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Instructor Characteristics and Student Achievement: Do Student Perceptions of Teacher Attributes Impact Their Success?

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INSTRUCTOR CHARACTERISTICS AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT:

DO STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHER ATTRIBUTES IMPACT THEIR SUCCESS?

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Abstract

This paper addresses the following question: How does student perception of teacher appearance, age, and community connection affect student achievement in the classroom? Literature from ERIC, EBSCO, Google Scholar, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), Sage Journals, and the Gutman Library at the Harvard Graduate School of Education was reviewed for international academic studies published between 1960-2021. A variety of qualitative and quantitative research was considered from elementary, secondary, and post-secondary institutions. The research overwhelmingly concludes that teacher appearance and age do not directly translate to greater classroom effectiveness on their own but that relational teaching practices, community building, and teacher reputation do have a large impact on classroom success.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Historical Context

Most people can reflect on their days in high school and remember teachers that impacted them. One of the first exclamations one might make about a past teacher is, “Oh, I loved them!” or “They were awful!” People may not always remember what they taught or how they taught, but they can vividly recall the environment the teacher created in the classroom. People can remember whether they trusted, respected, and built a relationship with their teacher.

What factors contribute to the reputation in our minds of teachers? Is it appearance? If so, is it attractiveness? Is it because they wear trendy clothing or professional clothing? Or, if the judgment is not related to appearance, is it based on age? Could it be the teacher’s use of relevant pop culture? Is it their ability to connect with the student body beyond the classroom? Is it other community connections like churches, common stores, and family connections like many small-town schools experience that make the difference?

Teachers spend a significant amount of time studying and testing teaching strategies, creating interventions, planning assessment techniques, scaffolding resources, and designing engaging activities. These are all effective tools for student achievement. Additionally, the administration invests significant time into hiring practices and personal development strategies to aid teachers toward greater effectiveness. But are they ignoring some of the strongest forces in the classroom?

Imagine if teachers could be told that dressing professionally, referencing student pop culture, or coaching a school sport could directly impact the academic progress of their students. Small, tangible changes like this could yield significant results in student learning. Imagine if administrators could be given a demographic profile of characteristics to search for in the hiring process of a teacher that would be most effective in their classroom. Teachers could then be matched to districts more efficiently, teacher turnover rates could decrease, and student progress would be prioritized.

While research has been done about student's perceptions of teacher effectiveness based on appearance, the missing connection is the tangible results pointing to a conclusion that attractive teachers yield higher results in the classroom. Some assume that younger teachers often have increased engagement in the classroom, and some believe that older teachers with more teaching experience yield higher student success rates. Some assume that students show increased motivation for popular teachers, but it is not conclusively known that popular teachers yield higher student outcomes. Much research needs to be done to correlate student outcomes with these perceptions of teacher popularity- in appearance, age, and connection.

In contrast, relational teaching methods are becoming more prevalent in several areas of academia. Administrators recognize the impact that teacher-student relationships have on both behavior management and academic progress, and they are implementing school-wide models that rely on teachers investing in these relationships. Teachers are also encouraged to further consider their popularity among the student body, using tools like ratemyprofessors.com at the undergraduate and graduate levels. It is not realistic to expect teachers to develop deep

connections with every single student, especially secondary teachers who teach upwards of 100-180 students per day. But if teachers knew how effective these strategies are toward raising students' grades, there is no reason to believe they would not implement them.

Legal Foundation

One goal of this literature review is to define the characteristics of an effective teacher and to assist administrators at schools in their hiring. However, it must be acknowledged that all American employees are protected from explicit bias in hiring practices through antidiscrimination laws. Explicit bias is a traditional conceptualization of bias, in which people are aware of prejudices and attitudes toward certain groups and knowingly assign positive or negative preferences. Antidiscrimination law can be described as follows:

> Antidiscrimination law seeks to neutralize widespread forms of prejudice that pervasively disadvantage persons based upon inaccurate judgments about their worth or capacities. The unfairness of prejudice is particularly manifest when it is directed against immutable traits, like race or sex. But prejudice can be unfair even if it is directed against traits that are within the control of a person. (Post, 2000, p.8)

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits employers from discriminating against applicants and employees on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, and national origin. This literature review is in no way suggesting that school administration use explicit bias or violate antidiscrimination laws in their hiring practices in any way.

Previous to Title VII being passed in 1964, the only law clearly dismantling discrimination in the workplace was The Equal Pay Act of 1963. It was clear this law alone was not enough on its own and it is notable that our country has come a long way in protecting employees from discrimination. We have learned that simple judgements about a person's worth in the economy cannot be made by physical characteristics, pliable or not.

> 'In passing Title VII,' the Court has said, 'Congress made the simple but momentous announcement that sex, race, religion, and national origin are not relevant to the selection, evaluation, or compensation of employees.' The point of rendering such factors irrelevant is to 'target' and eliminate 'stubborn but irrational prejudice.' In the words of one federal district court: 'In our society we too often form opinions of people on the basis of skin color, religion, national origin, and other superficial features. That tendency to stereotype people is at the root of some of the social ills that afflict the country, and in adopting the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Congress intended to attack these stereotyped characterizations so that people would be judged by their intrinsic worth.' (Post, 2000, p. 10)

Essentially, antidiscrimination law requires employers to disregard these attributes of an employee because they may lead to irrational or prejudiced judgements of ability. While the federal law specifically prohibits discrimination against race, color, religion, sex, and national origin some states have added additional considerations such as age, creed, ancestry, disability, marital status, pregnancy, military service of affiliation, bankruptcy or bad debts, citizenship status, genetic information, gender, sexual orientation, height, weight, or any physical

characteristic. While these laws require employers to be blind to such attributes, the law is not entirely clear what that blind behavior entails. “Blindness renders forbidden characteristics invisible; it requires employers to base their judgments instead upon the deeper and more fundamental ground of ‘individual merit’ or ‘intrinsic worth’,” (Post, 2000, p. 11). The sole exception to this is in cases of affirmative action. The sensitive nature of explicit bias and discrimination in today’s political climate cannot be ignored and it is not the intention of this literature review to encourage illegal or unethical behavior.

While the laws mentioned protect employees from explicit bias, it must be acknowledged that workplaces use implicit bias in their hiring and placement. That is, using a preference for or attitude toward a person or group of people that is unintentional and sometimes rooted in past experiences. It could be said that schools may use implicit biases when placing students with certain teachers. While this literature review suggests demographic profiles that are preferable when analyzing successful teachers, it is critical to note that there is no suggestion that teachers with certain characteristics shouldn’t be hired. The information given in this literature review should simply assist administrators in finding the best placement for a teacher within their district, while also helping teachers understand the impact of their decision on malleable characteristics such as choice of dress, relationship building, and community connection.

While relational teaching can be impactful, we cannot ignore factors that get in the way of teachers and students connecting. Research has been done that analyzes how a teacher's appearance (including attractiveness and dress code), age, gender, and community involvement

can influence the ability for students and teachers to build impactful relationships. Yet, most of the previous research analyzes student's perceptions of a teacher and not necessarily the true impact of the teacher. For example, researchers will have students view a teacher dressed in a suit and have students rate how they perceive that teacher would be in the classroom, rather than analyzing how that teacher actually performs in the classroom, as measured through student grades, student surveys, or administrator review. Much research needs to be done to correlate these factors with proven student achievement.

Definition of Terms

For this literature review, *teacher training* is defined as the education required to become a teacher in the local community (Armstrong, 2015). *Effective teacher* is defined as one from whom students thought they learned the most (Atamain, 1993) and/or one from whom students report the largest positive change in classroom achievement, commonly measured by grades. *Teacher characteristics* are defined as both earned and demographic characteristics such as age, appearance, attractiveness, race, training, and IQ (Armstrong, 2015), and *student performance* is defined as classroom achievement most commonly measured by grades (Armstrong, 2015). *Classroom immediacy* is defined as the different ways that teachers can lessen the emotional distance between themselves and their students (Thompson, 2013). *Gender* is defined by the category assigned at birth, largely due to the age of the research, with most of the studies performed in this area coming from the late 1990's and using the common terminology of the time. Readers should be aware that gender is defined differently in 2021.

Lastly, *community connection* is defined as the relationship between instructors and students above and beyond academic performance.

Additional definitions to consider include *business casual* dress defined as clothes considered less formal than a business suit. *Casual dress* is defined as garments that are slightly less dressy than standard sportswear items and slightly more dressy than standard activewear items. Finally, *professional dress* is defined as two, three, or more items of apparel in matching or contrasting fabric designed to be together (Chatelain, 2015). All studies in this review that include an examination of teacher attire follow relatively similar definitions of the categories above.

Guiding Questions

The topics at hand are challenging to narrow down and even more challenging to research, as tangible, data-driven results are difficult to find. Throughout the process of this literature review, two goals became clear, to give teachers tangible ways they can increase student performance (i.e., wear a suit or coach a sport), and to guide administrators toward making efficient hiring decisions for the most effective teachers. This paper will address the following question: How does student perception of teacher appearance, age, and community connection affect student achievement in the classroom? Subsequently, additional questions to be addressed include, Do teacher-student relationships affect classroom achievement? Does teacher reputation have an impact on student achievement or course enrollment? Do students care if their teachers are effective? Do teachers who dress up for class have students with higher grades than teachers who dress casually? Do older, experienced teachers have students

with higher classroom scores? Do teachers who build relationships with students outside of the classroom end up having those students score higher academically?

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Search Procedures and Parameters

Chapter II reviews the published literature on teacher characteristics that lead to student success. It examines the direct correlations between the multiple facets of a successful teacher, and how they use those characteristics to guide students toward higher achievement. This information should help in determining optimal teachers to hire for successful classrooms. To locate the literature for this thesis, searches of ERIC, EBSCO, and Google Scholar were conducted for publications. These searches were narrowed using the following keywords: "teacher characteristics," "teacher appearance," "teacher age," "community teaching," "relational teaching," and "teacher popularity." The structure of this chapter is to review relational teaching models and the associated applications, followed by the literature on teacher characteristics in three sections in this order: teacher appearance, teacher age, and community connection.

Relational Teaching

The benefits of a relational teaching model can be found in student achievement of learning targets, student engagement, and student retention. Many districts are prioritizing relational teaching models as their main focus for hiring and for teacher development. Experience in relational teaching can be a significant point of conversation during teaching interviews. When there are disciplinary issues with students, teachers are often asked to first reflect on their relationship-building efforts before assigning detention or any tangible consequences. This review aims to correlate teacher reputation and student achievement, and

one of the facets to be explored is the implementation of relational teaching methods, as teachers who actively build relationships with their students significantly impact their reputation among those students.

Scales et al. (2020) recently performed a study examining how a broader operationalizing of student–teacher relationships beyond care and challenge affects middle-school students' motivation, sense of belonging and school climate, and grade point average (GPA) over a school year. The hypothesis investigated was: "Student–teacher developmental relationships will predict middle-school students' academic motivation, both concurrently and longitudinally, with fall relationship levels predicting spring motivation" (Scales et al., 2020, p. 652). Five hundred and thirty-four middle school students in sixth, seventh, and eighth grade who attend a large metropolitan suburban middle school in the Midwest participated in the study. The school was not a Title I school, but it is notable that 33% of students qualified for free and reduced price meals (FRP). Participants completed an online survey comprising 81 questions in October 2016. Students then completed the survey using the same procedure in late May 2017 of that same academic year. These two survey administrations are referred to as Waves 1 and 2, respectively. The researchers assessed the student–teacher relationships using twenty items tapping how common it was for students to experience features of high relational quality reflecting expressions of care, provisions of support, challenging students to grow, sharing of power, and expanding their possibilities. Each item was scored on a five-point rating scale from Never to Very Often, or for some items, from Not at All Like My Teachers to Very Much Like My Teachers. The questions were consistent over the two waves of the study. The path model results show that students with stronger developmental

relationships with their teachers had significantly better belonging, school climate, and motivation, at both the beginning and end of the school year, than students with worse developmental relationships. It was also shown that at the beginning of the year student–teacher developmental relationships predicted students' perceptions of belonging and school climate, but academic motivation was not a predictor. At the end of the year, both student–teacher developmental relationships and academic motivation predicted perceptions of belonging, but student–teacher developmental relationships were a much stronger predictor at both time points. Additionally, the path model results for GPA show that students with stronger developmental relationships with their teachers had significantly better motivation and GPA, at both the beginning and end of the school year, than students with worse developmental relationships. Across the school year, students reported academic motivation was a good predictor of their GPA. However, student –teacher relationships did not have significant direct effects on GPA across the academic year. The impact of relationships on GPA was observed indirectly through the strong positive association of relationships with academic motivation. As expected, the strongest predictor of GPA at the end of the year was the previous GPA and not the student-teacher relationship as predicted (Scales et al., 2020). These results are significant because they prove that while positive and intentional student-teacher relationships lead to better belonging, school climate, and motivation, they do not necessarily correlate to higher GPA. It could be inferred that because the positive relationships lead to increased motivation which leads to higher GPA, but it is notable that this is not a direct correlation.

Also, recently, Lovett (2020) asked Chinese undergraduate students their opinion on what the characteristics of an effective or good English teacher are. The sample consisted of 205

first-year undergraduate students from the disciplines of computing, engineering management, civil engineering and building intelligence. Three variables used in the collection, analysis and interpretation of the data, were: age, gender, and field of study. Data was collected during orientation classes in November of 2017. The qualitative study was an open-ended survey, allowing students to share their true, uninfluenced thoughts. Respondents were asked to be candid when responding to the research questions, therefore resulting in plausible first-hand accounts. Then, Ricoeur's (1976) interpretation theory was used to analyze the participants' written responses to the research questions: "In your opinion what are the characteristics of an effective or good English teacher? Is the level of a teacher's competency affected by their gender (Yes/No)? Explain the reasons for your answer?" Participant responses were informed by each individual's personal experience. The results of the analysis indicate that the most important characteristics for efficacy were in order from least to greatest: being strict, being friendly, experience, patience, and humor (Lovett, 2020). While the sample is geographically and demographically limited, this data is significant because it outlines the most effective characteristics of relational teachers in a tangible way. This is not proven by data (i.e., student grades), but it is backed by student reflection.

In a similar study (Korte et al., 2013), 381 graduate and undergraduate students were given the opportunity to participate in a research study by completing a brief, two-page questionnaire, the purpose of which was to assess student perceptions of the characteristics and traits that contribute to good teaching. They were shown 35 different characteristics and asked to what degree each trait contributed to good teaching. The surprising results indicated that instructor expertise in the content/subject matter, strong communication skills, and being

prepared for class were identified as the traits perceived by students as most important to good teaching. Students, in general, believe that an instructor's rank or title, the instructor's manner of dress, and the instructor's research record contribute the least to teaching effectiveness (Korte et al., 2013). These results seem to conflict with other studies because they emphasize professional characteristics rather than relational characteristics. Considering that this sample is much older and farther along in their field of study, it is understandable that the priorities of teacher characteristics change.

While relational teaching is a current trend in the industry, it is important to acknowledge some significant issues. A study performed at a large, urban, private Midwestern university explored how students' perceptions of relational teaching messages (i.e., rapport, confirmation, and affinity-seeking) correlated with student perceptions of classroom justice (i.e., distributive, procedural, and interactional) (Young et al., 2013). One hundred twenty-four student participants were recruited from communication classes at the university. Forty-four men and 67 women participated (three declined to report their sex) and the average participant age was 22.39 years old. Students were given a survey and asked to report on the instructor they had in class prior to completing it. Participants reported on 64 male and 58 female instructors (two declined to report instructor sex), representing 31 subject areas. Then, perceptions of distributive classroom justice were assessed on 12 Likert-type items (e.g., ''Your grade on the last exam compared to other student's grade on the exam'',) using response options ranging from one (extremely unfair) to five (extremely fair). Procedural justice was assessed on 15 Likert-type items (e.g., ''Course attendance policies,''). Interactional justice was assessed with Chory's (2007) seven-item, Likert-type instrument (e.g., ''The way the instructor

treats students''). To analyze rapport, Frisby and Martin's (2010) 11-item adaptation of Gremler and Gwinner's (2000) scale was used. This Likert-type scale asked participants to respond from one (strongly disagree) to seven (strongly agree) on enjoyable interaction (containing six items e.g., ''My instructor relates well to me'') and personal connection between students and instructors (containing five items e.g., ''I have a close relationship with my instructor''). Perceived instructor confirmation was measured using the Teacher Confirmation Scale (TCS; Ellis, 2000, 2004). This 16-item scale uses a five-point Likert-type response format ranging from zero (strongly disagree) to four (strongly agree). Participants reported their agreement on three dimensions of confirming behaviors instructors may use in the classroom. The first dimension included five items about how instructors responded to questions (e.g., ''The instructor took time to answer student questions fully''). The second dimension included six items about demonstrating interest in students and their learning (e.g., ''The instructor made an effort to get to know students''). The third dimension included five items about instructor teaching style (e.g., ''The instructor used an interactive teaching style). Instructional affinity-seeking (IAS) was measured by Frymier et al. 's (1995) abbreviated version of Bell and Daly's (1984) affinity-seeking typology. In developing the 1995 scale, the twelve affinity-seeking strategies identified by Frymier (1994) served as the most relevant to the classroom and are the basis for their IAS scale (e.g., altruism, assume equality, comfortable self, concede control, conversational rule-keeping, dynamism, elicit others' self-disclosure, facilitate enjoyment, listening, nonverbal immediacy, optimism, and sensitivity). The IAS scale comprises 37 Likert-type items ranging from one (strongly disagree) to six (strongly agree), each of which reflects a single affinity-seeking behavior.

A general pattern emerged in the data indicating that engaging in enjoyable interactions with students is important for creating positive perceptions of justice, and effectively answering student questions is also important to consider for creating fair perceptions of classroom procedures and interpersonal interactions between the student and instructor. These results extend the literature on relational teaching messages and classroom justice and provide support for the potential benefits of relational teaching (Young et al., 2013). This is important to consider because oftentimes, students think that teachers play "favorites" or recognize how teachers interact differently with different students. While the teacher is simply implementing relational teaching strategies, students can become frustrated and disengage from the classroom.

While it is proven that relational teaching methods have a positive effect on student achievement, how are they associated with teacher satisfaction? Do satisfied teachers get better results in the classroom? Graham et al. (1992) examined to what extent the relational teaching approach (RTA) is associated with teacher satisfaction. The RTA is characterized in this study by interpersonal competence, immediacy, and use of humor. Participants were 211 college professors (161 males and 50 females) currently teaching at a large midwestern university. The pool of respondents included a balanced range of new through veteran associate professors at the university. The participants represented teaching experience in all of the academic colleges at the university. Surveys were sent to the participants during the third week of classes, and they were asked to report their perceptions of their behavior in the classroom. The survey included: a competence measure, an immediacy scale, and a humor index. The results indicated that a satisfying teaching experience could be attained by an ongoing

interpersonal relationship between teacher and student (Graham et al., 1992). These results are significant because they prove that teachers who teach relationally also are more satisfied with their jobs, meaning this method is good for both teachers and students.

Teacher Reputation

All teachers are affected by students' opinions about their ability to teach and relate to students. Arguably, elective teachers face the greatest challenge- their job security is largely founded on student enrollment and achievement, and if students are not choosing to take their courses to fill their elective blocks, the teachers' longevity in the district is at risk. Even though elective course content is valuable, this force of popularity will keep students from experiencing it. How do educators convince students that taking these courses is beneficial to them? Teachers can advertise the course content all they want, but ultimately, students will sign up to be taught by a teacher they "like." Student rumors about teacher reputation are powerful when it comes to enrollment. How can teachers influence their own popularity to result in higher course enrollment and eventually, higher student success and retention?

Fauth et al. (2018) attempted to connect teacher popularity and student outcomes in a primary school by investigating the question, "What are the relationships between teacher popularity and (a) teacher enthusiasm, constructivist beliefs, and self-efficacy, (b) students' gender and grades, and (c) the basic dimensions of teaching quality as rated by external observers?" (Fauth et al., 2018). The analysis drew on longitudinal data from 1,070 third-grade students and their 54 science teachers. Different sources of data were used: student surveys and standardized achievement tests, teacher self-report surveys, and standardized video observations in the classroom. Teacher popularity was measured with a three-item scale based

on Wagner, 2008; “I like my teacher very much”, “My teacher is great”, and “I am fond of my teacher”; Cronbach’s alpha=.92, ICC=.15). These items were formulated as simply as possible in order to be understandable for third grade students. The teachers also provided students’ midterm grades. The multilevel regression analyses revealed that teacher popularity was associated with teachers’ enthusiasm and self-efficacy. Thus, for student achievement, teacher popularity was relevant, and for student interest, students’ individual liking of the teacher was relevant as well (Fauth et al., 2018). It makes sense that teachers who report feeling enthusiastic about teaching are more popular with students.

Teacher popularity and teaching effectiveness are terms that, although intrinsically different, are often used interchangeably in praise of "good" instructors. However, it is teaching effectiveness rather than teacher popularity that should play an important role in faculty evaluation involving promotion, tenure, and merit raise decisions (Atamian & Ganguli, 1993). This study was performed to investigate whether students perceive any difference between attributes of their favorite versus effective teachers. Two hundred forty sophomore students enrolled in an introductory financial accounting course were administered a questionnaire at the end of a departmental exam. The two versions of the instrument differed in that Form A dealt with teaching effectiveness, and Form B addressed instructor popularity, as perceived by students. Form A instructed student respondents to recall the most effective instructor they had had and list four of the instructor's attributes that they perceived to contribute to the effectiveness of that teacher. The respondents were then asked to indicate whether that same instructor also was their favorite. Next, the students were asked to recall the least effective instructor they had had and to list four of that instructor's characteristics that they thought

contributed to his or her lack of effectiveness. Finally, the respondents were asked to indicate whether that instructor also was their least favorite. Form B contrasted with Form A only in that it concerned the students' most favorite instructors rather than their most effective instructors. To create a common understanding of the terms *most effective teacher* and *most favorite teacher* among respondents, the survey instrument provided a simple definition for each. The favorite teacher was portrayed as one who was liked by the respondent and was popular with students. Because the survey dealt with student perceptions, instead of providing concrete measures of teaching effectiveness within the definition, they defined an effective teacher as one from whom students thought they learned the most. Roughly equal proportions of male and female students (84.4% versus 84.3%) perceived their most effective instructor to be their favorite. Overall, 84.4% of the students surveyed favored their most effective instructors. In other words, only 15.6% of both males and females considered their most effective instructor not to be their favorite. This result tends to indicate that students, in general, like those instructors who are effective in the classroom (Atamian & Ganguli, 1993). These results are significant because they show that teachers who are most effective at teaching can become the most popular and that students value effective teachers.

Is there a profile for a perfectly effective teacher? If teacher characteristics are malleable, determining which teacher characteristics have the greatest impact on student achievement could also inform the design of teacher training programs (Dobbie, 2011). Dobbie (2011) tested to see if the information used for the Teach For America (TFA) corps member selection criteria could predict teachers' future impacts on student achievement. Data from the New York City Department of Education was matched to admissions data from TFA, consisting of

admissions files and placement information for the 2007 through 2009 application cohorts. The typical data for an applicant includes their name, undergraduate institution, grade point average, major, admissions decision, placement information, and measures of achievement, perseverance, critical thinking, organizational ability, motivational ability, respect for others, and commitment to the TFA mission. The sample of students consisted of those in third through eighth grade assigned to a first year TFA teacher, resulting in a sample size of 384 TFA teachers, 279 of whom teach math and 310 who teach English. Student achievement was then measured through an achievement test score and analyzed with a vector of student level controls including gender, race, eligibility for free or reduced price lunch and previous test scores as well as a vector of teacher characteristics including gender, race, measures of teacher achievement, perseverance, critical thinking ability, organizational ability, motivational ability, respect for others, and commitment to the TFA mission.

The results of this analysis show a clear pattern of teacher characteristics that could help predict significant variation in teacher effectiveness, though it should be taken cautiously with consideration to the small and location-specific sample size. A teacher's prior achievement, leadership, and perseverance are associated with gains in math in a teacher's first year, and leadership experience and commitment to the TFA mission are associated with teacher gains in English (Dobbie, 2011). These results are significant because they could lead to enormous implications for hiring and retaining impactful teachers.

Similarly, Francisco (2020) aimed to evaluate the effects of teachers' demographic characteristics on the English academic performance of high school students in the Philippines. Specifically, the researcher examined the teacher characteristics of age, gender, academic

qualifications, length of service, civil status, academic rank, performance rating, medium of instruction, seminars and training attended, research presented, articles published, and books published and compared them to the status of the academic performance of high school students in English. Purposive sampling was used to select 37 English teachers and 400 students from the Schools Division Office of Bulacan, EDDIS II, District of Plaridel during the 2018-19 school year. The primary data gathering tools used in the study were a researcher-made survey on determining teachers' personal and professional demographic characteristics and assessment data of the student respondents' level of performance in English. Francisco used frequency and percentage to describe and analyze all of the variables- the personal and professional characteristics of the respondents as well as the academic performance of students in the English subject. A regression analysis was used to determine the effects of personal and professional demographic characteristics of teachers on the academic performance of students. Results indicate that all eight variables of personal demographic characteristics affect the students' academic performance in varying extent as shown by the B Coefficients 0.561 (age), 1.198 (gender), and 0.629 (academic qualifications), 0.761 (length of service), 0.293 (civil status), 0.009 (academic rank), 0.115 (performance rating), 1.236 (medium of instruction) (Francisco, 2020). These results are significant because they conclusively relate instructor demographics to student performance, not just student's perceptions of learning.

The literature reviewed thus far explains that teacher demographics can impact student achievement, largely in terms of teacher popularity and likeability. To understand multiple

different aspects that could contribute to teacher popularity, the topics of teacher appearance, teacher age, and community connection are explored next.

Teacher appearance. Through this literature review, studies that center around teacher appearance and its effects on the classroom are examined. Does teacher appearance, measured by attire, attractiveness, and gender, directly affect student success? Why do districts invest time into enforcing teacher dress codes if the outcome is not related to students achieving higher?

Freeman (1988), at Ohio Wesleyan University, was one of the first to correlate perceived teacher attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness with student judgment of teacher effectiveness. One hundred twenty-one undergraduate psychology students, enrolled in a combination of introductory and advanced courses participated in this study. In each course, students completed the faculty evaluation survey in the last few minutes of a class during the final week of the term. Using a seven-point Likert scale, with options ranging from *not at all effective* (one) to very *effective* (seven), students indicated teacher effectiveness. Then, the CRF-S (Corrigan & Schmidt, 1983) measured student perception of teacher attractiveness, expertness, and trustworthiness. The CRF-S, constructed from the original Counselor Rating Form (LaCrosse & Barak, 1976), consists of 12 seven-point bipolar adjective scales anchored by the words *not very* and *very*. These adjectives then form three subscales that measure attractiveness (i.e., friendly, likable, sociable, warm), expertness (i.e., experienced, expert, prepared, skillful), and trustworthiness (i.e., honest, reliable, sincere, trustworthy). Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients indicated that each of the subscales of the CRF-S was positively related to ratings of teacher effectiveness. This was proven true for both female and

male introductory students as well as for female advanced students. For male advantage students, attractiveness was significantly related to judged teacher effectiveness, but expertness and trustworthiness were not. While this information is helpful, it is limited because it only shows us student's *perceptions* of teacher effectiveness, not actual proof of this effectiveness (i.e. student grades).

Gonyea (2018) assessed 408 undergraduate students to see how they connected faculty members' attractiveness and overall appearance (as defined by attractiveness, professionalism, and stylishness) to their end-of-course ratings. Data were collected from pre-, mid-, and post-class surveys. Results indicated that pre-course perceptions of appearance were not related to student evaluations of teaching, but end-of-course perceptions certainly were (Gonyea, 2018). Yet, subsequent regression analysis found that end-of-course student perceptions of a faculty member's appearance were significantly predicted by students' overall perception of the course at midterm and the perception of the course's workload when controlling for students' initial perception of the faculty member's appearance and other factors. This suggests that end-of-course perceptions of appearance are impacted by students' experience in the course. Results of this study suggest that faculty members' appearance (attractiveness or overall appearance), as measured by an initial rating without prior knowledge of a faculty member's teaching abilities, teaching style, or personal characteristics, is not related to college student evaluations of teaching (Gonyea, 2018).

Myers and Huebner (2011) investigated the relationship between students' motives to communicate with their instructors (i.e., relational, functional, participatory, excuse making, and sycophantic) and perceived instructor credibility and attractiveness. One hundred and fifty

undergraduate students (85 men and 64 women) enrolled in an introductory communication course at a large Mid-Atlantic university participated in the study. They ranged in age from 18 to 24 years old, with the majority being first year students. Participants completed four surveys: the 30-item Student Motives to Communicate scale (Martin, Mottet, & Myers, 2000), the 18-item Measure of Source Credibility (McCroskey & Teven, 1999), the 38-item revised Measure of Interpersonal Attraction scale (McCroskey, McCroskey, & Richmond, 2006), and the 25-item revised Measure of Homophily (McCroskey et al., 2006). Participants completed the surveys in reference to the instructor of the course they attended immediately prior, and it is important to note, they completed these surveys toward the end of the semester after having built a relationship with that professor throughout the course. Results indicated that the functional motive was correlated positively with perceived instructor character and caring as well as perceived instructor task and social attractiveness. Additionally, the relational motive was correlated positively with perceived instructor social and physical attractiveness, and the participatory motive was correlated positively with perceived instructor task, social, and physical attractiveness (Myers & Huebner, 2011). This supports multiple significant examinations relevant to this literature review- instructors who are identified as physically attractive have a positive influence on the motives of students to build relationships, participate in class, and behave positively toward course completion.

More specifically, Chatelain (2015) sought to discover student perceptions of academics' dress and gender and their impact on perceived instructor approachability and likeability. While this study does not address the main research question regarding student success, it is significant because it demonstrates how students perceive instructors' chosen appearance. One

hundred twelve post-secondary students at a southeastern United States career-arts institute completed an online survey. The key terms “casual dress,” “business casual,” and “professional dress” were defined in the survey then photos of instructors were shown (one male casual dress, one female casual dress, one male business casual, one female business casual, one male professional dress, and one female professional dress). Under each photo, participants were offered a choice of one to six where one= Not Approachable and six= Highly Approachable. A two-way ANOVA was then used to determine the effect of dress and gender on academics’ approachability and likeability. The results of the surveys showed that there is a strong correlation between gender and approachability or between gender and likeability, specifically that women were seen as less approachable and less likable than male teachers. Additionally, there was no statistically significant correlation between attire and approachability, though those who were dressed in business casual were considered to be the most approachable.

The purpose of a 1974 study by Menard was to determine if the appearance of teachers has an impact on their effectiveness as judged by student ratings and student achievement. One hundred fifty-six freshmen students taught by the investigator in four introductory psychology classes, were taught by an identical method, and were evaluated with identical tests. The only difference between winter and spring quarters was in the appearance of the instructor. During the winter quarter, the instructor had long hair, a full beard, and was dressed in faded blue jeans, a work shirt, and boots. During the spring quarter, the instructor had short hair, was clean-shaven, and was dressed in a white shirt and tie, dress slacks, and dress shoes. Expert raters determined that there was no significant change in the instructor’s personality resulting from the change in appearance, isolating the differences in results to instructor appearance.

Two types of statistical analyses were made. T-tests of significance between the two groups were performed on (a) the student ratings on each of the first items of the Purdue scale, (b) the total teacher effectiveness score, and (c) the achievement scores of the two groups. Multiple regression analysis was employed to determine if the student characteristics of sex, academic major, achievement, and socioeconomic status could aid in the prediction of teacher effectiveness for each of the two groups. It was found that there was no difference in teacher effectiveness as measured by student ratings or student achievement regardless of the appearance of the teacher, and the student characteristics of sex, academic major, achievement, and socioeconomic status did not aid in the prediction of teacher effectiveness (Menard, 1974).

Freeman (1994) sought to examine the effects of professor gender and perceived effectiveness. Specifically, he used two experiments to discover whether college students' evaluations of instructor effectiveness are affected by the instructor's gender role characteristics and whether students believe that some gender role characteristics are more important than others. One hundred and fifty three undergraduates (89 women and 64 men) enrolled in introductory psychology classes at Ohio Wesleyan University from the ages of 18 to 22 years old were sampled for this study. The participants read a set of three female or male instructor descriptions representing feminine, masculine, and androgynous gender roles. Then they evaluated each instructor as to how effective they were likely to be in teaching the course. Two courses were tested in each of four categories: social science (psychology and sociology), natural science (chemistry and zoology), humanities (philosophy and religion), and arts (music and theater). Therefore, students rated three hypothetical instructors on one of eight randomly

assigned courses. Evaluations were made on a seven-point scale ranging from not very effective (one) to very effective (seven). ANOVA tests yielded two significant effects: an overall effect for gender role ($F(2, 274) = 67.03$, $p < .001$ MSe = 1.61) and a Student Gender X Instructor Gender role interaction ($F(2, 274) = 4.94$, $p < .01$). No other significant main or interaction effects were observed between any of the variables tested. It was revealed that students rated androgynous instructors higher on effectiveness than feminine or masculine instructors. Additionally, the simple main effects of student gender were analyzed separately for each gender role- it was shown that that female students rated androgynous instructors higher on effectiveness than the male students did (F(l, 151) = 10.06, MSe = 0.98). No significant difference between male and female students was observed for feminine instructors (F(l, 151) = 5.08, M5e = 2.09) and there was no significant difference between male and female students observed for masculine instructors (F(l, 151) = 0.21, MSe = 2.03) (Freeman, 1994). These results are significant because they show that instructor gender does affect students' perceived effectiveness of the instructor, but gender role is more important than either instructor or student gender. Further research needs to be done to specifically define behaviors that fall into each identified gender role.

Another aspect of instructor appearance to investigate is chosen attire. Gorham et al. (1997) aimed to find if student learning and student perceptions of college instructors were influenced by differences in instructor attire. Three hundred and seventeen students enrolled in multiple sections of an introductory psychology course were the subjects of the study. This course was selected to isolate other influencing factors because it has multiple sections of students, a highly prescriptive teacher assistant training program to minimize potential organizational variables, it commonly uses guest lecturers during the term, and students are

regularly asked to evaluate those guest lecturers. Students should have had no indication of an experimental manipulation. The study identified three dress conditions- formal, casual professional, and casual. Two graduate students (one male and one female, each with an average physical build, similar level of physical attractiveness, and of traditional, mid-twenties teaching assistant age) were trained as the sample guest lecturers. Each gave guest lectures in six sections of the same course following a highly detailed outline for content. Attire was manipulated across the 12 lectures, with one presentation made by each of the two lecturers in each of the attire combinations. The subjects had no familiarity with the guest lecturers. After the lecture, students answered a lecture evaluation form that rated instructor use of each of the following behaviors on a zero to four scale (zero= never, four= very often): gestures while talking to class, looks at class while talking, smiles at the class while talking, moves around the classroom while teaching, uses a variety of vocal expressions when talking to the class, uses a monotone/dull voice when talking to class, has a very tense body position, looks at the board or notes when talking to class, and frowns at the class while talking. The following dependent variables were also measured via the survey- competence, character, sociability, composure, and extroversion, each using three sets of seven-point bipolar descriptors. Perceptions of learning were measured using a "learning loss" approach (Richmond, Gorham, & McCroskey, 1987; Richmond, McCroskey, Keamey, & Plax, 1987; Gorham, 1988). Students were asked to respond to two questions: “On a scale of zero to nine, how much did you learn in today's class?” with "zero" meaning nothing and "nine" meaning more than in any other class session and “On the same scale of zero to nine, how much do you think you could have learned about today's topic if you had had the ideal instructor?”. The learning loss score was then calculated by

subtracting the response to the first question from the response to the second question. Actual learning was then measured by formative assessment of six multiple choice questions over central concepts from the day's lecture. ANOVA regressions were used for the dress condition (three levels), immediacy condition (two levels), and rater gender (two levels). Results clearly indicated that the greatest effect of attire appears to be on judgments of instructor extroversion, with teachers choosing casual dress rated as the most extroverted and those deviating in either direction from the casual-professional teaching assistant norm rated higher on extroversion than those conforming to the norm. There was no statistically significant interaction between attire and immediacy, meaning the relational availability of the instructor. Thus, it does not appear that strategic choice of attire bolsters student perceptions of non immediate instructors. Nor does it appear that "non professional" attire hurts judgments of immediate instructors. These results are significant because they outline that professional dress may not have as large of an impact on students as once thought, and the results are consistent with others in this review.

Roach (1997) investigated instructor attire and its influence on student perceptions of teachers. Specifically, he examined graduate teaching assistant attire and its effects on cognitive learning, affective learning, and student misbehaviors, as well as the effects of instructor attire on student ratings of instruction. Three hundred and fifty five students enrolled in basic communication courses at a large Southwestern university participated in the study. The sample was split evenly between genders, a mixture of majors, and contained a combination of freshman through seniors with the average student age being 21. Student perceptions of instructor dress were measured through a survey where students were asked to rate instructor

dress from one to seven using the following adjectives: informal-formal, wrinkled-pressed, inappropriate-appropriate, dirty-clean, professional-nonprofessional, neat-sloppy, and fashionable-unfashionable. Affective learning was measured with a scale developed by Gorham in 1988. Participants were also asked to answer the following questions using seven point scales: attitudes toward course content, attitudes toward behaviors recommended in this class, attitudes toward the instructor of this class, likelihood of engaging in behaviors recommended in this class, likelihood of enrolling in another course of this type, and likelihood of taking another course with the teacher of this course. Students were additionally asked to respond to the following questions, using a scale of zero= nothing to nine= more than any other class you have had: "How much are you learning in this class?," "How much do you think you could be learning in this class if you had an ideal instructor?", "How much knowledge/understanding are you gaining in this class?," and "If this class were being taught by the best possible instructor, how much do you think you could be learning?" Students were also asked to identify the likelihood and frequency they participate in misbehavior items on a scale from zero= never to four= very often. Misbehaviors items included: cheating, asking counterproductive questions, challenging the teacher's authority, diverting classroom talk from the lesson, leaving class early, walking in late to class, non class-relevant talking during class, inattention to the teacher, lack of attendance, turning in assignments late, failure to turn in assignments, sleeping in class, reading the newspaper in class, and doing other homework in class. Students were then directed to use a Likert-type scale (Poor= zero, Weak= one, Average= two, Good= three, and Excellent= four) to respond to the following statements regarding rating of instruction: "The overall quality of this course"; "I would tell other students that this course was..."; "The overall effectiveness of this

instructor"; and "I would tell other students that the instructor was...". ANOVA tests were performed on the data to draw multiple conclusions. First of all, a significant positive correlation (r=.50, p=.0001) was found between teaching assistant dress and student affective learning, indicating a strong moderate relationship. Secondly, a significant positive correlation (r=.36, p=.0001) was found between perceptions of teaching assistant dress and student cognitive learning, showing a low to moderate relationship. Thirdly, a significant negative correlation (r=-.19, p=.001) was found between teaching assistant dress and student misbehaviors. This indicated that as teacher dress increased in professionalism, student misbehaviors decreased. Conversely, when teacher dress decreased in professionalism, student misbehaviors increased. Finally, a significant positive correlation (r=.51, p=.0001) was found between student perceptions of teaching assistant dress and student ratings of instruction, indicating a strong relationship between the two (Roach, 1997). These results are significant because they prove that instructor dress does affect student affective learning, perceptions of cognitive learning, and student ratings of instruction. It also proves that dressing more professionally can decrease classroom misbehaviors.

Morris et al. (1996) created an interesting study to determine if selected student perceptions of college instructors were influenced by differences in instructor attire and if those effects differ depending on the instructors' or the students' gender. Four graduate student teachers from West Virginia University (two males and two females, each with an average physical build, similar level of physical attractiveness, of traditional, mid-20s teaching assistant age, and in their first year of teaching the course) presented guest lectures in three sections of the course on the same day. They presented to a total of 401 students, 48% of which were

female and 46% were male. Lectures all followed the same very detailed departmental content outline to minimize differences in aspects like vocal expressiveness, movement around the classroom, eye contact, and other influential behaviors. Attire was systematically changed across the three lectures with one presentation made by each of the four instructors in each of the three attire conditions (formal professional, casual professional, and casual). The attire conditions were defined as follows:

Formal Professional

Males: dark business suits, white shirts with dark ties, dress shoes

Females: tan/black skirted business suits, sheer hose, high-heeled pumps

Casual Professional

Males: light colored, tan casual slacks, dark sport shirts (button front, button-down collars) in a muted plaid, no tie, brown leather casual shoes

Females: skirt and sweater, primarily in tan/black colors, dress pumps

Casual

Males and Females: faded, worn blue jeans, light-colored T-shirt, plaid flannel shirt (worn open), sport/athletic shoes

(Morris et al., 1996).

These definitions came from testing the students' attire perceptions before this study to rule out major bias. Students in a different course were tasked with sorting thirty-four photographs (17 of males and 17 of females) into four categories of teacher dress- formal professional, casual professional, and casual (same as above) but also "inappropriate teacher dress," which was used to identify dress variables to avoid while conducting the original experiment. The resulting

data helped define the three dress categories used in the main study (as seen above). After each lecture was completed, students filled out a brief lecture evaluation form indicating their gender and rated the instructor using the measures described below. To avoid awareness of the experimental manipulation this same lecture evaluation form had been used at other times in the course when a guest lecturer was on the schedule. Five characteristics were measured on the survey, each using three sets of five-point bipolar descriptors: competence, character, sociability, composure, and extroversion. Students were also asked to answer on a one (low)-five (high): Did the instructor seem to be well informed? And did the instructor present the material in an interesting way? Results clearly showed that more formal dress was associated with higher ratings of instructor competence, especially for female students rating female instructors. Contrary to common assumptions, the most positive influences of instructor dress were proven to be the casual condition (Morris et al., 1996). Though this sample is small, these results are clear and significant because they prove students are greatly influenced by the way an instructor is dressed.

Sebastian and Bristow (2008) investigated the effects of style of dress on business students' perceptions of the attractiveness, trustworthiness, expertise, and likeability of professors. Students in introductory marketing classes at St. Cloud State University in St. Cloud, Minnesota, were assigned to one of two studies in the research program. The first study consisted of 103 (43 were women and 60 were men) and 154 students (82 women and 72 men) participated in the second study. The average age of the participants was 22 years old. Participants were seated in a theater style room that contained a large screen projection system and after being made aware of the purpose of the study, were shown a high quality color

photograph of the appropriate stimulus person. The photograph was of either a 45 year old woman or a 52 year old man dressed in either a navy blue business suit or a blue denim shirt and khaki pants. The identical photo of each stimulus person was digitally manipulated to show both dress conditions where only the outfit varied and posture and facial expression were the same. The participants were asked to look at the picture and read the following accurate description of the person: "Chris (Dr. Kelly) completed his (her) graduate education and is a newly hired tenure track faculty member at a state university. He (She) has 8 years of previous teaching experience at the university level and over 10 years of industry experience. For each pair of adjectives listed below, circle the number that best describes the individual portrayed above and pictured on the screen at the front of the classroom. For example, if you think the person is very unattractive, circle the number one on the scale below, if you think the individual is somewhat attractive, circle the number four, and so forth." The participants rated the stimulus persons on 18 trait adjective pairs. The 15-item scale created by Ohanian (1990) was used to measure the attractiveness (unattractive or attractive, not classy or classy, ugly or beautiful, plain or elegant, not sexy or sexy), trustworthiness (undependable or dependable, dishonest or honest, unreliable or reliable, insincere or sincere, untrustworthy or trustworthy), and expertise (not an expert or expert, inexperienced or experienced, unknowledgeable or knowledgeable, unqualified or qualified, unskilled or skilled) of those in the photo as well as and the three item scale of likeability (cold or warm, unlikable or likable, unfriendly or friendly) developed by Whittler and DiMeo (1991). Participants were also asked to record their own gender, age, and major field of study.

The results of the study suggested that the verbal description of the stimulus persons may have swayed the results away from centralizing around attire. Therefore a second study was performed where the only change was to the verbal description given: “Chris (Dr. Kelly) recently completed his (her) doctoral graduate education and is a newly hired tenure track (full time) faculty member at a state university.” The results from the second study found many interesting details. In addressing whether formal dress would lead to higher levels of perceived instructor trustworthiness, a Gender × Dress interaction was marginally significant ($F(1, 145) = 3.7$, $p < .06$) meaning that style of dress had no effect on the trustworthiness ratings of the male instructors did affect those of the women instructors, with casual dress promoting greater trustworthiness than did formal dress. In investigating whether formal style of address would lead to higher levels of perceived instructor trustworthiness, Sebastian and Bristow (2008) found a Gender × Title interaction. Further, upon investigating whether formal dress would lead to higher levels of perceived instructor expertise, a main effect for dress was significant ($F(1, 146) = 5.7$, $p < .05$) with formal dress leading to a higher rating than did casual dress. Also, a Dress × Title interaction was identified ($F(1, 145) = 5.7$, $p < .05$). This means that the formally-dressed person with the formal title and the casually- dressed person with the informal title received the highest trustworthiness ratings. For the likeability index, a significant main effect for dress was obtained shown through the patterns of means indicating that dress made no difference in the likeability ratings of the casually dressed persons but the formally dressed man was viewed as more likeable than was the formally dressed woman. The means also indicated that style of dress had minimal effect on the perceptions of the man but strongly affected the views of the woman, with strong preference for the casually dressed woman

(Sebastian & Bristow, 2008). This data is significant because it confirms that instructor dress and formality does impact students' perception of instructor trustworthiness and expertise, with undergraduate students preferring more casual dress, especially if the instructor was a woman.

While we can see from Gorham et al. (1997), Morris et al. (1996), Roach (1997), and Sebastian and Bristow (2008) that undergraduate students are influenced by instructor dress, are secondary students also influenced this way? Shoulders et al. (2017) investigated this through a study designed after that of Morris et al. (1996). The sample was made up of 24 high school students in two high schools in the same county, but one located in a suburban community and one in a rural community. A set of 16 photographs of trained experimental instructors was used to prompt the participants. They were of different genders, different ages between 20 and 40, and were previously unknown to the participants. Instructors' dress included formal (dress shirt with tie, dress slacks or skirt, dress with blazer, nice shoes), business casual (dress shirt or blouse, dress slacks or skirt, nice shoes), casual (polo or plain shirt, nice jeans or khakis), and ultra-casual (t-shirt, jeans, flip-flops or moccasins) (Morris et al., 1996). Each participant, in separate 30-minute, audio-recorded, one-on-one, face-to-face focused interviews, selected a number between one and 16 and was shown the corresponding instructor photograph to be used as the basis for their interview questions. The interview included three sets of tiered questions. Before being asked the first set of questions, the student was told that the person in the photo was a person who spent his/her day in the public school system. Questions then asked what role the participant thought the person in the photo had in the school and a justification for their response. The second set of questions was asked after the participant was told that the person in the photo was a teacher. Questions in the

second set focused on what subject the teacher taught as well as their classroom atmosphere, disciplinary actions, subject matter knowledge, and the level of respect they received from their students. The third set of questions was similar to the second set but was asked after the participant was told that the photographed teacher was specifically an agriculture teacher. Demographic data were also collected. Interview data were then transcribed verbatim and analyzed using the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). In agreement with Morris et al. (1996), students participating in this study acknowledged teacher dress as a source of their perceptions, and those perceptions were different based on the style of clothing viewed by each participant (Shoulders et al., 2017). This study is helpful to demonstrate that student perceptions of teachers are influenced by attire at both the secondary and post-secondary levels.

Teacher age. Many students can remember being excited about having new or young teachers in the classroom- they were easier to connect with, understood your lifestyle and stage of life, and made content more relevant. Students often see younger teachers as realistic role models. Yet, it is widely known that younger teachers lack the teaching experience that often leads to higher student outcomes. How do we reconcile this conflicting information in a tangible way to best serve our students?

A 1990 study by Martin and Smith aimed to see if students were influenced by the physical characteristics of a teacher, particularly teacher age. Twenty-eight seventh grade students were shown six photos of a young male teacher, a young female teacher, a middle-aged male teacher, a middle-aged female teacher, an older male teacher, and an older

female teacher. The subjects were asked to rate the teacher whose picture they had in front of them on each of the following items: organization, classroom management, motivation, communication, sensitivity, imagination, and competence. Results found the correlation of age and sex were not significant in any of the research questions other than when it came to perceptions of classroom management and organization (Martin & Smith, 1990).

A more recent study in South Africa aimed to make this connection. Hierarchical linear modeling performed on data from the SACMEQ III study found that younger teachers are better able to improve the mean mathematics performance of their students and performed better on subject tests themselves than their older counterparts (Armstrong, 2015). This is significant for many reasons, but we also must acknowledge a few limitations- this study is centralized to South African elementary students, and it is well known that advancements in teacher training can be the cause behind the younger teachers scoring better on subject tests.

Similarly, Hoang et al. (2019) aimed to identify latent profile groups based on observed teachers' classroom quality and its relation to teacher age, teaching experience, and children's classroom engagement and disaffection. One thousand two hundred and eighteen kindergarteners and 57 teachers from 12 kindergartens in three Vietnamese cities participated in this study. The teachers' ages and experience levels are significant to the study and break down as follows: 11 teachers were between the ages of 20-25 years old, 30 teachers were between the ages of 26-30, and 16 teachers were between the ages of 30-35. Five of the teachers had less than a year of teaching experience, 33 of the teachers had between one to five years of experience, 15 teachers had between six-10 years of experience, three had 11-15 years of experience, and only one teacher had over 15 years of teaching experience. Teachers'

age and teaching experience were then coded for latent profile analysis. The results suggested that there were three classroom quality profiles (high, medium, low) for these kindergarten classrooms. Teachers with less experience were proven less likely to be represented in the high-quality profile group and more likely to be in the low-quality profile. The analysis also suggested that children´s classroom disaffection was lower in high-quality profile classrooms compared with those of lower-quality profile classrooms. Lastly, it was shown that children in the classes of more-experienced teachers were more engaged in learning. However, children in classes taught by older teachers were less engaged than those in younger teachers' classes (Hoang et al., 2019). These results are significant because they show that older, more experienced teachers are more likely to be represented in high-quality classrooms, to have lower levels of student disaffection, and to have students more engaged in learning. But, it is important to identify that students of younger teachers had higher levels of engagement overall.

A 2019 Canadian study seems to prove what administrators have long believed. It is tempting to link observable teacher characteristics such as certification, years of experience, and advanced academic degrees to teacher effectiveness and student achievement. Such characteristics are perceived as more objective and more easily measurable, and therefore are used in many jurisdictions to identify teacher salary levels. Unfortunately, the research typically does not support the link between these characteristics and student achievement gains (Irvine, 2019). Irvine tried to find a direct correlation between teacher's experience and teacher effectiveness. Teacher effectiveness was measured by student achievement gains, classroom observations, and surveys (student responses, peer responses, administrator responses). This

study critically examined sources cited in the policy report and reviewed other research on teacher effectiveness. This study utilized constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014), which makes no prior assumptions about whether a relationship exists between teacher effectiveness and teacher experience, nor the form such a relationship might take. Rather, the grounded theory methodology (known as the constant comparison method) employs an iterative approach of data collection, data analysis, and additional data collection based on this analysis, until data saturation is reached, and no new insights or new properties are generated by further data collection. Constructivist grounded theory employs multi-level coding, proceeding from initial open coding to more focused coding once themes have emerged, to axial coding, which relates coding categories to subcategories, and finally to theoretical coding that links categories to produce a hypothesis or theory (Noerager Stern & Porr, 2011). Through this process, analysis of findings indicate that the relationship between total years of experience and teacher effectiveness, as measured by student achievement gains, is complex, nuanced, and nonlinear. The conclusion is that decisions based on assumptions that the relationship between experience and effectiveness is direct and linear are simplistic and lead to less than optimal policy (Irvine, 2019). This study was helpful to prove the relationship was nonlinear but did not significantly point us in a direction that could help draw these conclusions.

Community connection. It is no question that when instructors pursue building community connections with students, meaning they care to develop relationships with them above and beyond their academic performance, it has a large impact on teachers' classrooms. Especially in small-mid size school districts, teachers often teach all the siblings and cousins of one family, go to church with many student's parents, and see students at the convenience

store. Many teachers coach the high school sports teams or are otherwise involved in student's lives outside of the classroom. Many assume these relationships would have a positive influence on the student's performance in the classroom, but we must investigate if there is evidence to back this up.

Heasley and Terosky (2020) recently aimed to draw conclusions between community-engaged teaching and student learning. The study was qualitative in nature, engaging 25 college and university professors in 60 90 minute interviews. The semi-structured interviews focused on three key areas: (a) background information about the pathway to academic career and discipline area, (b) discussion of participants' community-engaged work and their perceptions on impacts and what helps or hinders their work, and (c) discussion of participants' views on vitality and if, and if applicable in what ways, their community-engaged work has influenced their vitality. In addressing this study's research questions, all of the 14 participants responded affirmatively that community-engaged teaching positively influenced their students' learning, specifically through a meta-theme of grappling with complexity (Heasley & Terosky, 2020).

It is essential to digest the community connection of teachers in terms of race. Joshi et al. (2018) explored to what extent students experience improved test scores when assigned to a race-congruent teacher. The sample was incredibly large- consisting of 1,088,166 student-year observations between the 2009–2010 to 2014–2015 school years, totaling 412,785 and 675,184 unique student observations in reading and math, respectively, assigned to 13,920 teachers in 1,607 schools in Tennessee. The student-level data consist of students' standardized test scores for reading/English language arts and mathematics on the state's end-of-year assessment, the

Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP), for grades three through eight. It also contains student and teacher demographic information. The results indicate that a positive race-match does not have a significant and meaningful effect on student test scores in our full analytic sample (Joshi et al., 2018).

In contrast, Scott et al. (2019) analyzed 41 black and white teacher-student dyad mixes in elementary schools and another 41 in a high school to examine how teacher and student race interact in terms of teacher and student behaviors, particularly pursuing whether racial matching between teacher and student reveals differences in how teachers provide feedback. Beginning with a dataset of more than 7,000 observations, the final sample included observations conducted in 13 elementary schools and two high schools in a midwestern state and involved 82 white teacher-white student dyads, 82 non-white teacher-white student dyads, 82 white teacher-non-white student dyads, and 82 non-white teacher-non-white student dyads, for a total sample of 328 teacher-student dyads. It was challenging for the researchers to randomly create these dyads, as black teachers only made up eight point six percent of the total observations. Students averaged an equal split of genders across race and grade levels whereas teacher gender was 86% female at the elementary level and 56% female at the high school level. Only 22% of black teachers at the elementary level were male, compared to 40% at the high school level.

The results concluded that black male students are more likely to receive more negative interactions with their teachers, regardless of their behavior. Further, teachers of all ethnicities and gender were equally likely to interact with black students in this manner—indicating that implicit bias affects all of us (Scott et al., 2019). These results are significant because they

suggest that race can be a major barrier in building positive student-teacher relationships, and therefore having students experience the benefits of those relationships such as increased motivation, achievement, and sense of belonging. While this study does not attempt to prove race matching as a positive or negative indicator of classroom achievement, it is notable that the results could conflict with Joshi et al. (2018).

In addition to analyzing community-engaged teaching and race-matched teaching, the impact of teacher reputation in a community cannot be ignored. One such way to gauge student thoughts about a teacher is through public, online survey websites such as RateMyProfessors.com. A 2008 study examined the pattern of association between components of online ratings and whether they are more consistent with the pattern expected of valid measures of student learning (Otto et al., 2008). Four hundred institutions were randomly chosen from RateMyProfessors.com, out of a total of 4,077 educational institutions. Then one faculty member was randomly selected from each of the chosen institutions and their ratings were downloaded. After negating institutions chosen twice, the resulting sample contained 399 unique faculty members from 373 institutions and faculty from 48 fields. Through the regression, it is shown that the variables clarity, helpfulness, easiness and variability in easiness demonstrate patterns of association that are consistent with the assumption that ratemyprofessors.com ratings reflect student learning (Otto et al., 2008). The analysis of online ratings from ratemyprofessors.com showed a similarity with what might be expected if the ratings were valid measures of student learning. The analysis demonstrated that students' ratings of instructor clarity and helpfulness were strongly correlated. These findings were consistent with the researcher's expectations under the assumption that the ratings reflected

student learning. These results are significant because they demonstrate that student input on RateMyProfessors.com can be a reliable source of data, as well as highlighting helpfulness and clarity as the characteristics that can most lead to student success from the sample given.

Rosen (2018) also assessed information from RateMyProfessors.com to analyze for correlations between measures of instruction quality, easiness, physical attractiveness, discipline, and gender. The extensive sample included 13,677,171 ratings of 1,231,643 professors from 4,522 colleges and universities within the United States, which was the totality of all ratings in the United States at the time of research, January 3, 2016. Only professors with a minimum of 20 ratings were considered eliminating the raw data-set to a size of 7,882,980 ratings for 190,006 professors in an effort to keep results statistically proportional. Gender was not a listed demographic on the website, meaning professor gender was predicted based on first names as listed on RateMyProfessors using the R gender package (Mullen, 2015). The R gender package compares a list of first names with historical data and produces a probability that the name refers to a male or female based on the reference data-set (Rosen, 2018). The final sample broke down to 73,004 male professors and 55,464 female professors. Results regarding gender indicate that, on average, while male and female professors have statistically significant differences in ratings on RateMyProfessors, this difference in scores is relatively small. Female professors, on average, score 0.04–0.05 points lower on metrics of instruction quality and 0.03 points higher on easiness scores compared to male professors (Rosen, 2018). It is important to acknowledge that the R gender package used to predict professor gender does have limitations, particularly with foreign names or generally less-definitive gender-biased names. Because of this factor, a cut-off probability of 99% was established meaning all

professors with first names below this cut-off were disregarded for the gender portion of the analysis. Additionally, a statistically significant correlation between clarity, helpfulness, overall quality, and easiness scores was found. The overall quality–helpfulness and overall quality–clarity relationships are very strongly correlated. Regarding instructor attractiveness, the results indicate that students tend not to perceive professors with poor instruction ratings as attractive (and vice versa). However, just over 70% of professors with perfect clarity, helpfulness, or overall quality scores are rated as 'hot' on RateMyProfessors.

Finally, the results from this study also illustrate that student-submitted reviews on RateMyProfessors tend to be more positive than negative, with the median clarity, helpfulness, and overall quality scores ranging between three point eight and three point eight-six on a scale from one to five. This conclusion agrees with the conclusion of Bleske-Rechek and Michels (2010) that ratings on RateMyProfessors tend to be more positive than negative, which goes against a common misconception that publicly available web-based student evaluations frequently carry a negative bias (Rosen, 2018). We can conclude from Rosen's work that in general, we can disregard the assumption that online instructor surveys are biased toward disgruntled students and that there is not a statistically significant difference between male and female professors.

Another study that analyzes the use of community-based instructor ratings from RateMyProfessor.com was conducted by Davison and Price (2009). Particularly, this study sought to measure the validity of the website's ratings in measuring teaching effectiveness. They took a sample of 216 students enrolled in sociology, economics, statistics, and women's studies courses in 2004 at Illinois State University and gave them a short questionnaire. The

survey asked if they had heard of, visited, or posted a rating on the website and if and how they found the website data useful. Then, students were asked to rank the importance of the information on the website. To assess the validity of the data in measuring teaching effectiveness, the quantitative and qualitative data listed on the website for Illinois State University was collected and analyzed to address whether the measures offer the best overall picture of teaching effectiveness. For the quantitative data, the individual instructor scores on all scales listed on the website were gathered. RateMyProfessors.com had scores for 1,007 instructors at the university at the time data was extracted. Davison and Price computed correlation coefficients between the scores for easiness, helpfulness, clarity, hotness, interest, overall score, instructor gender, and course discipline. Collecting and analyzing students' written comments was perhaps the most informative. "We believe these comments better indicate what students value in an instructor and in a course" (Davison & Price, 2009, p. 54). Among the rated instructors, some had over 50 separate comments, some of which were several sentences long. To make the quantitative analysis more efficient, the researchers drew a two-stage systematic random sample to study further- they copied all of the postings for half of all instructors, then from that list, drew every seventh posting, totaling 1,166 comments to analyze. These comments were read several times, resulting in 13 common themes identified, which were coded for prevalence: entertainment, ease, politics, informative, student centredness, persona, preparedness, discrimination, and intellect. Following that, Davison and Price then documented whether each comment was positive or negative in meaning. Finally, they compared the frequency of the 13 themes across instructors from four different disciplines: sociology, economics, political science and psychology. To ensure an adequate

sample size for each discipline, they went back to the website and copied every fifth posting for every instructor listed in these four disciplines, ending in a sample size of 467 comments. They then selected excerpts from the comments to highlight the patterns across disciplines.

The results from this study indicate that students rely heavily on the data from RateMyProfessor.com**.** Ninety-two percent of the 216 surveyed students have heard of the website, typically from friends or classmates (88%). Surprisingly, only around 30% of the students claimed to actually post ratings. Eighty four percent of respondents described the website as reliable, and 95% deemed it credible. Seventy five percent said they use the website to decide whether or not to take a particular instructor or not and 33% use it to select or avoid a course completely, nevermind the instructor. A significant relationship between easiness and overall score ($r = 0.51$) shows that instructors who provide "easy" courses will receive a higher score on RMP. The significant inverse relationship between number of ratings and overall score ($r = -0.13$) could imply that students are more likely to post ratings on the website to speak negatively about instructors, which conflicts with the results of the aforementioned study by Rosen (2018). It was also found that gender does not affect overall scores however, gender is significantly associated with certain personality traits. The coded qualitative data showed four common themes among the comments posted by students and a percentage of comments that are negative or positive about each characteristic was identified. The most common theme (45% of all comments) in the students' remarks center around easiness. "Students want easy courses and reward instructors accordingly" (Davison & Price, 2009, p. 56). It is also notable that comments about easiness are slightly ($r = 0.07$) more likely to be made about female professors. The next two most common themes identified involve instructor personality (27%)

and student centredness (26%). The large majority, about 75%, of these comments are positive descriptions. Most negative comments describe an instructor's arrogance. Student centredness, a specific instructor characteristic, shows how helpful or accessible an instructor is to the students and usually reflects the extent to which an instructor cares about students. The fourth most common theme describes how entertaining an instructor is (24%).

Conclusively, Davison and Price find that most students at Illinois State University are aware of the RateMyProfessor website, visit it, think it is credible, and use it to choose instructors. It is known that most instructors receive feedback directly from students during an evaluation at the end of the semester, but that information is not made public. RateMyProfessors allows students to exchange information about their instructors and courses and it is proven powerful. Though the findings suggest that the information provided by the RateMyProfessors website may not be valid, the four more influential characteristics toward teacher effectiveness were identified (in order, from most to least influential) as easiness, instructor personality, student centredness, and entertaining (Davison & Price, 2009). These characteristics reflect themes found in relational teaching practices and confirm this method as a way to increase teaching effectiveness.

CHAPTER III: DISCUSSION AND SUMMARY

Summary of Literature

This paper has addressed the following question: How does student perception of teacher appearance, age, and community connection affect student achievement in the classroom? Conclusive answers have been reached through the review of multiple academic studies.

Through an analysis of the aforementioned research we can clearly see that teacher appearance does not have an impact on teaching effectiveness (Chatelain, 2015; Freeman, 1988; Gonyea, 2018; Korte et al., 2013; Menard, 1974). Korte et al. (2013) performed a survey of 381 graduate and undergraduate students proving that “instructor’s manner of dress” was nearly at the bottom of the list of perceived characteristics that lead to good teaching. Gonyea’s study of 408 undergraduate students reiterated this point through his study that suggests faculty members’ appearance (attractiveness or overall appearance), as measured by an initial rating without prior knowledge of a faculty member’s teaching abilities, teaching style, or personal characteristics, is not related to college student evaluations of teaching (Gonyea, 2018). Chatelain’s 2015 study of 112 post-secondary students shows no significant correlation between attire and approachability, though those who were dressed business casual were considered to be the most approachable (Chatelain, 2015). These results stand the test of time, with Menard’s 1974 study of 156 university freshmen claiming similarly that there was no

difference in teacher effectiveness as measured by student ratings or student achievement regardless of the appearance of the teacher (Menard, 1974).

Freeman's 1988 study does provide a point of contrasting information. His study of university students determined the subscales of attractiveness, expertness, and trustworthiness to be positively related to teacher effectiveness. This correlation was proven more strongly with female students than male students. While this information is helpful, it is limited because it only shows us student's *perceptions* of teacher effectiveness, not actual proof of this effectiveness (student grades) (Freeman, 1988). There is value to these results that suggests there may be further research to be done on how teacher appearance affects male and female students differently.

Additionally, Myers and Huebner (2011) found that instructors who are identified as physically attractive have a positive influence on the willingness of students to build relationships with instructors and participate in class. One hundred and fifty undergraduate students submitted four surveys toward the end of the semester after having built a relationship with that professor throughout the course. While this does conflict with the collective conclusion of this review, it is important to note that this study proves a connection between instructor attractiveness and communication motives of students even though it does not prove a direct correlation to student achievement.

Teacher attire conclusively impacts perceived instructor effectiveness (Gorham et al., 1997; Morris et al., 1996; Roach, 1997; Sebastian & Bristow, 2008; Shoulders et al., 2017). Morris et al. (1996) created an interesting study to determine if selected student perceptions of

college instructors were influenced by differences in instructor attire, in which he intentionally had instructors dress in different degrees of professional attire and had students give feedback about the lecture. Contrary to common assumptions, through his study the most positive influences of instructor dress were proven to be the casual condition, meaning students rated more casually dressed teachers as the most effective. In a similar and more recent study, Shoulders et al. (2017) examined teacher dress and high school students' perceptions of effectiveness by showing them photos of differently dressed teachers and performing interviews to gather their perceptions. These students acknowledged teacher dress as a source of their perceptions and that those perceptions were different based on the style of clothing viewed by each participant (Shoulders et al., 2017). These studies verify that student perceptions of teachers are influenced by attire at both the secondary and post-secondary levels. Roach (1997) investigated instructor attire and its influence on student perceptions of teachers by having students rate professors on their attire as well as answer multiple questions about the instructors' teaching ability. He found a positive correlation between student perceptions of teaching assistant dress and student ratings of instruction, indicating a strong relationship between the two (Roach, 1997). These results are significant because they confirm that instructor dress does affect student affective learning. Additionally, Sebastian and Bristow (2008) investigated the effects of style of dress on business students' perceptions of the attractiveness, trustworthiness, expertise, and likeability of professors. They found that style of dress had minimal effect on the perceptions of the man but strongly affected the views of the woman, with strong preference for the casually dressed woman (Sebastian & Bristow, 2008). This data is significant because it shows a difference in the instructors' attire's impact on

students based on instructor gender. Gorham et al. (1997) aimed to find if student learning and student perceptions of college instructors were influenced by differences in instructor attire through similar surveys given after lecture. His results clearly indicated that the greatest effect of attire appears to be on judgements of instructor extroversion- proving that attire does have an effect on student perception, but perhaps not an effect on teaching effectiveness.

Similarly, it is important to examine that teacher gender does correlate to perceived teacher effectiveness (Chatelain, 2015; Freeman, 1994). Freeman's 1994 study of university students shows that while instructor gender has a small effect on students' perceived effectiveness of the instructor, gender role is a more impactful factor. Similarly, Chatelain's 2015 study results in a strong correlation between gender and approachability or between gender and likeability, specifically that women were seen as less approachable and less likeable than male teachers (Chatelain, 2015). These studies were performed at the university level and should be replicated in the elementary and secondary levels to prove validity.

It is also appropriate to collectively conclude that teacher age does not have an effect on student achievement (Armstrong, 2015; Irvine, 2019; Martin & Smith, 1990). Martin and Smith's 1990 study of seventh grade students shows that teacher age did not affect how students anticipated a teacher's skills in the areas of motivation, communication, sensitivity, imagination, and competence. Results did find a correlation when it came to perceptions of classroom management and organization (Martin & Smith, 1990). Irvine's 2019 study of all teachers in the Province of Ontario, Canada reiterates this point by concluding that there is no direct relationship between years of teaching experience and teacher effectiveness (Irvine, 2019), contrary to what many education administrations believe.

In contrast, Armstrong's 2015 study of teachers in South Africa found that younger teachers are better able to improve the mean mathematics performance of their students and performed better on subject tests themselves than their older counterparts (Armstrong, 2015). While it is important to acknowledge that this study proves younger teachers as more effective, it must be considered that younger teachers more recently went through the coursework themselves and will therefore be more inept to perform well on such tests and teach the latest trends in math. We cannot use this study to conclude that younger teachers are more effective.

Additionally, Hoang et al. (2019) concluded that teachers with less experience were less likely to be included in the high-quality group of classrooms and more likely to be in the low-quality group. Along with that, children in the classes of more-experienced teachers were more engaged in learning. While experience is not necessarily a direct correlation to teacher age, the two factors do typically coincide. However, children in classes taught by older teachers were less engaged than those in younger teachers' classes (Hoang et al., 2019), helping us conclude that younger teachers do typically produce higher engagement levels in the classroom.

We can conclude that teachers who are involved in the communities of their students outside of the classroom can have higher levels of student achievement in the classroom (Heasley & Terosky, 2020; Otto et al., 2008). While community involvement is proven significant, we can also conclude that teachers and students do not have to be the same race to have the greatest levels of student achievement (Joshi et al., 2018).

Heasley and Terosky's 2020 qualitative study found through intensive interviews that all of the 14 participants responded affirmatively that community-engaged teaching positively

influenced their students' learning (Heasley & Terosky, 2020). Additionally, Otto et al. (2008) performed a qualitative study of 400 institutions demonstrating that student input on the community site RateMyProfessors.com can be a reliable source of data (Otto et al., 2008).

As an extension of community, Joshi et al. (2018) performed a study of 1,088,166 students and found that a positive race-match does not have a significant and meaningful effect on student test scores in our full analytic sample (Joshi et al., 2018). However, Scott et al., (2019) concluded through more than 7,000 observations that black male students are more likely to receive more negative interactions with their teachers, regardless of their behavior and regardless of the teacher's race. Through this paper we cannot conclusively declare the level of impact of race-matching between teacher and student, but we must acknowledge this is undoubtedly a factor in student-teacher relationships and therefore, student achievement.

We can also conclude that public ratings on teacher community pages have a significant impact on that instructor's reputation and can be used to identify effective teachers (Davison & Price, 2009; Rosen, 2018). Rosen examined all ratings on RateMyProfessors.com and concluded that ratings on the website tend to be more positive than negative, which goes against a common misconception that publicly available web-based student evaluations frequently carry a negative bias (Rosen, 2018). Davison and Price (2009) measured the validity of the website's ratings in measuring teaching effectiveness. While Davison and Price (2009) suggests contradictory results in the validity of RateMyProfessor ratings, they were able to conclusively find tangible characteristics correlated to increased teacher effectiveness.

We can overwhelmingly conclude that teacher reputation is impactful to classroom success and the demographic characteristics of teachers that lead to the highest levels of

student engagement are intangible and relationship-based (Atamian & Ganguli, 1993; Dobbie, 2011; Fauth et al., 2018; Francisco, 2020; Graham et al., 1992; Korte et al., 2013; Lovett, 2020; Otto et al., 2008; Young et al., 2013). Dobbie's 2011 study of United States participants in the Teach For America program proved that a teacher's prior achievement, leadership, and level of perseverance were associated with gains in math in a teacher's first year, and previous leadership experience was associated with student gains in English. Additionally, Francisco's 2020 study indicates that personal demographic characteristics of teachers that do affect the students' academic performance include age, gender, academic qualifications, length of service, civil status, academic rank, performance rating, and chosen medium of instruction.

As a point of contrast, it is important to acknowledge a very recent study performed by Scales et al. in 2020 proving the strongest predictor of GPA at the end of the year was the previous GPA and not the student-teacher relationship as predicted. This shows that relational teaching methods are impactful, but not necessarily the largest factor associated with academic performance.

We must acknowledge that students value effective teachers in the classroom. Atamian and Ganguli's 1993 study of 240 sophomore university students indicates that students in general like those instructors who are effective in the classroom. Elements of effective teachers were further solidified. Lovett's study of 205 undergraduate students showed that patience and humor were the characteristics of teachers that students chose to be the most effective in the classroom (Lovett, 2020). Similarly, Korte et al. (2013) performed a study of 381 undergraduate students showing the most effective characteristics of an instructor toward student achievement were instructor expertise, communication skills, and preparation for class. Young

et al. (2013) examined 124 university students and discovered that enjoyable interactions increase a needed sense of justice for students. Otto et al. (2008) found from 400 universities on ratemyprofessor.com that helpfulness and clarity are the characteristics that can most lead to student success. Additionally, Fauth et al. (2018) performed a study of 1,070 third grade students and their 54 science teachers proves that instructor popularity is important for classroom achievement. Through student surveys and test scores, it was concluded that teacher popularity was relevant for student achievement and students' individual liking of the teacher was relevant for student interest (Fauth et al., 2018).

Limitations of Research

Locating impactful research for this review was challenging. Searches of ERIC, EBSCO, and Google Scholar were regularly performed for international academic studies published between 2000-2021. After acknowledging the limited availability of such studies, the parameters were extended to include information dating back to 1960. External sources were also examined including the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), Sage Journals, and the Gutman Library at the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

Qualitative studies were initially preferred to ensure large enough sample size and increase application quality. Upon further research, several impactful quantitative studies were also referenced for in-depth quality of student-teacher relationship building. Academic journals were initially found using keywords such as: "teacher characteristics for student success," "teacher appearance," "teacher age," "community teaching," "relational teaching," and "teacher popularity". Research was expanded to include keywords such as "teacher race," "teacher

community placement," "student motivation," "teacher fitness," "relational teaching pedagogy," and "relational teaching practices".

It is vital to acknowledge that the pool of available research in this area is extremely limited. As this literature review was performed, this was the main obstacle. Much research exists connecting teacher appearance, age, and/or community connection with students' perception of teacher ability, effectiveness, etc. It was challenging to find a direct, statistical correlation between the highlighted teacher characteristics and student achievement shown through grades, motivation, test scores, and so forth. The education industry is relying heavily on new research outlining relational teaching practices, "teaching the whole student," social-emotional learning, and encouraging relationship-building between teachers and students to decrease student misbehaviors and increase classroom success. The industry is also recognizing the impact of demographic student-teacher matches in areas like race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status that can lead to more student success. If this is the case, why is there not more research on these topics? It was shocking to see this large gap in incredibly applicable and powerful research for the industry.

Implications of Future Research

There is no denying the importance of understanding how the demographic characteristics of teachers correlates to student success. Having trustworthy research in this area will lead education administrations to make more intentional hiring and professional development decisions. The large gap of research in this area is concerning and must be filled.

A quantitative study performed with a basic ANOVA correlation is recommended. The recommended research question is the same as that of this review: How does student perception of teacher appearance, age, and community connection affect student achievement in the classroom? The recommended population is a random sample of secondary teachers and students across the United States of various courses and comprises multiple age ranges, races, ethnicities, education backgrounds, teaching experiences, degrees of attractiveness, and genders. The methodology should include gathering this demographic information about the teachers then collecting multiple measures of success from their classrooms including grades, standardized test scores, and student reflections of learning.

Much of the demographic data of the licensed teachers in the United States of America can be found through the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). This information is also readily available locally through school districts and teacher unions. The most challenging demographic to collect data would be the degree of attractiveness, but similar to many of the studies listed in this review, this could be found through student surveys. Student surveys would also need to be collected at the end of the course as a tool to measure learning and growth.

Implications of Professional Applications

Educators are tasked with consistently adapting to new, research-based teaching models to continue to be as impactful as possible. School districts fight a constant battle of structurally implementing the latest findings at a school-wide level to best serve their students and give them the greatest chances of success inside and outside of the classroom.

"Research studies have proved what good teachers know from experience: students who believe their teachers like and respect them are far more likely to be successful than those students who don't perceive their teachers are caring or supportive," (Thompson, 2013, p. 152). In recent years, teachers have expressed the value of building relationships with students and how this helps students' overall motivation and behavior in class. Research has started to support this notion and schools have begun implementing relational teaching models such as Positive Behavior Intervention Strategies, or PBIS, that encourage teachers to curb student misbehaviors and low grades by building personal relationships with them. "It's only common sense that students will be much more willing to cooperate with those teachers who clearly like them and are interested in their welfare," (Thompson, 2013, p. 143).

This system takes away the use of detention or other common consequences for misbehavior (except for extreme circumstances) and replaces it with teacher-student relationship-building practices and an emphasis on social-emotional learning to combat these misbehaviors before they exist. The PBIS model rewards positive behavior instead of punishing bad behavior. Some schools are finding success with this and other similar relational teaching strategies.

As an extension of relational teaching strategies, understanding how a teacher's reputation amongst the student body affects their student's motivation and success in the class is vital for continued improvement. For teachers of elective courses, this is even more important- no matter the quality of the content in the class or the teaching ability of the

instructor, if students do not like the teacher (or even hear through the grapevine that they shouldn't) course enrollment numbers may be drastically low.

By applying the data from this review as well as the recommendations for further research, teachers can increase success in their classrooms through their relational teaching strategies and administrators can make more impactful hiring decisions. While it is true that there are many demographics that teachers cannot change about themselves, there are still many important takeaways.

Teachers would greatly benefit from knowing that by dressing more professionally, students will have less misbehaviors (Roach, 1997) and students will see them as more competent (Morris et al., 1996) and trustworthy (Sebastian & Bristow, 2008). Teachers should also know that if they dress casually, students will see them as more approachable (Gorham et al., 1997) and that being identified as physically attractive will have a positive influence on the motives of students to build relationships with them and participate in class (Myers & Huebner, 2011). Teachers should know that gender is not a significant factor in relation to students' perception of teacher effectiveness, but that gender role is (Freeman, 1994). Instructors should be aware that younger teachers are more impactful at increasing math scores (Armstrong, 2015) and classroom engagement levels (Hoang et al., 2019), while older teachers are more likely to produce entire classrooms of higher-scoring, well-rounded students. If teachers knew that any demographic change would increase student-teacher relationships and increase student success, they might do it. Applying this data will help teachers remove as many obstacles as possible from classroom success through relationship-building.

Administrators benefit from this data by being able to make impactful hiring decisions and aligning their classrooms assignments more effectively, all within the bounds of antidiscrimination law. District hiring managers can analyze the demographic information of their student body and make sure to hire teachers that will make the most impact for that specific student body. For example, hiring departments should design hiring practices around data that supports that the relationship between total years of experience and teacher effectiveness is nonlinear (Irvine, 2019). They should be aware that community-engaged teaching positively influences students' learning, (Heasley & Terosky, 2020) and that students care greatly about teacher reputation in the community (Otto et al., 2008). Hiring departments should know that teacher characteristics for effectiveness include, in order from least to greatest: being strict, being friendly, experience, patience, and humor (Lovett, 2020). They should also be aware that a teacher's prior achievement, leadership, and perseverance are associated with gains in math in a teacher's first year, and leadership experience with student gains in English classes (Dobbie, 2011). They should also consider that personal demographic characteristics that affect the students' academic performance include, in order of effectiveness from greatest to least, medium of instruction, gender, length of service, academic qualifications, civil status, performance rating, and academic rank (Francisco, 2020). Additionally, those who design personal development opportunities for teachers should know that relational teaching strategies lead to increased levels of perceived justice among students (Young et al., 2013) and increased teacher satisfaction (Graham et al., 1992). School boards should design teacher contracts and personal development opportunities to reflect these characteristics- from teacher dress codes to community involvement and beyond.

Conclusion

This paper has addressed the following question: How does student perception of teacher appearance, age, and community connection affect student achievement in the classroom? This literature review supplies teachers with tangible actions they can take to increase their student achievement in addition to improving their teaching skills. This literature review also attempted to give education administrators a demographic format for the most effective teachers including appearance, age, and community connection. The research overwhelmingly concludes that teacher appearance and age do not directly translate to greater classroom effectiveness on their own but that relational teaching practices, community building, and teacher reputation do have a large impact on classroom success.

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