

**Pygmalion Effect 'Teachers Expectations' on Secondary School Students' Motivation and Academic Performance**Dr. Muhammad Zafar Iqbal\*<sup>1</sup>, Muhammad Nadil Ali<sup>2</sup>**Original Article**

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**Abstract**

The Pygmalion refers to a psychological phenomenon where teachers' expectations about students' influence their academic performance. Although it is difficult to observe the Pygmalion effect in practical classroom settings, but teachers always have positive or negative expectations from their students. Contemporary educational theories demonstrates that teachers need to have higher expectations from their students to keep them motivated and to promote healthy behaviours among students. This paper examines the Pygmalion effect on the academic performance of secondary level students. True experimental design was used to collect the evidences about Pygmalion effect on secondary level students' academic performance. Population of the study include 570 secondary school students. Random sampling technique was applied to self the sample. Two groups were formulated (30 students' experimental group and 30 students for control group). One group was taught 10<sup>th</sup> grade English Text book by using 'pygmalion effect'. Teacher conveyed positive expectations to the experimental group while control group was taught by lecture strategy. Test comprising of MCQs was developed and used as instrument to record the pre-test and post test scores of both groups. Average ages of the respondents were 14 year to 19 years. Study was conducted with male secondary school students. Results of the study revealed that 'pygmalion effect' conveying positive expectations to students resulted in improvement of motivation level and having sessions with students to sensitize them about teachers expectations significantly affected their academic performance. Secondary school teachers need to inform students that they have positive expectations it will boost up students' academic performance and will directly increase students' level of motivation.

**Keywords:** Motivation, Positive Expectations, Pygmalion Effect, Academic Performance, Secondary School, Students

**Introduction**

Pygmalion effect is a psychological phenomenon about the effect of positive expectations on academic performance of students. It is mind-set of students that is effected by expectations of their teachers. Since 1960 various studies have been conducted to study this phenomenon. 'Pygmalion' a Greek word refers to the expectations of a child (Galatia) with a sculpture created by her. She fell in love with her own paintings (Ahmad, 2019). Pygmalion effect also refers the power of higher expectations which can increase or decrease the imagination of respondents (Zhu & Wu 2020). Professional teachers always put serious efforts to motivate their students by using different techniques. Likewise, teacher needs to have positive expectations from their students regarding their conduct (Almadi, 2020). 'Pygmalion effect' is tool for teacher to motivate their students. Rosenthal used 'Pygmalion effect technique' and named it 'Rosenthal effect'. Positive expectations of teachers' results in increased self-efficacy of students, which leads them to pursue higher academic goals (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968; Rosenthal 1973, Eden, 2018). Teachers' positive expectations improve students' success, while negative expectations led them towards poor academic performance. Results of the study conducted by Rosenthal & Jacobson during 1968 revealed that students' academic scores increased in analytical reasoning and linguistics as a

result of 'pygmalion effect' and assisted them to become academic bloomers (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968). Teachers' positive expectations increased students productivity (Shani, 1982 & Eden, 2018; Ullah, Saeed, Ahmad, Khan, & Naz, 2021). Teachers usually have lower expectations and not realize the significance of having positive expectations to boost up the academic performance of their students. Secondly teachers avoid to communicate their positive expectations to their students. Teachers are controllers of learning experiences. This study focuses to find out the effects of teachers' positive expectations on secondary level students' academic performance and motivation.

### Literature Review

The phenomena of 'pygmalion effect' refers to teaching to the students with positive expectations in practical classroom settings. Results of the experimental study conducted by Rosenthal and fellows in the field of education reflects that positive expectations of teachers increased students self-prophecy (Gentrup & Rjosk, 2020; Bass, 2020). Similarly, results of the study conducted by Bromley (2014) exposed that positive expectations of teachers helped out students to improve their weaker areas.

### Pygmalion Effect in Classroom

Teachers can use 'pygmalion effect' as a tool to inspire and motivate their students in practical classroom settings (Zhu & Wu, 2020). Results of the study conducted by Chang during (2011) about 'pygmalion effect' revealed that 'pygmalion effect' resulted in enhancement of motivation, provided them higher autonomy, sharing of knowledge, effective presentation of own ideas, searching out learning opportunities independently and passing out examinations (Chang, 2011). A predictive relationship exists between teachers positive expectations 'pygmalion effect' and students learning outcomes. With the passage of time students will put best efforts to improve their behaviours and demonstrate higher academic performance (Wang & Cai, 2016). Teachers should be trained to have positive expectations from their students. Results of the longitudinal study conducted by Friedrich et al during 2012 with 5<sup>th</sup> grade students revealed that teachers' expectancy resulted in increase of students' self-prophecy, clarity of concepts and competence in the subject of mathematics. Students perceive and react according to the expectancies of their teachers. Similarly, Chang, 2011 have concluded that there is no doubt that enthusiasm and motivation of teachers influences students' academic performance. Having positive teaching expectations necessarily lead students to demonstrate higher academic performance (Chang, 2011).

Usually, students have prodigious expectations from their teachers, instructors and supervisors. Teachers also have positive or negative expectations from their students, but they rarely communicate their expectations to their students. As Rosenthal has studied that when teachers paid more interest and conveyed their expectations to students it resulted in enhancement of academic performance of their students. 'Pygmalion effect' must be non-discriminatory (Amini, 2016). Chen & Klimoski, 2003 have studied the 'pygmalion effect' occurs between doctors and their patients. When patients believe that their physician is competent they get ready more ready to have treatment, but the nature of relationship between doctor and patient is entirely different between the relationship between teacher and student. Usually, duration of relationship between doctor and patient is short termed as compared to the relationship between teacher and student.

### 'Pygmalion Effect' in Teaching Learning Process

Teaching learning process is multidimensional, it is not merely interpersonal communication between teachers and students. Maya and Maraver, (2020) have studied that during the teaching learning process teachers have to manage oppositional behaviours to their students, motivating their students, providing access to the content, reducing the distance between teacher and students, inculcating problem solving skills and adoption of active teaching strategies. There is considerable controversy about effective and excellent teaching, traditional teaching approaches focused on the delivery of content, while cooperative teaching approaches focused on the effective

relationship between teachers and students. 'Pygmalion effect' works in almost all fields e.g industry and business, workers have expectations from their employers, likewise, customers have positive or negative expectations from the shopkeepers. 'Pygmalion effect' remained helpful for teachers to provide conducive learning environment to their students in practical classroom settings. Usually, teachers convey their expectations to the students, when they demonstrate negative behaviours in the classroom.

According to Chadha & Narula, (2016) conveying negative expectations or goals have adverse effects on human interaction and promotes negative behaviours. Students ought to invite their teachers feedback and teachers need to seek their students feedback about the nature of their relationship. Having feedback really matters for building or destroying relationships in any settings, particularly in classroom settings.

#### **'Pygmalion Effect' and Students' Motivation**

Motivation works like a soul in the teaching learning process, motivated teachers always have motivated students. According to Ali (2009) motivation is a powerful tool for teachers to enhance students' performance, but teachers are largely unaware about the importance of motivation and significance of conveying their positive expectations to students. The interplay of teacher's expectancy can motivate students to boost up their academic performance as well as self-esteem. Teachers also need to employ their expectations to describe the behaviour of their students, it may helpful as a motivation strategy for teachers. Amini, 2016 has found that individual differences need to be focused to recognize the average potential of a population. A variety of factors may influence the 'pygmalion effect' in practical classroom settings e.g counter effect, previous academic scores of students, observing teaching standards and overall environment of the educational institutions.

#### **'Pygmalion effect' and Students' Academic Performance**

Teacher Expectations and Students' Achievement (TESA) exists as an organization in Los Angeles to train the teachers to change students behaviour. TESA guides teachers to have the answer of more complex questions, devising strategies to deal with lower achievers, listening and understanding the problems of low achievers. TESA programme is based on the famous theory presented by Thomas Good and Jere Brophy. This theory encourage teachers to ensure equal distribution of responses, correction of behaviour and affirmation of correction, principle of proximity, latency, praise and reasons for praise, active listening techniques, asking higher level of questions, understanding personal interests, understanding students compliments and more particularly eliminating students misbehaviours in a courteous manner (TESA, 1970). Every student in a classroom have positive or negative expectations of his/her students, likewise all students have their own expectations about their own performance. Few students have positive expectations about their own performance and others have average expectations about their performance. It means 'pygmalion effect' and performance of students in a practical classroom setting exists. Amini, 2016 concludes that man is social being, usually we are influenced by our expectancies and experiences and students have authority to control their potential to have influence from others.

#### **Research Methodology**

This quantitative study aimed to study the efficacy of the 'Pygmalion Effect' on the academic performance of secondary level students. Pre-test post-test research design was used to conduct the experiment and to collect the data about phenomena of 'pygmalion effect' in Tehsil Nagar, Gilgit Biltastan. Experimental group was taught with 'Pygmalion effect' positive expectations were conveyed to the students. While control group was taught without 'pygmalion effect'. Total population of the study consisted of five hundred and seventy secondary level students. Sixty students from class 10<sup>th</sup> were selected as sample of the study. Selected sample was equally divided into experimental and control group 30 students each group. Average ages of the respondents range from 14 year to 19 years. Informed consent and anonymity was ensured.

'Pygmalion effect' sessions were conducted with the experimental group while control group was taught with conveying them the positive expectations by the teacher. Pre-and post-test comprised of Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs) from the English Text book. Reliability and validity of the instrument was checked by calculating the Cronbach Alpha and having experts' opinions simultaneously.

### Results

Statistical values reflects that a significant difference was noticed between the performance of experimental and control group.

**Table 1: Comparison of Performance of Experimental and Control Groups (Post-Test)**

Sr.	Groups	Strategies	N	Mean	Std. dev	Std. Er. M
1	Experimental Group	Pygmalion strategy	30	52.76	14.85	1.66
2	Control Group	Lecture strategy	30	36.93	8.99	2.72

**Table 2: Comparison of Performance of Experimental and Control Groups (Pre-Test)**

Sr.	Type of Response	Pre-test Exp. Grp	Pre-test Control	Sr.	Type of Response	Pre-test Exp.Grp	Pre-test Exp.Grp
1	Synonyms (Underlining)	1.96	1.99	7	Word (Matching)	1.24	1.64
2	Making Sentence structure	1.79	1.98	8	Correction of sentences	1.76	1.79
3	Searching Best Answers	1.67	1.81	9	Negative statements	1.97	2.30
4	Filling out the blanks	2.17	2.40	10	Completing incomplete sentences	1.90	2.12
5	Answering short statements	2.55	2.96	11	Searching out best alternatives	2.15	2.17
6	Autonym (Underlining)	1.35	1.77		<b>Total</b>	<b>20.51</b>	<b>23.93</b>

Overall experimental group taught with 'pygmalion effect' when teacher convey positive expectations to this group earned better scores as compared to the control group. The mean of average scores of the experimental group remained 52.76 in different segments of MCQs in the subject of English, while the average of mean of control group taught with conveying positive expectations remained 39.93. Average ages of the respondents belonging to both groups were 14-19 years. All respondents were male in this study and belonging to middle class families. Initially, respondents showed less interest in 'pygmalion effect' sessions but with the passage of time respondents belonging to experimental group became familiar with this strategy and took keen interest in 'pygmalion effect' sessions. It was felt respondents belonging to experimental group were happy and feeling motivated to receive the instructions. Overall, as a result of Pygmalion sessions, respondents belonging to experimental group created less disturbance. They were ready to follow teachers' instructions and for doing work hard to improve their academic performance.

'Pygmalion effect' sessions with experimental group resulted in encouragement and motivation of the respondents and they developed better understanding of the content taught by their teacher. The statistical representation of results shows that students belonging to experimental group demonstrated progressive results as compared to the control group and strategy 'pygmalion effect' conveying positive expectations to the students before giving them instructions remained effective and resulted in enhancement of motivation as well as academic scores.

### Discussions

Results of various studies e.g Amini, during 2016, Chadha and Narula, 2016, Chen & Kilmoski, 2003, Zhu and Wu, 2020 established the 'pygmalion effect' as it was established by Rosenthal and fellows during 1973. This effect may vary from class to class and student to student. Effectiveness of 'pygmalion effect' may affect due to various other factors e.g class size, demographical variables pertaining to students. Chadha & Narula, 2016 concluded that conveying positive expectations to students can affect their level of trust and positive engagement in academic activities during instructions. In contrast results of the study conducted by Holt, Deal and Pankow, 2020 showed that it is difficult for students to always fulfil teachers' expectations in the classroom. Study conducted by Shaha, 2020 shows that having positive expectations from students matters, but students develop their self concept on the basis of opinion of others as well, not only on the expectations of their teachers. When having positive expectations matters in case of doctor and patient, it may matter in case of teacher and student. Zhu & Wu 2020 has pointed out that students nature differ from case to case, some students are submissive and follow their teachers, while others are aggressive and ignore the instructions delivered by their teachers. Rosenthal, 1973 has also highlighted the effect of culture to fulfil others expectations. It is not always true that students will perform poor when they have low expectations from their teachers. On the other hand majority of teachers do not understand the vitality of positive expectations. Likewise, Rosenthal and Jacobson conducted a study on the performance of elementary level students in 1968 and found that about 20% students who were taught by open teachers showed outstanding academic performance, but 8 months later when same students were taught by same teacher they were more open towards their teachers. It shows that teachers' expectations have effect on their students.

### Conclusion

'Pygmalion effect' occurs in the classroom, secondary school students remained motivated to have higher academic performance when their teachers have positive expectations from them. Secondary school students put serious efforts to understand the content and work hard to improve their academic performance as a result of 'pygmalion effect'. Teachers expectancy resulted in higher level of motivation among secondary school students and it has positive impact on students. Students feel more encouraged and remained motivated to attain higher academic grades.

### Recommendations

Secondary school teachers need to sensitize about the 'pygmalion effect' having positive expectations on the motivation level of students and its positive effect on the academic performance of their students. Likewise, teachers need to be informed about vitality of developing positive relationship with students. On the basis of results of this study and many other studies referred in the review and discussions sections, it can be recommended that provincial education department and district education authorities may arrange sessions on the 'pygmalion effect' and teachers expectancy, it may result in enhancement of motivation and academic performance of secondary school students. Likewise, it is recommended for head teachers to realize the significance of teacher student relationships. Teachers ought to largely expose their positive expectations to their students. Lastly 'pygmalion effect' need to be included in the pre-service and in-service teachers training programmes.

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