

Impact Of Teachers' Expectations On Optimism, Achievement, And Aspiration Of Secondary School Students

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ABSTRACT

Teachers' expectations influence the learning of students in different ways. On the basis of these expectations, teachers bring variations in their decisions about students' teaching-learning process. Our study aimed at examining the impact of teachers' expectations on students' optimism, academic achievement, and aspiration in secondary schools. The study being quantitative in nature, using a cross-sectional survey design was used. The data was collected through a questionnaire consisting of four factors comprising teacher expectations, optimism, achievement, and aspirations Secondary School Teachers (SSTs) from five tehsils of district Sargodha, Punjab-Pakistan were conveniently taken as the sample (n=522. Inferential statistics Pearson correlation was applied to find out teachers' expectations and students' achievements, aspirations, and optimism with respect to their demographics. The study concluded that teachers' expectations had a positive impact on students' optimism, achievement, and aspiration in public secondary schools. The study recommended that teachers must have high expectations from their students with respect to their effort but irrespective of their ability.

Keywords: secondary school teachers, expectations, students, achievement, aspiration, optimism

INTRODUCTION

Research on the variables influencing academic performance has produced warmed contentions and numerous elements have been found to impact students' achievement. In any event, it is generally agreed that while analyzing the learning process, we need to take both psychological and affective variables into account. The impact of teacher expectations on students' attitudes toward learning is a critical issue because research reveals a relationship between instructor expectations and student accomplishment (Dusek and Joseph, 1983). A lot of focus has been placed on the issue of teachers' expectations for their students' capacity to learn (Alderman, 2004) and the self-fulfilling prophesy as a "conceptual

framework for analyzing classroom success progression" in a variety of circumstances. It is recommended that "teacher expectations do always play a vital role in the accomplishment of a student" (Cooper, 2000).

Expectations are the inferences which teachers make about their students' academic performance and their behavior in future, based on the knowledge of teachers about their students. Teachers' expectations can influence the students' performance in both ways e.g. positively or negatively. When teachers show their high expectations to students, then students try their best to meet these expectations and get high achievements. On the contrary, when teachers start to expect low expectations from their students, this will badly affect

the performance of students. Most teachers' expectations are affected by students' IQ level, socioeconomic status, gender, stereotypes etc. Teachers' expectations are more vital for students at secondary level. This is because on the basis of secondary classes students have to select their field of study for their career. That's why it is necessary to find out whether teachers' expectations have any impact on students' achievements, their optimism and aspirations as well.

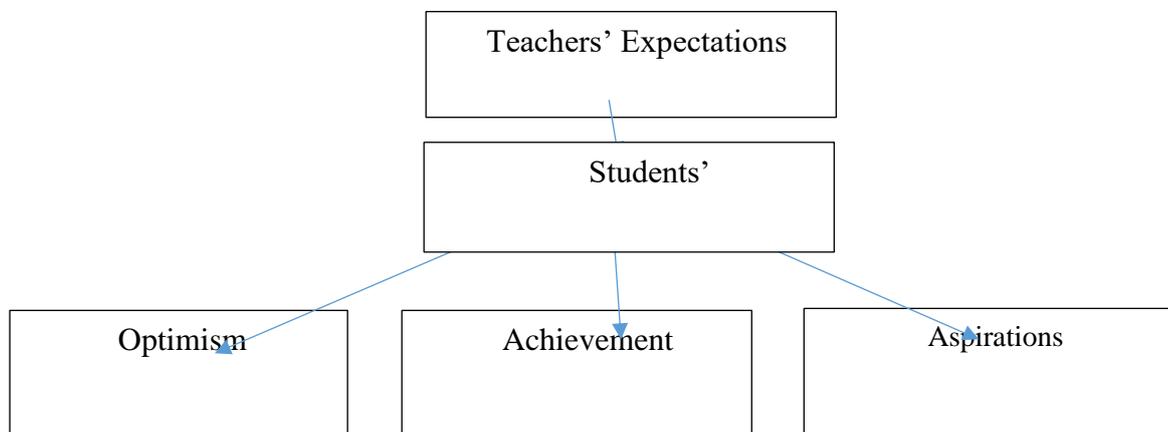
The main theme of the study was to find out the relationship of teacher's expectations with students' optimism, students' academic achievement and students' aspirations.

The research questions of the study were: 1) what is the relationship between teachers' expectations and students' optimism? 2) What is the relationship between teachers' expectations and students' academic achievement? 3) What

is the relationship between teachers' expectations and students' aspirations?

Teachers' expectations towards students always play an important role for their academic achievement, optimism and aspirations. Our study will help the teachers to focus on having expectations that bring positive change in students' behavior and achievement. Moreover, it will also provide a suggestion to teachers that they should reassess their expectations from time to time and must have a great trust and belief in their abilities and performance that will lead to high achievements for their students. This study may also give a recommendation to teachers that they do not criticize on low-achieving students. They must appreciate the low and average students for their determined performance.

Theoretical framework used to examine impact of teachers' expectations on students' achievement, optimism and aspiration at secondary schools is given below:



The findings of Robert Rosenthal and Lenore Jacobson's significant investigation, which came to be known as the Pygmalion Effect, were published in 1966. This study found that a person's expectations may eventually cause them to behave and achieve in ways that correspond to those expectations (Tauber, 1998). Using the Test of General Ability, Rosenthal and Jacobson conducted research at an

elementary school to assess the students' IQ levels. Some students were chosen at random to be academic bloomers after this test. When the students were retested at the conclusion of the school year, the academic bloomers outperformed the non-academic bloomers in terms of IQ test scores. Rosenthal and Jacobson came to the conclusion that students' intellectual

capacities may be influenced by teachers' expectations.

Academic Achievement

A program called TESA (Teacher Expectation Student Achievement) was established to improve teachers' knowledge of the impact that their expectations have on students and to teach them to have high expectations for all of their students. Cantor, Kester, and Miller (2000) define TESA as a staff development program with the objective of reducing the achievement gap for all students.

Academic Optimism

The academic optimism of teachers includes their positive self-, student-, parent-, and teaching-related beliefs. The development and upkeep of an efficient classroom need to immediately correlate with instructors' perceptions of their academic prospects. Academic optimism has been described using theories like social cognitive theory and positive psychology. The goal of positive psychology is to investigate and clarify ideal situations (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Positive psychologists find environments where people thrive and prosper by analyzing positive emotions, traits, and institutions. The social cognitive theory served as the study's second theoretical framework. According to this theory, skill acquisition and behavior control take place within a complicated, multilayered causal system (Bandura, 1997). The term "cognitive" was used by Bandura (1986) to describe a person's ability to encode, self-regulate, and carry out behaviors.

The role that orientations to the future, such as hopes and expectations, play in the process of achieving educational goals has long piqued the interest of social scientists (MacLeod, 2009). They have looked into the tenable hypothesis that ambitions for education have a significant impact on how we behave both now and in

the future, affect actions that are necessary for academic success, and are therefore crucial in deciding educational outcomes.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There have been numerous researches found in the literature regarding the formation of teachers' expectations, their importance and the role these expectations play in students' achievements. This chapter starts with the introduction of expectations as well as definition of teachers' expectations and follows with the review of literature regarding teachers' self-fulfilling prophecy and Pygmalion effect. This chapter also discusses the overview of factors that affect the expectations of teachers and also how teachers communicate expectations in the classroom. The chapter then focuses on academic optimism and theories that support academic optimism e.g. positive psychology theory and social cognitive theory of Bandura (Bandura, 1986).

According to research, teachers' internal standards for students' conduct and academic performance can have a big impact on how well pupils do in school and learn because they can operate as self-fulfilling prophecies (Zabel and Zabel, 1996). The self-fulfilling prophecy idea states that in educational settings, students' conduct and academic achievement will coincide with their professors' "desires, projections, or assumptions" (Boehlert, 2005).

The idea of self-fulfilling prophecy is based on the supposition that "an individual's prognosis of someone else's behavior somehow comes to be accepted" and that these ambitions are conveyed "in very subtle and unexpected ways" (Rosenthal and Jacobson, 2000). According to this theory, teachers create specific expectations for their pupils, which

they then convey to them, and these expectations have an impact on pupils' behavior and performance, either positively or negatively (Rosenthal and Jacobson, 2000).

The following developments are part of the self-fulfilling prophecy process (Brophy, 1985). The first step entails setting expectations based on a few characteristics (e.g. past accomplishment of students, and their socioeconomic base). Second, teachers act differently toward certain students in light of these expectations. For instance, teachers may provide poor performers with less guidance (Levin and Nolan, 1996). Third, pupils pick up teacher preferences. Finally, the behaviour and performance of the students line up with the fundamental instructor expectations.

The formation of teacher expectations is influenced by a number of diverse possible sources as well as certain composite elements. Alvidrez and Weinstein (1999) and Baron, Tom, and Cooper's investigation, as well as Alderman's (2004) valuable overview of the true causes of teachers' goals for their pupils (1985). Initially, a noteworthy source is identified with opinions of a teacher about the capability of a student and their convictions and about intelligence of students. Alderman (2004) clarifies that when instructors think about knowledge as a settled student characteristic, they will probably name the students as "genius or imbecilic and encourage them as indicated by the name". It was argued by Weinstein that "one supporter of teacher judgments of capacity is student performance" (Weinstein, 2002). In addition the other source of expectations of a teacher can be the financial base, sex and ethnicity of a student. In their meta-analysis of the literature on students' expectations, Dusek and Joseph found that factors like socioeconomic class, race, and leadership in the classroom "were related with

expectations of a teacher" for students (Dusek and Joseph, 1983).

Last but not least, test results and a student's past academic achievements could support teachers in their work. In the early years of primary school, a more experienced sibling's performance could influence a teacher's expectations for a younger sibling's performance, concluded research by Dusek and Joseph (1983), according to Rivers (1980). Further, according to Van Matre et al. (2000), teachers had greater expectations for female students than for male students, as well as for students with higher socioeconomic status (SES) than for those with lower SES in terms of evaluation, graduation, and school participation.

The process of setting expectations does not necessarily entail that teachers must tell pupils what is expected of them. Despite this, studies have revealed that various instructors occasionally unintentionally transmit desires to Students may learn disparity expectations via the accompanying training procedures (Gutman,2012). To begin with, a few teachers are affected by the qualities of particular students, label them as "less capable," and use discriminatory practices and behavior. However, this form of teacher inclination can have a negative impact on their self-efficacy observations, or their own assessments of their abilities to create and carry out the lesson plans necessary to provide the designated types of instructional exhibits (Bandura, 1997; Zimmerman, 1999). The second unavoidable result of the self-fulfilling prophecy is that teachers frequently commend low performers for their performance in ordinarily simple work while avoiding responsibility for disappointment.

However, these behaviours may be perceived by students as a sign that their

teachers have little faith in their skills and low expectations for them, which could negatively affect their motivation and self-assurance. Third, the use of interrogative language might make students believe that the teacher has either high or low expectations for them. Different investigative strategies are used by numerous teachers in accordance with their evaluations of their students' skills. They constantly consider the appropriate responses of high achievers, for instance, and wait a little bit longer before speaking to someone (Thompson, 1997). Fourth, seat assignments might convey expectations. Those identified by the teacher as "competent" are typically seated in the front rows, whereas students thought to be sluggish learners are typically seated in the back rows, becoming subsequently "imperceptible" by the teacher.

The pupils who are seen as more fit are frequently given more opportunities to perform honestly on important tasks, have more options in assignments, and are treated with greater respect and value by the teachers, despite the above-mentioned exhibiting of conduct. High achievers can make for enjoyable interactions for teachers as well. They frequently create a more positive socio-emotional environment for smarter pupils, such as by grinning more often in front of high achievers (Chaikin et al, 1974).

Research has shown that kids are "exceptionally all around adjusted" to teacher-prompted activities, which is of extraordinarily great significance. As a result, teachers transfer their expectations to pupils, who may then fulfil these needs (Covington, 1998).

Methodology

The study includes research methodology and procedure e.g. the design of the study, the population, the sample, the sampling technique, the instrument for data

collection. The main objective of the study was to get expressions from teachers related to the impact of their expectations on student's optimism, aspirations and academic achievements.

The study was designed to find out variations in teachers' expectations as means of affecting students' optimism, achievement and aspirations in secondary schools. The nature of the study was quantitative and moreover it was descriptive research. A survey method was used to collect data from teachers to find out the impact of their expectations on students' academic achievements, optimism and aspirations. For this purpose a questionnaire was administered to the SST teachers of secondary schools of district of Sargodha.

Total number of SST teachers in secondary schools of all tehsils of Sargodha district including males and females were 990. Out of these 60% teachers of five tehsils (Sargodha, Bhalwal, Sahiwal, Shahpur, and Silanwali) which were 522 in number were selected as the sample of the study. Convenient sampling technique was used for this study.

Instrumentation

The primary research tool in this study was a questionnaire, which was designed to extract as much pertinent information from the respondents as feasible. After reading the literature, SST instructors in secondary schools in the Sargodha district were given a survey with a five-point rating scale to see how their expectations affected the academic success, aspirations, and optimism of their pupils. There were just closed-ended questions on the questionnaire.

The scale was developed in the form of five point Likert type scale. The questionnaire consisted on 45 items under major four factors i.e. Expectations, Optimism, Achievement and Aspiration.

The questionnaire was presented in both English and Urdu languages.

For the validation of instrument expert's opinions were sought from three experts. These experts were PhD in the subject of Education with sufficient academic and research experience. Some senior SST teachers were also requested to give their opinion for validation of the instrument. All the experts were requested to review the instrument and check the content validity. They also judged the statements and suitability of the items with respect to the local environment. After integrating suggestions of the experts, the instrument was ready for pilot testing.

To ensure the reliability of the developed scale, the researcher carried out the pilot study. Male and female SST teachers of five tehsils of Sargodha district were selected for this purpose. Ten teachers from each tehsil were conveniently administered the research instruments for pilot study. Efforts were made to ensure as many as possible questionnaires sent would be returned. The obtained data from SST teachers were analyzed to find out the reliability coefficient 'Cronbach Alpha' for the reliability of research instruments. The value for the developed scale was 0.80, that's enough for the use of instrument.

Data collection was a difficult stage but vital part of the research study. The data was collected through self-approach from male and female SST teachers. The process of data collection was started in mid of August and completed after two months in mid of October.

During data collection the respondents were ensured the confidentiality of their information. To diminish the number of missing data it was confirmed that respondents had filled all the required demographic variables and the statements.

Table 1 Relationship between Teacher Expectation and Optimism

Teacher Expectation	Optimism	p
.202	.202	.000

n=522

**Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table1 displays that there is a positive relationship between Teacher Expectation and Optimism, ($r=.202$). This table also shows that teachers' more expectations for students tend to make students more optimistic.

Table 2 Relationship between Teacher Expectation and Achievement

Teacher Expectation	Achievement	P
.660	.660	.000

n=522

**Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 2 demonstrates that there is a strong positive relationship between Teacher Expectation and achievement, ($r=.660$). More expectations of teachers for students bring more achievement for students.

Table 3 Relationship between Teacher Expectation and Aspiration

Teacher Expectation	Aspiration	p
.234	.234	.000

n=522

**Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table3 shows that there is a positive relationship between Teacher Expectation and Aspiration, ($r=.234$). More expectations of teachers for students bring more aspiration for students.

Findings and discussion

1. A positive relationship existed between Teacher Expectation and

Optimism as indicated by correlation value ($r=.202$). This also shows that teachers' more expectations for students tend to make students more optimistic.

2. There was a strong positive relationship between Teacher Expectation and Achievement as indicated by the correlation value ($r=.660$). More expectations of teachers for students bring more achievement for students.
3. A positive relationship was there between Teacher Expectation and Aspiration as indicated by the correlation ($r=.234$). This also shows that more teacher expectations tend to bring more aspirations for students.

The findings and conclusions of the study about variations in teachers' expectations as a means of affecting students' optimism, achievement and aspirations at secondary level are as follows:

The findings of the study showed that teacher expectations were strongly related with optimism and students' achievement. This also indicated that teachers' more expectations tend to make students more optimistic and bring more achievements. Teachers' intellect of academic optimism involves the beliefs of teachers about themselves and about their students. Teachers' thinking of academic optimism was directly related to classrooms' care and effectiveness, (Hoy, et. al., 2006). It was described by the researchers that the expectations of teachers according to which they grade their students, cast a significant impact on the academic achievement of the students. (Entwisle and Alexander (1988).

The study indicated that the majority of teachers were interested to expect more from students having high IQ

levels. Rosenthal and Jacobson administered a Test of General Ability (TOGA) to measure the IQ level of students. They concluded that expectations of teachers could influence the intellectual abilities of students and their IQ level (Spitz, 1999).

Present study revealed that the majority of teachers believed in their own performance and their expectations of the students. This also means that teachers had a great trust in their performance that leads to high achievements for students. The effects of expectations formed by teachers on their students are connected to the idea known as self-fulfilling prophecy. This also indicates that once we form an expectation, then we are more likely to act according to these ways that are reliable with the belief and ultimately that persons' activities may cause the expectation to become a reality (Cooper & Good, 1983).

It was concluded that Expectations of teachers' for students are very important for their academic performances. As there was a strong positive relationship between Teachers expectations and students' optimism, teacher's expectation and student's academic achievement and teacher's expectation and student's aspirations.

According to findings and conclusions of the study about variations in teachers' expectations as a means of affecting students' optimism, aspiration and achievement in secondary schools following recommendations were made.

1. It was found that teachers' expectations had a great impact on students' performance. Some teachers were more optimistic towards students' achievements. So their students got high grades/scores and presented better performances. The study recommends that teachers must have high

expectations from their students with respect to their effort but irrespective of their ability.

2. In government institutions mostly teachers expect more from the students having high IQ level. This thing casts a bad effect on the performance of average students. So teachers must have to appreciate the average students for their determined performance.
3. The current study was conducted on SST teachers of public secondary schools, further it is suggested that the same research studies should be conducted on university teachers.

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