

THE ROLE OF SELF-FULFILLING PROPHECIES IN EDUCATION: TEACHER-STUDENT PERCEPTIONS

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ABSTRACT

A positive teacher-student relationship has for long been considered, a developmental asset for children from kindergarten to high school (Birch & Ladd, 1997). Such a relationship is usually characterised by less conflict and increased understanding between both. Students who enjoy a supportive relationship with their teachers, achieve at higher levels and are better accepted by classmates (Ladd et al., 1999). The purpose of the present study was to understand the role of self-fulfilling prophecies in the field of education. Self-fulfilling prophecies are an integral aspect of teacher-student interactions. The participants for the study included ten teachers and ten students from grades 8 to 10. Data was collected using semi-structured, in-depth interviews, to explore how teachers perceived their expectations, predictions, labels, and comments to have self-fulfilling prophecy effects on students and, how students believe it impacts various aspects of their school life. The data obtained was analysed using thematic analysis. The findings of the study indicated that teachers' expectations, predictions, labels, and comments are influenced by several key classroom factors and have a significant impact on the personal, social, psychological, and academic facets of a student's life.

Keywords: Self-fulfilling Prophecies, Teacher-student Relationships, Teacher Expectations.

INTRODUCTION

Teachers are undoubtedly the most significant individuals in the field of education and have the power to influence virtually every aspect of their students' lives. To a large extent, what students usually learn from their finest teachers is not restricted to a subject or curriculum. In fact, teachers who inspire and encourage their students to strive for excellence, facilitate personal growth, and help them see the best in themselves so that they can achieve their maximum potential, are responsible for imparting some of the most important lessons in life.

A positive teacher-student relationship, therefore, facilitates academic growth and helps make the schooling experience easier and enjoyable for students. However, there are several factors that can impair the quality of this relationship, and make it very fragile, thereby

drastically altering the classroom environment. Of special importance are educational self-fulfilling prophecies, a common occurrence in teacher-student interactions; and, which are predominantly manifested through teachers' verbal and nonverbal behaviours in the classroom. For instance, the expectations that teachers develop from their students, and the subsequent predictions they make about their academic achievement when communicated to them, have a significant impact on their overall performance. In essence, the words that teachers use in their feedback and interactions with students when internalised, have the power to create self-fulfilling prophecy effects on them.

Self-fulfilling prophecies are predominantly identified through the Pygmalion effect and the Golem effect. The Pygmalion effect, also commonly known as the Rosenthal

effect, works on the principle that higher expectations lead to enhanced performance. The rationale behind this assumption is that when people have expectations from an individual, it leads him or her to behave in such a manner, that they eventually conform to those expectations. Similarly, when individuals are labelled either positively or negatively, they tend to internalise those labels and eventually, those with positive labels succeed, while individuals with negative labels most often, encounter failure. The Golem effect, on the other hand, represents the phenomenon in which, lower the expectations placed upon an individual, by significant others or the individual him/herself, lower is the resulting performance. Both, the Pygmalion and Golem effects are two forms of self-fulfilling prophecies.

Teacher expectations have always been considered to be a powerful pedagogical tool (Good & Brophy, 2000), playing a crucial role in influencing students' academic outcomes. Most teachers know very little bit about the Pygmalion effect or the notion that one's expectations about an individual can eventually lead that person to behave and achieve in ways that confirm those expectations (Brehm & Kassin, 1996). When teachers form inaccurate opinions and expectations of students, low-performers are more severely affected (Madon et al., 1997). High-achieving students can always fall back on their earlier achievements, in the event of teachers being unsatisfied with their performance; but, low-achievers often rely on teachers primarily for support, and therefore internalize teachers' expectations of them more seriously, which could eventually result in their poor academic performance.

A study by Sadker and Sadker (2005), advocates that, teachers form expectations based on several factors; some of them include, students' previous academic performances, feedback from former teachers, and to some extent informal information obtained through staff room discussions, stereotypes, and students' physical attractiveness too could be an influential factor. In addition, according to Diamond et al. (2004), teachers tend to take into account, factors such as ethnicity and socioeconomic status, while evaluating students'

academic potential. In due course, students upon identifying teachers' high or low expectations of them, will behave in ways that conform to those expectations (Good & Brophy, 2000; Jussim & Harber, 2005). Since, teacher expectations usually have a high degree of accuracy (Brophy, 1983), owing to the keen observations and logical evaluations that teachers make of students' potential for future academic success, the issue of teacher expectancy effects becomes all the more important.

Another significant factor influencing the functioning of self-fulfilling prophecies in the classroom is academic predictions. Teachers quite often make predictive statements about students' academic achievement, based on various parameters that they consider vital in determining academic outcomes. A recent study by Boser et al. (2014), concluded that teachers could predict a student's college success more accurately, than parents or even the students themselves.

Similarly, teachers tend to categorize students at the onset of a new academic year, based on their intellectual abilities, and, subsequently, assign definitive labels to them. The impact of these labels can be understood in terms of the changes it produces on students' subsequent academic behaviour. It is observed that students often internalize the positive or negative labels assigned to them by teachers, and eventually live up to their perceptions of them.

The general lack of awareness on educational self-fulfilling prophecies in India is one of the most important factors to carry out this study. It has been proven that teachers who are educated about the self-fulfilling prophecy, and know how to successfully manipulate it in the classroom, can greatly improve student academic success. In addition, increased instances of labelling in Indian schools is very often a leading cause for the development of several academic and psychological problems among children. Since labelling-based self-fulfilling prophecies are just as powerful as teacher expectations, and usually, work to the detriment of students, there is a strong need to address the issue

through the generation of adequate awareness among the teaching fraternity.

The main objective of the study was to understand the role of self-fulfilling prophecies in the field of education, taking into account perspectives from teachers and students. The first objective was to explore the basis for the formation and usage of teacher expectations, predictions, comments, and labels in the classroom. The second objective was to understand the impact of self-fulfilling prophecies on various aspects of students' school-life.

1. Method

The study employed a phenomenological research paradigm, to explore participants' subjective experiences of the impact of self-fulfilling prophecies in the field of education. Since the fundamental purpose of the study was to obtain an in-depth understanding of self-fulfilling prophecies, by taking into account teachers and students' perspectives and experiences of the impact of the phenomenon on various aspects of students' school life; a qualitative research design was therefore considered most appropriate for the implementation of the study. A purposive sampling method was used to identify the participants for the study, in accordance with the research objectives.

The participants for the study included ten teachers and ten students from different schools in the city of Bengaluru, India. Those teachers involved in teaching high-school students following ICSE, CBSE, and SSLC curriculums with a minimum of 10 years teaching experience were included. Student participants comprised of both boys and girls studying in 8th, 9th, and 10th grades, from ICSE and CBSE curriculums.

2. Data Collection Measures

The materials that were required for the collection of data included an informed consent form, personal data schedule, and an interview schedule. Informed consent forms provided a brief overview of the nature and purpose of the study, as well as details pertaining to participants' rights. Personal data schedules were used to record important demographic details about the participants,

such as name, age, contact details, and other necessary information, and were to be duly filled by the participants prior to the commencement of the interview.

The interview schedule was developed on the basis of the research objectives and a systematic review of existing literature in the field of self-fulfilling prophecies, to determine the nature and extent of information required for the study. Two interview schedules were prepared in keeping with the requirements of the study and its objectives, for teachers and students separately. The questions were grouped under four main lines of inquiry, pertaining to teacher expectations, academic predictions, classroom labelling, and comments and remarks; and probed the impact of the above factors on various aspects of students' school life, such as achievement motivation, self-concept, and peer acceptance. A pilot study was then conducted on two teachers and two students, to ascertain the efficacy of the schedule. Based on the outcome of the preliminary interviews, certain modifications were made to form the final version of the interview schedules. The interviews were scheduled with the participants, once they gave their consent to be a part of the study. The duration of the interviews varied from 30 minutes to 1 hour and more. All the interviews were audio-recorded, for the purpose of transcription and qualitative analysis.

3. Data Analysis

The data obtained from the interviews were analysed using thematic analysis. Considering Braun and Clarke's view that thematic analysis may be particularly suited for research objectives concerned primarily with the content of what people say, (as cited in Sullivan et al., 2012); it can, therefore, be inferred that thematic analysis is highly relevant to the present study, which relies on participants' narration of their perspectives and experiences, as a source of insight into the phenomenon of self-fulfilling prophecies. Following a thorough reading of the interview transcripts, initial codes were generated from the raw data with the help of the analytical framework. After coding the data, information was categorised based on similarity, so as to identify recurrent themes or patterns

emerging from across the data. The basic themes were derived from the textual data, and are only an elementary representation of information. The organizing themes constituted the next level of data analysis and signified key ideas projected by the basic themes. In essence, the organizing themes were developed based on a cluster of basic themes. A group of organizing themes were then used to generate the global themes, which described the analysed data in its entirety and highlighted the impact of self-fulfilling prophecies on various aspects of students' school life.

4. Reliability of Results

The following measures were taken by the researchers to ensure the reliability of results. During the process of interviewing, the participants' responses were summarised, in conclusion, to ensure the researchers' understanding of the narratives were in line with what the participants intended to convey. This step ensured that the original data was not misinterpreted or tampered with. The personal notes and information pertaining to each stage of the research process were systematically maintained in order to draw inferences from existing theories and emerging data. In writing the analysis, the research journal, process notes, audiotapes from the interviews, transcripts, and other important material were combined to provide a systematic and comprehensive review of the obtained data. In addition, a member check was done, wherein the transcribed data was verified with the participants, to ensure the data was relevant to their actual responses. During the process of transcribing, if any part of the audio was unclear, owing to disturbances in the background, or in the event of the respondent using certain unfamiliar terminology, the concerned participant was contacted to clarify what was originally said or meant by him or her.

5. Ethical Considerations

Since the study was conducted on students, informed consent was obtained, from the parents or guardians of the participating students, prior to the commencement of the research. Utmost care was taken to prevent any personal or social harm to the participants. In addition,

they were also informed that they were permitted to withdraw from the study at any time if they wished to do so. The participants' transcripts were specifically coded, to maintain the confidentiality of the data obtained. De-briefing was done after the study.

6. Discussion

The global themes that emerged from the data, help explain the basis for the formation of teacher expectations, predictions, labels, and comments; and, are divided into two organizing themes, determining factors and basis for feedback.

6.1 Determining Factors

Determining factors, which emerged as an organizing theme (shown in Table 1), refers to the basis upon which teachers form expectations, or make academic predictions about students. It focusses on those classroom factors that are responsible for the development of teacher expectations and, that justify their occurrence in teacher-student interactions.

6.1.1 Student Appraisal

The organizing theme student appraisal, shown in Table 1

Global Themes	Organizing Themes	Basic Themes
Determining Factors	Student Appraisal	Observation of: Classroom Behavior Nature of Student Responses Performance in Tests and Exams Individual Abilities
	Basis for Feedback	Positive Comments: Appreciation of Ability and Effort Purpose of Motivation Improving Academic Performance Negative Comments: Deter Unwanted Behaviour Producing Positive Changes in Students Performance not up to Teachers' Expectations

Table 1. Thematic Framework on the basis for the Formation of Teacher Expectations, Predictions, Labels, and Comments

focuses on how teachers evaluate students before they form expectations or make predictions about them. It is common for teachers to develop expectations from their students, since they evaluate their strengths and weaknesses and understand their intellectual capacities, before ascertaining what students can achieve. Very often, this is easily accomplished when they are backed by several years of teaching experience, which gives them a better insight into the relationship between student behaviour and academic achievement. As teacher T5 said,

“Teacher expectations are more important than parental expectations. When I tell them that I expect 60 percent from them, that's because I know they are capable of getting at least 50 percent”. (T5 - UK, personal communication, August 4, 2014).

This response aptly describes the teacher's knowledge of students' abilities, as well as her confidence in her assessment. Teachers also have the tendency to overstate their expectations, when conveying it to students, as they believe, it motivates them; and in the process of trying to achieve it, they score relatively close to what the teacher has expected. Academic predictions made by the teacher hold a lot of significance for students, as it is reflective of how the teacher evaluates their abilities and the belief they appear to have in them. Therefore, its accuracy can be influential in shaping the final academic outcome. Many of the teachers who participated in this study knew their students well, right from the lower classes. They observed that this familiarity helped them in making fairly accurate predictions about student performance. In the words of teacher T5,

“Since we know the child very well, we can predict. Our predictions are quite accurate. And, we are almost correct in that. I think teachers' predictions are more accurate and more important”. (T5 - UK, personal communication).

The above statement indicates that a prolonged period of interaction with students increases the teacher's understanding of their abilities.

The basic themes, signify the various factors that were

instrumental in the formation of expectations and predictions. Most of the teachers in this study stated, that they formed expectations and made predictions about student performance, based on primarily observations of classroom behaviour, nature of student responses, performance in tests and exams, and individual abilities.

The first step in the development of self-fulfilling prophecies begins with observation. Based on observations, teachers form assumptions about students' academic abilities. These assumptions lead to expectations, which in turn are translated into predictions. According to teacher T4,

“As a teacher, based on observation we can estimate who will do well that year in each class. Among them, who will get a distinction, even that also we can expect”. (T4 - AH, personal communication, July 31, 2014).

This statement indicates the extent to which teachers rely on their observations while developing expectations from students. It is also suggestive of the confidence in their judgment and its accuracy.

Among the many things that teachers observe, classroom behaviour is most fundamental. This includes the manner in which students conduct themselves, their interactions with the teacher, their attitude towards academics, and the amount of interest they show towards learning. Students' interest and aptitude in a subject are revealed in how they behave in the classroom, for example, the level of concentration they exhibit, or the value they ascribe to teachers' inputs and feedback, could help teachers determine their level of academic performance. In the words of teacher T9,

“Every day in class, we observe their way of learning and how they accept what they learn, how they respond to our guidance. So, by all that we can estimate whether the student is good and how much he can score, and that's how we can visualize and form expectations”. (T9 - AN, personal communication).

Students who are on the other side of the spectrum, however, would commonly display low levels of interest, lack of concentration, unruly behaviour and inattentiveness in class. Such behaviours do not conform

to what teachers generally expect from their students. Distraction, restlessness, and bad behaviour in the class, are perceived as signs of disinterest and incompetence. These behaviours create a negative impression about the student, leading the teacher to believe that he or she is incapable. As a result of which, they do not expect much from them, in terms of performance. These low expectations are the reason why teachers make negative academic predictions about students.

Another important factor that teachers observe while evaluating students, is the nature of responses given in the classroom. Teachers assess students' responses based on their spontaneity, as it gives them a glimpse of their ability and level of understanding. Students who are more responsive and interactive in class, are perceived to be 'intelligent', while those who are usually quiet and less interactive are considered to be 'dull' or 'slow-learners'. These negative labels impede students' progress, not only academically but personally and socially as well. This finding is in line with previous research findings that conclude that when teachers hold inaccurate views, low-performing students suffer greater impact (Madon et al., 1997). According to teacher T4,

"When we teach, we observe how students respond when we ask questions. So, you can group them into three categories. The first group responds immediately, the second group only after repeatedly asking they will answer, and the last group will never respond. So, based on how well they answer, we will have more expectations from them". (T4 – AH, personal communication, July 31, 2014).

Academic performance is the most significant parameter that teachers consider when forming expectations or making predictions. When student performances are generally good, teachers develop high expectations from them, knowing that they can certainly achieve what is expected of them. However, low scores on tests and exams, over a period of time, will lead to the formation of low teacher expectations and negative predictions. However, teachers do not hold the same expectations for all students, nor do they make

generalized predictions. In the words of teacher T10, "While teaching, we group them based on their abilities. We will expect the good students to do well, and the weak ones to pass with at least 50-55 percent. We know each child's capability, so, we guide them accordingly. There's a difference in expectation because each child's IQ is different". (T10 – PM, personal communication, September 29, 2014).

The above statement brings to light the 'grouping practices' adopted by teachers in some schools, where students are assigned to homogeneous groups based on their abilities. Such practices also increase the disparity between high and low achievers (Dornbusch et al., 1996).

6.1.2 Basis for Feedback

This second organizing theme given in Table 1, includes all the factors that justify teachers' usage of labels, comments, and predictions in interactions with students. The purpose of using positive comments is primarily to appreciate the ability and effort of students. Teachers generally use positive comments when students perform well in tests, exams, assignments, projects, etc. When students respond in class, show interest in learning, or take the effort to acquire more knowledge, teachers feel they deserve appreciation for it. As teacher T9 said,

"I believe they have the ability to do much better. Wherever I have to give merit, I do it and I encourage them. I know they are very talented, so I feel they really deserve to get such comments". (T9 – AN, personal communication, September 15, 2014).

A few teachers in this study said, that they often use positive comments to encourage weak students. They felt, doing so would stimulate their interest in academics and make them more interactive in class. As a matter of fact, positive comments will have a greater impact on average and low-performers, compared to students who usually perform well. It would not only instil confidence in them, but also help develop their self-esteem.

The rationale for teachers developing expectations, using positive comments and labels and making predictions in the classroom, is for the purpose of motivating students. Students from whom teachers have high expectations,

get more help and encouragement, receive regular feedback on their performance, and are usually given more attention. A positive teacher-student relationship, one that is characterized by greater closeness and less conflict, (Hughes et al., 2001; Ladd et al., 1999) is a source of motivation for students to perform better. The purpose of using positive labels, such as 'intelligent', 'smart', or 'brilliant', is to encourage students to do well in their academics and, to stimulate their interest in learning.

The final and most significant factor that emerged from the study on why teachers use appreciative remarks or convey their expectations and predictions to students is for the purpose of improving academic performance. When teachers acknowledge students' efforts, laud their abilities, or say something positive about them, it elicits a positive change in their attitude and behaviour. The change in behaviour includes an increase in motivation, a strong desire to live up to the teacher's expectations and, most importantly an improved academic performance. Similarly, the predictions that teachers make foretelling the academic outcome of students, are equally powerful.

Conversely, the purpose of using negative comments in the classroom is to discourage unwanted behaviour. When students misbehave in class, either by talking continuously or distracting others when the class is in progress, teachers use negative remarks to control such behaviour. Some of the other factors that trigger the usage of negative comments, include low academic performance, unsatisfactory classroom behaviours, such as submission of work that is either of inferior quality or incomplete on a regular basis, decreased interest and interaction in the class, and a laid-back attitude towards academics. Many teachers in this study said that, although they avoid using negative comments as much as possible, they cannot do without it either. Teachers said that they mostly re-phrase their comments in such a way that it does not have an adverse impact on them. As teacher T7 said,

"Instead of harshly telling them on their face that their answer is wrong, we ask them to correct it and, we

encourage them by telling it differently. The way we give the feedback matters much. It should not demotivate them or take them back. Instead, they should re-try and restructure their process of learning. Usually, we make negative comments, in a polished way by rephrasing". (T7 –SB, personal communication, August 17, 2014)

In addition, teachers also use negative comments, labels, and predictions to bring about a positive change in students. The purpose of employing harsh words, according to the participants is to elicit a constructive change in their attitude, behaviour, and performance. The fear of failing in a subject, or having to repeat the same class again, could trigger positive behaviours. In the same way, students who are labelled as 'dull' or 'stupid', would be provoked to change the teachers' perception of them and their abilities, by rising above these labels. So participants said that negative remarks are as powerful as positive ones and can elicit similar outcomes in performance.

6.1.3 Impact on Students

The themes that emerged for the objective, to understand the students' perceptions of the impact of teacher expectations, predictions, labels, and comments are given in Table 2. Although teachers' remarks may have a significant impact on students, it is entirely in their control how they choose to use it, either constructively using words of encouragement or destructively using words of despair (Berg, 2010). The themes that emerged from the data were clustered under cognitive, affective, behavioural changes, and peer acceptance.

The actual impact of teacher expectancies can be rightly understood from students' perspectives, as they are the direct recipients in the above interactions. All the students who were a part of this study stated that high teacher expectations stimulated belief in their abilities. They said that the very fact that teachers expected enhanced academic performance from them, instilled the belief that they had the necessary ability to deliver that performance. It also implied that students believe teachers have a better understanding of their abilities

Global Themes	Organizing Themes	Basic Themes
Impact on Students	Cognitive Changes	Perception of abilities
		Effect on self-concept
		Positive attitude
		Interest in learning
	Affective Changes	Impact on motivation
		Positive comments create feelings of happiness
		Negative comments lead to sadness and depression
		Individual and gender difference in reactions
	Behavioural Changes	Classroom behavior
		Aversion towards the teacher and subject
		Academic performance
	Peer Acceptance	Role of teachers
		Relationship with classmates
Formation of peer groups		
Avoidance and neglect		
Discrimination based on intellectual superiority		

Table 2. Thematic Framework on Students' Perceptions of the Impact of Teachers' Expectations, Predictions, Labels, and Comments on Students

than themselves. According to student S9,

"When teachers have expectations from me, then I believe in myself that I can do great things and, I am capable of doing those things". (S9 – VN, personal communication).

As mentioned above, teacher expectations are not only a source of confidence that one can achieve anything, but it also instils the belief of further achievement in students.

Negative expectations are equally powerful in influencing students' perceptions of their abilities. Many students in this study felt that low expectations from their teachers conveyed the impression that their inadequacies exceeded their capabilities. As a result, they began doubting their abilities, believing the teachers' opinion about them. Unfortunately, such expectations lay the ground for the fulfilment of a self-fulfilling prophecy. As student S5 said,

"It hurts a lot when they don't have high expectations from us that we can do it, and that each child has the ability to do it. And, it shows that they have not understood me even after all these years, they don't believe in us or trust us. It hurts and I feel that I am not fit for anything". (S5 – PM, personal communication, August 25, 2014).

The teachers' role is portrayed here as someone who moulds and influences students' lives. However, several students said that although they would react in a similar manner, they would also sometimes take it up as a challenge and try to prove the teachers' expectations of them wrong. They said it instigated them to work even harder and score well so that they could show the teacher what they are capable of. As student S3 said,

"But, when they don't expect much, I try to show her that I am capable, so I try to prove myself. At that moment, I feel that I know what I am capable of, so my aim is to get 10 CGPA because I know my capabilities. So, if the teacher doesn't know my capability, then I have to show her my capabilities". (S3 – PS, personal communication, August 19, 2014).

The above statement highlights that self-belief is an important variable in the influence of low expectations on students. In order to counteract low expectations, students strive to prove themselves to their teachers. As student S6 said,

"Their expectations are for them and my expectations are for me, so it doesn't affect me". (S6 – VN, personal communication, August 27, 2014).

In general, it was seen that positive feedback creates more confidence, instils a feeling of self-worth and brings about a positive attitude in students. These expressions are fundamental in building students' self-esteem and their identity.

Similarly, many students said that when they realized the teacher had high expectations from them, they showed increased interest in the subject, and began taking more effort. They affirmed that when teachers give them such positive feedback, there was an increase in their motivation level and they felt the need to score higher so that they could live up to the teacher's expectations. As

student S7 said,

"I think all my teachers have told me that if I work more hard, I can do better. That's when you pay more attention to the subject, and you learn more because she's motivating you". (S7 – SR, personal communication, September 8, 2014).

In contrast, when teachers have low expectations for their students, it leads to a decreased interest in learning. Many students said that they experienced a loss of interest in academics after they realized the teacher did not expect much from them. They also stated that they developed hatred towards the teacher and the subject. Although teachers' low expectations have an adverse effect on students' motivation to achieve, there are certain instances where some students remain unaffected by such feedback and, instead try to overcome it.

Teachers' feedback and interactions with students have a significant impact on their relationship with classmates. Students whose relationships with teachers are characterized by greater closeness and less conflict are better accepted by classmates (Hughes et al., 2001; Ladd et al., 1999). When teachers make positive comments about students' abilities and performance or, have high expectations of them, classmates tend to accept them more easily into their peer groups. Students observed that there was a difference in the way they were treated by their peers, following the teacher's positive feedback. As student S5 said,

"When the teachers tell positive things, classmates think that, 'There is something positive in her, something is good, she has the ability to do', so, they come and join us". (S5 – PM, personal communication, August 25, 2014).

On the contrary, when teachers negatively label students or behave indifferently with them, classmates tend to avoid them. They assume that such students are incapable and teachers dislike them. Therefore, teachers' perceptions about a student have a direct impact on students' views as well. As student S8 said,

"If a teacher herself tells a student, she's 'dull and she can't do anything in life', I think, most of them will think twice to

talk to her. So, when they feel that the teacher herself has no opinion about her, they think, "Why should we be close to her?" If the teacher doesn't like you, then others will think, "The teacher herself does not like her, so she must be bad somehow". (S8 – SB, personal communication, December 23, 2014).

Students also said that classmates generally avoid students who have been labelled negatively and may not be too close to them and exclude him or her in class activities. As student S7 said,

"Because, you are bad at studies and the teacher calls you that way, they will say, 'you don't even know this, you are so bad at studies, and how can you do all this with us, you are not capable of all that', and then, that's how they just leave you out like that. So, our academic performance plays a major role in making friends". (S7 – SR, personal communication, September 8, 2014).

Conclusion

In conclusion, self-fulfilling prophecies have a significant role in the academic domain. The findings of this research support previous studies, that high teacher expectations produce high student achievement and low expectations produce low achievement (Capel, Leask, & Turner, 1999). In addition, it emphasizes the fact that teachers' predictions, labels, and comments are equally powerful in creating self-fulfilling prophecy effects on students. It was found that teachers' feedback and interactions, prominently influenced students' perceptions of themselves, their mood and affect, classroom behaviour, social interactions, academic performance, and quality of peer relationships. Hence, it can be rightly said that teachers exercise a significant amount of power over their students, academically, psychologically, and socially.

Implications and Suggestions for Future Research

The inferences made from this study can be extensively applied in the field of education, to practice and promote the positive impact of the Pygmalion effect, a form of self-fulfilling prophecies which functions on the underlying principle, that greater the expectations, greater is the resulting performance. Schools, colleges,

and educational programmes can make use of the results obtained from this study, to improve the quality of schooling and bring about a positive impact on students' personal and academic well-being.

Since the present study examined only the verbal aspects, upcoming research can focus on teachers' classroom behaviour as a significant variable influencing the development of self-fulfilling prophecies. Teacher differential behaviour is an important aspect that needs to be researched upon, to ascertain how teachers indirectly convey their expectations to students through their behaviour in the classroom. Upcoming studies can take into consideration factors, such as the extent of teacher-student interactions, the role of parental expectancies, and students' academic expectations as important variables influencing the degree of impact of self-fulfilling prophecies.

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