

# Rosenthal's Pygmalion Effect: An Historical Overview

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**Abstract – Education is the process of facilitating learning, or the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, morals, belief and habits. The conceptual framework developed by UNESCO's International Commission on Education. Its report identifies four pillars of lifelong learning: "learning to know" (the formal education system), "learning to do"(vocational learning), "learning to live together"(learning for social cohesion) and "learning to be"(learning as personal growth). In the classroom to make effective learning teachers use many approaches, techniques and strategies. A new strategy, the Pygmalion effect was used in the late 70s by the Rosenthal. The Pygmalion effect is where an individual's performance is influenced by others' expectations. It means if expectation is high then the performance is also high while if expectation is low then performance is also low. According to Cooley's looking glass self, it was clear that a person looks at oneself by the others eyes. Rosenthal continuously worked on the Pygmalion effect, in 1973 he gave a four-factor theory that shows how the Pygmalion effect works. This is a cyclic process in which four factors Positive Climate, Positive Feedback, Input and Output. In the beginning of the cycle the teacher shows high expectation in non-verbal way (input factor) and after all intervention (other three factors) the last results are high achievement and motivation of the students, therefore this result of expectation (high motivation and achievement) is called the Pygmalion effect.**

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## INTRODUCTION

Education is the most powerful tool, which we can use to change the world. Education has two meanings, in broad sense education is inculcating positive thinking, moral values, attitude of giving to society, attitude of helping, to being an ideal citizen. In the words of Albert Einstein "Education is what remains after one has forgotten what one has learned in school." In a narrow sense the education means knowledge acquired by formal learning and instruction. It means education is acquiring knowledge by learning. The conceptual framework developed by UNESCO's International Commission on Education Its report identifies four pillars of lifelong learning: "learning to know"(the formal education system), "learning to do"(vocational learning), "learning to live together"(learning for social cohesion) and "learning to be"(learning as personal growth).

Learning is life long process but according to UNESCO definition "learning to know" is formal education system, in which interaction takes place in the classroom between the teacher and the students on the curriculum. To achieve set goals or objectives teachers use many approaches, teaching methodology, strategies during the classroom teaching. To make sure that goals are achieved,

teachers also evaluate students periodically and according to evaluation results they change their teaching style, approaches, strategies and methodologies. During the classroom teaching other factors such as enthusiasm, positive classroom environment, motivation, feedback, reinforcement etc. also play a crucial role in effective learning. Pygmalion effect is also a strategy which is effective in classroom learning. Pygmalion effect is a set of intervention, such as it includes expectation, motivation, some situational activities etc." According to Nidhi Chadha and Bani Narula, 2016 "Pygmalion effect has the ability to boost performance through communication of high expectation."

## HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE OF THE PYGMALION EFFECT

The term Pygmalion originated from the mythology of the Greek. In this mythology story, The Prince who hated women was trying to develop his Pygmalion (expectation) of an ideal woman in the form of sculpture. This sculpture was so beautiful and he named it Galatea. During the process of sculpting, he falls in love with own work. He invoked Venus asking her to make Galatea come to life. Venus fulfilled this request, and the couple survived happily afterward. In the sociological

perspective the concept of Pygmalion is rooted in Thomas' (1928) statement that "If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences". According to Thomas (1928), people respond more actively to the way they observe the situations they are in, and to the meaning they assign to these observations, rather than to the situations themselves. So, we can say that people's behaviour is affected more by their perception or observation rather than situations.

The theory of Pygmalion effect is also supported by sociological theory of 'looking-glass self' given by a famous sociologist Charles Cooley (1902) and introduced in his work Human nature and the Social Order. The looking-glass self is created through the imagination of how one's self might be viewed through the eyes of another individual. This would later be termed "empathic introspection". It means a person during the process of socialization always improves oneself in that direction where one feels this act makes me more socially accepted or gives pride.

The Pygmalion effect is the new strategy in the field of teaching and learning which was first experimented in the classroom by Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968). This classic experiment was executed very smartly by the researcher so this factor is called the Rosenthal effect. The research in the beginning of the session gives a list of boom intellect students and tells the teacher that the students tested with a new technology, which was able to trace the students who were more capable to be successful in the school age but actually this list of students was made by randomization of the students. After the experiment and data interpretation of pre-test post-test the results clearly distinguish between the experimental and control group of students. The experimental group shows high achievement in comparison to the control group. This experiment showed that the teachers' expectancy works as a self-fulfilling prophecy for the students.

After Rosenthal's work K. West (1974) re analyses the data, interpretation process and methodology of the Rosenthal (1968) work. After a rigorous analysis West (1974) identified five elements of expectancy as Information, Behaviour, Expectancy, Achievement and Intelligence. He analyses each element separately, after a deep study West (1974) concluded that there are two classes of linkages. Class -1 linkage has a linear relationship, which persists between two elements only while second class-2 linkage has a complex relationship among more than two elements. According to West's (1974) analysis Rosenthal's (1968) work confined to class-1 linkage only. We can identify many mediating variables between the class-1 linkage, self-concept also a mediating variable (Friedrich et al, 2015). In a qualitative study by evaluates that the students get highly motivated by the expression of "you can do it."

Teachers can use verbal, non-verbal cues of motivation in contact sessions and during phonic conversation (Maria Niari and Evaggetia et al. 2016).

#### FOUR-FACTOR THEORY OF ROSENTHAL

Afterward the classic experiment of the Rosenthal (1968), he again worked on the Pygmalion effect and was able to identify the mechanism behind the whole process and gave a four-factor theory (1973). This four-factor theory includes all efforts of the teacher such as verbal and non-verbal communication, efforts to make a warm relationship with students, presentation techniques to develop motivation and showing high expectation, to make a relaxed, comfortable and enthusiastic environment in the classroom, etc. These factors are Climate, Feedback, Input and Output. These factors work in a cyclic manner.

Rosenthal and Babad (1985) express the Pygmalion effect as "When we expect certain behaviours of others, we are likely to act in ways that make the expected behaviour more likely to occur." To present this expectation in front of students effectively it is necessary to establish an enthusiastic and Positive Climate. During establishment of a positive climate teacher tends to use some non-verbal communication such as nodding, smiling, physical closeness, frequent eye contact between teacher- student, many gestures in friendly style, other positive facial expressions etc. When the students accept these non-verbal cues of expectation, soon after teacher comes to generate next force of Positive Feedback, in which teacher starts use of verbal communication including words and activities such as phrases of encouragement, first person plurals, superlative adjectives, possessive pronouns, use of student's first name etc, simultaneously encourage to achieve high.

Now the teacher uses the third factor Input, in which teacher gives extra assignment, more materials will be taught of greater aptitude and difficulty level because the student is able to take extra load. In this situation students want some help also to complete given tasks, to resolve some concepts, queries and some imagination and hypothetical questions also. This situation is perfect to develop an analytical and critical approach of problem solving in the students. The fourth factor is Output Factor; it includes all results related to evaluation and psychological dispositions such as student's performance in tests, students' high motivation, student developing self-concept about one self to do well etc. This factor also gives feedback to teachers for their efforts and motivates them to make it continue.

So, we can see, in the beginning the first factor teacher shows high expectation and after all intervention in at the last results are high

achievement and motivation of the students. Therefore, the Pygmalion effect is the result (high achievement and motivation of the students) of this high expectation. In fact, after the whole cycle, expectations of teacher and students jointly affect each other (Feldman and Andrew, 1980). According to study of Wang and Lin's (2014) Pygmalion effect makes a strong relationship between teacher and students, increases motivation level and confidence of the students.



## ROLE OF TEACHER

Implementation of the Pygmalion effect in the classroom primarily depends upon the teacher. To implement it, we have to develop the Pygmalion teaching style identified by S. Carmen and V. Mihaela (2013). Patience, confidence and enthusiasm are characters of the Professor/ teacher which prove supportive during an effective teaching (Walder, 1978). According to Budjac Corvette (2007) Sympathy and positive behaviour is an important aspect to develop a good relationship. Style of communication also conveys messages in positive terms. Feedback is another theme which is used to motivate highly for example if students gave confusing answers at that time it is necessary to correct wrong interpretation of the students with minimum brief comments and use the techniques of scaffolding of the Vygotsky theory. Presenting the tasks to students in such a way that they connect it with their previous knowledge. Critical thinking skills depends on students' motivation (will do), ability (can do), and opportunity (Boxall and Purcell, 2007). Collaboration plays crucial role during active participation in the classroom (Budjac Corvette, 2007; Coburn, 2013), Achievement-oriented, accepted, dependable, cooperative and self-controlled students are academically capable and achieve greater vocational success, so teacher have to identify such characters in the students (Lavoie, Joseph et al, 1973). J.L. Alpert (1974) got a positive tilted result towards the bottom reading group after given treatment for Pygmalion effect.

## CONCLUSION

The concept of Pygmalion is rooted in Thomas' (1928) statement that "If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences". Therefore, we can say that, the Pygmalion effect is where an

individual's performance is influenced by others' expectations. It means if expectation is high then the performance is also high while if expectation is low then performance is also low of any individual. Rosenthal's classical experiment was first experiment of Pygmalion effect in the classroom. He again continued their research in this field. Rosenthal explains four factors of Pygmalion effect explain that how an expectation communicated and affected the motivation and achievement level of the students (Rosenthal and Babad, 1985). Pygmalion effect also develops the self-concept of the students (Friedrich et al, 2015). Implementation of Pygmalion effect in different scenario, such as math achievement, English spelling (Wang, Y., & Lin, L., 2014), distance education, bottom reading group (J.L. Alpert, 1974), Pygmalion teaching style (S. Carmen and V. Mihaela, 2013) reconfirm the Rosenthal's view. Teachers can implement this Pygmalion effect in the classroom to develop high motivation and increase achievement level in students. In the review of literature, we can see that maximum studies, was done in abroad, while very few studies in Indian school setting (Nidhi Chadha and Bani Narula, 2016). So there are need to do more research in Indian context to identify the effect of Pygmalion in Indian social culture.

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