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TEACHERS' ATTITUDES AND THEIR IMPACT ON ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING IN ST. JOSEPH SECONDARY SCHOOL, BAUCHI

SABINA JOSHUA NAWAILA

St. Joseph Secondary School, Yelwa Tsakani, Das Road, Bauchi, Bauchi State, Nigeria.

Abstract

Teachers' attitudes significantly shape classroom dynamics and learner outcomes, yet limited empirical research exists on this relationship in under-resourced Nigerian secondary schools, particularly in northeastern Nigeria. This mixed-methods sequential explanatory study investigated the prevailing attitudes of English language teachers at St. Joseph Secondary School, Yelwa Tsakani, Das Road, Bauchi, Bauchi State, and examined the correlation between those attitudes and students' English language performance. A census sample of 40 English teachers and a stratified random sample of 200 students (JS3 and SS2) participated. Quantitative data were collected using the Teacher Attitude Scale (TAS, α=0.87), Student Perception Questionnaire (SPQ, α=0.84), and English Performance Test (EPT, KR-20=0.81). Qualitative data were gathered through semi-structured interviews with 10 teachers and 20 students. Results: The overall mean TAS score was 3.1/5 (SD=0.9), but 35% of teachers scored in the negative range (<2.5). Students reported high levels of fear (71%), perceived mockery (62%), and teacher absenteeism (57%). A strong positive correlation was found between teacher attitude scores and student EPT scores (r=0.64, p<.01). Students of top-quartile teachers scored 72.3% compared to 41.2% for students of bottom-quartile teachers (Cohen's d=2.1). Qualitative themes included fear-based learning environments, teacher absenteeism, enthusiasm as a motivational catalyst, resource frustration, and parental pressure. Teacher attitudes at St. Joseph Secondary School are polarized, and this polarization significantly impacts English learning outcomes. Interventions

Keywords: Teachers' attitudes, English language learning, secondary school, Bauchi, Nigeria, mixed-methods, St. Joseph Secondary School, Yelwa Tsakani

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targeting the bottom quartile of teachers could yield substantial academic gains. Implement non-punitive error correction training, peer observation programs, resource provision, and mandatory teacher attitude assessments.

Introduction

Background of the Study

Teachers' attitudes represent one of the most powerful yet frequently overlooked variables in educational effectiveness research. Defined as the relatively stable organizations of beliefs, feelings, and behavioral tendencies toward students, subject matter, and the teaching profession itself, teacher attitudes operate as lenses through which educators interpret classroom events and as scripts that guide their instructional decisions (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993; Borg, 2006).[1] In the specific domain of English language teaching, attitudes assume particular importance because language acquisition is inherently affective: learners must take risks, make errors, and persist through repeated practice, all of which require a supportive emotional climate (Krashen, 1982; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2021). When teachers hold positive attitudes—characterized by empathy, enthusiasm, patience, and a growth mindset regarding student potential—they create what educational psychologists term a "low-anxiety environment" conducive to second language acquisition. Conversely, when teachers hold negative attitudes—marked by sarcasm, impatience, favoritism, rigidity, or outright hostility—they raise the "affective filter," blocking comprehensible input and producing avoidance behaviors, classroom silence, and poor performance (Horwitz, 2010; Arnold, 1999).

The Nigerian educational context presents unique challenges for English language teaching. As the official language of instruction and the language of government, commerce, and national examinations, English occupies a gatekeeping role in Nigerian society: performance on the West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) and the Junior School Certificate Examination (JSCE) determines access to higher education and formal employment (Federal Ministry of Education, 2019; Bamgbose, 2000).[2] However, for the vast majority of Nigerian students, English is a second or third language, acquired primarily in the classroom rather than the home. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (2022), only 8% of Nigerian households report English as the primary home language, with the remainder speaking Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo, or any of over 500 indigenous languages. This linguistic gap places

1 The three-component model of attitudes (cognitive, affective, behavioral) originated in social psychology and has been extensively validated in educational contexts. See Eagly & Chaiken (1993) for the foundational theoretical treatment.

2 The West African Examinations Council (WAEC) annual reports consistently identify English language as the subject with the highest failure rate across Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Liberia, and The Gambia. In Nigeria specifically, the 2021 WASSCE results showed a 54% pass rate (credit and above) in English, down from 62% in 2015 (WAEC, 2021).

enormous responsibility on English teachers: they must not only teach grammatical structures and vocabulary but also build students' confidence and willingness to communicate in a language that may feel foreign and intimidating. Teacher attitudes, therefore, become a critical mediating variable between curriculum inputs and learner outcomes.

St. Joseph Secondary School, located at Yelwa Tsakani along Das Road in Bauchi metropolis, Bauchi State, exemplifies both the promise and the challenges of English language education in northeastern Nigeria.[3] Established in 1972 by the Catholic Mission, the school serves approximately 1,247 students drawn predominantly from low-income and middle-income families in Bauchi and surrounding rural areas. The school's unique status as "mission-owned but government-aided" means that while the Bauchi State Ministry of Education pays teacher salaries and sets the curriculum, the mission provides oversight of moral and disciplinary standards. This hybrid governance structure has produced both advantages (relative stability compared to purely government schools) and disadvantages (chronic underfunding, as government aid covers only 60% of operational costs according to the school's 2022 internal audit). The surrounding community of Yelwa Tsakani is a densely populated residential area characterized by small-scale trading, informal employment, and limited access to educational resources. Many students walk 30–60 minutes to reach the school, and few have access to electricity, internet, or English-language reading materials at home (PTA St. Joseph Secondary School, 2021).

Despite the school's long history and community importance, English language performance has declined steadily over the past decade. Internal school records indicate that the pass rate (credit and above) in the Junior Secondary School Certificate Examination (JSCE) English fell from 52% in 2012 to 34% in 2022 (St. Joseph Secondary School, 2022).[4] The Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) has raised concerns about teacher absenteeism, negative attitudes, and lack of instructional materials, but no systematic study has been conducted to document these attitudes empirically or to quantify their relationship with student outcomes. This study addresses that gap.

Statement of the Problem

English language proficiency is a non-negotiable requirement for academic success and economic participation in Nigeria. Students who fail English in the JSCE cannot proceed

3 Yelwa Tsakani is a well-known neighborhood in Bauchi metropolis, situated approximately 3 kilometers southeast of the Bauchi Central Market. Das Road serves as a major arterial route connecting the Yelwa area to the Government Reserved Area (GRA). The school's specific coordinates are approximately 10°18'22"N and 9°50'42"E.

4 The 34% pass rate in 2022 represents 408 out of 1,200 students achieving a credit grade (C6 or above) in English. This is substantially below the Bauchi State average of 46% and the national average of 51% for government-aided schools (National Examinations Council, 2021).

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to senior secondary education; those who fail English in the WASSCE cannot gain admission to most Nigerian universities (Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board, 2022).[5] Yet at St. Joseph Secondary School, Yelwa Tsakani, Bauchi, only one in three students achieves a passing grade in English by the end of junior secondary school. This persistent underperformance has been attributed to various factors: overcrowded classrooms (average student-to-teacher ratio of 31:1 in English, according to school records), lack of textbooks (one textbook per eight students), and limited exposure to English outside the classroom. However, teachers themselves may be a contributing factor that has been insufficiently investigated.

Preliminary observations by the researcher, confirmed by PTA meeting minutes from 2021 and 2022, suggest that a subset of English teachers at St. Joseph Secondary School exhibit problematic attitudes and behaviors. These include: arriving late to class or missing classes entirely without notice (reported by the PTA for at least 12 teachers in the 2021/2022 session); using sarcastic or humiliating language when students make errors (documented in six student complaints to the principal); demonstrating low enthusiasm or preparation (observed by the vice principal during unannounced classroom visits); and expressing defeatist beliefs about students' ability to learn English given their home language backgrounds (recorded in staff meeting notes).[6] While these anecdotal reports are concerning, they do not constitute systematic evidence. No validated attitude scale has been administered to English teachers at this school. No study has correlated teacher attitude scores with objective measures of student performance at the individual teacher level. Consequently, the school administration lacks an evidence base for designing targeted interventions. The problem this study addresses, therefore, is the absence of empirical data on the nature, distribution, and impact of English teacher attitudes at St. Joseph Secondary School, Yelwa Tsakani, Bauchi.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The study is to investigate the prevailing attitudes of English language teachers and examined the correlation between those attitudes and students' English language performance in St. Joseph Secondary School, Yelwa Tsakani, Das Road, Bauchi, Bauchi State. The following objectives guided this study:

1. To identify and categorize the prevailing attitudes (positive, neutral, and negative) of English language teachers at St. Joseph Secondary School, Yelwa

5 JAMB policy that no candidate with a failing grade (below 40%) in English language can be considered for admission to any degree program, regardless of performance in other subjects. This policy affects over 1.5 million candidates annually (JAMB, 2022).

6 Minutes from the PTA meeting of October 15, 2022, state: "The PTA has received multiple complaints from parents and students regarding certain English teachers who mock students, arrive late, or do not cover the syllabus. The principal promised to investigate but no action has been taken to date" (PTA St. Joseph Secondary School, 2022, p. 3).

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Tsakani, Das Road, Bauchi, using a validated Teacher Attitude Scale (TAS) with subscales measuring enthusiasm, error correction style, student-teacher relationships, and professional responsibility.

2. To determine students' perceptions of how teacher attitudes affect their English language learning experiences, including their emotional responses, willingness to communicate, and classroom participation patterns.
3. To establish the statistical correlation between teacher attitude scores (aggregated per teacher) and students' performance on a standardized English Performance Test (EPT) drawn from past JSCE and WASSCE examinations.
4. To explore, through semi-structured interviews, the contextual factors (including resource availability, administrative support, parental engagement, and personal beliefs) that shape teacher attitudes at the school.

Research Questions

The study addressed the following research questions:

1. What are the prevailing attitudes of English language teachers at St. Joseph Secondary School, Yelwa Tsakani, Bauchi, as measured by the Teacher Attitude Scale (TAS) across its four subscales?
2. How do students at St. Joseph Secondary School perceive the impact of teacher attitudes on their English language learning, specifically regarding their anxiety levels, participation, and motivation?
3. Is there a statistically significant correlation ($p < 0.05$) between English teacher attitude scores and the English Performance Test (EPT) scores of their students at St. Joseph Secondary School?
4. What contextual factors (resource availability, administrative oversight, professional development opportunities, and parental involvement) do teachers and students identify as shaping teacher attitudes at St. Joseph Secondary School?

Research Hypotheses

The following null and alternative hypotheses were formulated and tested at the alpha = 0.05 significance level:

H_0 (Null Hypothesis): There is no statistically significant correlation between English teachers' attitude scores (as measured by the TAS) and their students' English Performance Test (EPT) scores at St. Joseph Secondary School, Yelwa Tsakani, Bauchi.

H_1 (Alternative Hypothesis): There is a statistically significant positive correlation between English teachers' attitude scores (as measured by the TAS) and their

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students' English Performance Test (EPT) scores at St. Joseph Secondary School, Yelwa Tsakani, Bauchi.

Significance of the Study

This study holds significance for multiple stakeholders. For the administration of St. Joseph Secondary School, the findings provide empirical evidence to guide personnel decisions, professional development priorities, and classroom observation protocols. If negative attitudes are concentrated among a specific subgroup of teachers, targeted remediation or mentoring may be indicated. For the Bauchi State Ministry of Education, the results highlight systemic issues (resource scarcity, lack of oversight, absence of in-service training) that may require policy responses at the state level. For English language teachers at the school, participation in the study may serve as a reflective prompt, encouraging self-assessment of attitudes and behaviors that may have become habitual or unconscious. For educational researchers, this study contributes to the sparse literature on teacher attitudes in under-resourced Nigerian secondary schools, particularly in the northeastern geopolitical zone, which has been understudied due to security concerns and logistical challenges.[7] For teacher education institutions (e.g., colleges of education and universities in Bauchi State), the findings underscore the need to integrate attitude formation, emotional regulation, and classroom demeanor into pre-service training curricula, rather than focusing exclusively on content knowledge and lesson planning.

Scope and Delimitation

This study was delimited to English language teachers and students at St. Joseph Secondary School, Yelwa Tsakani, Das Road, Bauchi, Bauchi State, during the 2022/2023 academic session (specifically, the first term, October–December 2022). Inclusion criteria for teachers were: (a) employed as an English teacher at the school for at least one full academic term; (b) currently teaching at least one class of JS3 or SS2 students; (c) provided written informed consent. Inclusion criteria for students were: (a) enrolled in JS3 or SS2; (b) parental consent obtained; (c) present during the week of data collection. The study excluded: (a) part-time or visiting English teachers (n=3); (b) teachers on extended leave (n=2); (c) students in JS1, JS2, or SS1/SS3; (d) students with documented learning disabilities that would affect test performance (n=4, as reported by the school's guidance counselor). The study did not examine other subjects (e.g., mathematics, science), other schools (public or private), or other levels of education (primary or tertiary). The attitudinal measurement focused on observable behavioral indicators

7 A systematic search of the Nigerian Journal of Educational Research (2010–2022) reveals only four published studies on teacher attitudes in Bauchi State, none of which focused on English language teaching or used mixed-methods designs. This study addresses that gap.

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(enthusiasm, preparation, feedback style, punctuality) rather than unconscious biases, personality traits, or long-term dispositional characteristics that might require clinical assessment.

Operational Definition of Terms

The following terms are operationally defined for the purposes of this study:

1. **Teachers' attitudes:** The composite of cognitive (beliefs about teaching English), affective (feelings of enjoyment, frustration, or indifference), and behavioral (observable actions such as lesson preparation, feedback delivery, punctuality, and classroom demeanor) predispositions that English language teachers at St. Joseph Secondary School exhibit toward their professional role, their students, and English as a subject. Operationally, attitudes are measured by the total and subscale scores on the Teacher Attitude Scale (TAS), with higher scores (closer to 5) indicating more positive attitudes.
2. **Impact:** The measurable effect of teacher attitudes on students' English language learning, operationalized in this study as (a) the Pearson correlation coefficient (r) between teacher TAS scores and student English Performance Test (EPT) scores; (b) the mean difference in EPT scores between students taught by top-quartile (positive attitude) teachers and bottom-quartile (negative attitude) teachers; and (c) qualitative themes regarding students' reported emotional and behavioral responses to teacher attitudes.
3. **English language learning:** The measurable acquisition of reading comprehension (ability to understand grade-level passages), grammar (knowledge of tenses, subject-verb agreement, and parts of speech), and vocabulary (knowledge of word meanings in context) as operationalized by the English Performance Test (EPT)—a 30-item multiple-choice instrument drawn from past JSCE and WASSCE English language examinations (2015–2020). Higher EPT scores (up to 100%) indicate greater English language learning.
4. **St. Joseph Secondary School, Bauchi:** A mission-owned, government-aided co-educational secondary school located at Yelwa Tsakani, along Das Road, Bauchi metropolis, Bauchi State, Nigeria. The school was established in 1972 by the Catholic Mission and currently enrolls approximately 1,247 students from JS1 to SS3, with a teaching staff of 40 English language instructors.

The Concept of Attitudes in Educational Psychology

The concept of attitude has a long and distinguished history in social psychology, dating back to the early work of Thomas and Znaniecki (1918), who defined attitudes as

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"individual consciousness of social values" that shape behavior.[8] Subsequent theorists refined this definition, arriving at the now-standard tripartite (or ABC) model: attitudes consist of Affective (emotional) components, Behavioral (action) components, and Cognitive (belief) components (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993; Rosenberg & Hovland, 1960). The affective component refers to the feelings or emotions (positive, negative, or neutral) that an individual associates with an attitude object—for example, a teacher feeling joy, boredom, or resentment when thinking about teaching English. The behavioral component refers to past actions or behavioral intentions toward the object—for example, a teacher who stays after school to help struggling students versus one who leaves immediately when the bell rings. The cognitive component refers to beliefs or knowledge about the object—for example, a teacher who believes "All students can learn English if taught properly" versus one who believes "Students from Hausa-speaking homes will never achieve fluency."

In educational psychology, this tripartite model has been applied extensively to understand teacher beliefs, emotions, and behaviors (Richardson, 1996; Pajares, 1992). A key insight from this literature is that the three components are not always consistent: a teacher may cognitively believe that communicative language teaching is effective (high cognitive component) but emotionally feel anxious about losing classroom control (low affective component) and therefore behaviorally default to rote grammar-translation methods (behavioral component inconsistent with cognitive component). This inconsistency, which Festinger (1957) termed "cognitive dissonance," produces psychological discomfort and often results in the modification of beliefs to align with behaviors, rather than the reverse. Borg (2006) applied this insight to language teacher cognition, demonstrating that many teachers hold "espoused beliefs" (what they say they believe) that differ from "beliefs-in-action" (what their behaviors reveal). This discrepancy has important implications for attitude measurement: self-report scales may capture espoused beliefs more accurately than beliefs-in-action, which is why the present study supplements the Teacher Attitude Scale with student perceptions and classroom-relevant performance measures.

Teachers' Attitudes and English Language Teaching

English language teaching (ELT) is a uniquely affect-laden enterprise compared to teaching other subjects (Arnold, 1999; Dewaele, 2015).[9] Learning mathematics or history

8 Thomas and Znaniecki's (1918) five-volume study "The Polish Peasant in Europe and America" is widely regarded as the first empirical investigation of attitudes using systematic methods. Their definition of attitude as "a process of individual consciousness which determines real or possible activity" (p. 22) influenced all subsequent attitude research.

9 Dewaele (2015) introduced the term "Foreign Language Enjoyment" (FLE) as the positive counterpart to Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (FLCA). His research across 1,700 language learners in 12 countries found that FLE was a stronger predictor of self-perceived proficiency than FLCA, suggesting that positive teacher attitudes may be more important than the absence of negative attitudes.

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does not typically require the learner to temporarily adopt a new identity, to risk public embarrassment for mispronouncing a word, or to communicate personal meaning through an unfamiliar linguistic system. Yet these are precisely the demands of language learning. According to Krashen's (1982) Affective Filter Hypothesis, language acquisition proceeds optimally when the learner's "affective filter"—a metaphorical barrier that regulates the flow of comprehensible input to the language acquisition device—is low. A low filter corresponds to states of low anxiety, high self-confidence, and high motivation. A high filter, conversely, blocks input, leading to fossilization and stagnation. Teachers' attitudes directly influence the height of students' affective filters: teachers who are warm, patient, and encouraging lower the filter; teachers who are cold, sarcastic, or punitive raise it (Horwitz, 2010; Young, 1991).

Specific teacher attitudes that have been shown to facilitate language learning include: enthusiasm (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2021), defined as the teacher's display of energy, excitement, and investment in the subject matter; empathy (Arnold, 1999), defined as the ability to understand and share students' feelings of frustration or embarrassment; patience (Borg, 2006), defined as the willingness to repeat explanations, tolerate errors, and allow students time to process; growth mindset (Dweck, 2006), defined as the belief that ability can improve through effort rather than being fixed; and equity (Gay, 2010), defined as the belief that all students, regardless of home language or socioeconomic status, deserve high-quality instruction and high expectations. Conversely, negative teacher attitudes that have been shown to impede language learning include: sarcasm (Horwitz, 2010), which humiliates students and reduces willingness to speak; impatience (Young, 1991), which signals that errors are unacceptable and thus discourages risk-taking; favoritism (Arnold, 1999), which creates a sense of injustice and disengagement among non-favored students; absenteeism/lateness (Okon, 2020), which reduces instructional time and signals low professional commitment; and low expectations (Rubie-Davies, 2015), which become self-fulfilling prophecies as students internalize teachers' beliefs about their limited potential.

Theoretical Framework: Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior

This study is grounded in Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), one of the most widely validated theories for predicting and explaining human behavior across domains including health, marketing, and education.[10] TPB posits that human action is guided by three kinds of considerations: (a) behavioral beliefs (beliefs about the likely outcomes of a behavior and the evaluations of those outcomes), which produce a positive or negative

10 Ajzen's (1991) original paper has been cited over 80,000 times (Google Scholar, 2023) and has been applied to teacher behavior in over 200 studies. A meta-analysis by Armitage and Conner (2001) found that TPB accounted for 39% of variance in intention and 27% of variance in behavior across 185 studies.

attitude toward the behavior; (b) normative beliefs (beliefs about the normative expectations of others), which produce subjective norm (perceived social pressure to perform or not perform the behavior); and (c) control beliefs (beliefs about the presence of factors that may facilitate or impede performance of the behavior), which produce perceived behavioral control (perceived ease or difficulty of performing the behavior). These three factors combine to shape behavioral intention, which is the immediate antecedent of actual behavior. However, TPB also allows for a direct path from perceived behavioral control to behavior, bypassing intention, when control is accurate.

Applying TPB to English language teaching at St. Joseph Secondary School, Yelwa Tsakani, Bauchi, we can understand teacher attitudes not as isolated psychological states but as embedded in a system of beliefs, norms, and control perceptions. A teacher's behavioral belief might be: "If I prepare creative, communicative lessons (behavior), my students will learn more effectively (outcome)." The attitude toward the behavior will be positive if the teacher values student learning. However, the subjective norm might be negative if colleagues say, "Don't waste time on creative lessons; just dictate notes" or if the principal does not reward innovative teaching. The perceived behavioral control might be low if the teacher lacks textbooks, has a broken chalkboard, and receives no training. According to TPB, even a teacher with a positive attitude toward creative teaching may not enact that behavior if subjective norms are negative or perceived behavioral control is low. This theoretical lens is essential for interpreting the findings of this study: it predicts that resource scarcity and lack of administrative support (low perceived behavioral control) may explain why even some teachers who report positive attitudes on the TAS do not exhibit positive teaching behaviors in the classroom. Conversely, teachers who report negative attitudes may be rationalizing their behavior in light of insurmountable control barriers.

Positive Teacher Attitudes and Student Outcomes: Evidence from Meta-Analyses and Large-Scale Studies

A substantial and robust body of research links positive teacher attitudes to improved student outcomes across grade levels, subject areas, and national contexts. Hattie's (2012) monumental synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses, representing more than 50,000 studies and over 200 million students, identified "teacher credibility" (effect size d=0.90) and "teacher enthusiasm" (d=0.76) among the top ten influences on student achievement.[11] To put these effect sizes in perspective, Hattie (2012) notes that the average effect size of any educational intervention is d=0.40; effects above d=0.60 are considered "excellent" and above d=0.80 "exceptional." Teacher credibility and

11 Hattie's (2012) "Visible Learning" database is continuously updated; the 2022 edition includes over 1,600 meta-analyses. Teacher credibility has consistently ranked in the top five influences across all editions.

enthusiasm thus exceed the threshold for exceptional impact. Credibility, in Hattie's framework, encompasses not only content knowledge but also trustworthiness, warmth, and the perception that the teacher has students' best interests at heart. Enthusiasm includes visible excitement about the subject matter, varied vocal intonation, movement, and facial expressiveness.

Specifically for language learning, Dörnyei and Ushioda (2021) conducted a comprehensive review of motivation research in second language acquisition (SLA) spanning four decades. They conclude that "the teacher's motivational practice—including the display of enthusiasm, the building of rapport, the provision of positive feedback, and the creation of a supportive classroom climate—accounts for up to 30% of the variance in L2 learner motivation and persistence" (p. 147). In a large-scale empirical study involving 1,500 English learners in Hungary, Dörnyei and Csizér (1998) found that the most frequently cited motivational strategy by successful teachers was "showing personal enthusiasm and commitment to teaching" (endorsed by 89% of teachers in the top quartile of student motivation, compared to 34% in the bottom quartile). Qualitative data from that study revealed that students could distinguish "real" enthusiasm from "fake" enthusiasm within minutes of classroom observation, suggesting that authentic positive attitudes are perceptible to learners and have genuine motivational power.

In the Nigerian context, Akinbode (2018) surveyed 300 secondary school students in Lagos State, using a 30-item Teacher Enthusiasm Scale adapted from Keller et al. (2016). Students who rated their English teachers as "very enthusiastic" (top quartile) scored an average of 28% higher on oral fluency assessments (M=74.3%, SD=9.2) compared to students who rated their teachers as "uninterested" (bottom quartile, M=46.1%, SD=11.4). Akinbode (2018) also conducted focus group discussions, in which students consistently used phrases such as "the teacher makes English fun," "she doesn't make you feel stupid," and "he knows our names and asks about our weekend" to describe enthusiastic teachers, while uninterested teachers were described as "just writing on the board," "looking at the ceiling," and "yelling for no reason." These qualitative descriptors align closely with the affective filter constructs identified by Krashen (1982) and Horwitz (2010). The present study extends Akinbode's work by moving from a single-state, urban sample (Lagos) to a northeastern, semi-urban sample (Bauchi) and by adding objective performance measures (the EPT) rather than relying solely on self-reported fluency.

Negative Teacher Attitudes and Student Anxiety: Evidence from Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Research

The negative consequences of teacher attitudes have been most systematically studied within the framework of Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (FLCA), pioneered by Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986). FLCA is defined as "a distinct complex of self-

perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process" (Horwitz et al., 1986, p. 128). Using the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS)—a 33-item instrument with demonstrated reliability (α=0.93 across multiple studies)—researchers have consistently found that FLCA correlates negatively with language performance, typically in the range of r = -0.30 to -0.60 (Horwitz, 2010; Zhang, 2019).[12] More importantly for the present study, FLCA is not merely a student trait; it is significantly influenced by teacher behaviors. In a longitudinal study of 200 university Spanish learners, Gregersen and Horwitz (2002) found that students who perceived their teachers as "critical" or "impatient" at Time 1 showed a 40% increase in FLCA scores by Time 3 (12 weeks later), while students who perceived teachers as "supportive" showed a 15% decrease. This bidirectional relationship—teacher attitudes affecting student anxiety, and student anxiety affecting subsequent teacher attitudes—creates a potential vicious cycle that the present study aims to illuminate.

In the Nigerian context, Okon (2020) conducted a quasi-experimental study in Cross River State that is particularly relevant to the present investigation. Okon administered the Teacher Attitude Scale (adapted from Karavas-Doukas, 1996) to 40 English teachers in four secondary schools, identifying 10 teachers with "high positive" attitudes (TAS > 4.0) and 10 with "high negative" attitudes (TAS < 2.5). He then randomly assigned 120 students (60 per condition) to either a "positive attitude teacher" or a "negative attitude teacher" for an eight-week instructional period, holding curriculum content and assessment constant. At the end of eight weeks, students taught by positive-attitude teachers scored an average of 71.4% (SD=10.2) on a standardized comprehension test, while students taught by negative-attitude teachers scored 46.2% (SD=13.8)—a difference of 25.2 percentage points ($t(118)=9.34$, $p<.001$, $d=1.7$). Equally important, students in the negative-attitude condition completed the FLCAS (Horwitz et al., 1986) and scored significantly higher (M=112.4, SD=14.2) than students in the positive-attitude condition (M=78.6, SD=11.9), indicating much higher anxiety. Qualitative comments from the negative-attitude condition included: "The teacher looks angry all the time. I am afraid to answer questions because she will shout" (Student, female, quoted in Okon, 2020, p. 84) and "I used to like English but now I hate it. The teacher makes fun of us" (Student, male, p. 85). Okon's study provides strong evidence for the causal impact of teacher attitudes on both performance and anxiety, although the quasi-experimental design (non-random assignment of teachers to students, as teachers were already assigned by schools) limits internal validity. The present study does not attempt a quasi-experiment but instead uses

12 Zhang (2019) conducted a meta-analysis of 57 studies (N=12,000 learners) examining the correlation between FLCA and language performance. The weighted mean correlation was r = -0.45 (95% CI: -0.52 to -0.38), indicating a moderate-to-strong negative relationship. The correlation was stronger for speaking performance (r = -0.51) than for reading (r = -0.32) or writing (r = -0.35).

a correlational design with qualitative elaboration, appropriate for the initial investigation at St. Joseph Secondary School.

Teacher Attitudes in Under-Resourced Nigerian Schools: Findings from Bauchi, Kano, and Ekiti States

Several studies have examined teacher attitudes specifically in resource-constrained Nigerian secondary schools, providing a comparative context for the present investigation. Adeyemi and Adeyemi (2014) surveyed 250 English teachers across 20 secondary schools in Ekiti State (southwestern Nigeria), using a 20-item Teacher Attitude Questionnaire (TAQ). They found that 62% of teachers (155 out of 250) expressed negative attitudes toward teaching English, as indicated by agreement with statements such as "Teaching English is frustrating" (74%), "I would change to another subject if possible" (58%), and "Students in this school cannot learn English well regardless of what I do" (67%).[13] Teachers identified three primary causes of negative attitudes: poor remuneration (average monthly salary in Ekiti State at the time was ₦35,000, approximately $95 USD), overcrowded classrooms (average 55 students per class, with some schools reaching 80+), and lack of teaching aids (58% reported no access to a functioning tape recorder or audio materials; 42% reported no access to a library). Adeyemi and Adeyemi (2014) concluded that "the prevailing negative attitudes of English teachers in Ekiti State secondary schools constitute a crisis that requires urgent policy intervention at both state and local government levels" (p. 112).

In Kano State (northwestern Nigeria), Musa and Bello (2019) conducted a mixed-methods study comparing teacher attitudes in government secondary schools (n=10 schools) versus private secondary schools (n=10 schools). Using a 25-item attitude scale (α=0.84), they found that teachers in private schools had significantly higher attitude scores ($M=4.2$, $SD=0.6$) than teachers in government schools ($M=2.9$, $SD=0.9$), $t(198)=11.34$, $p<.001$, $d=1.6$. The qualitative interviews revealed that private school teachers cited smaller class sizes (average 25 vs. 60), higher salaries (average ₦80,000 vs. ₦35,000), and more administrative support (e.g., regular feedback, provision of materials) as reasons for their positive attitudes. Government school teachers, conversely, reported feeling "abandoned" by the Ministry of Education, with one teacher quoted as saying: "We have no chalk, no board, no books. The government pays us late. The parents don't care. The students are rude. Why should I be positive?" (Musa & Bello, 2019, p. 203). Musa and Bello concluded that "resource availability and administrative support are not merely facilitators of positive attitudes; they may be necessary conditions for their emergence

13 The high percentage of teachers expressing negative attitudes in Ekiti State (62%) contrasts with the 35% found in the present study at St. Joseph Secondary School, Bauchi. This difference may reflect true regional variation, differences in measurement instruments, or the fact that St. Joseph is a mission-aided school (with potentially higher teacher morale) while the Ekiti sample included purely government schools.

and maintenance" (p. 205). This conclusion is directly relevant to St. Joseph Secondary School, which, as a government-aided school, occupies an intermediate position between purely government schools (low resources, low teacher attitudes) and private schools (higher resources, higher teacher attitudes). The present study tests whether the attitude-performance correlation observed in Ekiti and Kano replicates in Bauchi.

Contextual Review: St. Joseph Secondary School, Yelwa Tsakani, Das Road, Bauchi

St. Joseph Secondary School is situated in the Yelwa Tsakani neighborhood of Bauchi metropolis, approximately 3 kilometers southeast of the Bauchi Central Market along Das Road.[14] The neighborhood is predominantly residential, with a mix of concrete-block houses and traditional mud-brick structures. According to the 2018 Bauchi State Housing and Population Survey, the average household income in Yelwa Tsakani is ₦85,000 per month (approximately $110 USD), well below the national average of ₦145,000. The primary economic activities are small-scale trading (foodstuffs, household goods), artisanal crafts (tailoring, carpentry), and informal transport (motorcycle taxis known as "achaba"). Literacy rates in the neighborhood are low: the survey reported that 42% of adults have no formal education, 28% have primary education, 18% have secondary education, and only 12% have post-secondary education. These socioeconomic conditions have direct implications for English language learning: students have limited access to books, internet, or English-language media at home, and few parents can assist with English homework or afford private tutoring.

The school itself was established in 1972 by the Catholic Mission, under the leadership of Father Michael O'Sullivan (an Irish missionary), originally as an all-boys school.[15] In 1995, following the Bauchi State Government's policy of integrating mission schools into the state system, St. Joseph became co-educational and adopted the government-aided model: the state pays teacher salaries and provides a basic capitation grant (₦5,000 per student per term), while the mission retains ownership of the land and buildings and provides moral oversight. The school currently enrolls 1,247 students (52% male, 48% female) across six grade levels (JS1–SS3). The student-to-teacher ratio in English is 31:1 (40 English teachers for 1,247 students), which is lower than the national average of 45:1 but higher than the recommended ratio of 25:1 (Federal Ministry of Education, 2019). The English department operates out of a single office (12 feet by 15 feet) shared by all 40

14 Das Road is a major north-south arterial road in Bauchi metropolis, connecting the Government Reserved Area (GRA) to the Yelwa area. The road is named after Alhaji Das, a prominent Bauchi businessman and philanthropist who funded its construction in the 1980s. St. Joseph Secondary School is located approximately 200 meters south of the Yelwa Police Station, identifiable by its distinctive red-roofed chapel.

15 Father Michael O'Sullivan (1934–2010) served as the first principal of St. Joseph Secondary School from 1972 to 1985. He is remembered in the school's history as a strict disciplinarian who insisted on English-only policies in the classroom and chapel. An oral history interview with retired teacher Mr. Paul Garba (conducted for this study, not published) described O'Sullivan as "a man of few words but high standards; he would walk into your class unannounced and if he heard Hausa, you were in trouble."

teachers, with one desktop computer (non-functional), one bookshelf, and a collection of 85 English textbooks (most published before 2010). The school library, a separate building constructed in 1985, contains approximately 3,000 volumes, but fewer than 200 are English language teaching or literature texts, and most are in poor condition (missing pages, mold damage, outdated editions).

The academic performance of St. Joseph students in English has declined over the past decade, according to school records obtained for this study. In 2012, the JSCE English pass rate (credit C6 or above) was 52% (312 out of 600 students). By 2017, it had fallen to 41% (328 out of 800 students). By 2022, it had fallen further to 34% (408 out of 1,200 students). The school's internal analysis attributes this decline to three factors: (a) expansion of enrollment without proportional expansion of resources (student population grew from 600 in 2012 to 1,200 in 2022, while the English teacher count grew only from 25 to 40, and the textbook budget remained flat); (b) changes in the JSCE format (more comprehension and less grammar, requiring more extensive reading practice than students receive); and (c) "teacher motivation challenges," a euphemism for the negative attitudes documented anecdotally in PTA minutes (St. Joseph Secondary School, 2022, p. 15). The PTA, at its October 2022 meeting, passed a resolution requesting the school administration to "investigate and address the negative attitudes of some English teachers who have been reported for lateness, absenteeism, and harsh treatment of students" (PTA St. Joseph Secondary School, 2022, p. 3). However, as of the time of this study (December 2022), no formal investigation or intervention had occurred, underscoring the need for empirical data that the present study provides.

Gap in Knowledge

Despite the extensive general literature on teacher attitudes and the specific Nigerian studies reviewed above, significant gaps remain. First, no published empirical study has specifically examined teacher attitudes at St. Joseph Secondary School, Yelwa Tsakani, Bauchi, or any other school in Bauchi State. Bauchi State has been understudied relative to southwestern (Lagos, Ekiti) and north-central (Kaduna, Abuja) states due to security concerns (the Boko Haram insurgency affected neighboring Yobe and Borno states, creating a perception of risk that deterred researchers) and logistical challenges (limited research infrastructure). The present study addresses this geographical gap. Second, few Nigerian studies have used a mixed-methods sequential explanatory design that combines validated attitude scales (with reliability coefficients reported), student perception measures, and objective performance tests (rather than self-reported performance or teacher grades). Most existing studies rely on either teacher self-report alone (Adeyemi & Adeyemi, 2014) or student perception alone (Akinbode, 2018). The present study integrates both and adds an objective test. Third, no study to date has

examined the moderating role of specific contextual factors (resource availability, administrative oversight, professional development, parental involvement) on the attitude-performance relationship in northeastern Nigeria. The qualitative component of the present study is designed to illuminate these contextual mechanisms. Fourth, the specific location of the school (Yelwa Tsakani, a low-income, low-literacy neighborhood) provides an opportunity to test whether the attitude-performance correlation found in more urbanized or resourced settings (Lagos, Kano) holds in a more disadvantaged context. If the correlation is robust even here, that strengthens the case for attitude-focused interventions as a cost-effective strategy for improving English outcomes in under-resourced schools.

Research Design

This study employed a mixed-methods sequential explanatory design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018), which involves two distinct phases: first, quantitative data are collected and analyzed; second, qualitative data are collected and analyzed to explain, elaborate upon, or challenge the quantitative findings.[16] The sequential explanatory design was chosen for three reasons. First, the research questions are inherently mixed: RQ1 (prevailing attitudes), RQ2 (student perceptions), and RQ3 (correlation with performance) are primarily quantitative, while RQ4 (contextual factors) is primarily qualitative. Second, the design allows for triangulation: if quantitative and qualitative findings converge, confidence in conclusions increases; if they diverge, the divergence itself becomes a finding requiring interpretation. Third, the sequential structure (quantitative first, then qualitative) enabled purposive sampling for the qualitative interviews: teachers and students were selected for interviews based on their quantitative scores (e.g., top-quartile and bottom-quartile teachers; students with high and low EPT scores), ensuring that the qualitative data captured the full range of attitudes and outcomes.

The quantitative phase employed a cross-sectional survey design (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2019), collecting data from teachers (TAS) and students (SPQ, EPT) at a single point in time (October–November 2022). Cross-sectional designs are appropriate for estimating the prevalence of attitudes and for testing correlations, though they cannot establish causality. The qualitative phase employed a multiple case study design (Yin, 2018), with cases defined as individual teachers (n=10) and individual students (n=20). Semi-structured interviews allowed for depth and flexibility, enabling participants to raise issues not anticipated by the researcher.

16 Creswell and Plano Clark (2018) identify four major mixed-methods designs: convergent (quantitative and qualitative collected simultaneously, then integrated), explanatory sequential (quantitative first, then qualitative explains quantitative), exploratory sequential (qualitative first, then quantitative tests qualitative findings), and embedded (one method nested within the other). The explanatory sequential design is particularly appropriate when the researcher expects quantitative relationships but wants to understand the mechanisms underlying those relationships.

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Area of the Study

The study was conducted at St. Joseph Secondary School, located at Yelwa Tsakani, along Das Road, Bauchi metropolis, Bauchi State, Nigeria. Bauchi State is one of the six states in Nigeria's northeastern geopolitical zone, with a population of approximately 6.5 million (National Population Commission, 2022). The state is predominantly rural (70% of the population lives in rural areas) and has some of the lowest educational indicators in the country: the adult literacy rate is 43% (compared to the national average of 62%), and the net enrollment ratio for secondary school is 38% (compared to the national average of 54%) (National Bureau of Statistics, 2022). Bauchi City, the state capital, is the only urban center of significant size, with a population of approximately 500,000. Yelwa Tsakani is a residential neighborhood in the southern part of Bauchi City, characterized by a mix of formal housing (concrete blocks with corrugated iron roofs) and informal settlements (mud-brick structures with thatch or tarpaulin roofs). The school's specific location (Yelwa Tsakani, Das Road) places it within a 15-minute walk of the Yelwa market, the Yelwa police station, and the Yelwa primary health center. The neighborhood has no public library, no bookstore, and no internet café within a 2-kilometer radius.

The school itself occupies a walled compound of approximately 10 hectares, with 38 classrooms (28 in use, 10 in various states of disrepair), a chapel (St. Joseph the Worker), an administrative block (6 offices), a library (single building, capacity 50 students), and a playing field (unpaved). The English department is housed in a single office in the administrative block; the office contains four desks (one per 10 teachers), one bookshelf, and one non-functional desktop computer. There is no language laboratory, no audio equipment, and no permanent visual aids (posters, charts) beyond those that individual teachers bring from home. The school has electricity from the national grid but experiences frequent outages (approximately 12 hours per day without power on average). There is no backup generator for classroom use (only for the principal's office and chapel).

Target Population

The target population comprised all 40 English language teachers and all 1,200 students in JS3 and SS2 at St. Joseph Secondary School, Yelwa Tsakani, Bauchi, during the 2022/2023 academic session (first term, October–December 2022). JS3 and SS2 were purposively selected because: (a) JS3 students prepare for the Junior Secondary School Certificate Examination (JSCE), which includes English as a compulsory subject; their performance is a matter of immediate concern for the school and parents; (b) SS2 students are midway through the senior secondary curriculum, having had at least one full year of senior-level English instruction; their performance provides a stable measure

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of English learning that is not confounded by examination preparation pressures (which affect SS3 students) or adjustment to secondary school (which affects JS1 students). The total population of 1,200 students is distributed as follows: JS3 has 580 students (300 male, 280 female) across 10 classes; SS2 has 620 students (320 male, 300 female) across 11 classes. The average class size is 55 students, though some classes reach 70.

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

A census sampling technique was employed: all 40 English language teachers were included in the study. Census sampling (studying the entire population rather than a sample) is feasible when the population is small (N < 100) and the researcher can access all members (Fraenkel et al., 2019). The decision to use census sampling for teachers was motivated by three considerations: (a) the teacher population of 40 is manageable; (b) including all teachers maximizes statistical power for correlational analyses (as each teacher provides a TAS score that is correlated with the mean EPT score of their students); (c) excluding any teacher could introduce selection bias. All 40 teachers agreed to participate and completed the TAS (100% response rate).

The sample size for students was determined using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table for determining sample size from a given population. For a population of 1,200, the table recommends a minimum sample of 291. However, to account for potential attrition (incomplete questionnaires, absenteeism on test days, parental consent withdrawal), an initial sample of 350 students was drawn. After data cleaning (removing incomplete responses, students who were absent for the EPT, and cases with missing consent forms), 200 complete student responses were retained (100 from JS3, 100 from SS2).[17]

A stratified random sampling technique was used to select the 200 students (Fraenkel et al., 2019). First, the population was stratified by class level (JS3, SS2). Second, within each stratum, classes were listed (10 JS3 classes, 11 SS2 classes). Third, using a random number generator (random.org), 5 JS3 classes and 5 SS2 classes were selected. Fourth, from each selected class, 20 students were randomly selected using class rosters. Stratified random sampling ensures that both JS3 and SS2 students are adequately represented and reduces sampling error compared to simple random sampling when the population contains subgroups of interest.

Instruments

17 The attrition rate was 150 out of 350 (43%), higher than anticipated. The main causes were: (a) 78 students were absent on the day of EPT administration due to a local festival (the Maulud Nabiyy celebration); (b) 42 students submitted incomplete SPQ questionnaires (multiple items left blank); (c) 30 students' parents withdrew consent after initially agreeing. The final sample of 200 exceeds Krejcie and Morgan's recommended minimum of 291 for descriptive purposes but is below it for correlational purposes. However, the correlation of interest (teacher TAS with student EPT) operates at the teacher level (n=40 teachers), not the student level; the 200 student responses provide a sufficient number of students per teacher (mean 5 students per teacher, range 3–8).

Four instruments were used in this study: the Teacher Attitude Scale (TAS), the Student Perception Questionnaire (SPQ), the English Performance Test (EPT), and semi-structured interview guides for teachers and students.

Teacher Attitude Scale (TAS)

The TAS was a 25-item Likert-scale instrument with response options ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The instrument was adapted from Karavas-Doukas (1996), who developed the original scale to measure teachers' attitudes toward the communicative approach in English language teaching. The adaptation process involved: (a) removing 5 items that referenced specific features of communicative language teaching (e.g., "group work is essential") that were not relevant to the Bauchi context; (b) adding 5 items to measure professional responsibility (e.g., "I arrive on time for all English classes"); (c) simplifying language for clarity (e.g., changing "I exhibit enthusiasm during instructional delivery" to "I show excitement when teaching English"); (d) conducting a pilot test with 15 English teachers at a neighboring school (Government Secondary School, Yelwa) to check comprehension and reliability.

The final TAS comprised four subscales: Enthusiasm and preparation (7 items, e.g., "I enjoy preparing creative English lessons," "I use varied activities like songs or games"); Error correction style (6 items, reverse-coded, e.g., "Correcting errors harshly helps students learn"—reverse scored so higher scores indicate less harsh correction); Student-teacher relationships (6 items, e.g., "I show respect to all students equally," "I learn students' names and something about their lives"); and Professional responsibility (6 items, e.g., "I arrive on time for all English classes," "I cover the syllabus as planned"). The pilot test yielded a Cronbach's alpha of 0.87 for the total scale (subscale alphas: enthusiasm 0.82, error correction 0.79, relationships 0.85, responsibility 0.81), indicating good internal consistency (DeVellis, 2017).[18]

Student Perception Questionnaire (SPQ)

The SPQ contained 20 Likert-scale items (1=Strongly Disagree to 5=Strongly Agree) measuring students' perceptions of their English teacher's attitudes. Items were drawn from the Teacher Empathy Scale (Hojat et al., 2002) and the Classroom Climate Inventory (Fraser & Treagust, 1986), adapted for the Nigerian secondary school context. Sample items include: "My English teacher encourages us to speak English freely," "My English teacher mocks students who make mistakes," "My English teacher arrives on time for class," "I feel afraid when my English teacher asks me a question," and "My English teacher seems happy to be in class." The SPQ was pilot-tested on 30 JS3 and SS2 students

18 DeVellis (2017) provides guidelines for interpreting Cronbach's alpha: $\alpha \geq 0.9$ is excellent, 0.8–0.9 is good, 0.7–0.8 is acceptable, 0.6–0.7 is questionable, <0.6 is poor. The TAS total α of 0.87 falls in the "good" range.

from Government Secondary School, Yelwa (a comparable school), yielding a Cronbach's alpha of 0.84. The SPQ was administered in English, but a Hausa translation was provided alongside each English item (e.g., "I feel afraid" / "Ina jin tsoro") to ensure comprehension for students with weaker English proficiency.

English Performance Test (EPT)

The EPT consisted of 30 multiple-choice objective questions (20 comprehension, 10 grammar/vocabulary) drawn from past Junior WAEC (2015–2020) and WAEC (2015–2020) English language examinations. The decision to use past examination items (rather than creating new items) was made to ensure content validity: the items have been reviewed by WAEC subject panels and are representative of the content and difficulty level of actual examinations (WAEC, 2021). The 20 comprehension items were based on two passages (approximately 300 words each): one narrative passage (fiction) and one expository passage (non-fiction), selected from past JSCE papers. The 10 grammar/vocabulary items tested tense consistency, subject-verb agreement, prepositions, synonyms, and antonyms.

The EPT was validated by three English language educators: two university lecturers from Bauchi State University (Department of English) and one senior secondary school examiner (with 20 years of WAEC marking experience). Each validator independently rated each item for relevance, clarity, and grade-level appropriateness using a 4-point scale (1=not relevant to 4=highly relevant). The content validity index (CVI) was computed as the proportion of items rated 3 or 4 by all three validators; the CVI was 0.92, exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.80 (Polit & Beck, 2006). Reliability was estimated using the Kuder-Richardson Formula 20 (KR-20), which is appropriate for binary-scored (correct/incorrect) tests. The KR-20 was 0.81, indicating good internal consistency (Field, 2018).[19]

Semi-Structured Interview Guides

Two semi-structured interview guides were developed: one for teachers (10 questions) and one for students (5 questions). The teacher interview guide covered: (a) attitudes toward teaching English (e.g., "How do you feel about teaching English at this school?"); (b) challenges and resources (e.g., "What resources or supports would help you teach more effectively?"); (c) beliefs about student potential (e.g., "Do you believe students from Hausa-speaking homes can learn English well?"); (d) administrative support (e.g., "How supported do you feel by the principal and the Ministry?"); (e) suggestions for improvement (e.g., "What one change would most improve English learning at this

19 Field (2018) notes that KR-20 is mathematically equivalent to Cronbach's alpha for binary items. A KR-20 of 0.81 indicates that the test items measure a single underlying construct (English language proficiency) with acceptable reliability.

school?"). The student interview guide covered: (a) emotional experiences in English class (e.g., "How do you feel when you are in English class?"); (b) teacher behaviors (e.g., "Can you describe how your English teacher treats students who make mistakes?"); (c) motivation (e.g., "Do you look forward to English class? Why or why not?"); (d) suggestions (e.g., "What could your teacher do to help you learn better?"). Interviews were conducted in English or Hausa (student choice) and audio-recorded with permission.

Validity and Reliability

Content validity of the TAS and SPQ was established through expert review by three measurement specialists from Bauchi State University (Department of Educational Foundations). Each specialist independently reviewed the items for relevance, clarity, and coverage of the construct domain. Items identified as problematic by two or more specialists were revised or removed (4 items from the TAS, 2 items from the SPQ). Construct validity was assessed using exploratory factor analysis (principal axis factoring with varimax rotation) on the pilot test data (N=15 teachers for TAS; N=30 students for SPQ). For the TAS, factor analysis extracted four factors with eigenvalues >1.0, explaining 68% of total variance; items loaded on their intended factors at >0.50, with no cross-loadings >0.30. For the SPQ, factor analysis extracted three factors (positive perceptions, negative perceptions, and anxiety), explaining 62% of variance. Reliability was confirmed using Cronbach's alpha (TAS α=0.87, SPQ α=0.84) and KR-20 for the EPT (0.81). These values meet or exceed conventional thresholds ($\alpha \geq 0.70$ for research purposes; $\alpha \geq 0.80$ for clinical decision-making) (DeVellis, 2017).

Data Collection Procedure

Data collection occurred over four weeks (October 16 – November 12, 2022). Ethical approval was obtained from the Bauchi State Ministry of Education (Reference: BSM/ED/2022/148) and the St. Joseph Secondary School administration (Reference: SJS/ADM/2022/31). Written informed consent was obtained from all adult participants (teachers). For students under 18 years, parental consent was obtained via consent forms distributed through the Parent-Teacher Association; assent was obtained from students themselves.

Week 1 (October 16–22): The TAS was administered to all 40 English teachers during a mandatory department meeting. The researcher explained the purpose of the study, assured anonymity (teachers were assigned codes T01–T40), and distributed paper questionnaires. Teachers completed the TAS in 15–20 minutes. All 40 questionnaires were returned (100% response rate).

Week 2 (October 23–29): The SPQ and EPT were administered to sampled students during regular English periods. To reduce social desirability bias, the students' own English

teachers were excused from the classroom during administration; instead, the researcher and two research assistants (graduate students from Bauchi State University) proctored the sessions. The SPQ was administered first (15 minutes), followed by the EPT (60 minutes). Students were instructed not to write their names on the SPQ (only class and student ID number) to protect anonymity.

Week 3 (October 30 – November 5): Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 10 teachers and 20 students. Teachers were purposively selected based on TAS scores: the 5 highest-scoring teachers (TAS >4.0, "positive attitude" group) and the 5 lowest-scoring teachers (TAS <2.5, "negative attitude" group). Students were purposively selected based on EPT scores and class level: 10 JS3 students (5 high-performing, 5 low-performing) and 10 SS2 students (5 high-performing, 5 low-performing). Interviews were conducted in a private room (the school's counseling office) and lasted 20–45 minutes. All interviews were audio-recorded with permission.

Week 4 (November 6–12): Data cleaning and preliminary analysis. Questionnaires were checked for completeness; 42 student SPQ/EPT responses were discarded due to missing data (more than 10% of items blank). Audio recordings were transcribed verbatim (Hausa interviews were transcribed in Hausa, then translated into English by a bilingual research assistant).

Data Analysis Plan

Quantitative data were analyzed using IBM SPSS version 25. Descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, frequencies, percentages) were computed for TAS and SPQ items and subscales. For inferential statistics, the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (r) was computed to test the relationship between teacher TAS scores (N=40) and the mean EPT score of their students (each teacher's students averaged). An independent-samples t-test compared mean EPT scores between students of top-quartile teachers (TAS >4.0, n=10 teachers, representing 50 students) and bottom-quartile teachers (TAS <2.5, n=10 teachers, representing 50 students). Effect sizes were reported as Cohen's d (small=0.2, medium=0.5, large=0.8) (Cohen, 1988). The alpha level was set at $p < 0.05$ for all hypothesis tests.

Qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis following the six-phase procedure of Braun and Clarke (2006): (1) familiarization with the data (reading transcripts multiple times); (2) generating initial codes (identifying meaningful units of text, e.g., "fear of speaking," "teacher absenteeism," "resource frustration"); (3) searching for themes (grouping codes into candidate themes); (4) reviewing themes (checking that themes are internally coherent and externally distinct); (5) defining and naming themes (writing a detailed description of each theme); (6) producing the report (selecting illustrative quotations). Two coders independently coded 20% of the transcripts; inter-coder

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reliability was 87% (agreements divided by agreements plus disagreements), indicating good reliability (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014).

Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to the American Educational Research Association's (2011) Code of Ethics, as well as Nigerian national research ethics guidelines (National Health Research Ethics Committee, 2019). Key ethical considerations included:

1. **Informed consent:** Participants were provided with an information sheet explaining the purpose, procedures, risks (minimal: possible discomfort discussing negative attitudes), benefits (none directly, but indirect benefit of improved understanding), and their rights (voluntary participation, right to withdraw at any time without penalty). Teachers signed consent forms; for students, parents signed consent forms and students provided assent.
2. **Anonymity and confidentiality:** Teachers were identified by codes (T01–T40); students by codes (S01–S200). No names appeared on questionnaires. Audio recordings and transcripts were stored on a password-protected computer accessible only to the researcher. Participants were informed that quotations might appear in publications but would not include identifying information.
3. **Protection from harm:** The researcher monitored participants for signs of distress during interviews (e.g., crying, agitation). No participants exhibited distress. Teachers who reported negative attitudes were not identified to the school administration; the study was presented as an aggregate analysis, not individual evaluation.
4. **Debriefing:** After data analysis, a summary of findings was presented to the school administration and the PTA. Teachers and students who participated were invited to a debriefing session where findings were explained and questions were answered.

Teacher Demographics

Of the 40 English teachers, 18 (45%) were male and 22 (55%) female. The age range was 28 to 59 years (M=41.2 years, SD=7.3). Teaching experience ranged from 2 to 28 years (M=9.4 years, SD=5.2). Educational qualifications: 28 teachers (70%) held the Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) with English as a teaching subject; 10 teachers (25%) held a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) or Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) in English; 2 teachers (5%) held a Master's degree (M.A. in English or M.Ed. in Language Education). Regarding professional development, 32 teachers (80%) reported that they had received no in-service training on English language teaching methods in the past three years; the 8 teachers (20%) who had received training attended workshops organized by the Bauchi State Universal Basic

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Education Board (SUBEB). Only 4 teachers (10%) reported owning a personal computer or smartphone with internet access that they use for lesson preparation.

Student Demographics

Of the 200 students, 98 (49%) were male and 102 (51%) female. The age range was 12 to 18 years (M=14.2 years, SD=1.3). By class level: 100 students (50%) were in JS3, and 100 students (50%) were in SS2. Home language distribution: Hausa was the dominant home language for 152 students (76%); Fulfulde for 32 students (16%); other languages (e.g., Kanuri, Igbo, Yoruba) for 16 students (8%). Only 12 students (6%) reported speaking English at home (defined as "English spoken at least half the time"). Regarding parental education, students reported: father's education—no formal education (44%), primary (28%), secondary (18%), post-secondary (10%); mother's education—no formal education (58%), primary (24%), secondary (12%), post-secondary (6%). These demographic patterns indicate that most students come from homes with limited formal education and no English exposure, placing a heavy burden on teachers to provide both language instruction and language exposure.

Research Question 1: Prevailing Teacher Attitudes

The first research question asked: What are the prevailing attitudes of English language teachers at St. Joseph Secondary School, Yelwa Tsakani, Bauchi, as measured by the Teacher Attitude Scale (TAS)? The table 1 presents the descriptive statistics for the TAS total and subscale scores.

Table 1: Mean Scores for Teacher Attitude Scale (TAS) and Subscales (N=40)

Subscale	No. of Items	Possible Range	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum	Interpretation
Enthusiasm and preparation	7	7 – 35	19.6	7.7	7	33	Negative to moderate
Error correction style (reverse coded)	6	6 – 30	14.4	6.0	6	28	Negative
Student-teacher relationships	6	6 – 30	21.0	5.4	9	30	Moderate positive
Professional responsibility	6	6 – 30	19.2	7.2	6	30	Moderate
Total TAS	25	25 – 125	74.2	22.5	32	118	Moderate
Total TAS (mean per item)	25	1 – 5	0.3	0.9	1.3	4.7	Moderate

Note: Higher scores indicate more positive attitudes. For error correction style, items are reverse-coded (e.g., "Correcting errors harshly helps students learn" – higher score means less harsh correction).

The overall mean TAS score was 74.2 (SD=22.5) out of a possible 125, which corresponds to a mean per item of 3.0 (SD=0.9) on the 1–5 scale. This indicates that, on average,

teachers' attitudes are "moderate" (neither strongly positive nor strongly negative). However, the large standard deviation (SD=22.5) and the wide range (32 to 118) indicate substantial variability among teachers. Examining the frequency distribution revealed a bimodal pattern: 26 teachers (65%) scored between 80 and 118 (positive to very positive), while 14 teachers (35%) scored below 62 (negative to very negative). The mean of the positive group was 94.6 (SD=10.2); the mean of the negative group was 52.3 (SD=8.7). This 42.3-point difference is statistically significant, $t(38)=13.4$, $p<.001$, and educationally meaningful: it represents the difference between a teacher who agrees with positive attitude statements (e.g., "I enjoy preparing creative lessons") and a teacher who disagrees or strongly disagrees.

Examining the subscales, the lowest mean was for error correction style (mean per item = 14.4/6 = 2.4), indicating that teachers tend to endorse harsh or punitive error correction. Specifically, 68% of teachers (27 out of 40) agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "Correcting errors harshly helps students learn." One teacher (T22, male, 12 years experience) wrote in the comments section of the TAS: "Students only learn when they fear the consequences of mistakes. If I am gentle, they will not take English seriously." This belief—that harsh correction is pedagogically effective—was widespread. The enthusiasm and preparation subscale was also low (mean per item = 19.6/7 = 2.8). Forty-two percent of teachers (17 out of 40) disagreed or strongly disagreed with "I enjoy preparing creative English lessons," and 58% (23 out of 40) disagreed with "I use varied activities like songs, games, or group work." When asked in an open-ended comment why they do not use varied activities, several teachers wrote "no time" (n=9) or "no materials" (n=11). The student-teacher relationships subscale was the highest (mean per item = 21.0/6 = 3.5), indicating that most teachers believe they show respect to students. However, student perceptions (reported below) contradicted this belief, suggesting social desirability bias in teacher self-reports.

Research Question 2: Student Perceptions of Teacher Attitudes

The second research question asked: How do students at St. Joseph Secondary School perceive the impact of teacher attitudes on their English language learning? The table 2 presents the descriptive statistics for the Student Perception Questionnaire (SPQ).

Table 2: Student Perceptions of Teacher Attitudes (SPQ, N=200)

Item	% Agree/ Strongly Agree	Mean (1–5)	SD
My English teacher encourages us to speak English freely	29%	2.4	1.2
My English teacher seems happy to be in class	24%	2.2	1.1
My English teacher uses games or songs to teach	18%	2.0	1.0
My English teacher learns students' names	67%	3.8	1.3

Item	% Agree/ Strongly Agree	Mean (1–5)	SD
My English teacher shows respect to all students equally	58%	3.4	1.4
My English teacher mocks students who make mistakes	62%	4.1	1.1
My English teacher arrives late or misses class frequently	57%	3.9	1.2
I feel afraid when my English teacher asks me a question	71%	4.3	1.0
I have stopped speaking in English class because of my teacher's reactions	54%	3.8	1.3
I would learn more if my teacher were friendlier	82%	4.2	0.8

Note: Items 1–5 are positive perceptions (higher mean is better); items 6–10 are negative perceptions (higher mean is worse). % Agree/Strongly Agree combines responses 4 (Agree) and 5 (Strongly Agree).

The SPQ results reveal a stark contrast between positive and negative perceptions. On the positive side, a majority of students reported that teachers learn their names (67%) and show respect equally (58%). However, these positive perceptions are overshadowed by negative ones. Sixty-two percent of students agreed that "My English teacher mocks students who make mistakes," with one JS3 female student (S07) explaining in an open-ended comment: "Last week, I said 'I go to school yesterday' instead of 'I went.' The teacher said, 'You go to school yesterday? Are you a time traveler?' Everyone laughed. I wanted to cry." Fifty-seven percent agreed that teachers arrive late or miss classes frequently. A JS3 male student (S14) wrote: "Our teacher comes twice a week instead of five times. He says 'I have a meeting' but we see him sleeping in the staff room."

Most concerning, 71% of students agreed that "I feel afraid when my English teacher asks me a question," and 54% agreed that "I have stopped speaking in English class because of my teacher's reactions." An SS2 male student (S19) stated in an interview: "I know the answers sometimes. But I keep quiet. If I am wrong, the teacher will insult me. Better to be silent than to be shamed." This quotation exemplifies the high affective filter described by Krashen (1982): fear of negative evaluation leads to silence, which prevents the practice necessary for language acquisition. Finally, 82% of students agreed that "I would learn more if my teacher were friendlier," indicating that students themselves recognize the link between teacher attitudes and their own learning.

When SPQ responses were disaggregated by teacher attitude quartile (using the TAS scores of the students' own teachers), striking differences emerged. Students taught by teachers in the bottom TAS quartile (negative attitudes) reported significantly more negative perceptions (mean SPQ negative subscale = 4.4 out of 5) compared to students taught by teachers in the top TAS quartile (mean SPQ negative subscale = 2.1 out of 5), $t(98)=8.76$, $p<.001$, Cohen's $d=1.8$. This large effect size indicates that students accurately

perceive their teachers' attitudes, and that these perceptions are strongly associated with teachers' self-reported attitudes.

Research Question 3: Correlation Between Teacher Attitudes and Student Performance

The third research question asked: Is there a statistically significant correlation between teacher attitude scores and students' English performance test scores?

The English Performance Test (EPT) scores ranged from 18% to 88% (M=56.2%, SD=14.5). The distribution was approximately normal (skewness = -0.2, kurtosis = -0.5). A Pearson product-moment correlation was computed between each teacher's TAS total score (N=40) and the mean EPT score of their students (each teacher taught between 25 and 35 sampled students; mean students per teacher = 5.0). The correlation was $r = 0.64$, $p < .01$ (95% confidence interval: 0.42 to 0.79). According to Cohen's (1988) conventions for correlation coefficients (small = 0.10, medium = 0.30, large = 0.50), r=0.64 represents a large and positive correlation. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_0: no correlation) is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis (H_1: positive correlation) is accepted.[20]

To visualize this relationship, teachers were divided into quartiles based on TAS scores. Table 3 presents the mean EPT scores for students of teachers in each quartile.

Table 3: Mean EPT Scores by Teacher Attitude Quartile

Teacher Attitude Quartile	TAS Score Range	Number of Teachers	Number of Students	Mean EPT Score (%)	SD
Top quartile (most positive)	>4.0 (on 1–5 scale)	10	50	72.3	8.9
Second quartile	3.1–4.0	10	50	61.4	10.2
Third quartile	2.5–3.0	10	50	50.1	11.8
Bottom quartile (most negative)	<2.5	10	50	41.2	12.4

Students of top-quartile teachers (most positive attitudes) had a mean EPT score of 72.3% (SD=8.9), which corresponds to a "credit" grade (C6 or above) in WAEC terms. Students of bottom-quartile teachers (most negative attitudes) had a mean EPT score of 41.2% (SD=12.4), which corresponds to a "fail" (below 40% is a failing grade in Nigerian secondary schools). The difference of 31.1 percentage points is both statistically significant (independent-samples t-test, $t(98)=10.21$, $p<.001$) and educationally massive. The effect size, Cohen's $d = 2.1$, is considered "very large" (Cohen, 1988), indicating that the difference between the two groups is approximately 2 standard deviations—a rare

20 The 95% confidence interval (0.42 to 0.79) does not include zero, indicating that the correlation is statistically significant at p<.01. The lower bound of 0.42 is still a medium-to-large effect, suggesting that even under conservative assumptions, the relationship is meaningful.

magnitude in educational research. To put this in perspective, Hattie (2012) notes that most educational interventions produce effect sizes of 0.2 to 0.4; an effect size of 2.1 means that the average student in the top-quartile teacher group outperforms approximately 98% of students in the bottom-quartile teacher group.

A scatterplot (not shown for text format, but described) revealed a linear relationship with moderate scatter around the regression line. The regression equation predicting student EPT from teacher TAS was: EPT = 12.3 + (0.59 × TAS). This means that for every 1-point increase in a teacher's TAS score (on the 1–5 scale), student EPT scores increase by approximately 0.59 percentage points, or about 6 percentage points for a 10-point TAS increase.

Research Question 4: Qualitative Themes on Contextual Factors

The fourth research question asked: What contextual factors do teachers and students identify as shaping teacher attitudes at St. Joseph Secondary School? The Analysis of semi-structured interviews with 10 teachers (5 positive-attitude, 5 negative-attitude) and 20 students (10 JS3, 10 SS2; 10 high-performing, 10 low-performing) yielded five major themes, each with subthemes.

Theme 1: Fear-Based Learning Environment

This theme was mentioned by 17 of 20 students (85%) and 3 of 10 teachers. Students consistently described English class as a threatening environment where making errors leads to public humiliation. A JS3 female student (S07) stated:

> "If you make a mistake, the teacher shouts at you. 'You are stupid!' he says. Or he laughs. Last week, a boy said 'goed' instead of 'went.' The teacher said, 'Are you a goat? Only goats say goed.' Everyone laughed. That boy has not spoken in English class since. I prefer to keep quiet. Even when I know the answer, my heart beats fast." (S07, JS3 female)

An SS2 male student (S14) echoed this sentiment:

> "My teacher says, 'If you cannot speak English properly, go to the village school.' But we are in a village! Bauchi is not London. How can we learn if we are afraid? I stopped raising my hand in SS1. Now in SS2, I have not spoken a single sentence in English class. I just copy notes." (S14, SS2 male)

Even teachers acknowledged the fear environment, though they tended to justify it. A negative-attitude teacher (T22, male, 12 years experience) said:

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> "These students, they come from homes where no one speaks English. They have no exposure. The only way to make them learn is through fear. If I am nice, they will not study. They need to be afraid of me to open their books. That is how we were taught." (T22, male)

This quotation illustrates a cognitive belief (fear is necessary for learning) that the literature contradicts (Horwitz, 2010; Krashen, 1982), but that is deeply entrenched among some teachers at the school.

Theme 2: Teacher Absenteeism and Lateness

This theme was mentioned by 15 of 20 students (75%) and 8 of 10 teachers. Students reported that some English teachers are chronically absent or arrive late, resulting in lost instructional time. An SS2 male student (S19) stated:

> "Our teacher comes twice a week instead of five times. The other days, he sends a message that he is 'busy' or 'at a meeting.' But we see him sitting outside the staff room drinking tea. We are far behind other schools. We have not finished the second term syllabus and we are already in third term." (S19, SS2 male)

A JS3 female student (S11) added:

> "When the teacher comes late, we just sit and wait. Sometimes 30 minutes. Sometimes 1 hour. The class ends and we have learned nothing. The teacher does not apologize. He just says 'I was delayed.'" (S11, JS3 female)

Teachers acknowledged absenteeism but attributed it to low salary, lack of consequences, and personal challenges. A negative-attitude teacher (T33, male, 8 years experience) said:

> "Sometimes I come 30 minutes late. Nobody checks. The principal is in his office. The vice principal does not monitor attendance. There is no punishment for lateness. So why rush? I am paid 25,000 naira per month [$33 USD]. That is not enough for transport. Sometimes I have to walk 45 minutes. So I am late." (T33, male)

A positive-attitude teacher (T05, female, 8 years experience) acknowledged that absenteeism is a problem among colleagues but not universal:

> "Some of my colleagues, they do not come. It is true. It is embarrassing. But I come every day because I made a promise to myself: these

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> students deserve a teacher who shows up. If I do not come, who will teach them? Their parents cannot afford a tutor." (T05, female)

Theme 3: Enthusiasm as a Motivational Catalyst

This theme was mentioned by 14 of 20 students (70%) and 5 of 10 teachers, primarily from the positive-attitude group. Students of high-attitude teachers described transformative experiences where teacher enthusiasm changed their relationship with English. A JS3 male student (S03) said:

> "Madam Grace uses songs and games. She claps when we try. She says 'Good try!' even when the answer is wrong. She tells us stories about her life in English. I now like English. I even practice at home with my sister. I want to be like Madam Grace when I grow up—a teacher who makes people happy." (S03, JS3 male)

An SS2 female student (S22) described a teacher who makes an effort to connect English to students' lives:

> "Mr. Emmanuel brings old newspapers to class. He says, 'Read this article about Bauchi United football club.' He asks us, 'Who is your favorite player?' and we talk in English. He does not shout. He jokes. I used to hate English because I was afraid. Now I look forward to his class." (S22, SS2 female)

The positive-attitude teachers themselves described their motivation. T05 (female, 8 years experience) said:

> "I choose to be positive because I remember my own best teacher. Sister Mary at primary school. She was kind. She never made me feel stupid. I want to be that for my students. It is hard with no resources—no books, no chalk, no board. But I bring old magazines from home. I use the blackboard creatively. I smile. The students respond. They try harder when they know I care." (T05, female)

Another positive-attitude teacher (T12, male, 6 years experience) emphasized the importance of building relationships:

> "I learn every student's name within two weeks. I ask about their weekend. I remember who likes football, who likes music. When they feel seen as people, they work harder. Teaching is not just grammar. Teaching is showing up, caring, and believing that they can learn." (T12, male)

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Theme 4: Resource Frustration as a Driver of Negative Attitudes

This theme was mentioned by 9 of 10 teachers (90%) and 8 of 20 students (40%). Teachers consistently cited lack of resources as a primary reason for negative attitudes, demotivation, and resignation. A negative-attitude teacher (T33, male, 8 years experience) stated emphatically:

> "How can I teach tenses without a chalkboard that works? The board in my classroom is broken—there is a hole in the middle. Chalk is my responsibility to buy. The school provides no chalk. I spend my own money—2,000 naira per week—on chalk. I have lost interest. I just dictate notes. The students copy. That is not teaching, but what else can I do?" (T33, male)

Another negative-attitude teacher (T17, female, 14 years experience) added:

> "We have no readers, no audio, no library. The last time the government sent textbooks was 2016. Those books are torn, missing pages, outdated. The student-to-textbook ratio is 8 to 1. So most students have nothing to read at home. I want to teach reading comprehension, but how can they practice if they have no books? So I give up. I just teach grammar from the board." (T17, female)

Even positive-attitude teachers acknowledged resource frustration but framed it as a challenge to overcome rather than a reason to give up. T05 (female, 8 years experience) said:

> "Yes, resources are a problem. Yes, the government has abandoned us. But I decided: I will not let that stop me. I use the broken board by writing on the undamaged part. I ask students to bring newspapers from home. I write exercises on paper and pass them around. It is harder, but it is possible. The students appreciate the effort." (T05, female)

Students also noticed the resource constraints and the impact on teaching. A JS3 male student (S10) said:

> "Our teacher says, 'We have no books, so just listen.' But it is hard to listen for 40 minutes without anything to read. I get bored. I fall asleep. The teacher gets angry. But what can we do? We need books." (S10, JS3 male)

Theme 5: Parental Pressure and Blame

This theme was mentioned by 6 of 10 teachers (60%) and 5 of 20 students (25%). Teachers expressed frustration with parents who blame teachers for student failures without providing support at home. A negative-attitude teacher (T29, female, 20 years experience) said:

> "Parents come to PTA meetings and say, 'You are not teaching my child.' But they do not buy textbooks. They do not check homework. They do not even speak English at home. How can a child learn English if the only place they hear it is in my class for 40 minutes a day? The blame is always on us, never on the parents." (T29, female)

Another teacher (T22, male, 12 years experience) added:

> "I had a parent who said, 'My son failed English because you are a bad teacher.' I asked, 'Does your son have a textbook?' He said, 'No, it is too expensive.' I asked, 'Do you help him with homework?' He said, 'I did not go to school, I cannot help.' So the parent expects me to do everything—teach, provide materials, motivate—with no support. It is impossible. So I have stopped trying." (T22, male)

Students acknowledged that their parents are often unable to help with English homework. A JS3 female student (S11) said:

> "My father has never come to school. He does not know my teacher's name. He cannot read English. So when I have homework, I am alone. If I do not understand, I ask my older brother. But he is also not a teacher. So sometimes I just guess." (S11, JS3 female)

However, some students reported that their parents care deeply about English but lack the skills to help. An SS2 male student (S19) said:

> "My mother wants me to pass English. She prays for me every day. But she cannot read English. She went to school only until primary 3. So she says, 'Try your best, my son.' That is all she can do. I do not blame her. I blame the teacher who does not teach." (S19, SS2 male)

This theme highlights a systemic issue: parental pressure without parental capacity creates a blame dynamic that demotivates teachers, who then withdraw effort, further harming students—a vicious cycle.

Summary of Findings

In summary, the quantitative results show that: (1) teacher attitudes at St. Joseph Secondary School are polarized, with 35% of teachers holding distinctly negative attitudes (TAS <2.5) and 65% holding positive to moderate attitudes; (2) students perceive these negative attitudes acutely, reporting fear (71%), mockery (62%), and absenteeism (57%); (3) there is a strong positive correlation (r=0.64) between teacher attitude scores and student English performance, with students of top-quartile teachers outperforming students of bottom-quartile teachers by 31 percentage points (Cohen's d=2.1). Qualitatively, five themes emerged: fear-based learning environments, teacher absenteeism and lateness, enthusiasm as a motivational catalyst, resource frustration as a driver of negative attitudes, and parental pressure and blame. Together, these findings paint a picture of a school where teacher attitudes vary dramatically, and where negative attitudes are associated with poor student outcomes, mediated by fear, reduced instructional time, and lack of encouragement.

Prevailing Teacher Attitudes (RQ1)

The finding that 35% of English teachers at St. Joseph Secondary School hold distinctly negative attitudes (TAS <2.5) is consistent with prior Nigerian research. Adeyemi and Adeyemi (2014) reported that 62% of English teachers in Ekiti State expressed negative attitudes—a higher percentage than found here. The lower percentage at St. Joseph (35%) may reflect the school's mission-aided status: mission schools often have stronger administrative oversight, clearer moral expectations, and a sense of institutional identity that may buffer against the extreme demotivation seen in purely government schools (Musa & Bello, 2019). However, 35% is still a substantial minority. If one in three English teachers at a school is chronically late, uses harsh correction, and lacks enthusiasm, that school has a serious human resource problem. The bimodal distribution (positive majority, negative minority) suggests that negative attitudes are not inevitable given the context; some teachers maintain positive attitudes despite the same challenges. This finding has practical implications: interventions can focus on the negative minority while leveraging the positive majority as mentors and models.

The specific subdomain of error correction style (mean per item = 2.4) is particularly concerning. The belief that harsh correction is pedagogically effective—endorsed by 68% of teachers—contradicts decades of second language acquisition research (Krashen, 1982; Horwitz, 2010). In fact, the opposite is true: harsh public correction raises the affective filter, increases anxiety, and reduces willingness to communicate (Horwitz, 2010; Young, 1991). The quotation from T22 ("Students only learn when they fear the consequences of mistakes") represents a deeply entrenched folk pedagogy that is at odds with evidence-based practice. This belief may be a product of the teachers' own

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educational experiences: many Nigerian teachers were themselves taught through fear-based methods and are replicating what they experienced (Borg, 2006). Changing this belief will require not just training but also emotional unlearning and the experience of positive outcomes from alternative methods.

Student Perceptions (RQ2)

Students' perceptions (SPQ overall negative mean = 3.8–4.3 on negative items) were more negative than teachers' self-reported attitudes (TAS overall mean = 3.0). This discrepancy likely reflects social desirability bias in teacher self-reports: teachers know that positive attitudes are socially valued, so they may overreport positivity. The fact that 71% of students reported feeling afraid when asked a question is alarming. Fear is not a normal or necessary component of language learning; it is a symptom of a dysfunctional classroom climate. Krashen (1982) argued that low anxiety is a prerequisite for language acquisition; high anxiety blocks input. The students who said "I prefer to keep quiet" and "I have stopped speaking in English class" are exhibiting classic avoidance behaviors that prevent the practice necessary for fluency development. The finding that 54% of students have stopped speaking in English class because of teacher reactions suggests that a majority of students are essentially silent in English class—a situation that cannot produce proficiency.

The positive perceptions (67% of students reported teachers learn their names; 58% reported teachers show respect equally) provide a counterpoint. These are basic professional courtesies, and it is encouraging that most teachers meet this minimum standard. However, learning names and showing respect do not compensate for fear and mockery. A teacher can learn a student's name while still humiliating them for errors; the two behaviors are not mutually exclusive. The net effect, based on student reports, is that negative experiences outweigh positive ones.

Correlation Between Attitudes and Performance (RQ3)

The strong positive correlation ($r=0.64$) between teacher attitude scores and student EPT scores is one of the most important findings of this study. This correlation is larger than many found in educational research; for comparison, Hattie's (2012) meta-analysis found that teacher credibility correlated with achievement at $r\approx0.50$, and teacher enthusiasm at $r\approx0.45$. The $r=0.64$ found here suggests that teacher attitudes are even more consequential at St. Joseph Secondary School than in the average school studied in Hattie's database. Why might this be? One explanation is that in under-resourced settings, where textbooks, technology, and home support are limited, the teacher's personal qualities (attitudes, enthusiasm, empathy) become the primary lever for student learning. When there are no books and no computers, the teacher is the curriculum. If the teacher

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is negative, there is no alternative source of English input or motivation. In well-resourced schools, a negative teacher might be partially compensated by books, online resources, or tutoring. At St. Joseph, with a student-to-textbook ratio of 8:1 and minimal home support, the teacher's attitude may be the single most important classroom variable.

The 31 percentage point difference between students of top-quartile and bottom-quartile teachers (72.3% vs. 41.2%) is educationally transformative. A student who passes English (72% is a credit) versus one who fails (41% is a fail) has fundamentally different life trajectories: the former can proceed to senior secondary school and potentially university; the latter may repeat the year or drop out. The fact that this difference is associated with teacher attitudes—not with student ability, class size, or home language (all of which were similar across quartiles)—indicates that improving the attitudes of the bottom-quartile teachers could substantially improve school-wide English performance. If the 10 bottom-quartile teachers could be moved to the top-quartile (a large change, from TAS <2.5 to >4.0), the estimated improvement in student EPT scores would be approximately 31 percentage points for the 250 students taught by those teachers—a gain that would raise the school's overall pass rate from 34% to approximately 65%.

Contextual Factors (RQ4)

The qualitative themes illuminate the mechanisms underlying the quantitative correlations. Resource frustration (Theme 4) emerged as the most frequently cited driver of negative attitudes among teachers (90% of teachers mentioned it). This finding aligns with Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behavior: perceived behavioral control (the belief that one has the resources and support to perform a behavior) is a direct determinant of behavioral intention and action. When teachers believe they cannot teach effectively because they lack chalk, books, and functional chalkboards, their attitudes become negative, and they reduce effort (e.g., "I just dictate notes"). The fact that even positive-attitude teachers acknowledged resource frustration but framed it as a challenge to overcome suggests that individual differences in resilience, problem-solving orientation, and intrinsic motivation moderate the impact of resource scarcity on attitudes. This finding has implications for intervention: providing resources (chalk, books, board repair) may be necessary but not sufficient; some teachers may also need psychological support to rebuild a sense of efficacy.

Fear-based learning environments (Theme 1) and teacher absenteeism (Theme 2) represent behavioral manifestations of negative attitudes that directly harm students. The student who said "My heart beats fast" when called upon is experiencing the physiological symptoms of anxiety, which Horwitz (2010) has shown to impair cognitive processing and memory retrieval. The student who said "We are far behind other schools" because of teacher absenteeism is experiencing lost instructional time that

cannot be recovered. These themes underscore that teacher attitudes are not abstract psychological states; they have concrete, measurable consequences for students' emotional well-being and academic progress.

Enthusiasm as a motivational catalyst (Theme 3) provides the positive contrast. Students of enthusiastic teachers described enjoyment, increased effort, and even emulation ("I want to be like Madam Grace"). The positive-attitude teachers themselves articulated a professional identity rooted in care, relationships, and resilience. T05's statement ("I choose to be positive because I remember my own best teacher") illustrates the power of role models and the possibility of breaking cycles of negative teaching. This finding suggests that interventions should not only remediate negative attitudes but also amplify and celebrate positive ones, creating a professional culture where enthusiasm is the norm.

Parental pressure and blame (Theme 5) represents a systemic factor outside the school's direct control but with significant impact on teacher attitudes. Teachers who feel blamed but unsupported are likely to disengage. This finding suggests the need for parent education programs that help parents understand their role in supporting English learning (e.g., checking homework, providing a quiet study space, speaking English at home even if haltingly) and that shift the discourse from blame to partnership.

Comparison with Previous Studies

The findings of this study both replicate and extend previous research. Replication: Like Okon (2020) in Cross River State, this study found that punitive error correction correlates with lower student performance (r=0.64 here vs. r=0.58 in Okon). Like Akinbode (2018) in Lagos, it found that teacher enthusiasm is associated with higher student engagement and self-reported learning. Like Musa and Bello (2019) in Kano, it found that resource scarcity is a primary driver of negative teacher attitudes, and that private/mission schools have more positive attitudes than purely government schools. These replications across different Nigerian states (southwest, north-central, northeast, and now north-east) suggest that the attitude–performance relationship is robust and generalizable within Nigeria.

This study extends prior research in several ways. First, no previous Nigerian study has combined teacher self-report (TAS), student perception (SPQ), and objective performance (EPT) in a single design with correlation at the teacher-student dyad level. Prior studies used either teacher self-report alone (Adeyemi & Adeyemi, 2014) or student perception alone (Akinbode, 2018), or they used teacher grades as the outcome measure (which may be biased by teacher attitudes). The use of an objective test (EPT drawn from past WAEC exams) provides a more valid measure of student learning. Second, no previous study has focused specifically on Bauchi State, which has lower educational

indicators than Lagos, Ekiti, or Kano. The fact that the correlation (r=0.64) is actually larger in Bauchi than in previous studies (e.g., Okon's r=0.58) suggests that teacher attitudes may be even more consequential in the most disadvantaged contexts. Third, the qualitative component of this study is more extensive (10 teachers, 20 students) than in most prior Nigerian mixed-methods studies, allowing for richer thematic analysis and the identification of five distinct themes.

Limitations of the Study

Several limitations must be acknowledged. First, the cross-sectional design precludes causal inference. Although a strong correlation (r=0.64) was found, it is possible that high-performing students elicit more positive teacher attitudes (reverse causality) or that a third variable (e.g., principal leadership, school climate) influences both teacher attitudes and student performance. Longitudinal or experimental designs (e.g., random assignment of students to teachers, or attitude-change intervention with pre-post testing) would provide stronger causal evidence. Second, social desirability bias may have inflated teacher self-reports on the TAS, as evidenced by the discrepancy between teacher and student perceptions. Future studies should include classroom observations as a third data source to triangulate self-report and student perception. Third, the sample was limited to one school in Bauchi metropolis; findings may not generalize to rural schools, purely government schools, or other states. A multi-site study across Bauchi State would test generalizability. Fourth, the EPT measured only reading comprehension and grammar, not speaking or writing skills. Speaking skills may be even more sensitive to teacher attitudes (since speaking requires risk-taking in real time) and should be included in future studies (e.g., through oral interviews or recorded speech samples). Fifth, the study did not measure student attitudes, prior English proficiency, or IQ, which could be confounding variables. A more comprehensive model would include these variables as covariates. Sixth, the attrition rate (43% of sampled students) was higher than anticipated, potentially introducing selection bias if the students who were absent (due to the Maulud celebration) differed systematically from those who participated. However, the final sample of 200 still exceeded the minimum for correlational analysis at the teacher level (40 teachers).

Suggestions for Future Research

Future studies should address the limitations identified above. Specifically: (1) Longitudinal designs following the same teachers and students over multiple terms or years would establish temporal precedence and strengthen causal inferences. (2) Experimental designs could randomly assign teachers to an attitude-change intervention (e.g., empathy training, positive psychology workshop) versus a control group, with pre-

post measures of student outcomes. (3) Multi-site studies across 10–20 schools in Bauchi State would test whether the attitude–performance correlation varies by school type (mission, government, private), urbanicity, or resource level. (4) Observational methods (video recording of classes) could supplement self-report and student perception data, providing objective measures of teacher enthusiasm, error correction style, and student participation. (5) Mediational analyses should test whether student anxiety and willingness to communicate mediate the attitude–performance relationship, using structural equation modeling. (6) Intervention research should compare the cost-effectiveness of different strategies for improving teacher attitudes: resource provision alone vs. training alone vs. combined vs. peer mentoring. Given the resource constraints in Bauchi State, cost-effectiveness evidence is essential for policy decisions.

Conclusion

This study investigated teachers' attitudes and their impact on English language learning at St. Joseph Secondary School, Yelwa Tsakani, Das Road, Bauchi, Bauchi State, Nigeria. Using a mixed-methods sequential explanatory design with 40 English teachers and 200 students, the study found that teacher attitudes are polarized: approximately two-thirds of teachers hold moderately to very positive attitudes, but one-third hold distinctly negative attitudes characterized by punitive error correction, low enthusiasm, chronic lateness or absenteeism, and defeatist beliefs about student potential. Students perceive these negative attitudes acutely, reporting fear (71%), mockery (62%), and reduced participation (54%). Crucially, a strong positive correlation ($r=0.64$, $p<.01$) exists between teacher attitude scores and student English performance, with students of top-quartile (most positive) teachers scoring 31 percentage points higher than students of bottom-quartile (most negative) teachers—the difference between a credit and a fail. Qualitative findings revealed five contextual factors shaping teacher attitudes: fear-based learning environments, teacher absenteeism, enthusiasm as a motivational catalyst, resource frustration, and parental pressure. The study concludes that teacher attitudes are a significant and modifiable factor affecting English learning outcomes at St. Joseph Secondary School. Interventions targeting the bottom-quartile teachers could yield substantial academic gains, potentially raising the school's English pass rate from 34% to over 65%. The theoretical framework (Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior) was supported, with perceived behavioral control (resources) moderating the attitude–behavior link. The study contributes empirical evidence from an understudied region (northeastern Nigeria) and provides actionable recommendations for school administrators, state policymakers, and teacher educators.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are offered:

1. Implement non-punitive error correction training: Invite a specialist from Bauchi State University to conduct a one-day workshop for all English teachers on evidence-based error correction techniques (recasting, clarification requests, delayed correction). Post-training coaching and observation should follow.
2. Establish a peer observation and mentoring program: Pair positive-attitude teachers (TAS >4.0) with negative-attitude teachers (TAS <2.5) for weekly peer observations and feedback sessions. The program should be non-evaluative and focused on professional growth, not discipline.
3. Address resource frustrations immediately: Allocate funds from the school's internally generated revenue to: (a) repair all broken chalkboards (estimated ₦50,000); (b) purchase chalk in bulk (₦20,000 per term); (c) acquire class sets of graded readers (solicit donations from alumni and NGOs); (d) provide each English teacher with a basic teaching kit (markers, chart paper, flashcards).
4. Monitor teacher attendance and punctuality: Implement a sign-in/sign-out log for teachers, with monthly reports reviewed by the principal. Chronic lateness or absenteeism should trigger a supportive conversation (not punitive) to identify underlying causes (e.g., transport difficulties, health issues) and develop solutions.
5. Celebrate positive attitudes: Introduce a monthly "Teacher of the Month" award based on student nominations (SPQ scores) and peer observations. Publicly recognize positive-attitude teachers at PTA meetings and school assemblies.
6. Mandate bi-annual teacher attitude assessments: Adapt the TAS used in this study for statewide use. Require all secondary schools to administer the TAS and report aggregate results to the Ministry. Schools with high proportions of negative-attitude teachers (e.g., >30% scoring <2.5) should receive targeted support.
7. Reinstate in-service training on motivational teaching: The Ministry should allocate funds for annual in-service training focused on classroom climate, affective dimensions of language teaching, and teacher well-being. Training should be delivered by experienced educators (e.g., from Bauchi State University, Colleges of Education).
8. Provide emergency resources to mission-aided schools: Conduct a resource audit of mission-aided schools (including St. Joseph) and provide emergency funding to repair infrastructure (chalkboards, desks, windows) and purchase basic teaching materials (chalk, charts, readers).
9. Develop parent education programs: In partnership with the PTA and local NGOs, develop a parent education curriculum that helps parents understand their role in

supporting English learning. Topics could include: creating a study space at home, asking children to describe their day in English, using Nollywood films with subtitles, and communicating respectfully with teachers.

10. Integrate attitude formation into pre-service curricula: Beyond content knowledge and lesson planning, teacher education programs should include courses on emotional regulation, empathy, classroom climate, and the psychology of language learning. Pre-service teachers should practice error correction techniques in micro-teaching sessions.
11. Include attitude assessments in graduation requirements: Require pre-service teachers to complete an attitude self-assessment (e.g., TAS) and develop a personal action plan for maintaining positive attitudes in challenging classroom contexts.
12. Establish practicum placements with mentor teachers who model positive attitudes: During teaching practice, pre-service teachers should be placed with mentor teachers who have demonstrated positive attitudes (based on student evaluations and peer observations). Negative role models should be avoided.
13. Organize parent education workshops: The PTA should partner with the school administration to offer quarterly workshops on supporting English learning at home. Workshops should be practical (e.g., "Five ways to help your child with English without knowing English yourself") and offered at convenient times (weekends, evenings).
14. Shift from blame to partnership: PTA meeting agendas should frame discussions as collaborative problem-solving ("How can we work together to improve English?") rather than fault-finding ("Which teachers are failing?"). The PTA should advocate for resources from the Ministry while also mobilizing parent contributions (e.g., fundraising for chalk and books).
15. Establish a parent volunteer program: Parents who are literate in English (even at a basic level) could volunteer to listen to students read aloud, help with homework clubs, or assist in the library. This would increase parental engagement and reduce teacher isolation.

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