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Questions from the Front Row: Teacher Expectations and Mature Students in Tertiary Education

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Education, the University of Auckland, 2019.
Abstract

The extent to which ageism affects mature students within the tertiary education environment is unclear. Whether the academic expectations of teaching staff are influenced by the age of students, and whether these expectations have an effect on subsequent academic outcomes, were the primary questions of this thesis. A mixed-methodology approach was adopted. In Study 1, 54 first-year teaching staff (i.e., lecturers and tutors) predicted, through vignettes of hypothetical students, that mature students—defined as those aged 25 years and older—would be more likely to follow directions when compared to their younger counterparts, and that female students in particular were more likely to be anxious, insecure learners. These different behavioural expectations did not translate to a difference in academic expectations, with teaching staff holding moderately high academic expectations at the class level. In Study 2, 976 students of the teaching staff involved in Study 1 made accurate predictions about how their teachers expected them to perform, with no significant effects observed in relation to student age or gender. Students also did not perceive any differential treatment from their teachers in the classroom based on their age. The expectations held by teaching staff did not significantly influence students’ academic outcomes. However, expectations held by the students about themselves, as measured by predictions of their own final grade, did influence their subsequent academic outcomes. In Study 3, interviews with 10 staff members and 24 students (15 younger and nine mature students) revealed that mature students generally experienced a positive learning environment within the tertiary setting, bolstered by their younger peers and teaching staff. As such, the current thesis finds little evidence for a significant effect of ageist beliefs in tertiary education. The current thesis also contributes to the understanding of how staff class-level expectations are communicated and accurately perceived by tertiary students and highlights the importance of maximising awareness among teaching staff of how students might
perceive their expectations. Recommendations for how teaching staff might positively influence the expectations held by the students themselves are also made.
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Chapter One: Introduction

To be yourself in a world that is constantly trying to make you something else is the greatest accomplishment.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

I grew up in a small town in Malaysia with two high-achieving, charming older brothers. From a very young age, my identity within the school environment—as far as the teachers were concerned—primarily became an extension of their achievements. Academic success on my part was inevitably measured against the formidable yardstick of their previous victories in the classroom and, with time, I became burdened with the reputation of an “underperforming younger sibling” despite my grades clearing the actual benchmarks set within the school curriculum. The school of life evidently had favourites, just like teachers did, and my primary school-aged self was left with the distinct impression that I had not made the grade.

I chose to enrol in an overseas university (that is, at a university over the South China Sea, the Banda Sea, the Arafura Sea, the Tasman Sea, and the continent of Australia for good measure) partly to extend my knowledge in the field of psychology but also to establish a clearer sense of my own identity, beyond the familial shadow of my formative years. My journey through university began at the age of 20, slightly later than the majority of my classmates. Few registered the age discrepancy, and I was soon accepted into the youthful fold of my younger peers. Those of an earlier vintage suffered a different fate. Adorned with the label “mature students” they were sketched with thick brushstrokes by many as the askers of questions, the tellers of too many personal stories, and a certainty for the front row of any lecture theatre. When I became a tutor, I noticed that my colleagues had either positive or negative preconceived notions about mature students, guided by their own anecdotal
evidence. University, I was saddened to learn, had not escaped the influence of social expectations and stereotyping. In this thesis, I intend to build on my previous personal and professional experience as I investigate the influence of such preconceived notions on student experiences.

The current research project aims to investigate academic staff expectations, as well as the influence of said expectations on mature students (defined for the purposes of this research project as students over the age of 25 years). Staff expectations of students guide their behaviour, which in turn influence students’ in-class experiences, learning, and overall outcomes (Babad, 2009; Good, 1987; Rubie-Davies, Peterson, Irving, Widdowson, & Dixon, 2010; Rubie-Davies, Hattie, & Hamilton, 2006; Rubie-Davies, Peterson, et al., 2012). For example, when teachers have low expectations for their students (controlling for achievement), often driven by false information or conclusions made based on student characteristics, they have a negative impact on student learning and outcomes (Rubie-Davies, Flint, & McDonald, 2012; Rubie-Davies & Peterson, 2011; Turner, Rubie-Davies, & Webber, 2015). Previous research has shown that teacher expectations can be influenced by student characteristics such as gender, social class, race or ethnicity, and physical attractiveness (C. Braun, 1976; Clifford & Walster, 1973; Diamond, Randolph, & Spillane, 2004; M. J. Harris & Rosenthal, 1985; Obiakor, 1999; Rubie-Davies, Peterson, et al., 2012). As an extension of these previous research findings, the current research project aimed to investigate the possibility that academic staff in tertiary education also base their expectations on students’ age, possibly mediated by student gender.

Although teacher expectations have been investigated since the 1960s (Babad, 2009; Good, 1987; Rosenthal, 1994; Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968), there are gaps that exist in the research. Firstly, there has not been a lot of research carried out in the tertiary environment with regard to the influence of staff expectations on student academic outcomes. Secondly,
the influence of student age on staff expectations and its subsequent effects on student outcomes have not been primarily investigated to the degree achieved by the current research project. The negative effect of age-related discrimination, or “ageism” has been largely reported in employment (see K. Harris, Krygsman, Waschenko, & Laliberte Rudman, 2017 for review), and in the healthcare industry (Ouchida & Lachs, 2015), whereby older individuals are often not provided with the same opportunities or care as their younger counterparts. Granted, research on ageism mainly focuses on older individuals who are often described as “aged,” “elderly” or “senior citizens” (Kite, Stockdale, Whitley, & Johnson, 2005), descriptors that may not apply to all mature students, as the label in the current study encompasses all students over the age of 25 years.

The current research adds to the field of ageism by including and comparing both younger (25–40 years)—a much-less-investigated target group—and older mature students (40 years and older) to their younger counterparts (24 years and younger). The mediating effect of gender will also be explored. Although researchers (e.g., Chonody & Teater, 2016; McGann et al., 2016) have found a mediating effect of gender on age stereotypes – whereby older females are subjected to negative ageist stereotypes, some argue these have not been thoroughly explored (Kite, Deaux, & Miele, 1991). In general, there is an observed double standard of ageing, whereby older men are viewed more favourably than older women, which can mean that women experience higher levels of anxiety in regard to ageing (Chonody & Teater, 2016), but also lowered opportunities in employment (McGann et al., 2016). Hence, in total, the current research project includes six target groups: female younger students, female younger mature students, female older mature students, and their male complements.

The term mature student carries with it both positive and negative connotations. For example, mature students have been referred to as more motivated learners (when compared to their younger counterparts), have been credited with a more developed sense of student
identity (Newbold, Mehta, & Forbus, 2010), perceived as more motivated, and as prioritising
the knowledge gained during lessons (Jinkens, 2009; Johnson & Kestler, 2013). Mature
students are also considered more focussed on their goal to succeed in tertiary education: to
either gain or enhance their work skills and knowledge to adapt to their ever-changing
environment (Aslanian, 2001; Compton, Cox, & Laanan, 2006).

Some of the negative, ageist stereotypes surrounding mature students were mentioned
at the beginning of this chapter. More importantly, however, mature students have reported
feeling undervalued, unappreciated, and neglected in tertiary institutions (Kasworm, 1990b,
2003b, 2011; Sissel, Hansman, & Kasworm, 2001). They have reported that feelings of
discrimination arise not only from the manner in which they are treated by their younger
counterparts (Mallman & Lee, 2016), but also in the construction of public policies and
programmes (O'Toole & Essex, 2012). Mature students have also reported feelings of
neglect and experiences of discrimination in the tertiary environment in terms of a disregard
for their particular approach to learning, their needs, and interests (Sissel et al., 2001). The
current research project aimed to investigate a number of these claims by not only
investigating staff members’ expectations for mature students and mature students’
perceptions of staff members’ behaviour towards them, but also by examining younger
students’ perceptions of mature students. This investigation is necessary in order to begin to
address discrimination or ageist conduct that might be occurring in tertiary environments.

The Current Research Project

The current research employed a mixed-methods design and consisted of three
studies. Study 1 focussed specifically on the academic and behavioural expectations that
academic staff held for older versus younger students in their courses. Study 2 examined the
perceived expectations of students, and Study 3 sought to clarify the extent to which ageism
occurred within the tertiary environment via interviews conducted with staff, as well as with
mature and younger students. This research was exploratory in nature, as research into teacher expectations for individual students at the tertiary level is very limited.

Chapter 2 offers a review of the literature to set the scene for the studies conducted. Beginning with an in-depth background into teacher expectation research, the literature review identifies the aforementioned gap in the teacher expectation research in regard to a student’s age as a characteristic that could guide teacher expectations. As mentioned, ageism might be a factor that influences staff expectations for mature students in tertiary education, hence the phenomenon of ageism is also discussed in depth. Research into areas where ageism has been identified has found that gender can be a mediating factor, whereby men and women experience ageing and age-related discrimination differently (Chonody & Teater, 2016; Clarke & Griffin, 2008), hence the influence of gender on ageism is also explored. The current research project also included gender as a mediating effect when examining staff expectations of mature students in tertiary education.

Chapter 3 will present the first study, Study 1. As mentioned briefly above, Study 1 investigated the possible prevalence of different (either higher or lower) academic and behavioural expectations that teaching staff might have for their students, based on students’ age and gender. As discussed above, researchers have indicated differences in perceptions of mature students’ motivation and goal orientation when compared to younger students. Study 1 aimed to examine these previous findings by exploring staff members’ expectations of students’ in-class behaviours—specifically behaviours that have been identified as critical for success. The question being examined was whether or not staff members would predict that mature students would be more likely to display these critical in-class behaviours and if that would translate to staff members also having higher expectations for mature students’ academic achievement. On the other hand, staff members could be susceptible to age-related biases and have lower academic expectations for mature students—and possibly lower
expectations for female mature students (if previous areas, such as employment, are an indicator). Because Study 1 was exploratory in nature, it was important to examine staff members’ explanations for their predictions and expectations to better understand what it was that influenced the expectations they formed for their students. This study also investigated the potential influence of staff members’ individual characteristics, such as age, gender, and position (either lecturer or tutor) on their expectations for students.

Vignettes were used to present staff members with hypothetical typical students, rather than staff members being asked to make predictions for their own students. Vignettes made it possible to manipulate and isolate the hypothetical students’ in-class behaviour, gender, and age to examine the effects of each of these factors on staff members’ predictions. The vignette methodology also offered a more efficient alternative to asking staff to make predictions for each of their students enrolled in their actual course.

Chapter 4 will present the second study, Study 2. Study 2 was intended to answer the question pertaining to staff members’ student expectations being conveyed to students in a tertiary environment and the possible influence their expectations might have on students’ academic success. Research has determined that students are capable of perceiving differential treatment and, by extension, high or low expectations that their teachers may hold for them (Weinstein, Marshall, Brattesani, & Middlestadt, 1982). In Study 2, students from various faculties from a university in New Zealand were asked what they believed their lecturers’ and tutors’ expectations were for their academic success. Students’ own personal expectations for their academic success were collected in parallel, and their academic achievement was monitored. Students were grouped by age, and perceived and personal expectations were examined.

Chapter 5 presents the third and final study of the thesis. Study 3 aimed to examine the question of students’ overall tertiary experience, focussing on the different experiences of
older and younger students. Students answered the College and University Classroom Environment Inventory (Fraser, Treagust, & Dennis, 1986), which was developed to assess students’ and teachers’ perceptions of the university or college seminar and tutorial environment. In this questionnaire, students were specifically asked about their tutorial environments, which included their relationship with their tutors (e.g., whether their tutors listened to them or paid equal attention to them). Responses were compared between older and younger students to explore the possibility of age-related discrimination or differential treatment during tutorials. Interviews were also conducted with students and staff members. The interviews extended the findings from Studies 1 and 2, whereby staff and students were given the opportunity to expand on their responses. Findings from the interviews enabled a more in-depth exploration of the expectations and perceptions obtained from staff and students.

Chapter 6 is the final chapter in this thesis. It discusses the findings from all three studies and considers contributions of the thesis to the field of educational psychology, specifically teacher expectations at the tertiary level and the mature-student experience. Chapter 6 also discusses the potential educational and theoretical implications the findings might have for future research and addresses the limitations of this thesis.
Chapter Two: Literature Review

Teacher expectations are the ideas and perceptions held by teachers about their students’ capability, which frequently lead to predictions about students’ academic performance, attitudes, and social development (Rubie-Davies, 2014). Teachers often alter their behaviour towards students according to the expectations they hold for them, resulting in teacher differential behaviour based on teacher expectations (Babad, 2009; Good, 1987; Rubie-Davies et al., 2010; Rubie-Davies et al., 2006; Rubie-Davies, Peterson, et al., 2012). For example, teachers have been shown to slow the pace of their lessons (Good & Weinstein, 1986) or be less available to students for whom they have lower expectations (Urhahne, 2015), whereas they were more likely to offer more challenging opportunities, and greater independence in the classroom, to students for whom they had high expectations (Rubie-Davies et al., 2006).

Teacher expectations are often based on information about the student’s prior achievements or attitude in class, but can also be influenced by student characteristics such as gender, ethnicity, and physical appearance (Clifford & Walster, 1973; Diamond et al., 2004; Obiakor, 1999; Rubie-Davies, 2014). For example, teachers have been found to hold higher academic expectations (i.e., predicted that students would perform better academically when compared to their peers) for those who were more physically attractive (Clifford & Walster, 1973) and lower academic expectations (i.e., predicted that students would underperform academically compared to their peers) for students from ethnic minorities, frequently underestimating their academic ability (Rubie-Davies, Hattie, & Hamilton, 2006).

Research examining whether conscious or unconscious biases held by teachers might influence their expectations for students is vital. Ideally, individual factors
beyond one’s control—such as ethnicity, gender, or age—should not influence an individual’s educational opportunities (Salmi & Bassett, 2014). Teacher expectations often guide the way teachers interact with and respond to their students, which in turn can influence student academic outcomes (see Brophy & Good, 1970; Cooper, 1979; Darley & Fazio, 1980; Rubie-Davies, 2014). In a meta-analysis incorporating 674 studies, Hattie (2009) argued that the expectations a teacher held for their students’ academic performance had a significant impact on the academic outcomes of students ($d = 0.43$). This is because teacher expectations can directly influence the learning opportunities and experiences of students which can, in turn, indirectly influence students’ motivation and self-image (Babad, 1993; Brophy & Good, 1970; Rubie, 2004; Rubie-Davies, 2007; Urhahne, 2015).

There is currently a scarcity of research investigating the influence of age-related biases on teacher expectations in educational environments. As most investigations to date have been carried out in primary school classrooms with similar-aged students, the influence of teacher expectations based on student age in tertiary environments (where the age of students can vary enormously) is yet to be investigated. All members of society should, ideally, receive equal access to tertiary education and should also be granted equal opportunities after enrolment.

In other settings, a preference for younger individuals has been reported along with evidence for negative or ageist attitudes being held towards older individuals (K. Harris et al., 2017; Loretto, Duncan, & White, 2000; Loretto & White, 2006; Ouchida & Lachs, 2015; Taylor & Walker, 1998). It has been reported that employers and supervisors show a preference for younger candidates which has led to reduced opportunities in employment for older individuals, especially those aged 50 years and older (K. Harris et al., 2017; Loretto et al., 2000; Loretto & White, 2006; Taylor &
Similarly, in healthcare, ageist attitudes towards older patients have been identified (Ouchida & Lachs, 2015), which have impacted on the quality of medical care and treatment provided to patients 60 years and over. As the positive, transformative influence of higher education should be available to all those who choose to participate in tertiary education, it is important to also determine whether a similar preference for younger individuals, along with negative ageist prejudices, might also exist within the tertiary education context.

To provide relevant background, this chapter will present a critical discussion of studies across time that have examined teacher expectations and ageism. The review of the literature begins with a comprehensive discussion of teacher expectation effects and the theoretical models of teacher expectations proposed to date. This is followed by an examination of the student characteristics that influence teacher expectations. As the current research focuses on age as a student characteristic that might influence teacher expectations, the phenomenon of ageism is then discussed, with a focus on the positive and negative qualities of stereotypes of older individuals. Finally, the occurrence of ageism in tertiary environments is discussed, with consideration given to the observed differences between older and younger students' in-class behaviour and attitudes, and academic achievement. The small amount of research that has been carried out to date in relation to academic staff attitudes, perceptions, and behaviours towards older students will also be discussed, with an emphasis on the methodology used.

**Teacher Expectations, Defined**

Teacher expectations are an example of an interpersonal factor that can influence student achievement (Cooper, 1979; Hoge, 1984). Early definitions of teacher expectations focussed on two key components: predictions for students’ future
performance, and teachers’ current knowledge of their students (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968). Definitions later evolved to incorporate teacher perceptions of in-class student behaviour, in addition to teachers’ perceptions of students’ present and future academic achievement (Brophy & Good, 1974; West & Anderson, 1976). Broadly, teacher expectation research initially involved manipulating or inducing high expectations in teachers by providing information about students related to their probable high achievement. Later, studies adopted a correlational design whereby teacher rankings of their students were collected and correlated with student achievement (Cooper 1983, 1985; Hoge, 1984). These rankings or ratings were often based on teacher perceptions of the general competencies of the student or how adequately the student performed in certain achievement domains (Cooper 1983, 1985).

The seminal study.

Any discussion or investigation into the history of teacher expectation research must recognise the contribution of Rosenthal and Jacobson’s (1968) seminal study, as captured in their book, *Pygmalion in the Classroom*. They described the Oak School experiment (sometimes referred to as the Pygmalion study) which was to become the first experimental study to demonstrate teacher expectation effects. The aim of their study was to determine whether students whose teachers were led to believe they would suddenly make more progress than they had previously, would indeed show more progress when compared to a control group. As part of the manipulation procedure, teachers were asked to administer the “Harvard Test of Inflected Acquisition,” which was in fact the Test of General Ability (TOGA; Flanagan, 1960), a nonverbal intelligence test measuring basic learning abilities.

Teachers were falsely informed that the test would predict the likelihood that a given student would show an inflexion point or “spurt”—that is, a sudden
improvement in their performance relative to their peers—within the near future.

Roughly four months after testing, a random sample of 77 students (between one to nine students from each classroom) were identified as “spurters” (i.e., the experimental group), with the remaining 305 students forming the control group. The students were re-tested using the same test for all children at 5, 8, and 20 months after the initial pre-test. Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968) found significant differences in the intelligence quotient (IQ) gains for students identified as “spurters” when compared to the rest of the class after 8 months, but only for students who had progressed to Grade 1 and Grade 2. Although all students showed some degree of IQ gain, students in the experimental group averaged an increase of 20.5 total IQ points, compared to those in the control group, who averaged an increase of 9.5 total IQ points. It should be noted, however, that not all of the Grade 1 and Grade 2 students in the experimental group out-performed the control group. Although not statistically significant, the control group students in one of the Grade 2 classes showed a greater increase in IQ points than those of the experimental group. Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968) argued that students whose teachers expected them to show greater intellectual gains did, in fact, outperform their peers, thus demonstrating what was referred to as an “expectancy advantage.” Such an effect is also more commonly referred to within the literature as a “self-fulfilling prophecy,” which posits that a person can prompt new behaviours in another in order to validate their previously held false beliefs (Merton, 1948). In the context of the classroom, the self-fulfilling prophecy occurs when a teacher holds a false belief about a student, then interacts with the student in accordance with their false belief, subsequently influencing the student’s behaviour and academic outcomes and hence verifying their initially held false belief (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968).
Learnings from the seminal study. The findings from the Oak School experiment were generally met with enthusiasm and praise by many who argued that the study successfully demonstrated how teacher expectations and the expectancy advantage could be used to improve student performance and raise intelligence (Spitz, 1999). These early findings paved the way for subsequent studies that have further demonstrated teacher expectations as self-fulfilling prophecies within the classroom. The Oak School experiment did, however, also receive its share of criticism, most of which was addressed by Rosenthal (1969, 1987). Some of the criticism received is discussed below.

One critique of Rosenthal and Jacobson’s (1968) study was the extremely low pre-test IQ scores of the students at the kindergarten level (Elashoff & Snow, 1970; Spitz, 1999; Thorndike, 1968). For example, two of the students in the experimental group scored 60 and 61 IQ points respectively in the pre-test, scores which indicated intellectual disability (Spitz, 1999; Thorndike, 1968). Thorndike (1968) argued that the scores obtained for the pre-test from the younger students indicated that “the testing was utterly worthless and meaningless” (p. 710). Similarly, Snow (1969) suggested that the low scores indicated the presence of serious measurement and data-analysis problems. Rosenthal (1969) clarified that the low-scoring students did not answer large sections of the test, although that in itself is perhaps an indicator that the students did not understand the questions being asked. Thorndike (1968) argued that the average gain in the TOGA’s reasoning IQ section for students who were entering the second grade (i.e., in the first grade during the pre-test) after 8 months indicated perfect scores obtained during the retest. Rosenthal (1969) countered that the effects of teacher expectations on reasoning IQ did not depend on the inclusions of the three lower grade classrooms singled out by Thorndike (1968), but rather that reasoning IQ
gains for the experimental group were higher than the control group in the majority of the classrooms examined.

Another critique of the Oak School experiment was that teachers were not actually observed in the classroom. As such, Rosenthal and Jacobson’s (1968) claims that teacher–student interactions influenced student achievement were difficult to fully substantiate. Elashoff and Snow (1970) noted that although the changes in IQ scores observed among the first- and second-graders were promising, the lack of clarification of how strong the expectancy effect was acted as a major limitation of the study. In fact, Rosenthal (1987) himself acknowledged that significance tests were unaccompanied by estimates of the sizes of the effects discussed.

In the time since, manipulated or induced teacher expectations research has become less popular as an approach (Hoge, 1984). Hoge (1984) argued that there were a number of issues in relation to manipulated or induced teacher expectations. Firstly, such studies lacked a consistent operational design, as different researchers used different manipulation or induction procedures, which produced varying strengths of the manipulation effect (Hoge, 1984). For example, the Oak School experiment provided teachers with a list of students who were expected to perform better in class (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968), and other studies provided teachers with student test scores which were then used by teachers to guide their expectations of future performance (e.g., Fleming & Anttonen, 1971). Similarly, although the Oak School experiment provided teachers with a list of students once, at the beginning of the year, in other studies (e.g., Goldsmith & Fry, 1971) teachers were reminded up to three times who was in the experimental group. Hence, it could be argued that these other studies employed a stronger manipulation procedure, although Goldsmith and Fry (1971) reported that they could not confidently infer successful teacher-bias
induction even after teachers were provided with three reminders. Researchers from the Oak School experiment were also unable to confidently state that the induction or manipulation procedures had been successful (Hoge, 1984). Post-study interviews found that teachers who were provided with biasing information often discounted the information provided to them for various reasons (e.g., Fleming & Anttonen, 1971; Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968). Finally, Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968) noted that whereas they would have preferred to also examine the effect of negative biasing information on teacher expectations and student achievement, they chose not to do so as they argued it would have been unethical. Hence, the Oak School experiment only demonstrated the effects of high expectations on student academic achievement and offered no insights into the potential consequences of low teacher expectations.

**Rist (1970): Tigers and clowns.**

Since the Oak School experiment, both positive and negative outcomes from the self-fulfilling prophecy in classrooms have been observed (Babad, Inbar & Rosenthal, 1982). Positive outcomes, when high teacher expectations enhance student performance (i.e., teachers overestimate their students’ abilities), are referred to as the *Galatea effect*, named after a statue in Greek mythology carved by King Pygmalion who eventually fell in love with the statue (Babad et al., 1982; Law, 1932). Negative outcomes, when low teacher expectations hinder student performance (i.e., teachers underestimate their students’ abilities), are known as the *Golem effect*, a term taken from the Hasidic myth of the Golem—a creature that was brought to life but grew into a monster that became destructive and had to be destroyed (Babad, Inbar, & Rosenthal, 1982). Babad et al. (1982) argued that the myth of the Golem was best suited to represent the influence of low expectations as it focussed on the influence of prejudice and negative stereotypes and self-fulfilling prophecies.
In Rist’s (1970) prominent study, he observed teacher–student interactions based on teacher expectations that were arguably influenced by students’ social class. In the study, a group of new-entrant kindergarten students were observed twice-weekly for 90 minutes during their first and third years. Seating allocations at the kindergarten level—carried out 8 days after the first day of kindergarten—were based on a student’s physical appearance (e.g., types of clothes worn, body odour), the income level of a student’s family (e.g., whether or not the student’s family received welfare benefits), family education background (e.g., parents’ highest education qualification), family size, level of interaction with the teacher (e.g., seeking to speak with the class teacher), and language used (e.g., Standard American English versus “black dialect”).

Students identified by the teacher as “ideal students” (e.g., who were well-dressed and groomed, from a high-income family, and whose parents were well-educated, and who interacted and communicated well with the teacher) were a mixture of both black and white students. Referred to by their teacher as “fast learners,” she had higher expectations for those students to succeed. The teacher responded more favourably to these students, as she believed that they possessed the right behavioural and cultural criteria for success (Rist, 1970). She referred to students whom she believed did not fulfil these criteria as “failures” (Rist, 1970).

The following year, the kindergarten teacher informed the first-grade teacher who the failures were, and the first-grade teacher placed students into reading groups based on their previous achievement. The failures were placed in the mid-achievement group, whereas the low-achievement group consisted of new students and students who were held back for the year. Rist (1970) argued that because the kindergarten teacher had spent more time teaching the fast learners, these students
were the only students who were prepared for the first-grade reading material and were subsequently placed at the top-performing reading table. The assigned second-grade teacher the following year also stated that students were allocated to groups based on their previous reading performance. The same pattern of group allocation followed from the previous year. Students from the top-performing table were placed in the “Tigers” reading group, whereas underperforming students or new students were placed in the “Clowns” reading group. Rist (1970) noted that the self-fulfilling prophecy—including both Galatea and Golem effects—was realised as the initial expectations of the kindergarten teacher resulted in the subsequent streaming of students into reading groups: “The child’s journey through the early grades of school at one reading level and in one social grouping appeared to be pre-ordained from the eighth day of kindergarten” (p. 287).

Given the evidence for teacher expectations exerting a real and observable effect on the performance and outcomes of students, it becomes important to gain a clear understanding of why such an effect might occur. The next section will chronologically present and contrast theoretical models for teacher expectations that sought to clarify the underlying process and steps driving the interaction between the formation of teacher expectations and the impact of these expectations on the academic outcomes of students.

Models of Teacher Expectations

Brophy and Good (1970).

Brophy and Good (1970) argued that teachers expected specific behaviour and achievements from particular students. These varied expectations could then cause the teacher to behave differently depending on which students they were interacting with. This variability in interaction style—hereafter referred to as teacher differential behaviour—communicated to the student the type of behaviour and achievement the
teacher expected from them. Teacher differential behaviour also affected student self-concept, achievement motivation, and levels of aspiration. If a teacher’s differential behaviour was consistent over time, and the student did not resist, it would influence the student’s achievement and behaviour. High-expectation students’ learning would be enhanced, and they would perform at a higher level than earlier achievement had indicated (i.e., the Galatea effect), whereas the opposite would hold for low-expectation students (i.e., the Golem effect). According to the model, a student’s achievement and behaviour could eventually become consistent with their teacher’s initial expectations for them.

Brophy and Good’s (1970) six-component model, detailed below, contributed significantly to the understanding of the mediation of teacher expectations, arguably becoming the blueprint for other models of teacher expectations. According to the model, teacher expectations play out in the following manner:

1. Teachers form differential expectations for student performance.
2. Teachers behave differently towards different students.
3. The differential teacher behaviour communicates differential teacher expectations to individual students.
4. Students’ self-concept, achievement motivation, level of aspiration, classroom conduct, and interactions with teachers are affected by differential teacher treatment.
5. These effects complement and reinforce teachers’ initial expectations.
6. Ultimately, students show a difference in their achievement and other outcomes, indicating that teacher expectations can function as self-fulfilling prophecies.
This model focussed on dyadic, observable teacher behaviours rather than teacher behaviours directed at entire classes or groups of students (Good, 1981). It not only contributed greatly to the understanding of teacher behaviours and self-fulfilling prophecy effects, but it also allowed for teacher behaviours and communication to be scrutinised (Rubie-Davies, 2007).

Brophy (1983) later expanded on the final step in the model (i.e., student achievement and behaviour conforming to a teacher’s initial expectations). He argued that students often responded to teacher expectations through a change in either their motivation to study or in their feelings towards the subject/class/education, before showing any changes in their intelligence or academic achievement (Brophy, 1983). Hence, teacher expectations—displayed through teacher behaviour— influenced student self-concept, achievement motivation, level of aspiration, classroom conduct, and interactions of students with teachers, in addition to student academic outcomes (Brophy, 1983).

**Cooper’s (1979) expectation communication model.**

Although Brophy and Good’s (1970) model suggested the possibility of effects from teacher behaviours that were both direct (e.g., low-expectation students given less work to do) and indirect (e.g., lowered student motivation when given less work to do), Cooper’s (1979) model argued that the manner in which teacher expectations and behaviours influenced students’ self-concept and the teacher–student relationship was more complex. According to Cooper and Good (1983), teachers might accurately perceive the academic abilities of their students initially but might fail to notice subsequent changes in a student’s behaviour in the classroom. This risked limiting a student’s academic progress and might confirm the teacher’s initial expectations. For some students, teachers might also act to protect their original evaluation when faced with contrary information, by identifying extraneous reasons
for a change in student performance. For example, a teacher might hold high expectations for a particular student’s reading ability and, when faced with evidence of less-than-expected achievement by that student, the teacher might identify a reason beyond the student’s control (e.g., an illness), and might continue to evaluate the student’s performance as equal to that of a higher performer.

Cooper (1979) suggested that the evidence available at the time more likely supported the notion that teacher expectations acted to sustain student performance at undesirably low levels, rather than actively changing or altering student performance. This suggestion did not diminish the significance of the phenomenon; rather, it explained the maintenance of low student performance via teacher expectations and why it “ought to be a focus of societal concern” (p. 393).

Cooper’s (1979) expectation communication model considered the possible mechanisms by which teacher behaviour could influence students’ self-concept, the teacher–student interaction context, feedback, and the classroom climate. The model was introduced as a causal model that focussed on the influence of expectation communication on student behaviour (Cooper, 1979). Much like Brophy and Good’s (1970) model, Cooper’s (1979) model began with teachers forming varying expectations for their students. Cooper (1979) posited that teacher expectations were based on student background and abilities (e.g., student ethnicity, gender, and social class). Teachers often possessed student background information (e.g., student name, ethnicity, home address, parent’s name) prior to meeting a student, which could act to influence their expectations based on their existing network of social stereotypes (Cooper, Baron, & Lowe, 1975; Rist, 1970).

In his model, Cooper (1979) also paid attention to possible differences in classroom interaction contexts. It was argued that classroom contexts (i.e., where a
teacher–student interaction took place and how it came about) differed in the amount of personal control afforded to a teacher by the students. When identifying the amount of control that a student afforded a teacher—referred to as a teachers’ perception of control—three dimensions were considered to be important for positive student outcomes: control over teacher–student exchanges (i.e., what the interaction was concerning), timing (i.e., when the interaction occurred), and duration (i.e., how long the interaction lasted). Cooper (1979) contended that teacher expectations influenced perceptions of control along the three dimensions. Teachers, for example, might presume that teaching new material to low-expectation students might require more time, which might then reduce the teacher’s sense of control over the duration of interactions with them. As such, the teacher might choose not to teach those students new material.

According to Cooper (1979), teacher perceptions of control could also influence the feedback that they provided to their students, and the socioemotional climate of the classroom. Specifically, Cooper’s (1979) model suggested that teachers’ feedback could influence a student’s beliefs about the amount of effort necessary to achieve, subsequently influencing their academic performance. The model was later revised to incorporate additional student interpretations and perceptions of teacher behaviour, as it was found that teachers’ perceptions of control were only weakly correlated to teacher behaviour, and students’ self-efficacy beliefs were more strongly related to perceptions of teacher behaviour (Cooper, 1985; Cooper & Good, 1983).

**Darley and Fazio’s (1980) model of simple social interactions.**

Darley and Fazio (1980) posited that there were a number of intermediary steps between teachers expressing their expectations, and students reacting to those expectations, that had not been fully explored in previous models. Their model
ascribed greater importance to the role of the student, as they highlighted the important step of students interpreting and responding to perceived teacher expectations. Darley and Fazio reasoned that the actions of a teacher did not convey any meaning unless they were noticed, interpreted, and given meaning by a student. As such, social interactions would occur when a teacher developed a set of expectations about a student (either based on previous experience or categories to which the student might belong) and reacted to the student based on those expectations. The student then interpreted the meaning behind the teacher’s actions and reacted accordingly. In return, the teacher then interpreted the student’s actions, creating a loop in which the teacher acted towards the student, and so forth. Darley and Fazio also identified an additional step in the sequence: After reacting to the teacher, the student might interpret the meaning of their own actions and potentially infer something new about themselves, modifying their self-concept as a consequence.

If Darley and Fazio’s (1980) model of simple social interactions was to be overlaid with Brophy and Good’s (1970) six-component model, it could be argued that teachers might form expectations for their students based on previous observations of, and interactions with, the student, or on stereotypes based on the groups to which individual students might belong. Teacher expectations could then guide the manner in which the teacher behaved towards students, with students noticing their teacher’s behaviour towards them, and responding accordingly. The teacher might then interpret the student’s behaviour as a confirmation of their initial expectations. Finally, students might then incorporate their teacher’s expectations, as expressed through the teacher’s in-class behaviour, into their own self-concept.
**Weinstein’s ecological paradigm (2002).**

Weinstein (2002) proposed an ecological paradigm which better described the interactions between individuals and their environment. She contended that teacher expectations and their mechanisms were both institutional and societal, as well as intra- and interpersonal. The ecological paradigm increased the focus on classroom climate and student perceptions of their teachers’ differential expectations and treatment. Put simply, Weinstein (2002) argued that a student’s complex environment (school, home, or community) might influence their perceptions and reactions to teacher expectations as well as their susceptibility to teacher expectation effects.

A number of critical assumptions formed this paradigm. Firstly, Weinstein (2002) described environments as “nested settings” (i.e., classes within a school, within a community) that were complex and multi-levelled, with each individual (or student) being different. Also, individuals interacted with their environments in a different manner (i.e., different students responded differently to the expectations of their teachers). An individual’s perceptions and understandings of their environment are an essential source of information, and ecological transitions occur whereby a person’s roles can shift over time (Weinstein, 2002).

**Rubie-Davies’s (2014) model.**

Rubie-Davies’s (2014) model differed from the previous models in two ways. She argued that teacher expectations were influenced by a teacher’s beliefs about teaching and learning in conjunction with their knowledge about their students (guided by student characteristics and prior achievement), and that teachers could also hold class-level expectations. Her model posited that the beliefs that a teacher held about teaching and learning could influence the academic and behavioural expectations held for their students. Rubie-Davies (Rubie, 2004; Rubie-Davies, 2007) identified high-expectation teachers (i.e., teachers who overestimated their students’
academic performance), average-progress teachers (i.e., teachers who overestimated their students’ academic performance, but whose students did not make significant gains), and low-expectation teachers (i.e., teachers who underestimated their students’ academic performance). Teachers could also form individual-level expectations for students based on information about the student (e.g., student characteristics), or the student’s prior achievement.

Rubie-Davies (2014) suggested that teacher expectations could influence the instructional and emotional climate experienced by students, as the teacher communicated their expectations to students both verbally and non-verbally. She argued that teachers planned and delivered learning opportunities to their students based on the expectations they held for their students (Rubie, 2004; Rubie-Davies, 2007, 2014). Students then interpreted their teachers’ verbal and nonverbal interactions and behaviours, and experienced the instructional and emotional climate of the classroom, which influenced their learning opportunities and experiences. Ultimately, students’ academic performance and in-class behaviour reflected and confirmed the initial expectations held by the teacher. Rubie-Davies (2014) highlighted the influence of teacher expectations on the instructional and emotional climate created by the teacher, and, as it could be argued that the climate created was experienced by more than one student, this model also offered an account for how teacher expectations might influence the whole class.

In summary, models of teacher expectations typically contain three agreed-upon stages: Teachers develop different expectations for their different students; teachers express their expectations by treating their high-expectation students differently compared to their low-expectation students; and finally, students react to
the differential treatment accordingly thus playing out the self-fulfilling prophecy (Urhahne, 2015).

The Expression of Teacher Expectations

Teacher expectation models (e.g., Brophy & Good, 1970; Cooper, 1979; Darley & Fazio, 1980) placed emphasis on how teacher expectations can act as self-fulfilling prophecies. An important step described in the models related to teachers reacting to and treating students in accordance with the initial expectations they had formed for individual students. Whether teacher expectations actually influenced student achievement, however, was contingent upon teachers consistently communicating their inaccurate expectations to students (Brophy & Good, 1970). The next section will detail how interpersonal expectations of teachers are communicated to their students through teacher differential behaviour.

Early evidence for teacher differential behaviour.

Brophy and Good (1970) carried out one of the first naturalistic classroom-observation studies of teacher differential behaviour, in which four classroom teachers were asked to rank their students in order of student academic achievement. The researchers then selected three boys and three girls, who were ranked as high-, middle- or low-expectation students, from each classroom, for observation. Brophy and Good (1970) hypothesised that teacher expectations (as indicated by teacher rankings of the students) would influence the teacher’s behaviour towards the students (e.g., teacher praise, criticism, and teacher-afforded response opportunities), student classroom performance, and ultimately, test scores.

It was found that teacher behaviour towards low-expectation students limited student learning, with the opposite effect being evident for high-expectation students (Brophy & Good, 1970). Teachers called upon high-expectation students more frequently and often praised them after a correct response. Teachers were also more
likely to repeat or rephrase a question or give clues when interacting with high-expectation students but supplied answers or called on a different student when low-expectation students could not provide answers. Low-expectation students were also criticised for their in-class behaviour more often. High-expectation students were observed to behave differently in class: They raised their hands more frequently and initiated more procedural and work-related interactions with their teachers. By the end of the year, high-expectation students produced more correct answers, had fewer problems in the reading groups, and achieved higher average scores on the achievement test.

Taking the small sample size into account (24 students in total), Brophy and Good (1970) concluded that student achievement gains were related to the teacher’s performance, behaviour, demands, and expectations. They observed differences in dyadic teacher–student interaction patterns between high- and low-expectation students, which ultimately influenced students’ academic outcomes. Teacher differential behaviour resulted in the academic performance of some students improving (i.e., high-expectation students), and some diminishing (i.e., low-expectation students), depending on the direction of the teacher’s expectations.

Rosenthal (1973, 1981) presented his four-factor theory, which focussed solely on differential teacher–student interactions. The theory was based on 31 earlier studies that had examined the dyadic teacher–student interactions. Rosenthal (1973, 1981) argued that teachers positively influenced student academic performance when they created warm socioemotional relationships with their students (climate), gave students more feedback about their academic performance (feedback), taught students more difficult material (input), and provided students with more opportunities to respond, ask questions, and generally interact more with the teacher (output).
Teachers created warmer socioemotional climates for students they deemed to be “special”—high-expectation students—and communicated this warmth through nonverbal cues (Rosenthal, 1974, 1981). Teachers within the studies on which Rosenthal based the four-factor theory were observed to nod their head or smile more when they were interacting with students whom they considered to be high achievers, regardless of whether students were primary-aged (e.g., Chaikin, Sigler, & Derlega, 1974) or secondary-aged students (Kester & Letchworth, 1972). It was also observed that teachers provided high-expectation students with more opportunities to learn new materials and taught these students more difficult material (Rosenthal, 1974).

**Specific differential behaviour.** Brophy (1983) argued that teachers would benefit from a thorough list of specific mediation mechanisms or teacher behaviours that could be used to guide their pedagogy. He subsequently provided a list of behaviours that had been shown by various studies to be connected to the mediation of teacher expectation effects (Brophy, 1983). Building on previous research (e.g., Rosenthal's [1973] four-factor theory) the list presented 17 teacher behaviours that negatively influenced students’ academic outcomes. These behaviours included waiting less time for low-expectation students to answer questions (Allington, 1980; Rowe, 1974), providing less-informative feedback to the questions of low-expectation students (Cooper, 1979), and using less effective but time-consuming instructional methods with low-expectation students when time was limited (Swann & Snyder, 1980). Overall, the mechanisms or teacher behaviours comprised variables such as patterns of reinforcement, frequency of interactions, nonverbal cues, and assignment of class work (M. J. Harris & Rosenthal, 1985).

In order for a behaviour to be considered a mediating variable for teacher expectations, it must be influenced by teacher expectations and used to express
teacher expectations, as well as influence students’ academic outcomes (M. J. Harris & Rosenthal, 1985). M. J. Harris and Rosenthal (1985) identified particular behavioural variables that had been found to mediate teacher expectations and estimated the statistical and practical significance of these behaviours on student academic outcomes. In their meta-analysis, M. J. Harris and Rosenthal (1985) examined 136 studies which were then coded and categorised according to teacher behaviours.

The studies were separated based on the specific configuration of the dependent and independent variables used. Only behaviours that were represented in four or more studies were categorised. After the studies were sorted and coded, they were categorised into 31 behavioural variables, with some degree of overlap. For example, it could be argued that praise (i.e., “instances of positive feedback and positive evaluation directed by the teacher toward the student” [p. 367]) shared some similarities with indirect influence (i.e., “a category of the Flanders coding system consisting of teacher acceptance of students’ feelings, use of students’ ideas, and praise” [p. 367]), and that persistence (i.e., “when the teacher repeated questions or otherwise prolonged interactions with the student” [p. 367]) shared similarities with wait time (i.e., “the length of time a teacher waited after asking a student a question before moving on to another student, another topic, or giving the answer” [p. 367]).

M. J. Harris and Rosenthal (1985) found strong evidence for the role of four key factors as mediators of teachers’ (or others’) expectations (climate: 47 studies and Pearson correlation coefficient $r = .20$; feedback: 46 studies and Pearson correlation coefficient $r = .13$; input: 24 studies and Pearson correlation coefficient $r = .26$; output: 48 studies and Pearson correlation coefficient $r = .19$). Input was identified as the most important mediating factor, with feedback being the least important, with a
very small combined effect size \((r = .07)\) overall. Due to the lack of evidence to support the practical importance of feedback, Rosenthal (1989) removed feedback as a factor and instead stressed the importance of climate, which was found to exert a strong influence over behaviours and outcomes \((r = .36)\).

Harris and Rosenthal (M. J. Harris & Rosenthal, 1985; Rosenthal, 1989) proposed a simplification of the four-factor theory. Their affect/effect theory suggested that changes in teacher expectations translated to changes in the affect shown by the teacher towards a student (Rosenthal, 1989). Both the input and output factors were combined, which mainly represented the degree of effort exerted by the teacher while teaching the student, as indicated by the teacher’s instructional behaviour (Babad, 1993; Rosenthal, 1989, 1994).

**More recent evidence for teacher differential behaviour.**

Urhahne (2015) investigated the likelihood that teacher behaviour mediated the relationship between teacher expectations and student motivation, emotion, and academic performance. A total of 246 students for whom English was a second language completed a standardised English test in class. Students also completed a questionnaire pertaining to their motivation, emotion, and their perceptions of their teacher’s behaviour towards them. To gauge teachers’ expectations of their students, teachers were asked to predict the performance of their students on the English test and to assess the students’ characteristics outside of the classroom.

Urhahne (2015) reported that teachers both overestimated or underestimated student performance on the test (measured by comparing the actual test scores to teacher judgements about student test scores). High-expectation students were identified as those for whom teachers had overestimated their test performance, whereas low-expectation students were those whose test performance was underestimated by their teachers. Low-expectation students reported that they felt
teachers were less available to them and that it was difficult to communicate with their teachers and maintain positive student-teacher relationships. Those students also reported lower self-concept of ability, learning-goal orientation and learning enjoyment, and lower expectations of success and aspiration compared to high-expectation students. Urhahne (2015) concluded that teacher expectations were expressed via their accessibility to students, and this influenced student learning-goal orientation and enjoyment of learning, which then impacted upon student academic performance.

Teacher Expectations and Student Awareness

Brattesani, Weinstein, and Marshall (1984) argued that in order for teacher expectations and teacher differential behaviour to influence student academic outcomes, students must first be aware of these expectations, and must also interpret, accept, and conform to them. An important intermediary step in the models of teacher expectations (e.g., Darley & Fazio, 1980), between teachers expressing their expectations for students and students actually being influenced by their teachers’ expectations for them, is the students noticing, interpreting, and giving meaning to teacher behaviours. Due to the importance of this intermediary process, this following section discusses the next process in the mediation of teacher expectation effects: student perceptions of differential treatment by teachers.

Students’ perception of teacher differential behaviour.

Historically, perceived teacher differential behaviour was measured indirectly in order to reduce the likelihood of students not wanting to directly share their thoughts about undesirable teacher behaviour (Weinstein, 2002). Rather than having students report on their own teacher’s behaviour directed towards them, students were presented with vignettes that described hypothetical students. Students were then asked to select from a list of teacher behaviours that best described the way in which a
previous teacher or teachers in general, might work with the student described (Weinstein, 2002). The list of teacher behaviours was often obtained from the Teacher Treatment Inventory (TTI; Weinstein & Middlestadt, 1979), a questionnaire containing 60 teacher behaviours categorised into seven broad groups: teacher support, teacher attention, teacher expectations, teacher questions, variability in activities, task orientation, and teacher versus student direction directed towards a single hypothetical student.

Weinstein and Middlestadt (1979) investigated whether students aged between 6 and 12 years were able to perceive differential treatment of hypothetical low and high-achieving male students. They argued that different teacher behaviours selected in the TTI for the low and high achievers would suggest perceived differential teacher behaviour. Their study incorporated TTI ratings, an adjective rating (specifically, how popular, friendly, powerful, competitive, attentive, independent, and successful the hypothetical students were on a 4-point scale), a student self-concept measure, and interviews following the completion of the questionnaires.

Weinstein and Middlestadt found that students perceived the male high achievers to be more popular, friendly, competitive, attentive, independent, and successful than the male low achievers. Students of all ages and genders perceived differential treatment for the hypothetical students; this was independent of self-concept ratings. Students reported that it was more likely that the high-achieving males were provided with more opportunities to succeed, were trusted more, and were allowed to make up their own projects. Thus, Weinstein and Middlestadt (1979) demonstrated that students noticed the differential treatment of high- and low-achieving students by their teachers. In later studies, (e.g., Brattesani et al., 1984; Kuklinski & Weinstein, 2000, 2001; Weinstein et al., 1982; Weinstein, Marshall,
Sharp, & Botkin; 1987), Weinstein further demonstrated that both male and female students were able to perceive differential treatment directed towards female and male high- and low-achieving students.

**Student perceptions of nonverbal teacher differential behaviour.**

Teacher differential behaviour can be observed in both verbal and nonverbal behaviour (Babad, 1993, 2009; Babad & Taylor, 1992). A teacher’s verbal behaviour is more controlled, as teachers actively adjust their teaching style or feedback given to students; in contrast, nonverbal behaviour is less inhibited and thus arguably more truthful (Babad, 1993). Independent reviewers who watched 10-second video clips of teachers engaging with their students reported no differences in teaching behaviour but reported differences in the manner in which teachers displayed their emotions when teaching (Babad, Bernieri, & Rosenthal, 1987). Specifically, reviewers reported differences in what was referred to as dogmatic behaviour (i.e., not flexible, not democratic, not warm) and negative affect (i.e., hostile, condescending, tense/nervous/anxious). Negative affect was also detected in clips with no audio, as the independent reviewers reported that negative affect was detected mostly on the teacher’s face (Babad et al., 1987).

In a study that aimed to demonstrate students’ sensitivity to the nonverbal manner in which teachers expressed their expectations, Babad and Taylor (1992) had participants who acted as judges (students aged 10, 13 and 16 years, and their teachers) watch 10-second videos in Hebrew. The study was focussed exclusively on nonverbal communication, as the study was conducted in New Zealand and none of the judges understood Hebrew. The videos were of teachers talking about, and to, high expectations and low expectations students. Judges were told that the purpose of the study was to make judgements as to whether the students in the video clips were strong or weak learners, and whether they were liked or disliked by their teacher.
It was found that the judges did not detect teacher expectations from the clips of teachers talking *about* the students, but when judges observed the teachers talking *to* their students, expectation differences were detected (Babad & Taylor, 1992). Judges perceived teachers as liking the students who were identified as high expectations students more than students who were identified as low expectations students. Babad and Taylor (1992) concluded that teachers probably had distinctive nonverbal styles (i.e., facial expressions and body language) when interacting with high and low expectations students, which could be identified objectively via their nonverbal behaviour.

Research into the nonverbal behaviour of teachers extends to secondary (e.g., Babad, Avni-Babad, & Rosenthal, 2003) and tertiary environments (e.g., Ambady & Rosenthal, 1993; Babad et al., 2004). Respondents have been found to be accurate in evaluating high school teachers’ and lecturers’ nonverbal behaviour, with their evaluations correlating with students’ actual end-of-course ratings of their teacher or lecturer’s teaching (Ambady & Rosenthal, 1993; Babad et al., 2003, 2004). For example, Babad et al. (2004) examined ratings of lecturers’ nonverbal behaviour by “judges” consisting of students, lecturers, and professors based on 9-second video clips. These were compared to end-of-course student ratings, and it was found that nonverbal behaviour in lecturers significantly correlated with the end-of-course ratings provided by students.

To recap, the strong and significant influence of teacher expectations on student academic achievement has been reviewed. The different ways in which teachers treat students for whom they hold high or low expectations, as well as students’ perceptions and the influence of the differential treatment, has also been discussed. Yet to be discussed is the specific manner in which teachers form their
initial expectations. In the next section of this chapter, a thorough examination of the influence of student characteristics, and the manner in which stereotypes based on those characteristics influence teacher expectations, will be conducted.

**The Role of Student Characteristics Within Teacher Expectations**

There are a number of non-induced and naturally occurring student characteristics that can influence teacher expectations (Clifford & Walster, 1973; Diamond et al., 2004; M. J. Harris & Rosenthal, 1985; Obiakor, 1999; Rubie-Davies et al., 2006). These include ethnicity, gender, and other physical characteristics of the students. Teachers risk forming biases based on these characteristics instead of basing their judgements on more rational and objective measures, such as examination performance (Babad, 2009). A selection of these student characteristics and their potential influence on teacher expectations are discussed below.

**Student ethnicity.**

Perhaps the most researched student characteristic to date has been student ethnicity, as researchers attempt to determine whether teachers hold ethnicity-based expectations for their students. Tenenbaum and Ruck (2007) conducted four meta-analyses to examine differences in teacher expectations, referrals, and speech directed towards ethnic minorities (e.g., African Americans, Asians Americans, and Latinos) compared to European American or white students. From an analysis of a sample of 39 journal articles published between 1968 and 2003, Tenenbaum and Ruck found that teachers held higher expectations for Asian American students ($d = .17$), compared to white children and that overall, teachers held more positive expectations for white children compared to Latino students ($d = .46$) and African American students ($d = .25$).

Within Tenenbaum and Ruck’s meta-analyses, 10 studies investigating the use of negative speech (e.g., criticisms) did not find any evidence to support the assertion
that teachers were more likely to direct negative speech towards students from ethnic minorities ($d = .02$). However, evidence from 11 studies supported the assertion that teachers were more likely to direct positive speech (e.g., encouragement, questions) towards white students compared to students from ethnic minorities ($d = .21$).

Tenenbaum and Ruck argued that the findings from their meta-analyses provided evidence that teachers favoured white students and held lower expectations for African American and Latino students, which might have reduced academic performance and created an unfair classroom climate with limited educational opportunities for African American and Latino students.

Van den Bergh, Denessen, Hornstra, Voeten, and Holland (2010) aimed to investigate achievement gaps between ethnic minorities in the Netherlands (specifically, students of Turkish or Moroccan origin) and the ethnic majority, by examining whether prejudiced attitudes held by teachers could be detected via their expectation ratings. Attitudes towards students were measured explicitly via self-report, and also implicitly via the implicit association test (IAT; Greenwald, McGhee, & Schwartz, 1998). The IAT measured the strength of the association between ethnic background (i.e., Turkish or Moroccan versus Dutch names) and the valence of words (i.e., words with positive versus negative connotations).

Van den Bergh et al. (2010) found that teacher expectations and student academic achievement related to the implicit prejudiced attitudes held by the teachers towards students from ethnic minorities. Specifically, teachers who showed negative prejudiced attitudes in their IAT scores also stated in their self-report that students of Turkish and Moroccan descent had less promising prospects and were less intelligent when compared to Dutch students. The achievement gap between students of Turkish
and Moroccan descent relative to Dutch students was larger in classrooms with
teachers who showed evidence of such biases.

Within the New Zealand context, Rubie-Davies et al. (2006) explored the
difference in teacher expectations and judgements of student reading performance for
students of varying ethnic backgrounds in New Zealand. They also compared teacher
expectations and judgements to actual student achievement. New Zealand Europeans
(Pākehā) form the ethnic majority in New Zealand (74%), followed by indigenous
Māori (14.9%), Asians (11.8%), Pasifika people (7.4%) and finally those of Middle
Eastern, Latin American, and African descent, who total 1.2% of the population
(Statistics New Zealand, 2014). Rubie-Davies et al. (2006) recruited a diverse sample
of 540 primary-aged students and 21 of their teachers. At the beginning of the year
(i.e., one month into the academic year), teachers completed a survey examining their
expectations for their students’ achievement in reading. Teachers were asked at
which level on a 7-point Likert scale (from very much below to very much above
average) they expected their students to achieve in reading by the end of the year.
Teachers were then surveyed for a second time at the end of the year to provide
comparative data.

Achievement data from the beginning of the year showed that Pasifika
students were significantly underachieving in reading compared to Pākehā and Asian
students. There were no significant differences in achievement across any other
ethnicities. However, at the beginning of the academic year teachers held
significantly different expectations for students based on student ethnicity.
Specifically, teachers held lower expectations for Māori students when compared to
Pākehā, Asian, and Pasifika students.
At the end of the year, teacher expectations from the second survey and teacher judgements of student achievement (i.e., their actual achievement) were compared. It was found that teachers held significantly higher expectations for Pākehā, Asian, and Pasifika students, but not for Māori students. Teacher expectations for the reading ability of their Māori students were significantly lower than those for Pākehā and Asian students. Additionally, the achievement data for Māori and Pasifika students were significantly lower than for Pākehā and Asian students; Māori students showed the least achievement gains compared to the other students. Hence, although Māori students were achieving at the same level as Pākehā and Asian students at the beginning of the year, by year’s end they were underperforming. Although it could be argued that the lower expectations held by teachers for their Māori students might have been accurate (based on their subsequent lower performance), the same cannot be said for Pasifika students as, unlike their teacher predictions, they were not found to be performing at the same level as Pākehā and Asian students. Rubie-Davies et al. (2006) concluded that teacher expectations were not based on student achievement, but, rather, teacher expectations were influenced by student ethnicity.

Lower expectations for students based on ethnicity might stem from stereotypical beliefs—for example, that Māori are less interested in education (Bishop, Berryman, Cavanagh, & Teddy, 2009; Bishop, Berryman, Tiakiwai, & Richardson, 2003). Rubie-Davies et al. (2006) argued that Māori students in their study might not have been given equal learning opportunities, which arrested their reading progress at an earlier level, compared to the other groups of students who were provided with more challenging opportunities that significantly enhanced their reading.
To investigate if teachers’ negative stereotypical beliefs either implicitly or explicitly influenced their expectations for their students, Peterson, Rubie-Davies, Osborne, and Sibley (2016) used both implicit and explicit teacher expectation measures. Thirty-eight teachers from 11 schools participated in their study, and student data were obtained from 1080 students taught by the teachers who participated. Teachers’ explicit expectations for their students were measured on a 7-point Likert scale, whereby teachers were asked to predict the level of their students’ academic performance by the end of the year. Teachers’ implicit attitudes for their students’ academic performance were assessed using a modified version of the self-esteem IAT (Greenwald & Farnham, 2000). A task titled the “Teacher Implicit Academic Achievement Association Task” (TIAAAT) measured the strength of the association between Pākehā, Māori, and Asian surnames (e.g., Clarke, Wairau, and Wong), images (e.g., 10/10 or 1/10), and/or words associated with academic success and failure (e.g., excellent, poor). The researchers argued that easier pairings between surnames and academic success—measured by faster reaction times—would indicate a stronger association. Students’ actual achievement data in reading and mathematics were also collected.

Peterson et al. (2016) found that when prior achievement was controlled for, teachers’ explicit expectations did not contribute to the differences in year-end achievement or the ethnic achievement gap. However, it was found that the TIAAAT scores for all teachers showed bias, whereby Pākehā students were more quickly paired with words and symbols depicting success when compared to Māori or Asian names, with an opposite effect occurring when paired with words and symbols depicting failure. In contrast to what the researchers hypothesised, however, teachers were faster to categorise a Māori name when paired with achievement, compared to
an Asian name. It was observed that in mathematics, there were larger academic gains among students from the ethnic group favoured by teachers (i.e., Pākehā students), demonstrating that teachers’ implicit prejudiced attitudes influenced students’ performance. Up to 25% of the variance in mathematics achievement and 30% of the variance in reading achievement at year-end was attributable to teacher or school factors (e.g., teachers’ implicit prejudiced attitudes, school socioeconomic status), factors outside of the students’ control.

On a more positive note, Peterson et al.’s (2016) results also demonstrated that students from classrooms with high-expectation teachers showed improvements in reading, independent of student ethnicity. This finding was supported by Rubie-Davies’s (2014) model of teacher expectations, whereby high-expectation teachers who hold high class-level expectations create a more conducive instructional and emotional class climate which enhances student performance. However, the same effect was not observed in relation to mathematics performance. Peterson et al. (2016) theorised that this differential outcome might reflect a better ability within teachers to predict the reading abilities of their students, and a relative difficulty in accurately predicting performance in mathematics. As student reading performance (but not mathematics performance) was communicated to students via rankings on a wall chart, it might also be that the reading abilities of students were communicated more explicitly. The rankings ultimately influenced student behaviour and, subsequently, student performance.

Turner et al.’s (2015) investigation involved secondary school teachers and their students in the New Zealand context. Through questionnaires and interviews, they investigated the relationship between teacher expectations and student ethnicity. Turner et al. discovered that teacher expectations were influenced by student
ethnicity, whereby teacher expectations of their students’ performance in mathematics differed depending on the ethnicity of the student, even controlling for prior achievement. It was observed that teacher expectations were highest for Asian and Pākehā students, and lowest for Pasifika and Māori students. Turner et al. suggested that these lower expectations might go some way to explaining the achievement gap present in New Zealand, in which Pasifika and Māori students often underperform compared to Asian and Pākehā students.

**Student gender.**

Student gender is another student characteristic that has been widely examined within the teacher expectation field, but findings have been equivocal. Student gender is more often reported as a moderator of teacher expectation effects that interact with other variables such as study subject (Eccles & Jacobs, 1986; Hinnant, O’Brien, & Ghazarian, 2009; Meece, Parsons, Kaczala, & Goff, 1982) or student socioeconomic status (Auwarter & Aruguete, 2008). For example, Eccles and Jacobs (1986) reported that female students were more vulnerable to teachers’ stereotyped expectations specifically in relation to mathematics achievement. In contrast, Jussim, Eccles, and Madon (1996), who examined roughly 2000 students in seventh-grade mathematics classes, later noted that the predictive effects of teacher expectations based on student gender in mathematics were small, with an effect size (standardised regression coefficient) between .10 to .30. They concluded that female students were no more significantly affected by teacher expectations than male students.

Auwarter and Aruguete (2008) reported that teachers were more likely to have lower expectations for students believed to be from lower socioeconomic backgrounds in general, especially if the student was male. More recently, Mizala, Martinez, and Martinez (2015) replicated Auwarter and Aruguete's (2008) study. Using a similar methodology involving the use of vignettes (hypothetical primary
school students who varied in gender and socioeconomic status), their participants were trainee teachers rather than registered teachers. Mizala et al. (2015) found that student gender had a significant effect on teacher expectations for trainee teachers who themselves reported high levels of anxiety in regard to their own mathematics skills. Male students obtained higher ratings for their mathematics performance compared to female students. Mizala et al. (2015) also found an effect of student socioeconomic status, as trainee teachers in their study held significantly higher expectations for students described as being from higher socioeconomic backgrounds.

**Student age.**

Although student age has been examined as a moderator of teacher expectation effects, most available research to date has been carried out at the primary school level (e.g., Kuklinski & Weinstein, 2001; McKown & Weinstein, 2002; Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968; Weinstein et al., 1987). Conclusions about the influencing role of student age have been mixed. Some researchers (e.g., Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968) have argued that older primary-aged students were less likely to be influenced by teacher expectations than younger primary-aged students, due to their greater self-awareness. In contrast, McKown and Weinstein (2002) have suggested that older primary-aged students were, in fact, more likely to perceive and internalise their teachers’ lower expectations for them. Weinstein et al. (1987) argued that the self-expectations in 10-year-olds (compared to students aged between 6 and 7 years) were more consistent with their teachers’ expectations for them, suggesting an increasing effect with age.

**Teacher Expectations and the Tertiary Environment**

Due to the currently limited collection of teacher expectation research conducted beyond the primary and secondary school setting, the influence of age-based stereotyping on teacher expectations in tertiary settings has not yet been
examined in depth. To date, only one study has examined teacher expectations at the tertiary level. Li and Rubie-Davies (2017) examined the influence of tertiary-teaching-staff academic expectations on students’ academic outcomes in two universities in China. Participants were 50 staff members who taught an English-as-a-foreign-language course and their 4,617 first-year students (Li & Rubie-Davies, 2017). Teacher expectations were measured by asking teaching staff to predict their students’ academic achievement by the end of the academic year, using a standardised examination (College English Test Band or CET). Li and Rubie-Davies (2017) proposed that in tertiary environments where staff members had limited access to individual students due to time constraints, class-level expectations were to be expected, as opposed to individual expectations for specific students. They also proposed these class-level expectations would be consistent across all of the classes that they taught, because teacher expectations were based to a greater degree on staff-member characteristics and teaching beliefs rather than individual students. Controlling for students’ prior achievement, they hypothesised that the class-level expectations of teaching staff would influence students’ end-of-year academic achievement, whereby students who were taught by staff identified as high-expectation teachers (that is, teaching staff who held high class-level expectations) would achieve to a higher level than students taught by staff who were identified as low-expectation teachers.

Li and Rubie-Davies’s (2017) findings supported their hypotheses, in that teaching staff who taught multiple classes held similar academic expectations for all students across all classes. The authors also concluded that the expectations of teaching staff had a significant effect on students’ academic achievement. They argued that individual student characteristics did not influence staff expectations for
their students, although it was also noted that the age range of students was limited (most students were approximately 18 years old). On discussing the limitations in their research project, Li and Rubie-Davies (2017, 2018) stated that an investigation encompassing a more diverse sample of student participants (e.g., students studying different subjects, students from different ethnicities, a different cultural context) was necessary. The current research project is based in a tertiary environment which encompasses a more diverse sample of students.

In New Zealand, tertiary education includes education provided by private training establishments, institutes of technology and polytechnics, wānanga (institutions that provide education in a Māori cultural context), universities, and workplace training (New Zealand Qualifications Authority, 2017). A diverse range of students is enrolled in tertiary education in New Zealand, including those of varying ages. The unique nature of tertiary education is such that the age range in a class might be larger than might typically be expected at the primary- and secondary school level. Hence, age becomes another student characteristic that could potentially influence how others (e.g., lecturers, tutors, or classmates) might interact with a student.

**Mature students, defined.**

There is currently no official definition available for older students in the New Zealand tertiary context. Ministry of Education (2016) reports discussing the profiles and trends of tertiary students have grouped students aged 18–24 years and 25–64 years together. Education review publications refer to students over the age of 25 years as mature students (Education Central, 2015). Although research conducted in adult education (specifically in formal tertiary settings) often refers to older students as mature students, the term itself has proven challenging to accurately define in a consistent manner across researchers and tertiary institutions. Older students are often
included in a heterogeneous “non-traditional student” category alongside international students, part-time students, students who have a full-time job, or students who have dependents other than a spouse (Compton, Cox, & Laanan, 2006). Compton et al. (2006) argued that despite the overlap—non-traditional students were often 25 years and older—not all non-traditional students were older students, and older students had characteristics that set them apart from other non-traditional students.

Generally, older age at the time of enrolment has been identified as an essential criterion in the classification of mature students. Although mature students in tertiary education research have been identified as either students aged 21 years and over, or students over the age of 25, some argue that 25 years and over is the more appropriate cut-off point (Tones, Fraser, Elder, & White, 2009; Western, McMillan, & Durrington, 1998). Historically, in the United Kingdom, universities involved in the Joint Matriculation Board Scheme (Roderick & Bell, 1981; Smithers & Griffin, 1986) had different definitions for mature students based on their age at enrolment. The Universities of Sheffield, Birmingham, Leeds, Liverpool, and Manchester defined students over the age of 21 years as mature students; Scottish universities and the University of Wales assigned the title to those over the age of 23 years. Other English universities involved in the scheme defined students over the age of 25 or 26 years as mature students (Roderick & Bell, 1981).

A break from education prior to re-enrolling in tertiary education has been considered by some to also be an important defining factor (Bye, Pushkar, & Conway, 2007; Newbold et al., 2010). For example, Nisbet and Welsh (1972) defined mature students as individuals returning to full-time undergraduate or tertiary study after a break of 2 years or more since completion of high school. Leder and Forgasz (2004) defined mature students as students aged 21 years and over who had not completed
the formal academic prerequisites required for university entrance. Reay (2002) defined mature students in terms of both their older age (25 years and over) and special entrance methods. Gilchrist (2016) described different subcategories for mature students: “Second-start students,” represented by individuals who may have been working, travelling, or unemployed since leaving high school; “rediscoverers,” who were characteristically older than second-starters and who were typically seeking qualifications in an industry that they might already have a connection with (or who were looking to change industries); and “expertise-adding students,” who already had significant career experience but who were looking to obtain graduate or postgraduate qualifications (Gilchrist, 2016). Based on earlier definitions (Tones, Fraser, Elder, & White, 2009; Western, McMillan, Durrington, & Training, 1998), and consistent with educational review publications in New Zealand (Education Central, 2015), the current thesis defines mature students as students over the age of 25 years, who may be participating in tertiary education for the first time or be returning students. It is also worth noting that the mature students who participated in the current research were all first-year undergraduate students.

The next section of this literature review will examine age-based stereotyping or “ageism” in a broad sense. This will be followed by a review of the main established findings in relation to ageism within the workplace, which arguably bears some similarities to the education setting, and, finally, an evaluation of ageism within tertiary environments.

**Ageism**

Age-related discrimination, or *ageism*, a term first coined by Butler (1969), is defined as prejudice towards an age group resulting from biases about the nature and experience of ageing (Butler, 1969; Duncan, 2001). Put simply, ageism occurs when
an individual displays negative attitudes or behaviours towards another individual based on their age (Greenberg, Schimel, & Martens, 2002). There are currently fewer published articles available on ageism as compared to sexism or racism. For example, North and Fiske (2012) conducted an online search via PsycINFO on February 2012 and produced 8,491 entries with the keyword *racism* and 2,836 for *sexism*, but only 750 for ageism. Similarly, a brief online search by the current author via Google Scholar in February 2018 yielded roughly 1,190,000 entries with the keyword *racism*, 265,000 entries with the keyword *sexism*, and 55,700 with the keyword *ageism*.

Certain aspects of ageism make it unique when compared to other forms of discrimination such as racism or sexism. Firstly, in contrast to ethnicity and gender, age is the only social category to which all individuals will naturally progress through (Greenberg et al., 2002; North & Fiske, 2012). All individuals will, with time, increasingly belong to the older person category, the category that is most commonly biased against (Greenberg et al., 2002; North & Fiske, 2012). Secondly, unlike other forms of bias, ageism often goes unchallenged (North & Fiske, 2012). Levy and Mahzarin (2002) argued that normalised and often unchallenged negative portrayals of older individuals might result from the absence of any clearly defined hate groups holding explicit antipathy towards the elderly, in contrast to other forms of discrimination such as racism or homophobia. Unchallenged negative attitudes and beliefs about the elderly are seen in their portrayal in the media (Levy & Mahzarin, 2002). Specifically, older people (especially elderly women) are not only underrepresented (e.g., there are not many older characters in movies) but they are often described in pejorative, stereotypical terms (Kessler, Rakoczy, & Staudinger, 2004; Vasil & Wass, 1993). For example, Vasil and Wass (1993) found that older people represented on television were often portrayed as unsuccessful, lacking
common sense, or as being eccentric. More recently, Robinson, Gustafson, and Popovich (2008) reported that younger people were aware of the negative stereotypical manner in which older people were represented in the media. They also reported that they understood that the portrayal of older people in the media was both offensive and harmful, yet it could be argued that little has been done in practical terms to change how older people are portrayed (Robinson et al., 2008).

**Ageism in employment.**

Ageism is more than just a static belief, in the sense that it has both long- and short-term negative consequences (North & Fiske, 2012). These negative consequences have been clearly observed in the field of employment. Ageism in employment manifests as stereotypical beliefs and perceptions that can influence an older individual’s prospects for not only gaining employment, but also accessing opportunities for training and career development (K. Harris, et al., 2017; Loretto et al., 2000; Taylor & Walker, 1998).

A recent scoping review which examined 43 articles published between 2006 and 2015 provided an excellent window into the occurrence of ageism in employment (K. Harris et al., 2017). The review identified perceptions of older workers, the intended and reported behaviour towards them, and older workers’ own understanding and perceptions of ageism. Using thematic analysis, several analogous stereotypical beliefs were identified. There were both positive and negative stereotypical traits assigned to the older workers. One key negative belief was that older workers (45 years and older) lacked competence and willingness to learn and represented poor investments due to their reduced performance and capabilities, specifically, in relation to new technology (K. Harris, et al., 2017). In contrast, older workers were also perceived to be more reliable. Indeed, reliability was the most commonly cited positive trait possessed by older workers, followed by commitment and loyalty. Other
common attributes identified were experience and knowledge gained over time, strong work ethic, and warmth.

Based on the articles examined, K. Harris et al. (2017) found that younger respondents (mostly consisting of university students) and human resources managers were more likely to hire younger applicants with the same skills, education, and work history as older applicants. These findings echoed those of Kite and colleagues (Kite & Johnson, 1988; Kite, Stockdale, Whitley, & Johnson, 2005), who found that respondents often showed a preference for younger individuals when compared to older individuals, given all other information was identical. Human resources managers reported that they were also less likely to recommend an older worker for training sessions. Only one research article (Leisink & Knies, 2011) reported positive behaviour by managers in relation to hiring and training older workers. In addition, employees reported experiencing negative feelings towards older workers, and reported a lack of interest in working with them.

There is some evidence to suggest that older workers are less likely to apply for training and professional development opportunities—and tend to conceal their age when applying—due to their belief that there is a higher likelihood of them being turned down (K. Harris et al., 2017). Unemployed older job-seekers are also more likely to refer to themselves as “semi-retired” to reduce the stigma and negative connotations behind being an older unemployed job-seeker. K. Harris et al.’s (2017) review highlighted the prevailing existence of ageism, directed especially towards those 45 years and older (those who are referred to as older mature students in the current research project), and its effect on workers, their current and future job prospects, and ultimately, one could postulate, their quality of life. Research findings
have provided evidence to suggest that older women and older men experience ageing and ageism differently (Chonody & Teater, 2016; Clarke & Griffin, 2008).

**Working as an older woman versus working as an older man.** There has been relatively limited research on the role of gender in ageist stereotypes (Kite et al., 1991). What is available suggests a double standard for ageing, whereby “ageing enhances a man but progressively destroys a woman” (Sontag, 1972, p. 29). This double standard not only possibly contributes to older women reporting higher levels of anxiety in regard to ageing (Chonody & Teater, 2016), but also lowered opportunities in employment (McGann et al., 2016).

The different work experiences and opportunities reported by older women and older men start at recruitment. Recent research on the intersection between gender and age during job-seeking has found that females and males perceive and experience ageism differently (McGann et al., 2016). McGann et al. (2016) collated qualitative data (semi-structured interviews with 37 males and 43 females between the ages of 45 and 75 years, conducted in 2013 and 2014) and quantitative data (roughly 4,852 Household, Income and Labour Dynamics [HILDA] survey responses collected between 2001 and 2013) to investigate the experience of older male and female job-seekers, defined as individuals who were either underemployed or unemployed. During the interviews, female job-seekers were more likely to identify their age as a barrier to gaining employment (McGann et al., 2016). Female job-seekers believed that their ability to perform well at their job was perceived by their employers to be largely dependent on their physical attractiveness, which was perceived to decline with age.

Interestingly, based on the survey data from 2001 to 2013, males were more likely to report that they experienced age-based discrimination (McGann et al., 2016).
In contrast to the experiences of female workers, reports by men of age-based discrimination reduced as the economy improved and created more male-dominated positions, such as machine operators and trade workers. Male job-seekers also reported experiencing ageism related to their physical appearance; however, they described negative assumptions and beliefs surrounding their health and strength (especially when applying for more physically strenuous roles), rather than assumptions related to their physical attractiveness. Older males applying for more managerial and professional roles interpreted ageism as negative beliefs surrounding their perceived loss of intellect. In the current thesis another area in which ageism has been reported, but not explored in depth, is examined: the tertiary environment.

**Ageism Within Tertiary Education**

It seems possible that a similar pattern of ageism to that demonstrated in employment settings might occur within tertiary education even though students in tertiary environments tend to be younger in general compared with individuals in employment contexts. Indeed, there have been incidences of bias reported in tertiary education, which have produced adverse effects. For example, the belief that male students are the ideal students within science-based-faculties because they possess the innate talent necessary to be successful in science-based subjects has contributed to the underrepresentation of female and ethnic minority students (Leslie, Cimpian, Meyer, & Freeland, 2015).

Younger students arriving straight from high school have been perceived as the ideal student as they are young, well-resourced and not bound by family obligations, as opposed to older students enrolling in tertiary study after taking a break from education (Edwards, 1993). Mature students could, by comparison, be viewed as the out-group as they do not match the typical pattern or journey into
tertiary education. It has been suggested that mature students are viewed as the marginalised, stigmatised “other” as they are more disconnected from student networks (Christie, Munro, & Wager 2005; Mallman & Lee, 2016).

Kasworm (2011) argued that universities, particularly those with a research focus, have shown more interest in and support for younger undergraduates compared to older undergraduates aged 25 years and older. Mature students have reported feeling undervalued, unappreciated, and neglected at tertiary institutions (Kasworm, 1990a, 2003a, 2011; Sissel et al., 2001). They have also reported feelings of neglect and discrimination, not only in terms of a disregard for their particular approach to learning needs and interests, but also in the construction of public policies and programmes (O'Toole & Essex, 2012; Sissel et al., 2001).

Between 2009 and 2012 alone, there was a decline of 50,702 mature students enrolled at universities in New Zealand. Mature students in New Zealand argued that the government, which cut NZD13.1 million from the adult and community education funding in the 2009 Budget, had discriminated against older students and demonstrated a lack of concern for second-chance learners (Fisher, 2011). The budget cut specifically affected the funding for Community Learning Association Through Schools (CLASS), a night-school programme intended for older students who had either familial or work responsibilities during the day. Further funding reductions came into effect in January 2013, whereby individuals aged 55 years and over were only eligible for the compulsory-fees component of the student loan (Ministry of Social Development, 2012). The non-compulsory component, which included course-related costs for study materials such as textbooks, stationery or computer items, and living costs to help pay for day-to-day expenses, were no longer available.
The University of Auckland Student Association released a press statement in 2013 arguing that the additional funding reductions were another step towards restricting older individuals’ access to tertiary education. The Auckland Chamber of Commerce suggested that the message communicated by these changes was contradictory to earlier messages encouraging retraining and continued participation in the workforce (Hill, 2014). The claims of discrimination made by mature students should be taken seriously. An equitable stance in society should mean that all students are given equal opportunities in tertiary education settings to ensure that they can access equal hiring and earning opportunities in future, as individuals who hold tertiary qualifications are not only more likely to be employed but are also more likely to earn more (MacPherson, 2013).

The Elderly Stereotype

We no longer see our elders as sources of wisdom but as feeble yet loveable, doddering but dear. (Cuddy & Fiske, 2002, pp. 2–3).

Some of the elderly stereotypes discussed below (e.g., inflexible senior citizen, perfect grandparent) might not apply to younger mature students. However, the subcategories below are still relevant as they may apply to mature students over the age of 40 years. In New Zealand, mature students are roughly 25% of the first-year student population enrolled in tertiary education. Of that group, 42% of the students were over the age of 40 years (Education Counts, 2018).

Subcategories of the elderly stereotype.

The heterogeneous nature of the elderly stereotype lends itself to the identification of specific elderly subcategories rather than a simple well-defined group. Brewer, Dull, and Lui (1981) explored younger individuals’ perceptions of the elderly and concluded that cognitive representations of the elderly could be assigned
into categories based on their distinctive physical features, personalities, and behaviours. They identified three distinct categories by which older individuals were categorised: the grandmotherly figure, the elder statesman, and the senior citizen (Brewer et al., 1981). The grandmother figure was reserved for family-orientated females who love animals and children and who enjoy spending time in the kitchen, while the elder statesman was defined as a distinguished elderly man who holds a high status in society. The senior citizen was perceived as isolated, inactive, and living in a residential institution.

Brewer et al. (1981) showed younger respondents pictures of older individuals and asked them to group the pictures into what they thought were similar categories. Consistent with their model, participants grouped the pictures into category types which mapped to the grandmotherly figure, the elder statesman, and the senior citizen, and attributed traits to the individuals shown in the photographs consistent with the category type to which the individual was assigned (e.g., older women were said to be family-orientated). When limited information was available about the person being rated, respondents made more generalised assumptions about the older person based on the prototypical category to which they were assigned. Brewer and Lui (1984) replicated their earlier study with older (i.e., in-group) respondents and found that they too distinguished among the three categories. However, older respondents perceived more variability among members of each category, and more diversity among the attributes by which category members were characterised. Thus, older respondents perceived more complex representations of the elderly and grouped the photographs into more categories (Brewer & Lui, 1984).

Schmidt and Boland (1986) extended on the work of Brewer et al. (1981) by defining further categories within the elderly stereotype. They argued that as there
was not one general stereotype for older people, studies that examined attitudes towards older people without specifically identifying the type or category of the older person might not accurately represent how society actually felt about this group. Instead, it might depend more on which stereotype was triggered when an individual’s attitudes or feelings about the target were assessed (Schmidt & Boland, 1986). In Schmidt and Boland’s (1986) study, respondents were asked for their opinions about older people, and a total of 99 traits were identified from their responses, mostly based on physical characteristics. A second group of participants then sorted the traits into what they believed would best describe an elderly person. Based on these responses, Schmidt and Boland (1986) identified four positive categories (John Wayne conservative, liberal matriarch, patriarch, perfect grandparent, and sage), and eight negative categories (despondent, mildly impaired, vulnerable, severely impaired, shrew or curmudgeon, recluse, nosy neighbour, and bag lady or vagrant). Hummert (1990) later added further subcategories to the superordinate stereotypes of the elderly: inflexible senior citizen, and self-centred elderly.

**The mature-student subcategory.**

Online articles and social media feature various stereotypes attributed to mature students in tertiary education. Mallman and Lee (2016) found that the term mature student suggested someone possessing certain category traits, many of which held negative connotations (e.g., asks a lot of questions during the lessons, tells personal stories, sits in front of the class, is annoying, obnoxious). Hence, the mature-student stereotype tends to be a catalyst for negative attitudes (Mallman & Lee, 2016).

A satirical article published in the Victoria University of Wellington Students’ Association magazine *Salient* (“Collective Groan Heard Whenever Mature Student Raises Hand”; Oliver, 2009), provides a local example. A number of fictitious younger students mentioned within the article reported feeling disadvantaged in their
classes, as a mature student, who did not have basic entry-level knowledge for the course, constantly disrupted the lecture with their questions, and would take up the lecturer’s time by talking to them about her personal life after class, preventing the younger students from asking the lecturer questions about the course content. In a follow-up article (“A Freudian Analysis of ‘Collective Groan Heard Whenever Mature Student Raises Hand’ for Old Fuddy Duddies”; Langdon, 2009), the magazine suggested that the students described reflected a commonly-known stereotype (i.e., an older student whose age and experience impaired their learning, and who was disruptive to the learning of their younger counterparts), already present within the culture of university students.

In Mallman and Lee’s (2016) Australian study, 344 first-year students reflected on elements of university culture: interactions between students and staff, cultural rituals, social spaces, study-work life-balance, as well as their own perspectives and experiences in university. It was found that students aged 21 years and older reported that although they displayed enthusiasm for learning (e.g., asking questions, participating in discussions with academic staff), they eventually discovered that it was not acceptable or normal behaviour in the classroom. The older students reported that when they displayed “too much enthusiasm,” they attracted unwelcome glances and snide comments from younger classmates. This eventually caused them to feel ashamed and to change their behaviour in class. They reported that they became more aware of their behaviour in front of other students, did not want to seem too friendly with the academic staff, and rather than participate in class discussions they would instead talk to and answer academic staff questions after class. Although academic staff encouraged active class participation, older students who demonstrated in-class participation were often confronted with disparaging remarks.
from younger students. Based on Mallman and Lee’s (2016) findings, it could be argued that mature students in tertiary education might not be receiving the same opportunities or experiences when compared to their younger counterparts due to the stereotyping and the discrimination that they face.

**Studying as an older woman versus studying as an older man.** There is some evidence to suggest that female mature students face unique challenges compared to their male counterparts (e.g., Merrill, 1999; Parr, 2000), similar to findings within employment settings (McGann et al., 2016). Merrill (1999) argued that the relationship between gender, education, and academic performance might be well documented at the school level, but not at the tertiary level. Several factors have contributed to this occurrence, not least the belief that there is no need to advocate for women enrolled in tertiary education as they are the “future elite” who are well on their path to success (Merrill, 1999). Unfortunately, such a belief might be misguided. Previous qualitative research (King, 1998; Merrill, 1999) has reported that female mature students in particular tend to refer to themselves as unconfident and anxious learners.

O’Shea and Stone (2011) found primarily that mature women were less confident in their academic achievement. It was also found that male mature students received more support and advocacy, as they were often given more time to study when compared to their female counterparts, who were expected to fit their study time around their personal responsibilities (O’Shea & Stone, 2011). There appears to also be a gender difference in relation to one’s motivation to enrol in tertiary education in the first place. It has been argued that women’s personal experiences and motivations were more likely—when compared to men—to motivate them to enrol in tertiary education (Merrill, 1999; Parr, 2000). Parr (2000) argued that older women enrolled
in tertiary education “to redefine at least part of their identity, to see themselves in a different way and exert a degree of control over some aspects of their lives” (p. 1). Women were more likely to report a lack of parental encouragement and support for further education as it used to be perceived as unnecessary for their future, relative to low-skilled work and motherhood (Merrill, 1999). Hence, women enrolled in tertiary education as a means to empower their lives and held high expectations for the effects of possessing tertiary qualifications (Merrill, 1999).

Other barriers faced by mature female students in their journey to gaining tertiary qualifications are gender and class inequalities that their male counterparts do not experience, such as a lack of support from their partners or the guilt of not being a good mother while they are studying (Merrill, 1999). In a study by Merrill (1999), one female participant spoke about her deteriorating relationship with her husband, which was a result of her returning to study as a mature student. She stated that her husband did not support her goal to pursue tertiary education, and instead believed that she should have kept her low-paying job to earn a wage. Merrill (1999) reported that although the mature male students also described a lack of support from their partners, the majority of them were still able to dedicate their time to studying, arguably due to relatively fewer demands in relation to domestic tasks and childcare.

Maguire (2005) argued that ageist and sexist concepts present within tertiary education (which are often normalised) have to be exposed and discussed if there is to be change. For example, mature female students often have to contend with the notion that they could either successfully raise a family, or participate and succeed in higher education (Merrill, 1999). Unfortunately, tertiary institutions contribute to this notion as timetables and course schedules often fail to consider the needs and responsibilities of mature women. The female mature students in Merrill’s (1999)
study reported anger and frustration when they were not able to choose the courses of their liking due to timing issues (e.g., clashes with school pick-up times). They called for a policy change by tertiary institutions to support the needs of mothers and other women returning to higher education.

**Characteristics of Mature Versus Younger Students**

To better understand the potential origins of mature-student stereotypes in academic settings, the next section of this chapter begins with a review of different reasons that older and younger students have cited for enrolling in tertiary education in the first place, followed by a discussion of the varying motivations, study styles, and academic achievement of mature and younger students. Age alone does not distinguish mature students from their younger counterparts. Rather, it is the life experience and the maturity that comes with age that distinguishes mature students from younger students (Hull, 1970; Phillips, 1986; Tones et al., 2009; Walker, 1975; Western et al., 1998). This maturity and depth of experience might contribute to the diverse perspectives and capabilities that mature students bring to the classroom (Kasworm, 1980). Besides reporting different motivations for enrolling in tertiary education (Jinkens, 2009; Johnson & Kestler, 2013; Scala, 1996), mature students also see their role within the tertiary environment differently when compared to their younger counterparts (Compton et al., 2006) possibly due to their self-reported personality differences.

To better describe and understand the various influences on mature students’ tertiary education journey and achievement, Donaldson and Graham (1999) introduced the model of college outcomes for adults. The six components are: (a) prior experiences and personal biographies, which influence (b) adults’ psychosocial and value orientations, which interact with (c) the connecting classroom, which
interacts with (d) complex adult cognition and (e) life-world environments, which leads to (f) outcomes. The model also highlighted some of the differences between mature students and their younger counterparts. For example, Donaldson and Graham argued that mature students—the responsibilities that they might have, which might prevent them from spending as much time on campus—compensate by being more focussed and conscious of their role as a student. Mature students also arguably bring with them more sophisticated procedural and metacognitive knowledge, gained through their richer library of life. Donaldson and Graham also argued that younger students valued the social aspects of being in a tertiary environment more than their education or studying.

**Reasons and roles.**

Whereas younger students enrol in tertiary education as the next step in their education journey, prioritising the achievement of high marks to progress to the next stage of the programme, older students might instead prioritise the knowledge gained during lessons (Jinkens, 2009; Johnson & Kestler, 2013). Scala (1996) reported that the most frequently cited motivation for older students enrolling in tertiary education was cognitive interest and the desire to learn, followed by personal growth and satisfaction, which represent intrinsic or expression motivations. Other researchers have argued that most mature students who enrol in tertiary education have a more focussed goal: to gain or enhance their work skills and knowledge, in order to adapt to their ever-changing environment (Aslanian, 2001; Compton et al., 2006).

Mature students also consider their role in the tertiary environment to be more akin to a job, and they view themselves more as workers than students (Compton et al., 2006). Mature students possibly spend less time on campus due to their obligations outside of the tertiary environment, such as being a spouse, parent, or employer which may have hold a higher priority than being a student (Compton et al.,
Although spending less time on campus could influence the amount of time mature students have to participate in on-site social events, it has also been argued that mature students are generally less interested in social activities on campus when compared to younger students (Newbold, Mehta, & Forbus, 2010).

**Age-related differences in motivation and study styles.**

The various life events inherent with the ageing process might influence the manner in which mature students approach their studies, as meaningful learning over time might produce adjustments to study methods which are then applied to their tertiary experiences (Richardson, 1994). The motivations identified by mature students for enrolling in tertiary education include an increase in the prestige of credentials or qualifications (or “credentialism”), the need for increased knowledge and skills due to technological advances, and, finally, a general decline of job and life satisfaction over time because of new technologies at work and in the home (see Richardson, 1994b, for full review).

More recently, Justice and Dornan (2001) offered support for Richardson's (1994b) findings when they reported that older female students reported higher intrinsic motivation and more cognitive monitoring (i.e., an awareness of one’s own knowledge) when compared to their younger counterparts. However, there was no significant difference overall between older and younger students’ expressed desire to perform well in a particular course. Thirty-seven older students (24 years and older) and 58 younger students (23 years and younger) completed self-report questionnaires that examined students’ learning strategies, motivations to achieve, and memory abilities. In contrast to earlier studies, however, Justice and Dornan (2001) also observed no significant difference between students of different ages and genders in their academic performance. There were also no reported differences between students’ study behaviour and memory abilities. Age differences were observed in
terms of students’ study strategies, with older students reporting a greater use of hyper-processing (i.e., extra processing of difficult or challenging materials) and the generation of constructive information (i.e., elaborating, reorganising, or integrating information), which increased comprehension and integration of information (Justice & Dornan, 2001).

Richardson (1995) summarised the various study methods used by tertiary students into three approaches: deep approach (e.g., intention to understand, relate new ideas to previous knowledge), surface approach (e.g., intention to complete task requirements, treat task as an external imposition), and strategic approach (e.g., intention to obtain highest possible grades). Based on the research examined, Richardson (1995) tentatively concluded that mature students adopted a deep approach and were less likely to adopt a surface approach to learning. He also argued that there was little evidence for the previously held stereotype that mature students were lacking in the skills necessary for effective higher education.

It could be argued that a number of the stereotypes attached to the mature-student label (e.g., sits at the front of the class, participates in discussions with the lecturer, asks questions in class) might be explained by the different motivations or study styles employed by mature students. The next section will continue the investigation into the differences between mature students and their younger classmates by examining previous research that has investigated potential differences in academic achievement, perhaps spurred by the differences in motivations and study styles described above.

**Age-related differences in academic achievement.**

Notably, there have been conflicting findings from early research comparing older and younger students’ performance in tertiary education (see D. Harris, 1940, and Roderick & Bell, 1981). Studies published between the 1930s and 1970s that
examined the academic performance of older versus younger students did not specify age bounds. For example, D. Harris (1940) collated and examined research conducted between 1930 and 1937, focussing on the various factors that contributed to success in tertiary education. These factors included high school grades, intelligence test scores, and personal characteristics such as age and gender (D. Harris, 1940). Although D. Harris (1940) did not specify the ages of the students assessed, he argued that younger students out-performed older students. Upon closer examination, however, it was observed that student intelligence was not accounted for in many of the studies examined. Earlier studies not accounting for the importance of student intelligence on academic achievement would have been heavily biased as the “younger students” (defined as being 17 years old or younger) were more likely to be highly intelligent individuals who were admitted into tertiary education through acceleration programmes of the time. In one study (Sarbaugh, 1934), when intelligence was controlled for by matching student IQ scores, no differences were found between older and younger students’ academic performance.

In New Zealand, one of the earliest studies designed to examine the influence of age on tertiary academic achievement was conducted by Small (1966), as part of a larger investigation into the achievement and adjustment experiences of New Zealand students after their first year at university. Interviews, health questionnaires, aptitude tests, and students’ final grades were used to determine success after one year. Unfortunately, findings could not be generalised as most of the students involved in this study were under the age of 20 years. Nonetheless, it was found that younger students tended to be more successful in terms of their academic achievement but also adjusted to tertiary education environments more quickly and successfully (Small, 1966).
Walker (1975) monitored the performance and attrition rates of older students between 1965 and 1971, with older students defined as those over the age of 21 (a total of 231 undergraduate mature students with an average age of 25.9 years were included in the final study). It was reported that older students were more likely to obtain higher class (i.e., first-class versus upper second-class) degrees than their younger counterparts. There were also faculty-level differences. Older students from arts faculties performed significantly better than younger students from the same faculty, as did older students from the social sciences faculties. Older students aged between 26 and 30 years performed best among the older students, and students aged between 21 to 30 years out-performed all the students in the study overall. Older students who did not satisfy the general entrance requirements out-performed all other students, including other mature students who were younger and who did satisfy the general entrance requirements.

Woodley (1984) aimed to replicate Walker’s (1975) study with a larger sample by including several universities across the United Kingdom. Woodley’s (1984) study included 165,400 undergraduate students, of whom 18,343 were over the age of 21 years. It was found that 83% of the older students eventually graduated, compared to 87% of younger students, but both groups were equally likely to gain first- or upper second-class degrees. Much like Walker’s (1975) findings, students aged between 26 and 30 years were found to perform best. Woodley (1984) found that in the faculties in the arts and social sciences a higher withdrawal rate contributed to non-completion, whereas in faculties of science a higher failure rate was the main contributor. When only the students who had not withdrawn were considered, it was found that older students taking arts and social science degrees out-performed their younger counterparts, whereas the reverse was found among students taking science
degrees. Woodley (1984) concluded that mature students performed as well as their younger counterparts, and that within each individual age group women were more likely to graduate than men.

Simonite (1997) examined a cohort of 1,222 students from Oxford Brookes University and reported that after controlling for gender, entry qualification, and course studied, older students out-performed their younger classmates. Simonite (1997) also found that students in their 30s were the most successful group. In the same year, and using a larger cohort, Hoskin, Newstead, and Dennis (1997) also found that age was a strong predictor of academic success. Information (e.g., age, gender, entry qualifications, discipline studied) for 6,866 students from the University of Plymouth was obtained along with their overall academic achievement (either a first-, upper second-, lower second-, third-class degree or pass/fail). It was found that academic performance increased with student age, with students older than 25 years outperforming those aged between 21 and 25 years, who themselves out-performed those aged 20 years and younger.

Subsequent research produced similar findings. McKenzie and Gow (2004) reported that although older Australian students and school leavers (i.e., students who progress directly from high school to tertiary education) had similar entrance qualifications, older students on average attained slightly higher grades in the first semester of university. Previous academic performance was the most important predictor of tertiary academic performance for school leavers, but the previous semester (within the same year) in university or tertiary education was a much stronger predictor of academic performance for mature students. McKenzie and Gow (2004) argued that these findings were likely a reflection of the fact that performance for school leavers was more directly related to performance in the years immediately
prior, whereas academic performance prior to enrolling in tertiary education for older students might reflect their academic performance from several years prior.

Based on the most recent findings, it could be argued that mature students tend to slightly outperform their younger counterparts, yet there seems to be a lack of support—both financially and emotionally—for older individuals returning to or enrolling for the first time in tertiary education. In New Zealand, this lack of support is evident in the form of government funding cuts (Fisher, 2011), and negative stereotypes around mature students that largely go unchallenged (Mallman & Lee, 2016).

**Staff Attitudes, Perception, and Behaviours Towards Mature Students.**

Owen (2015), a lecturer, argued that although younger students might find mature-aged students to be a nuisance, he took pleasure in teaching older students as they were often well-prepared for lessons and were juggling several commitments while in tertiary education. He argued that despite what the stereotype might suggest, older students did not intend to monopolise discussions. Instead, mature students contributed when no one else would and enjoyed sharing their thoughts and ideas about the lesson. The following section will aim to provide, to some extent, a broader view based on the limited amount of research that has been carried out to examine staff members’ attitudes, perceptions and behaviour towards mature students.

Day, Lovato, Tull, and Ross-Gordon (2011) found that academic staff members had both positive and negative perceptions of mature students. It is important to note that this study consisted of a very small, specific sample size of eight staff members who had at least 5 years of tertiary-level teaching experience, including experience teaching mature students. During interviews, staff members described mature students as more tenacious (i.e., more committed to their education,
more focussed, and harder-working in their classes when compared to their younger counterparts), multi-taskers (i.e., juggled multiple roles, including work and family commitments), and able to draw from their life experiences in the classroom.

However, staff members also stated that mature students lacked study skills and confidence in the classroom (Day et al., 2011). Mature students, when confiding in staff members, stated that their lack of confidence was often caused by believing that they had been away from school for too long, or because they believed they were too old or had other issues to manage.

Kasworm (2008) found that academic staff sometimes perceived mature students as lacking confidence or unsure of themselves or their future, as mature students often enrolled in tertiary education as a response to life crises such as divorce or a work issue. Academic staff were more likely to make this assumption in the case of mature female students (Merrill, 1999; Parr, 2000). Academic staff also suggested that some mature students displayed “emotional chaos” as they developed their student identity, planned their academic success, and managed their turbulent life circumstances and their relative lack of financial support (Kasworm, 2008).

Kasworm (2008)—who described mature students as “courageous” but also “fragile”—suggested that mature students required support through reassuring messages in collegiate literature programmes and services, at all stages of the tertiary experience including support and encouragement in the admission process, participation in the courses, basic skills and study strategy support, and career advice.

In a more recent study with a larger sample size of 171 university and community college academic staff, staff members expressed only positive opinions about mature students (Brinthaupt & Eady, 2014). Brinthaupt and Eady (2014) found that staff members agreed with statements suggesting that mature students were more
motivated, had better time-management skills, worked more independently, and looked for more real-life applications of the course material when compared to younger students. Staff members disagreed with statements suggesting that having mature students in their classes made their jobs more difficult, or that mature students thought that staff members should know more about the course content than they did.

Staff members stated that they appreciated the diversity that mature students brought into their classrooms; however, Brinthaupt and Eady (2014) argued that these positive opinions did not translate into staff member behaviour or classroom activities, as staff members detailed that they did not make any distinctions between older and younger students, nor did they treat their older students differently from the younger students. These findings were in contrast with those of Day et al. (2011), who found that staff members actively changed their teaching styles to accommodate mature students’ life experiences and knowledge. Academic staff from Brinthaupt and Eady’s study (2014) stated that mature students nevertheless requested more structure from staff members, as they were more likely to expect teaching staff to be organised, clear, and concise in their teaching. Staff members also identified limited training opportunities for better supporting and understanding the needs and classroom requirements of mature students in the tertiary environment.

These findings, along with those of Day et al. (2011), indicated that although there appear to be more negative stereotypes about mature students held by younger students (Mallman & Lee, 2016), there are also positive mature-student stereotypes recognised by staff members. The existence of both negative and positive stereotypes mirrors workplace perceptions of older workers (K. Harris et al., 2017). Based on the research available on staff members’ attitudes towards and perceptions of mature
students, it is difficult to hypothesise staff members’ academic expectations for mature students, especially when compared to those for younger students.

The Current Research

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, teacher expectations guide the way in which teachers interact with and respond to their students, directly influencing students’ learning opportunities and experiences, which can, in turn, indirectly influence students’ motivation, self-image and academic achievement (Babad, 1993; Brophy & Good, 1970; Rubie, 2004; Rubie-Davies, 2007, 2014; Urhahne, 2015). Currently, there is very limited research on staff members’ attitudes, perceptions, and behaviours towards mature students. As such it is unclear if academic staff hold higher or lower expectations for older students compared to younger students.

The current research used a mixed-method research design in order to address this issue, as well as to investigate and identify any potential discrimination within tertiary education environments. Overall, the current research consisted of three studies that answered one key research question each, as well as complementary research questions designed to investigate influencing variables such as student and staff demographics (e.g., student gender, staff member age, staff member gender, faculty affiliation). The main research questions were:

1. Do academic staff members have ageist attitudes towards mature students in their classes that are communicated via lower expectations when compared to younger students?

2. Do mature students perceive different staff member academic expectations and/or differential treatment when compared to their younger counterparts?
3. Do academic staff members and younger students display biases against mature students, and have mature students experienced discrimination in tertiary education environments?

The three corresponding studies are presented in the following three chapters. Chapter 3 details Study 1, which used vignettes presented to staff members online to acquire their academic and behavioural expectations for potential students. In the vignettes, student age and gender were manipulated. As discussed, in employment an older workers’ gender tends to explain the discrimination observed, whereby older women are given provided with less opportunities when compared to their male counterparts (McGann et al., 2016). Student gender was included as a mediating variable in Study 1 to investigate if student gender could explain staff members’ expectations for their mature students. A mediating variable (e.g., student gender) would explain the association between an independent variable (e.g., student age) and an outcome variable (e.g., staff member expectations), as opposed to a moderating variable that affects the strength or direction of an association between an independent variable and an outcome variable (Baron & Kenny, 1986; Bennett, 2000).

Chapter 4 details Study 2, which employed two questionnaires presented to students (an online questionnaire at the beginning of the semester, and an online follow-up questionnaire at the end of the semester), to explore their perceptions of different staff member expectations. The study also further investigated the differences between mature students and their younger counterparts with a specific focus on self-academic expectations and the perception of the tutorial classroom climate. Chapter 5 details Study 3, a qualitative study that used semi-structured interviews to explore academic staff members’ as well as younger students’ (24 years and below) perceptions and opinions of mature students. Mature students were also
interviewed and asked, in particular, if they had experienced discrimination or faced prejudicial behaviour from academic staff, non-academic staff within the tertiary education environment, or their younger class or coursemates. Finally, Chapter 6 provides a general discussion of the findings from all three studies. Chapter 6 also summarises the significant contributions that this doctoral research adds to the body of literature and provides suggestions for improving tertiary learning environments to ensure equity for all students.
Chapter Three

Study 1: Academic Staff Expectations of Mature Students

This study—the first in a series of three—was designed to investigate if academic staff members held ageist beliefs or attitudes in relation to mature students in tertiary education. This was achieved by examining academic staff members’ expectations of both mature and younger students’ achievement and in-class behaviour. Students taught by the staff members (both mature and younger students) involved in this study were then approached (in Studies 2 and 3) in order to assess their perceptions of the same staff members’ attitudes and behaviour towards them.

The current study was exploratory in nature and incorporated both quantitative and qualitative data collection, and analysis methods. Staff members’ expectations were measured via an online survey, after which they were given the opportunity to provide reasoning or explanations for their expectations. The mediating effect of gender on age was also explored. The study was designed to explore whether or not staff members would have higher expectations for mature students’ in-class behaviour, and (if behavioural expectations were higher) whether or not this would translate into higher academic expectations. The study also investigated whether negative stereotypes of older individuals (e.g., lower competence) would influence academic staff member expectations. Finally, the study analysed data related to whether being a member of the in-group (i.e., in an age group closer to mature students than younger students enrolling directly after secondary school) would influence staff members’ expectations for mature students.
Method

Participants

Based on a power analysis, a sample size of 52 staff members was deemed suitable to detect a medium effect-size difference. Using GPower (Faul, Erdfelder, Buchner, & Lang, 2009; Mayr, Erdfelder, Buchner, & Faul, 2007), an *a priori* test for linear multiple regressions was computed. A medium effect size of $r = 0.2$ was assumed, power (1-\(\beta\)) set to 0.80 with \(\alpha = .05\), which established a minimum sample size of approximately 52 participants was required for the range of analyses anticipated for this study. In line with the power calculations, 54 academic staff members (shown in Table 3.1) who taught first-year courses in a large university in New Zealand agreed to participate in this study. Staff members varied in age and gender.
Table 3.1
Participant Academic Position and Demographic Information by Faculty

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Faculty Description</th>
<th>Education and Social Work</th>
<th>Arts</th>
<th>Science</th>
<th>Law</th>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>Tutors</td>
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<td>8</td>
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<td>8</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethnicity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NZ European</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Māori</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pasifika</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the purposes of the current research, academic staff members were categorised as either lecturers or tutors. Lecturers were defined as academic staff who had the title of professor, associate professor, senior lecturer or lecturer, who taught in lecture sessions typically consisting of a large number of students. In the current study, the mean number of students taught by lecturers was 137.9 ($SD = 124.5$). The standard deviation highlighted the wide variation in class sizes (interquartile range [IQR] was 30–250) among the different faculties and courses. Tutors were professional teaching fellows or graduate teaching assistants (i.e., qualified postgraduate students who taught part time); or teaching staff who taught in
partnership with an academic colleague who approved course design, assessment content and level, and moderation. In the current study, tutorials were smaller in size, with a mean of 33.2 ($SD = 12.3$) students.

As shown in Table 3.1, staff members were affiliated with both science and humanities-based faculties, specifically the Faculties of Education and Social Work, Arts, Science, and Law. The university’s student administration provided an aggregate of the numbers, age ranges, and distribution of first-year students across all faculties. Only staff members from faculties that had a student population of at least 5% mature students enrolled were approached. An assumption was made that having at least 5% or more mature students enrolled in each faculty would allow for a sufficient number of mature students to participate in Studies 2 and 3; whereas including faculties with a student population of fewer than 5% mature students enrolled would require a very large overall sample size to yield sufficient statistical power. Six faculties were selected to participate in Study 1 (shown in Table 3.2).

The Faculties of Engineering and Business were excluded because the total percentage of mature students enrolled in those faculties was less than 5%.

Table 3.2

*Headcount Data of Students in First-Year Courses Categorised by Faculty and Age Range in 2013*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty Description</th>
<th>25 years old and over</th>
<th>Under 25 years old</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of students</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>Number of students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education and Social Work</td>
<td>405</td>
<td>19.3%</td>
<td>1,693</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>964</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
<td>9,136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
<td>1,443</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative Arts and Industries</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
<td>1,333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>703</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>11,207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical and Health Sciences</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>2,214</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Vignettes. In this study, vignettes, specifically Aguinis and Bradley’s (2014) experimental vignette methodology describing hypothetical students rather than actual students, were used as foci to collect staff member expectation data. This methodology typically involves presenting participants with brief vignettes describing realistic scenarios about people, objects, or situations (Aguinis & Bradley, 2014). Using hypothetical students in the current study allowed for factors such as student ethnicity, physical appearance, and gender to be balanced.

The vignettes used described undergraduate students differentiated by gender (female or male), age (21-year-old, 30-year-old or 45-year-old), and in-class behaviour. There were six vignettes in total, and each staff member was randomly assigned two vignettes, one from Column A and one from Column B in Table 3.3.
Table 3.3

*Descriptions of Hypothetical Students*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Column A</th>
<th>Column B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student A is a student enrolled in your class. She is 21 years old and she lives in Auckland. She enjoys golf and baking. She asks lots of questions in class. You have noticed that she often chats with other students in the class.</td>
<td>Student G is a student enrolled in your class. She is 21 years old and she was born in Auckland. She enjoys music and swimming. This is her first time at university. You have noticed her complimenting males in the class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student B is a student enrolled in your class. He is 21 years old and he lives in Auckland. He enjoys golf and baking. He asks lots of questions in class. You have noticed that he often chats with other students in the class.</td>
<td>Student H is a student enrolled in your class. He is 21 years old and he was born in Auckland. He enjoys music and swimming. This is his first time at university. You have noticed him complimenting females in the class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student C is a student enrolled in your class. She is 30 years old and she lives in Auckland. She enjoys golf and baking. She asks lots of questions in class. You have noticed that she often chats with other students in the class.</td>
<td>Student J is a student enrolled in your class. She is 30 years old and she was born in Auckland. She enjoys music and swimming. This is her first time at university. You have noticed her complimenting males in the class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student D is a student enrolled in your class. He is 30 years old and he lives in Auckland. He enjoys golf and baking. He asks lots of questions in class. You have noticed that he often chats with other students in the class.</td>
<td>Student K is a student enrolled in your class. He is 30 years old and he was born in Auckland. He enjoys music and swimming. This is his first time at university. You have noticed him complimenting females in the class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student E is a student enrolled in your class. She is 45 years old and she lives in Auckland. She enjoys golf and baking. She asks lots of questions in class. You have noticed that she often chats with other students in the class.</td>
<td>Student L is a student enrolled in your class. She is 45 years old and she was born in Auckland. She enjoys music and swimming. This is her first time at university. You have noticed her complimenting males in the class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student F is a student enrolled in your class. He is 45 years old and he lives in Auckland. He enjoys golf and baking. He asks lots of questions in class. You have noticed that he often chats with other students in the class.</td>
<td>Student M is a student enrolled in your class. He is 45 years old and he was born in Auckland. He enjoys music and swimming. This is his first time at university. You have noticed him complimenting females in the class.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Additional information was included in the vignettes to differentiate between the two sets of vignettes, and to describe realistic students. The additional information included was a place of birth or residence area, as well as hobbies and sports. Gender-neutral sports were selected, according to Koivula’s (1995) research. Two hundred and seven participants (104 men and 103 women) rated 59 sports as appropriate for men, women or both. Most of the sports were rated either as appropriate for both men and women, or neutral (Koivula, 1995). Of the 34 sports rated as neutral (e.g., archery, basketball, bowling), the researcher randomly selected swimming and golf. Also included in the vignettes were generic in-class behaviours and actions one might observe in a tertiary classroom.

Students in the vignettes were described as either “giving compliments to members of the opposite sex” or “chatting to classmates”—behaviours adapted from Lane, Wehby, and Cooley’s (2006) study examining in-class student behaviour. Although academic staff members from the tertiary sector were not involved in Lane et al.’s (2006) study, teachers from primary and secondary schools uniformly agreed that “students complimenting the opposite sex” or “introducing themselves to other students without being invited to do so” did not influence teacher expectations. However, the action of students introducing themselves to others without being invited to do so was altered to become “chatting to classmates” as tertiary students were not often invited to introduce themselves, especially in large lecture halls. To investigate the influence and salience of mature-student stereotypes (e.g., asks a lot of questions in class), additional information stereotypically associated with mature students was added to the vignettes. This was done to examine if academic staff members had different expectations for students who displayed certain behaviours based on student age.

**Staff members’ expectations.** Academic achievement expectations were measured on a grading system (based on the University of Auckland’s range of percentages and corresponding grades). After reading the vignette, staff members were asked to select a
grade that represented a range of percentages; for example, an A grade (85%–89%) or B+ (75%–79%). Selecting a high grade (e.g., A+) indicated high expectations. Staff member expectations for student in-class behaviour were measured on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Not at all; 2 = More often than not; 3 = Often; 4 = Very Often; 5 = Always), whereby staff members were asked to predict the likelihood that the students described in the vignettes would engage in a number of behaviours. The behaviours (as listed in Table 3.4) were adapted from a list of skills critical for success (Lane et al., 2006).

Table 3.4

List of Students’ In-Class Behaviours (Lane, Wehby, & Cooley, 2006)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behaviour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Controls temper/emotions when in conflict situation with peers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controls temper/emotions when in conflict situations with you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follows your directions/complies with your directions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attends to your instructions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Produces correct coursework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listens to classmates when they present their work or ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easily makes transitions from one course activity to another during class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seems to be an anxious and insecure learner who lacks confidence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Primary and secondary school teachers from Lane et al.’s (2006) study described these skills as behaviours critical for students’ academic success across all school grades. Again, staff members from the tertiary sector were not involved in Lane et al.’s (2006) study. Although inconclusive due to the small amount of research carried out, previous research (e.g., Brinthaupt & Eady, 2014) has indicated that staff members had positive observations of mature students’ in-class behaviours when compared to their younger counterparts (e.g., mature students were more motivated in-class).

The current study examined whether staff members perceived mature students to be more likely to engage in constructive in-class behaviour when compared to younger students. This served as an indicator for whether staff members held higher expectations for mature students’ in-class behaviour. To examine whether staff members’ expectations were
consistent with previous research (King, 1998; Stone & O’Shea, 2013), which maintained that mature students (in particular female mature students) lacked confidence in the classroom, staff members were also asked to predict the likelihood that the students in vignettes were anxious, insecure learners who lacked confidence.

Finally, in order to better understand and interpret the quantitative data, staff members were asked to briefly explain their academic and behavioural predictions for each of the hypothetical students that they were presented with. Staff members were provided with a single textbox at the end of the survey following the questions about their academic and behavioural expectations for the students described in the vignettes. This was not a forced-choice task, as staff members had the option of making ratings without providing an explanation.

**Procedures**

Prior to data collection, ethical approval was gained for this study (Ref. 014598) from the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee (UAHPEC) for all three studies in the current research project for a period of 3 years. The first round of data collection began in the second semester of 2015. Deans from the six faculties listed in Table 3.2 were contacted to gain their approval to approach the first-year undergraduate course coordinators within their faculty (information sheet and consent form presented in Appendix A). A total of 83 course coordinators were emailed an invitation to participate in the current research (Appendix A). Although deans from all six faculties agreed to participate, only course coordinators from the Faculties of Education and Social Work, Arts, Science, and Law responded to the researcher and agreed to participate. In total, 13 course coordinators agreed to participate in the first round. Teaching staff involved in the course, were emailed an information sheet and consent form (Appendix B) as well as link to complete the current study online. Instructions along with the vignettes and corresponding questions were
presented via Qualtrics software Version 2015, an online data-collection software program (Appendix C). Staff members were asked to read the vignettes and imagine those students described as hypothetical students in their class. Staff members were then asked to predict the students’ final grade for the course (i.e., the course the staff member taught) and to predict the likelihood that the described student would engage in a number of in-class behaviours. In the same online questionnaire, staff members were asked several demographic questions, including their age, gender, and ethnicity. Staff members were also asked the number of years they had been teaching and at which faculty they taught.

The second round of data collection began in the first semester of 2016. A total of 44 course coordinators who had not been approached for the previous round of data collection were emailed an invitation to participate in the research. Four course coordinators from new courses, as well as three course coordinators from courses involved in the previous round of data collection (but which now included new academic staff members), agreed to participate and were emailed the aforementioned link to complete the questionnaire online.

**Data Analysis**

**Coding the quantitative data.**

The data from the surveys were first downloaded from Qualtrics, then loaded into SPSS Statistics, Version 22, a software package used for statistical analyses. Staff member predictions of students’ academic performance (student final-grade data) were regarded as indices of their expectations for the students. Staff member predictions of the likelihood of specific in-class behaviours were regarded as indices of their expectations for the occurrence of these behaviours by the students. Staff member expectations of academic performance and in-class behaviour were both ordinal data that were converted into numeric values to allow for statistical analyses in both SPSS and MLwiN, Version 2.10, a statistical software package for fitting multilevel models. Student grades from F to A+ were translated to a 1–13
scale with a numerical value corresponding to each grade. For example, C- = 5, B = 9 and A- = 11. The Likert scale ranging from ‘Not at all’ to ‘Always’ was translated into a 0–5 scale.

**Hierarchical linear modelling (HLM).**

It was important to retain the hierarchical and clustered nature of the data obtained in the current study. Data obtained from education settings are often naturally hierarchical and clustered (see Woltman, Feldstain, MacKay, & Rocchi, 2012), and the current study was no exception. HLMs were used as they retain and account for the hierarchically structured data that are clustered with a certain degree of dependency (Rasbash, Steele, Browne, & Goldstein, 2012). If the clustered and hierarchical nature of the data were not considered and the data were instead aggregated or conversely analysed at the individual level, subtle nuances and the influence of the variables at each lower level might be lost (Raudenbush & Bryk, 2002). HLMs are also widely used in repeated measures studies, in which observations are interrelated rather than independent, in order to measure growth, change over time, or in matched-pair designs (Garson, 2012; Marsh & Hau, 2002). Repeated measurements obtained from the same individual often show strong correlations, indicating a bias and that there was a degree of commonality between the observations (Burton, Gurrin, & Sly, 2004).

In the current study—which was a repeated measures design whereby the same staff members made predictions on two different vignettes—a 3-level hierarchy accounted for the two vignettes or observations (Level 1: vignette), made by staff members (Level 2: staff) from different faculties (Level 3: faculties). Additional to the assumption that there would be a degree of similarity between the two ratings by the same staff member, an assumption was also made that there would be a degree of dependency or similarity between staff members from the same faculty.

However, there were also sample size guidelines that required consideration. Specifically, a minimum of 30 units at each level of analysis has been suggested as a benchmark (Bell, Ferron, & Kromrey, 2008; Maas & Hox, 2004, 2005). Due to the fact that
only staff members from four faculties agreed to participate in the current study, there were only four units in Level 3 of the HLM. Faculty was nevertheless included as the highest level to determine whether it was a significant source of variation. Separate HLMs were conducted for each of the nine dependent variables: one academic achievement prediction (student marks), and eight in-class behaviour predictions (refer to Table 3.4). Each model was built in the same manner. The unconditional model for Study 1 was expressed as:

$$Y_{ijk} = \beta_0 + v_k + u_{jk} + e_{ijk}$$

$$v_k \sim N(0, \sigma_v^2)$$

$$u_{jk} \sim N(0, \sigma_u^2)$$

$$e_{ijk} \sim N(0, \sigma_e^2)$$

where $Y_{ijk}$ was the staff predictions of students’ academic achievement (student grades) or in-class behaviour (depending on the model) made for vignette $i$ by staff member $j$ from faculty $k$, $\beta_0$ was the grand mean, $v_k$ was the effect of faculty $k$, $u_{jk}$ was the effect of staff member $j$ from faculty $k$, and $e_{ijk}$ was the residual error term. The faculty, staff members, and vignette variance components, $\sigma_v^2$, $\sigma_u^2$ and $\sigma_e^2$, measure how variance is allocated across the three different levels.

The unconditional model allowed variance partitioning, also termed the intra-class correlation (ICC), which provided an estimate of the degree of variance at each of the levels within the model. This represented the proportion of variance that occurred across staff members (based on staff members’ age and gender) and the expected correlation between the predictions for the two vignettes made by the same staff member (Rasbash et al., 2012).

**Coding the qualitative data.**

As the current study was exploratory, thematic analysis was used to analyse staff members’ explanations of their expectations, due to the inductive approach needed to analyse
the data. Thematic analysis was also used as it often provides a rich, detailed, and complex account of data (V. Braun & Clarke, 2006; V. Braun, Clarke, & Rance, 2014).

Staff members’ explanations were collated and entered into Microsoft Excel (2013), categorised by vignette. V. Braun and Clarke’s (2006) six phases of thematic analysis were used as a guide to analyse the qualitative data from Study 1. Phase 1 involved becoming more familiar with the explanations or responses. This was achieved by reading each response multiple times. Phase 2 involved the generation of initial semantic codes by first scanning across all of the responses, and by then identifying any interesting features. Phase 3 involved a search for themes, whereby all of the initial codes identified were collated into potential themes and the relevant responses pertaining to each theme were gathered. Phase 4 was a review to ensure that the generated themes worked in relation to the codes and the data in general. Phase 5 involved the definition and naming of the themes found. Through rigorous analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, clear definitions and names were identified. The sixth and final phase (Phase 6) involved the production of the report, described as a scholarly report of the analysis supported by examples, and relating this back to the research question and literature. The report for the thematic analysis carried out is presented within the Results section of this chapter.

Results
In total, 54 staff members were presented (online) with 108 vignettes (two vignettes each). Two staff members did not complete the section regarding staff members’ predictions of student academic achievement, and therefore could not be included in the study. Five staff members only made predictions on one of the two vignettes, which were included in the analyses. No reasons were given by the staff members who did not complete the task. Hence, in total there were 99 predictions (i.e., staff member expectations) obtained. As
mentioned, staff members were asked to provide explanations to accompany their predictions; 84 predictions were found to have accompanied explanations.

**Staff Member Expectations of Student Academic Achievement**

An unconditional model with staff predictions of students’ academic achievement as the dependent variable was built:

\[
Y_{ijk} = \beta_o + v_k + u_{jk} + e_{ijk}
\]

\[
v_k \sim N(0, \sigma_v^2)
\]

\[
u_{jk} \sim N(0, \sigma_u^2)
\]

\[
e_{ijk} \sim N(0, \sigma_e^2)
\]

The grand mean of expected student grades by staff members was found to be 10.018, which reflected a B+ grade. The faculty-level variance in student-grade prediction was found to be 0.008, staff member variance was found to be 0.469, and the vignette-level variance was found to be 1.450. Restricted Iterative Generalized Least Squares (RIGLS) was the estimation procedure selected from MLwiN to estimate the deviance (-2*loglikelihood) for the model. RIGLS was designed specifically for hierarchical modelling, used in models with fewer higher level units (Gill, 2002). As mentioned, Level 3 in the current study had only four units (representing the number of faculties involved in the study). The ICC, which provides an estimation of the degree of variance at each level (Rasbash et al., 2012), estimated that the proportion of variance at the faculty level (Level 3) was 0.004, the proportion of variance at the staff member level (Level 2) was 0.243, and the proportion of variance at the lowest (Level 1), or vignette level, was 0.752. The small proportion of variance at the faculty level, combined with the small number of units at the faculty level, indicated that the three-level model would not be a better fit than a two-level model. The model was therefore reduced to a two-level HLM:

\[
Y_{ij} = \beta_o + u_j + e_{ij}
\]
where $Y_{ij}$ was the staff members’ expectations of student academic achievement made for vignette $i$ by staff member $j$, $\beta_0$ was the grand mean, $u_j$ was the effect of staff member $j$, and $e_{ij}$ was the residual error term. The staff members and vignette variance components, $\sigma^2_u$ and $\sigma^2_\varepsilon$, measure how variance is allocated across the two different levels. Using MLwiN, it was observed that the grand mean in the unconditional model was 10.015, which reflected a B+ with a staff member variance of 0.472 and a vignette-level variance of 1.452. The ICC estimated that the proportion of variance at the staff member level (Level 2) was 0.245 (24.5% of the variation in expectations explained by staff member effects) and the proportion of variance at the lowest (Level 1), or vignette level, was 0.755 (75.5% of the variation explained by the differences in the vignettes).

The raw metric rather than centring was used in the current study. In the current study, variables were measured on an ordinal scale whereby the values represented ranking, and the order of the values (student grades and likelihood of behaviours) held importance and meaning. There are generally two equally plausible methods of centring: grand-mean centring and group-mean centring. In grand-mean centring the overall mean is subtracted from each score or data point, whereas in group-mean centring, the group mean is subtracted from each score or data point (Kreft, de Leeuw, & Aiken, 1995). Centring is more useful when investigating a continuous predictor variable such as weight or height; having the mean value set at zero would make any deviations or shifts away from the mean more interpretable.

**Level 1 effect: Vignette.**

The vignette, either from Column A (i.e., a student who lives in Auckland, enjoys golf and baking, asks lots of questions in class, and often chats with other students in the class) or from Column B (i.e., a first-time university student who was born in Auckland, enjoys music
and swimming, and compliments the opposite sex in class), was added to the unconditional model as a Level 1 predictor. Column B was used as the reference category. Results indicated that, regardless of the age and gender of the student, students described in the vignettes from Column A were predicted to achieve a better grade (A-) than the students described in vignettes from Column B (B+). This difference was statistically significant ($p < 0.001$).

To examine the main effect of student age on staff members’ expectations, student age was added as a variable to the model. As the researcher was particularly interested in the effect of student age on staff members’ expectations, the oldest students (aged 45 years) were used as the reference category. There was no statistically significant effect of student age on staff members’ expectations for students’ final grades in their respective first-year undergraduate courses. The mean predicted student grade was negligibly higher for the 45-year-old students described (10.13, equated to a B+) compared to the 30-year-old students (9.93, equated to a B+) and 21-year-old students (9.971, equated to a B+).

To determine if student gender had an effect on staff members’ expectations of students’ academic performance, student gender was added as a variable to the model. Male students were used as the reference category. Again, there were no statistically significant effects of student gender on staff members’ predictions of students’ final grades. Both male and female students, regardless of their age, were predicted to achieve a B+ by staff members.

To determine if gender had a mediating effect on age in terms of staff members’ expectations of their students, the current study aimed to investigate the influence of both gender and age on staff expectations by including both age and gender as variables into the model. Unfortunately, when examined, the sample size for each hypothetical student category (age: 21 years, 30 years, or 45 years, and gender: female or male) from the two
types of vignette varied significantly (maximum of 15, minimum of 3), due to the randomised nature (in conjunction with voluntary participation in the study) in which the surveys were assigned to staff members. Given the low sample size in some categories and to avoid bias, the decision was made to only examine each main effect separately.

To summarise, the analysis of staff members’ expectations for students’ academic achievement revealed (based on the unconditional model), staff members’ characteristics such as academic position, age, and gender did not influence the academic expectations or predictions made. Across the four faculties investigated, staff members predicted that the students (regardless of the description provided in the vignette description) would achieve a B+. This represents an above average passing grade at the university involved, with grades of D and below representing fail grades. It was also found (as shown in Table 3.5) that staff members had higher academic expectations (an A- average for students compared to a B+) for students described to be living in Auckland, who enjoyed golf and baking, asked lots of questions, and often chatted with other students in the class, when compared with a student who was born in Auckland, enjoyed music and swimming, was new to university and complimented the opposite sex in class.

With regard to the main effects of student age and student gender independently influencing staff members’ expectations of students’ academic achievement, no statistically significant differences were observed. The following section explores staff members’ expectations of students’ in-class behaviour, examining the influence of student age and gender independently.

**Student Behaviour Expectations**

Staff members were asked to predict the likelihood that the students described in the vignettes would display certain in-class behaviours. Again, due to the small number of units at the faculty level (initially assumed to be Level 3) and considering the repeated measures
nature of the current study, a two-level HLM was used, and separate two-level HLMs for each of the eight in-class behaviours examined were produced. For example, the model for the likelihood that the student described in the vignette would control their temper with their peers was as follows:

\[ Y_{ij} = \beta_0 + u_j + e_{ij} \]

\[ u_{ij} \sim N(0, \sigma_u^2) \]

\[ e_{ij} \sim N(0, \sigma_e^2) \]

where \( Y_{ij} \) was the prediction made by staff member \( j \) of the likelihood that the student described in vignette \( i \) would control their temper with their peers, \( \beta_0 \) was the grand mean, \( u_j \) was the effect of staff member \( j \), and \( e_{ij} \) was the residual error term. The staff members and vignette variance components \( \sigma_u^2 \) and \( \sigma_e^2 \) measure how variance is allocated across the two different levels. The eight unconditional models are shown in Table 3.5.

As seen in Table 3.5, the unconditional model showed that generally staff members expressed high expectations of students’ in-class behaviour, in the sense that they predicted students were more likely to behave in a positive manner (e.g., “often” control their temper with their peers, produce the correct coursework; “very often” control their temper with staff members, follow or comply with staff members’ directions). Most of the variance in the unconditional models was explained at the vignette (or lowest) level. Variance in the predictions for the likelihood that students would control their temper with peers and attend to staff members’ instructions was explained more at the staff member level (Level 2). This was in contrast with the unconditional model of staff members’ expectations of students’ academic achievement, whereby the majority of variance was explained at the vignette level. As such, the following sections examined staff members’ expectations of students’ in-class behaviour at both the vignette and staff member level (i.e., staff member academic position, age and gender). To avoid bias due to the difference in the number of staff members in each
staff member category (due to the randomised nature of the study, in conjunction with its voluntary participation), staff member effects were examined independently.
Table 3.5  

*Unconditional Models for Students’ In-Class Behaviours*  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parameter</th>
<th>Controls temper with peers</th>
<th>Controls temper with staff</th>
<th>Follows directions</th>
<th>Attends to instruction</th>
<th>Produces good coursework</th>
<th>Listens to classmates</th>
<th>Easily makes transitions</th>
<th>Seems anxious</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fixed effects</td>
<td>3.484 (0.138)</td>
<td>3.638 (0.132)</td>
<td>3.525 (0.108)</td>
<td>3.518 (0.116)</td>
<td>3.47 (0.103)</td>
<td>3.414 (0.099)</td>
<td>3.201 (0.103)</td>
<td>1.9 (0.09)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Random effects</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff member (Level 2)</td>
<td>0.767 (0.199)</td>
<td>0.772 (0.179)</td>
<td>0.363 (0.128)</td>
<td>0.5 (0.142)</td>
<td>0.315 (0.117)</td>
<td>0.218 (0.115)</td>
<td>0.281 (0.12)</td>
<td>0.041 (0.112)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vignette (Level 1)</td>
<td>0.415 (0.085)</td>
<td>0.25 (0.051)</td>
<td>0.458 (0.093)</td>
<td>0.368 (0.075)</td>
<td>0.441 (0.09)</td>
<td>0.553 (0.112)</td>
<td>0.509 (0.103)</td>
<td>0.737 (0.149)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deviance (-2*loglikelihood)</td>
<td>273.22</td>
<td>244.275</td>
<td>252.555</td>
<td>249.256</td>
<td>245.676</td>
<td>252.687</td>
<td>252.717</td>
<td>257.574</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Vignette represents the two versions of vignettes with which staff members were randomly presented (standard errors) [Derived prediction of student displaying the behaviour in class]. Scale 1=Not at all, 2=Sometimes, 3=Often, 4=Very often, 5=Always, $N = 52$
Level 1 effect: Vignette.

The vignette was added to the eight unconditional models as a Level 1 predictor. To maintain continuity (when staff members’ expectations of students’ academic achievement were analysed), Column B (i.e., a first-time university student who was born in Auckland, enjoys music and swimming, and compliments the opposite sex in class) was used as the reference category. As shown in Table 3.6, staff members predicted that students described in Column A (i.e., a student who lives in Auckland, enjoys golf and baking, asks lots of questions in class, and often chats with other students in the class) were significantly more likely to control their temper with their peers \( (p = 0.03) \) and staff members \( (p = 0.02) \), and were also significantly more likely to produce good coursework \( (p = 0.01) \) compared to students described in Column B (controlling for the age and gender of the student described in the vignette). Students in Column A were also predicted to be significantly less likely to be anxious and insecure learners who lacked confidence \( (p < 0.01) \).

Student age and gender were added to the unconditional models as a Level 1 predictor to obtain the likelihood of in-class behaviours, and to analyse the significance of the influence of the age and gender of the students described. Again, to maintain continuity, 45-year-old students and male students were used as the reference categories. As shown in Table 3.7, staff members predicted that 45-year-olds from both vignettes were significantly more likely to follow or comply with their directions compared to 21-year-olds \( (p = 0.03) \) from both vignettes. As shown in Table 3.8, staff members predicted that female students described in both vignettes were significantly more likely to be anxious insecure learners \( (p < 0.01) \) when compared to their male counterparts in both vignettes.
Table 3.6
Two-Level HLM Estimates for the Type of Vignette on Staff Members’ Prediction of Likelihood of In-Class Behaviour

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parameter</th>
<th>Controls temper with peers</th>
<th>Controls temper with staff</th>
<th>Follows directions</th>
<th>Attends to instruction</th>
<th>Produces good coursework</th>
<th>Listens to classmates</th>
<th>Easily makes transitions</th>
<th>Seems anxious</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fixed effects</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept, $\beta_0$</td>
<td>3.356 (0.154)</td>
<td>3.532 (0.142)</td>
<td>3.467 (0.13)</td>
<td>3.473 (0.133)</td>
<td>3.308 (0.123)</td>
<td>3.425 (0.127)</td>
<td>3.082 (0.127)</td>
<td>2.232 (0.119)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vignette (reference: Column B)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Column A</td>
<td>0.24 (0.127)</td>
<td>0.199 (0.098)</td>
<td>0.11 (0.137)</td>
<td>0.084 (0.123)</td>
<td>0.307 (0.128)</td>
<td>-0.021 (0.151)</td>
<td>0.226 (0.142)</td>
<td>-0.636 (0.148)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Random effects</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff member (Level 2)</td>
<td>0.783 (0.199)</td>
<td>0.786 (0.18)</td>
<td>0.363 (0.128)</td>
<td>0.501 (0.142)</td>
<td>0.335 (0.115)</td>
<td>0.213 (0.115)</td>
<td>0.29 (0.119)</td>
<td>0.141 (0.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vignette (Level 1)</td>
<td>0.392 (0.08)</td>
<td>0.233 (0.048)</td>
<td>0.46 (0.094)</td>
<td>0.37 (0.076)</td>
<td>0.402 (0.082)</td>
<td>0.563 (0.114)</td>
<td>0.493 (0.1)</td>
<td>0.543 (0.11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deviance (-2*loglikelihood)</td>
<td>269.718</td>
<td>240.277</td>
<td>251.915</td>
<td>248.791</td>
<td>240.135</td>
<td>252.678</td>
<td>250.2</td>
<td>241.692</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Vignette represents the two versions of vignettes with which staff members were randomly presented (standard errors) [Derived prediction of student displaying the behaviour in class]. Scale 1=Not at all, 2=Sometimes, 3=Often, 4=Very often, 5=Always. *p < 0.10 **p < 0.05 ***p <0.01 significantly different from the reference group. N = 52
Table 3.7  
**Two-Level HLM Estimates for Student Age on Staff Members’ Prediction of Likelihood of In-Class Behaviour**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parameter</th>
<th>Controls temper with peers</th>
<th>Controls temper with staff</th>
<th>Follows directions</th>
<th>Attends to instruction</th>
<th>Produces good coursework</th>
<th>Listens to classmates</th>
<th>Easily makes transitions</th>
<th>Seems anxious</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fixed effects</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept, $\beta_0$</td>
<td>3.459 (0.179)</td>
<td>3.669 (0.16)</td>
<td>3.71 (0.153)</td>
<td>3.651 (0.155)</td>
<td>3.486 (0.15)</td>
<td>3.508 (0.151)</td>
<td>3.085 (0.154)</td>
<td>1.969 (0.152)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student age (reference: 45-year-old)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-year-old</td>
<td>0.051 (0.195)</td>
<td>-0.015 (0.156)</td>
<td>-0.348 (0.188)</td>
<td>-0.192 (0.178)</td>
<td>-0.034 (0.187)</td>
<td>-0.254 (0.199)</td>
<td>0.249 (0.193)</td>
<td>-0.248 (0.208)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-year-old</td>
<td>0.021 (0.208)</td>
<td>-0.086 (0.167)</td>
<td>-0.193 (0.201)</td>
<td>-0.214 (0.19)</td>
<td>-0.008 (0.199)</td>
<td>-0.002 (0.212)</td>
<td>0.082 (0.206)</td>
<td>0.076 (0.221)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[3.48]</td>
<td>[3.583]</td>
<td>[3.517]</td>
<td>[3.437]</td>
<td>[3.478]</td>
<td>[3.506]</td>
<td>[3.167]</td>
<td>[2.045]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Random effects</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff member (Level 2)</td>
<td>0.775 (0.201)</td>
<td>0.774 (0.181)</td>
<td>0.364 (0.127)</td>
<td>0.504 (0.142)</td>
<td>0.315 (0.119)</td>
<td>0.192 (0.113)</td>
<td>0.323 (0.124)</td>
<td>0.064 (0.112)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vignette (Level 1)</td>
<td>0.426 (0.087)</td>
<td>0.257 (0.052)</td>
<td>0.448 (0.091)</td>
<td>0.368 (0.075)</td>
<td>0.454 (0.092)</td>
<td>0.572 (0.116)</td>
<td>0.486 (0.099)</td>
<td>0.712 (0.144)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deviance (-2*loglikelihood)</td>
<td>273.18</td>
<td>244.019</td>
<td>249.118</td>
<td>247.563</td>
<td>245.676</td>
<td>250.639</td>
<td>251.191</td>
<td>255.115</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Vignette represents the two versions of vignettes with which staff members were randomly presented (standard errors) [Derived prediction of student displaying the behaviour in class]. Scale 1=Not at all, 2=Sometimes, 3=Often, 4=Very often, 5=Always. **$p < 0.05$. N = 52*
Table 3.8

Two-Level HLM Estimates for Student Gender on Staff Members’ Prediction of Likelihood of In-Class Behaviour

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parameter</th>
<th>Controls temper with peers</th>
<th>Controls temper with staff</th>
<th>Follows directions</th>
<th>Attends to instruction</th>
<th>Produces good coursework</th>
<th>Listens to classmates</th>
<th>Easily makes transitions</th>
<th>Seems anxious</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fixed effects</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept, $\beta_0$</td>
<td>3.394 (0.164)</td>
<td>3.59 (0.15)</td>
<td>3.471 (0.139)</td>
<td>3.447 (0.142)</td>
<td>3.355 (0.132)</td>
<td>3.359 (0.133)</td>
<td>3.164 (0.136)</td>
<td>1.687 (0.126)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student gender</strong> (reference: Male students)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female students</td>
<td>0.174 (0.171)</td>
<td>0.094 (0.139)</td>
<td>0.103 (0.167)</td>
<td>0.136 (0.157)</td>
<td>0.222 (0.161)</td>
<td>0.106 (0.171)</td>
<td>0.071 (0.17)</td>
<td>0.409 (0.173)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[3.568]</td>
<td>[3.684]</td>
<td>[3.574]</td>
<td>[3.583]</td>
<td>[3.577]</td>
<td>[3.465]</td>
<td>[3.235]</td>
<td>*** [2.096]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Random effects</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff member (Level 2)</td>
<td>0.778 (0.2)</td>
<td>0.772 (0.18)</td>
<td>0.369 (0.129)</td>
<td>0.5 (0.142)</td>
<td>0.315 (0.116)</td>
<td>0.218 (0.115)</td>
<td>0.287 (0.121)</td>
<td>0.039 (0.107)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vignette (Level 1)</td>
<td>0.41 (0.084)</td>
<td>0.252 (0.051)</td>
<td>0.458 (0.094)</td>
<td>0.369 (0.075)</td>
<td>0.435 (0.089)</td>
<td>0.557 (0.113)</td>
<td>0.511 (0.105)</td>
<td>0.705 (0.143)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Vignette represents the two versions of vignettes with which staff members were randomly presented (standard errors) [Derived prediction of student displaying the behaviour in class]. Scale 1=Not at all, 2=Sometimes, 3=Often, 4=Very often, 5=Always ***p < 0.01 significantly different from the reference group N = 52
To simplify, student in-class behaviours described in the current study can be categorised into three groups: behaviour towards their peers/classmates (e.g., student controls their temper with their peers, listens to their classmates when they are talking); student behaviour towards staff (e.g., student controls their temper with staff members, takes directions from staff members, attends to staff members’ instructions); and, finally, behaviour related to student learning (e.g., student produces good coursework, student easily makes transitions between tasks in class, student seems like an anxious or insecure learner). In general, regardless of the vignettes used to describe the student, student age or gender, academic staff members expected that students in their classes would often behave positively towards their peers/classmates and staff members. In terms of student behaviour relating to student learning, staff members expected students enrolled in their courses to be sometimes anxious or insecure learners.

Similar to staff members’ expectations of students’ academic achievement, there was a significant effect of the type of vignette (i.e., distractor information provided that was not meant to bias staff member expectations) on staff members’ expectations of student in-class behaviour. However, unlike staff members’ expectations for student academic achievement, there was a significant effect of student age and gender on staff members’ expectations for in-class student behaviour. Younger students were expected to comply less with staff members’ instructions, whereas female students were expected to be more anxious and insecure learners. The next section explores staff member characteristics in relation to their expectations of student in-class behaviour, as there were larger variances explained at the staff member level (Level 2) for three of the included student in-class behaviours.

**Level 2: Staff member effects.**

More variance was explained at the staff member level (Level 2) compared to the vignette level (Level 1) in academic staff member expectations for three of the eight
student in-class behaviours. The in-class behaviours were: student controlling their temper with staff members, student controlling their temper with their classmates/peers, and student attending to staff members’ instructions. This indicated that for these three in-class behaviours, staff member individual characteristics were more likely to explain their predictions. Hence, the effects of staff members’ individual characteristics (e.g., academic position, age, and gender) were explored for these three behaviours. Although the initial aim was to investigate the influence of being a member of the in-group (e.g., older staff members, particularly lecturers with longer teaching experience) or out-group (e.g., younger staff members, particularly tutors with shorter teaching experience) on staff member expectations for mature students, due to sample size constraints only a general investigation of the influence of academic staff age and gender on expectations for their students’ in-class behaviour was able to be carried out. An investigation of the influence of academic position (either a lecturer or tutor) was completed to explore if teaching in a larger or smaller class had an influence on staff members’ expectations for their students’ in-class behaviour.

The academic position of staff members was first added to the unconditional model, and lecturers were used as the reference category. No significant effect of staff members’ academic position was found, despite tutors being marginally less likely to predict that students very often control their temper with peers and staff members, and very often attend to staff members’ instructions. Next, staff members’ gender was added to the unconditional model. Male staff members were used as the reference category. Results showed that there were no statistically significant differences in the predictions made by male staff members compared to female staff members. Although female staff members stated that students would often control their temper with their peers and attend to staff member instructions (whereas male staff members stated that students would very often do
so), the difference in reality was negligible. Both female and male staff members predicted that students would very often control their temper with staff members. Finally, staff members’ age was added to the unconditional models, as depicted in Table 3.9.

Table 3.9

Two-Level HLM Estimates for Staff Members’ Age on Prediction of Likelihood of Students’ In-Class Behaviour

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parameter</th>
<th>Controls temper with peers</th>
<th>Controls temper with staff</th>
<th>Attends to instruction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fixed effects</strong></td>
<td><strong>-</strong></td>
<td><strong>-</strong></td>
<td><strong>-</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept, $\beta_0$</td>
<td>3.29 (0.227)</td>
<td>3.53 (0.219)</td>
<td>3.421 (0.187)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Staff member age</strong></td>
<td><strong>-</strong></td>
<td><strong>-</strong></td>
<td><strong>-</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(reference: 20–29 years)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30–39 years</td>
<td>0.099 (0.227) [3.389]</td>
<td>0.029 (0.386) [3.559]</td>
<td>0.023 (0.329) [3.444]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40–49 years</td>
<td>0.898 (0.401) <strong>[4.188]</strong></td>
<td>0.724 (0.402) <strong>[4.254]</strong></td>
<td>0.641 (0.343) <strong>[4.062]</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50–59 years</td>
<td>0.211 (0.401) [3.501]</td>
<td>0.14 (0.386) [3.67]</td>
<td>0.023 (0.329) [3.444]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 60 years</td>
<td>0.044 (0.615) [3.334]</td>
<td>-0.193 (0.592) [3.337]</td>
<td>0.246 (0.505) [3.667]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Random effects</strong></td>
<td><strong>-</strong></td>
<td><strong>-</strong></td>
<td><strong>-</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff member (Level 2)</td>
<td>0.772 (0.204)</td>
<td>0.784 (0.187)</td>
<td>0.479 (0.14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vignette (Level 1)</td>
<td>0.417 (0.085)</td>
<td>0.25 (0.051)</td>
<td>0.365 (0.074)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deviance (-2*loglikelihood)</td>
<td>257.76</td>
<td>229.63</td>
<td>232.467</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Vignette represents the two versions of vignettes with which staff members were randomly presented (standard errors) [Derived prediction of student displaying the behaviour in class]. Scale 1=Not at all, 2=Sometimes, 3=Often, 4=Very often, 5=Always ** $p < 0.05$ significantly different from the reference group $N = 52$

Younger staff members (aged 20–29 years) were used as the reference category in Table 3.9, displaying the effects of age on staff members’ predictions of the likelihood that students in their class would control their temper with staff members and peers as well as attend to staff members’ instructions. Staff members aged 40 to 49 years were significantly more likely to predict that students described in the vignettes were likely to control their temper with their peers ($p = 0.01$) as well as staff members ($p = 0.04$), and to attend to staff
members’ instructions ($p = 0.03$), compared to staff members aged between 20 and 29 years. No other statistically significant differences were observed between other age groups.

To summarise, staff member age (not academic position nor gender) influenced their predictions, and by extension their expectations, of student in-class behaviour. Younger staff members held different expectations in terms of students’ behaviour towards their peers/classmates and towards staff. Younger staff members (when compared to older staff members) predicted that students were less likely to control their temper with their peers and staff members, and less likely to attend to staff members’ instructions. However, there was no difference in staff members’ expectations of students’ behaviour relating to student learning.

**Staff Members’ Explanations of Their Expectations.**

As mentioned, staff members were asked to provide explanations for their predictions for students in the vignettes (final grades and in-class behaviour), described as hypothetical students enrolled in their course. A total of 84 explanations, matched to the student information (age, gender and vignette type), were evaluated using thematic analyses. This section presents and describes each of the themes that emerged, which were:

1. Age was more salient as a predictor of academic achievement than in-class behaviour in older students.
2. Mature students were predicted to be motivated and hardworking.
3. Student gender and age influenced staff members’ interpretation of students’ in-class behaviour.
4. Asking questions in class was a positive student trait that reflected engagement with teachers.
5. It was difficult to make predictions.
Age was more salient as a predictor of academic achievement than in-class behaviour in older students.

Overall, staff members commented on three different aspects of the vignettes: Student age, student gender, and student in-class behaviour. However, staff members focussed on and ultimately made more comments in relation to age, when older students (30-year-olds and 45-year-olds) were concerned. Staff members commented on mature students’ age more often (roughly 56% of the time), compared to the in-class behaviour of these students (28% of the time) or gender (16% of the time). An important note in relation to the percentages presented in this section: Although higher percentages perhaps indicated consensus among staff members, there is no means of confirming whether the viewpoint was shared among all staff members, given the nature of qualitative research (Pyett, 2003).

In this qualitative component of this study, there were individual differences among the staff members, and significance tests were not performed.

Staff members often referred to older students as mature students and used the mature students’ age to justify students’ in-class behaviour. For example, “Mature students are often very motivated, and this student sounds like he engages strongly with the material and would most likely ask questions in class if he is unsure and/or come to office hours” (45-year-old male student from Column A, staff member predicted an A). Staff members also attributed intelligence and academic success to older age. One staff member stated, “In the absence of any other info... go with mature students tend to do well” (45-year-old female from Column B, staff member predicted a B+). In contrast, staff members focussed more on younger students’ in-class behaviour (90% of the time) when making predictions for their future success. For example, “Communicates well with others, showing willingness to discuss and listen to peers” (21-year-old male from Column B, staff member predicted an A).
Mature students were predicted to be motivated and hardworking.

Regardless of the descriptions within the vignettes, staff members referred to mature students (30-year-olds and 45-year-olds) as hardworking or motivated, and noted that students returning to study were demonstrating determination. For example, “Middle-aged man coming in to teaching at this point in his life would probably be quite motivated to achieve highly, so I would expect he would get a good grade. I would also make sure he handed everything in and would check his essays, give feedback etc., to make sure he did well” (45-year-old male from Column A, staff member predicted an A). One staff member stated, “Based on the student's age and the fact she has returned to study, I'm assuming she is very motivated, plus the fact that she asks lots of questions and engages, supports this” (45-year-old female from Column A, staff member predicted an A-).

Although barriers such as the generation gap and advances in technology were mentioned, staff members believed overall that older students’ hardworking attitude would overcome these barriers. For example, “The generation gap between students can be a slight disadvantage to older learners who have never participated in higher ed, but if she does the work, she can still get a solid grade” (45-year-old female from Column B, staff member predicted a B). Another staff member stated,

I would expect a mature student to be very motivated, but if she is new to university, she might have some problems with confidence and be less familiar with academic expectations. From her description, she would probably participate well in tutorials, which would help her achieve a good grade, but if she lacked confidence, she might also be hesitant about approaching tutors/lecturers for help when needed. [30-year-old female from Column B, staff member predicted a B]
Student gender and age biased staff members’ interpretation of students’ in-class behaviour.

Overall, staff members regarded students “complimenting the opposite sex” as negative in-class behaviour among female students (especially among 21-year-olds and 30-year-olds), but rated it as a potentially positive or neutral in-class behaviour among male students. With female students, complimenting the opposite sex served as an indicator to respondents of attention-seeking behaviour of trying to impress males. For example, “To impress males (either lecturer or fellow students) she will model good behaviour. Perhaps not take risks to set herself up for failure in a male-dominated subject and being a 1st-year student too” (21-year-old female student, staff member predicted a B). One staff member stated “She seems less focussed on learning than she could be” (21-year-old female student, staff member predicted a C+). Another staff member stated, “She knows what she is doing, however hesitates to do everything right to be looked at as more attractive to her male peers” (30-year-old female, staff member predicted an A-).

In contrast, when explaining their expectation for 21-year-old males, one academic staff member stated “There is no reason to expect that he would not achieve. Liking the ladies is what 21-year-old men do!” (21-year-old male student, staff member predicted an A+). Another staff member stated “Appears to be confident. May need help transitioning into university expectations” (21-year-old male, staff member predicted a B) and another stated:

If he has been complimenting other students to the extent where I have noticed, then perhaps he is not focussed very much on the class content. But this also means he might be quite confident and able to work in a group situation which will help his learning. (21-year-old male student, staff member predicted a B)
Asking questions in class was a positive student trait that reflected engagement with teachers.

As discussed earlier, in the quantitative results section of this chapter, staff members held higher expectations for students listed in Column A (Table 3.3). Students were described as: lives in Auckland, enjoys golf and baking, asks lots of questions in class, and often chats with other students in the class. Staff members predicted significantly better final grades for these students, regardless of age or gender.

Analysis of staff members’ explanations for their predictions found that, overall, staff members commented most on students’ behaviour of asking questions. Often, staff members associated this behaviour with engagement, which they identified as being important for academic success. For example,

The fact that she asks lots of questions seems to indicate that she is engaging with the material and curious about the subject matter (yet, this is with an assumption that she is asking questions about the course). On the other hand, if she is often chatting with classmates, she may lack in focus and [be] easily distracted (unless, of course, she is talking about the course material with her classmates). (21-year-old female student, staff member predicted an A-)

One staff member stated, “He appears to have good social skills and seems to communicate well with students and staff. Asking questions denotes behavioural engagement with course content so he’s likely to apply himself somewhat to his studies” (21-year-old male student, staff member predicted a B+). Another staff member stated, “If she is asking questions and speaking with classmates, then she is engaged. I'd expect an engaged student in this course to achieve highly” (45-year-old female, staff member predicted an A).

**It was difficult to make predictions.**

Eighteen of the 52 staff members (34.6 %) who made predictions stated that they found it difficult to make predictions for the hypothetical students’ academic performance.
Of those staff members, some stated that it was difficult to predict based on the lack of information provided; for example, “Not sure. Cannot predict.” (21-year-old female student, staff member predicted a B). Some staff members stated that they relied on their previous experiences with similar students, for example,

It can't be predicted, I've put A because I like my students doing well :) An older student generally doesn't go below B, keeping in mind general background knowledge and experience. I didn't really understand the part on her complimenting male students and how would that affect her mark. It can run both ways so no prediction this time (45-year-old, female student, staff member predicted an A).

**Discussion**

Study 1 had three primary aims. Firstly, to investigate if academic staff members in tertiary environments held different academic and behavioural expectations for students based on student age. Secondly, to investigate if these potential differences in expectations were mediated by student gender. Finally, the study sought to determine whether staff members’ personal characteristics (e.g., age, gender, and academic position) influenced their expectations. Results indicated that there were no statistically significant differences in staff members’ expectations of student academic outcome, based on student age and gender. On average, staff members had relatively high expectations for students described in the vignettes (B+). However, there were variations in staff members’ expectations (with a range of A+ to C+) depending on basic descriptions of the student.

There was an apparent lack of clear age-related discrimination (or ageism) among staff members involved in this study. However, there were positive age-related judgements or stereotypes that prompted positive expectations in terms of the in-class behaviours of mature students. Staff members predicted that older mature students (45-year-olds) from both vignettes were more likely to follow the directions of staff members compared to
younger students. As younger students were predicted to often comply with staff members’ instructions, and older students were predicted to very often comply, this difference in in-class behavioural expectations did not translate to a statistically significant difference in staff members’ academic achievement expectations for mature students, compared to younger students.

The findings in the current study suggest that a students’ older age might increase the likelihood of staff members attributing positive traits and behaviours to them. It was observed that age was salient to staff members when presented with vignettes of mature students—as they mentioned it more in their explanations—and staff members appeared to hold some stereotypes about mature students. An analysis of staff members’ explanations for their predictions found that staff members were generally positive about the mature students described, irrespective of the mature students’ gender and accompanying vignette description.

Overall, it could be argued that the vignettes triggered positive stereotypes about mature students within the respondents (i.e., that mature students were more motivated and more hardworking). These findings support the earlier notion, as discussed in Chapter 2, that mature student could be a subcategory within the larger category of age-based stereotypes. It was in the current study, however, that only positive stereotypes were cited by academic staff members. Previously reported ageist views—specifically, that older workers (45 years and older) lacked the willingness to learn (K. Harris et al., 2017)—were not echoed in the current study. In fact, it was the 45-year-olds described in the vignettes whom staff members reported would most frequently follow the direction of staff members.

On a less positive note, results from Study 1 signposted negative gender biases in tertiary education. Specifically, there was a statistically significant difference in staff members’ expectations for a female student’s likelihood of being an anxious and insecure
learner. These findings were in contrast to those of previous researchers (see King, 1998; Stone & O'Shea, 2013), who argued that it was often mature students whom staff members found to be insecure or anxious learners.

Analysis of staff members’ explanations for their expectations revealed that the extraneous information provided in the vignettes, as well as information added to investigate the salience of mature-student stereotypes, influenced their predictions. Whereas asking questions in class was generally viewed as a positive behaviour, complimenting the opposite sex was perceived as either a positive or negative in-class behaviour depending on the gender of the student. Hence although it was expected that gender might act as a mediator between student age and staff member expectations, the findings suggested that rather than being a mediator, gender seemed to act as a moderator whereby the gender of the student determined staff member’s perception of the in-class behaviour (as either an adverse or advantageous in-class behaviour) and hence staff member expectations for the particular student.

Based on an analysis of staff members’ explanations for their predictions, it was observed that staff members held lower expectations for female students described to be complimenting the opposite sex in the vignettes. These students were considered to be engaging in negative behaviour associated with attention seeking or wanting to impress the opposite sex, whereas male students engaging in the same behaviour were characterised more favourably (with higher final-grade predictions) in staff members’ explanations of their expectations. The gender of the staff member evaluating the behaviour (complimenting the opposite sex) had no bearing on their expectations, as both female and male staff members reported similar expectations.

These findings echoed previous research arguing that there is a gender bias in tertiary education (particularly within science-based faculties), where male students are
often perceived more favourably (Ceci, Ginther, Kahn, & Williams, 2014; Ceci & Williams, 2011; Ceci, Williams, & Barnett, 2009; Charles & Bradley, 2009; Weeden, Thébaud, & Gelbgiser, 2017). The current study expanded on previous studies by including science, arts, and humanities-based faculties. Unfortunately, due to the small number of faculties that participated, the influence of faculty could not be isolated and examined. Overall, a negative gender bias against female students was nonetheless identified.

The final aim of Study 1 concerned the influence of staff members’ personal characteristics (i.e., age and gender) on their expectations for their students; the study specifically investigated whether being a member of the in-group (of an age similar to mature students) would influence their expectations for mature students, and, in addition, whether there was a specific effect of being a lecturer or a tutor. By extension, the effect of teaching in larger classes (lecturer), where one might not have as much contact with individual students, and hence might be less likely to form stereotypes or opinions of certain groups of students, was investigated, and it was discovered that there was no influence. This indicated that perhaps having more time and experiences with students (e.g., tutors have smaller classes, office hours and often grade student assignments and final exams) did not influence staff members’ stereotypes or expectations of certain types of students (e.g., mature students, female students) in their course.

There was, however, an influence of staff member age on their expectations for the in-class behaviour of their students. Younger staff members (aged between 20 and 29 years) predicted that students were less likely to control their temper with their peers and staff members and were less likely to comply with staff members’ directions, when compared to the predictions of staff members aged 40 to 49 years of age. When explaining their predictions, staff members did not allude to students’ tempers or ability to follow
directions. However, it could be argued that younger staff members perceived university students as peers who were less likely to recognise their role and authority and comply with their instructions.

**Additional Findings**

There were two unexpected findings of interest from Study 1. Firstly, students asking questions in class (regardless of the age and gender of the student) activated a positive response in staff members. Based on staff members’ explanations of their expectations, students in the current study who were described as asking questions in class were described as “engaged” in learning. Student engagement at tertiary level is often defined as the amount of time and effort students put into engaging with educational activities, such as active learning, seeking guidance from staff, and working collaboratively with other students, which is likely to lead to desired educational outcomes (Coates, 2005). The more engaged a student is, the more likely they are to study or practise the subject. The more practice and feedback that the student receives, the more their knowledge and proficiency in the subject increases. For these reasons, student engagement is considered to be a good predictor of learning and personal development (Carini, Kuh, & Klein, 2006).

Secondly, in contrast to previous findings of teachers perceiving students chatting with their classmates as neither a positive trait nor necessary for success (Lane et al., 2006), staff members in Study 1 reported that such students had positive study and learning habits. In the current study, staff members saw chatting with other students in class as mostly indicative of good social skills. Staff members did not elaborate on why they held higher expectations for these students. One possible belief held by the respondents is that students with good social skills engage in more successful collaborative learning with their peers, which contributes to successful educational outcomes (Coates, 2005).
**Conclusion**

The current study is the first exploratory study to investigate academic staff members’ academic and behavioural expectations based on student age and gender. This study found that staff members, although generally holding mid-to-high expectations for their students, did to some extent base their expectations on students’ age and gender. Through the use of vignettes, the findings of the current study indicated that the observed biases stemmed from beliefs, values, and stereotypes held by staff members, and did not result from gendered behaviour differences seen in students. The next phase of this research study explored the transmission of staff members’ expectations for their students’ academic success, by investigating student perceptions of the expectations held by staff members in relation to their academic performance. To further investigate the socioemotional differences between older and younger students in tertiary education, students’ personal expectations of success were also explored.
Chapter Four:

Study 2: Student Perceptions of Staff Member Expectations and the Classroom Environment

Study 1 established that academic staff members reported holding different expectations for their students, based largely on descriptions of student in-class behaviour, and at times moderated by student gender. When asked to explain their expectations for mature students, staff members were mainly encouraging, as they listed positive traits that they believed mature students in tertiary education possessed. Study 2 aimed to investigate whether reported differences in staff member expectations (particularly with regard to mature students’ in-class behaviour) translated to a difference in reported staff member behaviour towards their students. Any potential difference in staff member behaviour would influence how students perceived staff members’ expectations of their future academic outcomes, and possibly affect the manner in which students perceived their own academic outcomes.

In Study 2, students were asked to predict the final grade that their lecturers and tutors would expect for them, while also making their own predictions about their final grade. Students were asked to make their predictions at the beginning of the course to determine whether students’ perceptions of staff member expectations—based on student observations of their staff members’ behaviour—were more likely to be based on students’ perceptions of the influence of student age and gender on staff behaviour, rather than students’ actual performance on the course. To examine staff member differential behaviour in more depth, students were asked to complete the “College and University Classroom Environment Inventory” (CUCEI; Fraser et al., 1986; Nair & Fisher, 2001) as they neared the end of their course. The CUCEI is a measure of classroom climate, which includes scales such as personalisation and satisfaction that measure tutors’ behaviours.
towards students and students’ level of satisfaction and happiness in the classroom. As opposed to students’ predictions that were collected at the beginning of the semester (to avoid confounding information such as students’ basing their predictions on their actual academic performance) the CUCEI was administered at the end of the semester to better gauge students’ overall course experience.

Study 1 revealed that staff members held relatively high (B+ average) expectations for their students, regardless of student age or gender. Building upon findings from Study 1, it was hypothesised that mature students would perceive higher staff member expectations based on staff members’ positive behaviour towards them, which would translate into higher personal expectations when compared to their younger counterparts. Due to the differences between younger and mature students mentioned in Chapter 2 (i.e., differences in study styles, motivation), mature students might perceive a different classroom climate when compared to younger students. Also, staff members might interact with mature students differently due to their different expectations of mature students’ in-class behaviour, which could also influence mature students’ perceptions of the classroom climate. Similarly, female and male students might experience a different classroom climate, a reflection of the difference in staff member expectations for the in-class behaviour of female students. Study 2 also aimed to establish whether student perceptions of their staff members’ expectations matched staff member expectations in Study 1, and whether those expectations were associated with actual student academic outcomes.

Method

Participants

In total, 17 course coordinators from Study 1 agreed to the researcher approaching students in their courses and inviting them to participate in Study 2. These interactions took place during lectures (which were often longer in duration, and usually included a 10-
minute break in the session) rather than tutorial sessions to avoid potential disruptions to the latter. A total of 976 students from the Faculties of Education and Social Work, Arts, Science, and Law agreed to participate. Table 4.1 summarises the demographic distribution of the students who agreed to participate in the current study, grouped by their level of participation (i.e., completed the in-class questionnaire only, or completed both the in-class questionnaire and online questionnaire). As with Study 1, mature students in Study 2 were classified as students aged 25 years and over. Mature students comprised 13.4% of the total number of students who participated in the study.

A total of 930 students provided the researcher with an email address to be sent the second questionnaire at the end of the semester. As shown in Table 4.1, 271 of those students who completed the questionnaire in class also completed the second questionnaire online. This equated to a response rate of 29%, which, although modest, was within the range of average response rates (19%–50.3%) suggested by Cook, Heath, and Thompson (2000) for online questionnaires. A decline in response rates for online questionnaires has been reported since the 1990s (see Bickhart & Schmittlein, 1999), and there is evidence to suggest that online surveys often do not achieve the same response rates as paper-based surveys (e.g., Nulty, 2008). Mature students comprised 15.2% of the total number of participants who completed both the online questionnaire and the in-class questionnaire.
Table 4.10

Demographics of Students Enrolled in First-Year Courses Who Participated in Study 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Completed in-class questionnaire only (Time 1)</th>
<th>Completed in-class questionnaire and online questionnaire (Time 1 and Time 2)</th>
<th>Total (N = 976)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>431 (61.1%)</td>
<td>205 (75.6%)</td>
<td>636 (65.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>268 (38%)</td>
<td>66 (24.4%)</td>
<td>334 (34.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not state</td>
<td>6 (0.9%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6 (0.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;20</td>
<td>424 (60.1%)</td>
<td>163 (60.1%)</td>
<td>587 (60.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20–24</td>
<td>195 (27.7%)</td>
<td>58 (21.4%)</td>
<td>253 (25.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25–34</td>
<td>52 (7.4%)</td>
<td>19 (7.0%)</td>
<td>71 (7.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35–40</td>
<td>8 (1.1%)</td>
<td>12 (4.4%)</td>
<td>20 (2.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;40</td>
<td>22 (3.1%)</td>
<td>18 (6.6%)</td>
<td>40 (4.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not state</td>
<td>4 (0.6%)</td>
<td>1 (0.4%)</td>
<td>5 (0.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NZ European</td>
<td>253 (35.9%)</td>
<td>110 (40.6%)</td>
<td>363 (37.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Māori</td>
<td>60 (8.5%)</td>
<td>27 (10%)</td>
<td>87 (8.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pasifika</td>
<td>89 (12.6%)</td>
<td>33 (12.4%)</td>
<td>122 (12.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>209 (29.6%)</td>
<td>66 (24.4%)</td>
<td>275 (28.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>85 (12.1%)</td>
<td>35 (12.9%)</td>
<td>120 (12.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not state</td>
<td>9 (1.3%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>9 (0.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education and Social Work</td>
<td>161 (22.8%)</td>
<td>66 (24.4%)</td>
<td>227 (23.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>322 (45.7%)</td>
<td>98 (36.1%)</td>
<td>420 (43.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>106 (15%)</td>
<td>71 (26.2%)</td>
<td>177 (18.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>116 (16.5%)</td>
<td>36 (13.3%)</td>
<td>152 (15.6%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Measures

A paper-based questionnaire, an information sheet, and a consent form (Appendix D) were used at Time 1 of the data collection. By means of the questionnaire, student expectations for their own academic achievement were measured by asking students to predict their final grade. Staff member expectations for student academic success, as perceived by the students, were measured by asking students to estimate their staff members’ prediction of their final grade. Consistent with Study 1, the options for the final grades ranged between A+ and F. Also, although students were asked to make predictions on both their assignment grades as well as their final grade, only final grades were used as a measure of academic achievement. This was to maintain consistency with the measure used in Study 1. After making each estimation, students were given the opportunity to explain their predictions. Students’ explanation of their predictions (i.e., lecturer, tutor, and self-expectations) served as the qualitative component of the study.

The same questionnaire asked students a number of demographic and identifying questions, such as their age, gender, ethnicity, and the faculty that they associated with. Students who did not state their age and gender were excluded from the analysis. At the end of the questionnaire, students were asked to provide their student identification number and to sign the section of the consent form confirming that they were willing to share their assignment grades and final grade for the course with the researcher. At Time 2 (3 weeks prior to the end of the semester), students who supplied the researcher with their email addresses were sent an online questionnaire via Qualtrics, which contained the CUCEI (Appendix E). The CUCEI is further discussed below. As this measure was originally intended for use in smaller tutorial or seminar environments, it was therefore used to investigate the tutorial climate, or environment.
College and University Classroom Environment Inventory (CUCEI).

The CUCEI (Fraser & Treagust, 1986), was used as a measure of class climate. The inventory contains 49 items across seven scales, with an equal number of items in each scale. The seven scales in the CUCEI are personalisation, student’s cohesiveness, task orientation, innovation, individualisation, involvement, and satisfaction. Personalisation measures the extent to which tutors were concerned with and interacted with students on an individual level regarding students’ personal welfare, whereas student cohesiveness measures the extent to which students knew, helped and were friendly towards each other. Task orientation measures the extent to which class activities were clear and well-organised, and innovation measures the extent to which the tutors planned new and unusual class activities. Individualisation measures the extent to which students were allowed to make decisions and were treated differently according to ability, interests, and rate of working. Involvement measures the extent to which students actively and attentively participated in class discussions and activities. Finally, satisfaction measures the extent of enjoyment of classes.

Students responded to the CUCEI on a 7-point scale: strongly disagree = 1; disagree = 2; disagree somewhat = 3; neither disagree or agree = 4; agree somewhat = 5; agree = 6 and strongly agree = 7. Twenty-four of the items in the CUCEI are negatively worded, hence these items were reverse-scored before analysis. The wording of items was also modified slightly to suit tutorials; for example, the item “The instructor considers students’ feelings” was modified to become “My tutor considers my feelings.”

Procedures

As mentioned in the previous chapter, ethical approval was gained for this study (Ref. 014598) from the UAHPEC for all three studies in the current research project. Time 1 of data collection for Study 2 began in the second semester of 2015, approximately 2 weeks into the semester. With permission from the course coordinators and lecturers, the
researcher approached students during lecture sessions. Prior to handing out copies of the questionnaire, information sheet and consent form, the researcher addressed the class to briefly explain the questionnaire and what would be required of them if they opted to participate. Students were also informed that while confidential, their responses were not anonymous, especially if they provided the researcher with permission to request their final grades after the semester had ended.

The researcher then distributed the information sheet, consent form, and questionnaire, and left the lecture hall. Students who were willing to participate were told that they had 10 minutes to complete the questionnaire. Completed questionnaires were placed into a sealed collection box outside the lecture hall at the end of the lecture. At Time 2, students were emailed the Qualtrics link to the follow-up questionnaire which contained a number of demographic questions including the CUCEI. Students were sent two reminders to complete the questionnaire, one week apart. Two weeks after the semester ended, course coordinators were emailed scanned copies of student consent forms to collate students’ academic achievement on the course. To capture a large number of diverse participants, a second round of data collection with the same procedure was conducted in Semester 1 of 2016. A total of 433 students participated in 2015, and 543 students participated in 2016.

Data Analysis

Coding the quantitative data.

Data from the paper and pencil surveys ($N = 976$) at Time 1 were manually loaded into SPSS Statistics (Version 22). Data at Time 2 ($N = 271$) from the online questionnaire were downloaded from Qualtrics as an SPSS file. As Study 2 primarily investigated the main effects of student age and gender, both variables were recoded into a binary (gender) or polytomous (age) dummy variables. Students’ self-expectations and perceived expectations for their final grade were converted into numeric representations (values) to
allow for statistical analyses in SPSS. Students’ self-expectations, perceived and actual
grades from A+ to F were translated to a 1 to 13 ordinal scale, in a similar manner as for
Study 1. Student ratings on the CUCEI were also converted into numeric representations
(1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree). As mentioned, 24 of the negatively worded
items were reverse-scored prior to analysis to ensure that values indicated the same type of
response to each item.

Missing data.

A total of 38 students started the online questionnaire (i.e., answered the
demographic questions) but did not answer the CUCEI. Hence, their data were excluded.
Five students (1.8%) missed more than 20 items (of 49 items) of the CUCEI, and their data
were also excluded. Data from a total of 228 students were included in the analysis. A
total of 82 students (36%) missed more than five items but fewer than 20, 133 students
(58%) missed fewer than five items, and 13 students (8%) missed no items. The missing
values were imputed using expectation maximisation (EM; Little & Rubin, 2014). Little’s
MCAR test indicated data were likely to be missing at random ($\chi^2 = 8846.04, p = .540$) and
therefore, EM was an appropriate method for imputing data.

Coding the qualitative data.

Students in the current study were given the opportunity to explain their self-
expectations as well as their predictions of their lecturer’s and tutor’s expectations for their
final grade. In this instance—as with Study 1—thematic analysis was used (V. Braun &
Clarke, 2006; V. Braun et al., 2014). Students’ explanations were extracted and entered
analysis were used as a guide to analyse the qualitative data. Phase 1 involved becoming
more familiar with the explanations or responses. This was achieved by reading each
response multiple times. In Phase 2, initial semantic codes were generated by first
scanning across all the responses, and by then identifying any interesting features. Phase 3
involved a search for themes, whereby all the initially identified codes were collated into potential themes and the relevant responses pertaining to each theme were gathered. Phase 4 was a review to ensure that the generated themes were suitable in relation to the codes and the data in general. Phase 5 involved defining and naming the themes found. Through rigorous analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, clear definitions and names were identified. The sixth and final phase (Phase 6) involved the production of a scholarly report of the analysis supported by examples and relating back to the research question and literature. The report for the thematic analysis is presented in the Results section of this chapter.

**Results**

A total of 976 students participated in Study 2. Of those participants, 705 students only completed the in-class, paper-based questionnaire concerning their personal and perceived expectations at Time 1. A total of 228 students (177 females, 51 males) were included in Study 2. The means and standard deviations for the predictions of students who answered the questionnaire at Time 1 are shown in Table 4.2. Students were grouped as either only having answered the in-class questionnaire at Time 1 or as having answered the questionnaire at both Time 1 and Time 2 (separated by age and gender). Table 4.3 provides the overall average of all responses at Time 1, irrespective of whether or not students completed the second questionnaire at Time 2.
### Table 4.11

**Time 1: Means and Standard Deviation for Students’ Predictions of Self- and Staff Expectations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student age</th>
<th>Student gender</th>
<th>Predictions of students who completed in-class questionnaire only (N = 705)</th>
<th>Predictions of students who completed both in-class questionnaire and online questionnaire (N = 271)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Students’ prediction of their final grade <strong>M(SD)</strong></td>
<td>Students’ prediction of their tutor’s expectations for their final grade <strong>M(SD)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Students’ prediction of their lecturer’s expectations for their final grade <strong>M(SD)</strong></td>
<td>Students’ prediction of their tutor’s expectations for their final grade <strong>M(SD)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Students’ prediction of their final grade <strong>M(SD)</strong></td>
<td>Students’ prediction of their lecturer’s expectations for their final grade <strong>M(SD)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;20 year</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>4.00 (1.61) [B+]</td>
<td>4.30 (1.70) [B+]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3.86 (1.83) [B+]</td>
<td>4.23 (1.96) [B+]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3.94 (1.70) [B+]</td>
<td>4.27 (1.79) [B+]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20–24 years</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>3.86 (1.63) [B+]</td>
<td>4.39 (1.67) [B+]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3.27 (1.57) [A-]</td>
<td>3.84 (1.71) [B+]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3.63 (1.62) [B+]</td>
<td>4.19 (1.70) [B+]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25–34 years</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>3.64 (1.62) [B+]</td>
<td>3.87 (1.93) [B+]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>4.00 (2.01) [B+]</td>
<td>4.72 (2.23) [B]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3.81 (1.81) [B+]</td>
<td>4.23 (2.08) [B+]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35–40 years</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>3.29 (1.50) [A-]</td>
<td>3.57 (1.72) [B+]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>2.80 (1.79) [A-]</td>
<td>2.75 (1.50) [A-]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3.08 (1.56) [A-]</td>
<td>3.27 (1.62) [A-]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;40 years</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>4.33 (2.35) [B+]</td>
<td>5.12 (2.00) [B]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>4.75 (2.25) [B]</td>
<td>4.67 (2.58) [B]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4.46 (2.28) [B+]</td>
<td>5.00 (2.11) [B]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>3.93 (1.65) [B+]</td>
<td>4.31 (1.72) [B+]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3.72 (1.81) [B+]</td>
<td>4.15 (1.93) [B+]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3.85 (1.72) [B+]</td>
<td>4.25 (1.81) [B+]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note.** *M* and *SD* represent mean and standard deviation, respectively. Values in the square brackets represent students’ grade prediction. A+ to F were translated to a 1 to 13 ordinal scale.
Student responses from the in-class questionnaire at Time 1 were collated. The means and standard deviations of student predictions of their academic performance on the course, as well as their predictions of their staff members’ expectations for their academic performance on the course, are presented in Table 4.3. Preliminary analyses showed that the students in Study 2 had moderately high expectations for themselves (mean grade B+) and perceived similarly high expectations from both their lecturers (mean grade B+) and their tutors (mean grade B+). A frequency distribution revealed that a majority of students predicted an A- (22%) for their final grade, whereas 0.2% of students predicted that they would fail the course. When it came to their prediction of their tutor expectations for them, the majority of students predicted that their tutor expected them to achieve a B+ (21.4%), and a small proportion (0.6%) of students predicted that their tutor would expect them to fail the course. Similarly, the majority of students predicted that their lecturer would expect them to achieve a B (18.5%), and 0.3% of students predicted that their lecturer expected them to fail the course.

Table 4.12

*Time 1: Means and Standard Deviations for All Students’ Responses of the In-Class Questionnaire*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In-Class Questionnaire (Time 1)</th>
<th>M(SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students’ prediction of their lecturer’s expectations for their final grade (N = 820)</td>
<td>4.02 (1.76) [B+]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students’ prediction of their tutor’s expectations for their final grade (N = 856)</td>
<td>4.16 (1.75) [B+]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students’ prediction of their final grade (N = 961)</td>
<td>3.78 (1.66) [B+]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. M and SD represent mean and standard deviation, respectively. Values in the square brackets are students’ grade prediction.

The means and standard deviations of students’ responses to the online questionnaire (CUCEI) are provided in Table 4.4. The Cronbach alpha reliability for the CUCEI, reported by Fraser et al. (1986) for Australian students (N = 307) for their classroom environment, are shown in Table 4.3. Both the original CUCEI reliability measure of the scales and those obtained from Study
2 had an alpha of .70 and above, which suggested that all of the items within each scale were reliably measuring the same dimension.

Table 4.13
*Time 2: Cronbach Alpha Reliability for the College and University Classroom Environment Inventory (CUCEI)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Online Questionnaire</th>
<th>M (SD)</th>
<th>Alpha Reliability (N = 228)</th>
<th>Alpha Reliability (N = 307) (Fraser et al., 1986)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personalisation</td>
<td>5.32 (1.03)</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[Agree somewhat]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement</td>
<td>5.21 (1.00)</td>
<td>.70</td>
<td>.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[Agree somewhat]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohesiveness</td>
<td>3.66 (1.26)</td>
<td>.90</td>
<td>.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[Neither agree nor disagree]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction</td>
<td>4.78 (1.33)</td>
<td>.94</td>
<td>.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[Agree somewhat]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task Orientation</td>
<td>5.18 (.85)</td>
<td>.71</td>
<td>.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[Agree somewhat]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovation</td>
<td>3.94 (.94)</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td>.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[Neither agree nor disagree]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individualisation</td>
<td>3.73 (.83)</td>
<td>.71</td>
<td>.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[Neither agree nor disagree]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* M and SD represent mean and standard deviation, respectively. Values in the square brackets represent the likelihood that classroom environment is a preferred classroom environment specific to each psychosocial dimension.

Overall, students from Study 2 who completed the online questionnaire at Time 2 somewhat agreed that there was a level of personalisation present in tutorial sessions (e.g., that the tutor considered students’ feelings, or that the tutor talked individually with students), that there was a level of student involvement (e.g., that students put effort into what they did in tutorials, or that students paid attention to what others said), that there was a sense of satisfaction in the tutorials (e.g., that students looked forward to the tutorials or that getting a certain amount of work done was important to the class), and that their tutorials were task-orientated (e.g., students knew exactly what had to be done or that activities in the tutorials were clearly and carefully planned). Students neither agreed nor disagreed upon the levels of student cohesiveness (e.g., that the tutorials were made up of students who knew each other or that friendships were made), innovation (e.g., that the tutor thought
up innovative activities for students to do, or that the teaching approaches in the tutorials were characterised by innovation and variety), and individualisation (e.g., that students were allowed to choose activities and how they worked, or that students were generally allowed to work at their own pace).

The following sections in this chapter examine students’ perceived expectations of both their lecturer and their tutor, followed by an examination of students’ tutorial environment. This will be followed by an investigation of students’ self-expectations, to determine whether there were any differences in their expectations based on student age or gender. Finally, the association of perceived staff member expectations and students’ self-expectations with students’ actual final grades will be considered.

**Perceived Lecturer Expectations**

The means and standard deviations of students’ predictions of their lecturers’ expectations for their academic performance (final grade for the course) are shown in Table 4.5. As shown in Table 4.5, students (regardless of their age and gender) predicted that their lecturers would expect them to achieve a B+ for their final grade in their first-year undergraduate course. Given the options that students were provided with when making their predictions, a B+ grade was above the median and hence was interpreted as a moderately high grade.
Table 4.14

Time 1: Means and Standard Deviation of Students’ Prediction of their Lecturers’ Expectation of their Final Grade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Age</th>
<th>Student Gender</th>
<th>M(SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;20 years</td>
<td>Female (N = 334)</td>
<td>4.00 (1.65) [B+]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male (N = 155)</td>
<td>4.05 (1.93) [B+]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total (N = 489)</td>
<td>4.01 (1.75) [B+]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20–24 years</td>
<td>Female (N = 139)</td>
<td>4.16 (1.60) [B+]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male (N = 74)</td>
<td>3.58 (1.88) [B+]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total (N = 213)</td>
<td>4.00 (1.71) [B+]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25–34 years</td>
<td>Female (N = 36)</td>
<td>4.25 (1.81) [B+]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male (N = 25)</td>
<td>4.16 (2.08) [B+]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total (N = 61)</td>
<td>4.21 (1.91) [B+]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35–40 years</td>
<td>Female (N = 11)</td>
<td>3.50 (1.68) [B+]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male (N = 6)</td>
<td>3.50 (2.07) [B+]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total (N = 17)</td>
<td>3.59 (1.77) [B+]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 40 years</td>
<td>Female (N = 24)</td>
<td>4.25 (1.98) [B+]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male (N = 8)</td>
<td>4.25 (2.25) [B+]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total (N = 32)</td>
<td>4.25 (2.02) [B+]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.02 (1.76) [B+]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. M and SD represent mean and standard deviation, respectively. Values in the square represent students’ grade prediction.

To examine the effect of student age and gender on student predictions of their lecturers’ expectations for them, a two-way between-groups ANOVA was conducted, which allowed for the main effects of age and gender to be explored both independently and as an interaction effect. No statistically significant interaction effect was found for student age and gender in relation to perceived lecturer expectations for their academic performance, $F(4, 802) = 1.06, p = .376$. There was also no statistically significant main effect for student age, $F(4, 802) = .84, p = .498$, nor gender, $F(1, 802) = .35, p = 552$, on student perceptions of their lecturers’ expectations for them. These results indicated that student age and gender did not influence their perceptions of their lecturers’ expectations for them.

Student explanations of their lecturers’ expectations.

Students provided explanations for the predictions that they made of their lecturers’ expectations for their final grade in the course. A total of 466 explanations were evaluated using...
thematic analysis, representing the 57% of students who made predictions. The majority of the students believed that their lecturers were high-expectation lecturers and predicted that they would expect them to achieve what the students deemed high grades. A large number of students also stated that their lecturer did not know who they were, but made predictions, nonetheless. The main themes that emerged when students’ explanations were analysed were:

1. Lecturers’ teaching skills, style, and personality reflected their expectations.
2. Students reasoned that their lecturers’ expectations for them were based on their in-class achievement and behaviour.

**Lecturers’ teaching skills, style, and personality reflected their expectations.**

When making predictions for the expectations of lecturers, some students stated that their lecturers’ teaching skills and style were the basis of their high expectations. For example, “Hopefully, because she is nice :)” (under-20-year-old female, predicted an A-), “Should expect somewhere there because the contents have been taught” (25–34-year-old male student, predicted an A-), and “My lecturer teaches the course well, so I think he would predict a higher grade” (under-20-year-old male student, predicted an A). Equally, students who predicted lower grades also based their predictions on the lecturers’ teaching. For example, “Lecturer enjoys taking the liberty to stress things that are far too obvious and dwells on them for too long” (under-20-year-old female student, predicted a C+).

Overall, a small proportion of students (less than 1%) predicted that their lecturer held low expectations for them, as reflected in the lower grades predicted. For example, “I assume that she thinks that I will just pass” (25–34-year-old male student, predicted a C). Some students stated that their lecturer expressed that the course was difficult, and there was generally a low likelihood for them to receive an A. For example, “Lecturer explicitly said the course is hard to get an A” (under-20-year-old female student, predicted a B). One student also stated that her lecturer’s low
expectations were due to her personal characteristics. She stated “Because I’m older and slower at learning” (25–34-year-old female student, predicted a C+).

Students reasoned that their lecturers’ expectations for them were based on their in-class behaviour.

Students based their predictions on their own in-class behaviour. Students who predicted that their lecturer would have high expectations for them mentioned their high rate of attendance, taking notes, or sitting in front of the class. For example, “Because I take notes and pay attention to the lecturer's lectures” (under-20-year-old female student, predicted an A+). Conversely, students who believed that they displayed undesirable in-class behaviours predicted low grades. For example, “Not focussing in class” (20–24-year-old female, predicted a C+), and “I ask really stupid questions in lectures” (under-20-year-old female student, predicted a C). Some students based their predictions on the fact that they had engaged in personal communication with the lecturer. For example, “We’ve emailed and talked once or twice, so he’d guess I will do well” (under-20-year-old male student, predicted an A+), and “Emailed to ask questions relating to extra work outside of class” (under-20-year-old female, predicted an A-).

Perceived Tutor Expectations

The means and standard deviations of student predictions of their tutors’ expectations for their academic attainment (final grade in the course) are shown in Table 4.6. Overall, as mentioned above, students predicted that their tutors would expect them to achieve a B+ for their final grades, the same as students’ predictions of their lecturers’ expectations.
Table 4.15
*Time 1: Means and Standard Deviation of Students’ Prediction of their Tutor’s Expectation of their Final Grade*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Age</th>
<th>Student Gender</th>
<th>M(SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;20 years</td>
<td>Female (N = 340)</td>
<td>4.15 (1.66) [B+]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male (N = 164)</td>
<td>4.13 (1.90) [B+]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total (N = 504)</td>
<td>4.14 (1.74) [B+]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20–24 years</td>
<td>Female (N = 148)</td>
<td>4.30 (1.61) [B+]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male (N = 78)</td>
<td>3.83 (1.75) [B+]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total (N = 226)</td>
<td>4.14 (1.67) [B+]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25–34 years</td>
<td>Female (N = 39)</td>
<td>4.00 (1.89) [B+]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male (N = 26)</td>
<td>4.46 (1.89) [B+]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total (N = 65)</td>
<td>4.19 (2.05) [B+]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35–40 years</td>
<td>Female (N = 12)</td>
<td>4.17 (1.53) [B+]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male (N = 6)</td>
<td>2.67 (1.21) [A-]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total (N = 18)</td>
<td>3.67 (1.57) [B+]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 40 years</td>
<td>Female (N = 28)</td>
<td>4.82 (1.81) [B]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male (N = 8)</td>
<td>4.63 (2.20) [B]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total (N = 36)</td>
<td>4.78 (1.87) [B+]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (N = 849)</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.16 (1.75) [B+]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* M and SD represent mean and standard deviation, respectively. Values in the square brackets represent students’ grade prediction.

Again, similar to students’ perceptions of their lecturers’ expectations for them, students’ age or gender did not influence their predictions. The interaction effect between student age and gender was not statistically significant, $F(4,839) = 1.65, p = .160$, nor was there a statistically significant main effect of student age, $F(4,839) = 1.51, p = .196$, or student gender, $F(1,839) = 1.93, p = .165$, on students’ perceptions of their tutors’ expectations for them. These results indicated that, in general (while considering some level of individual differences), students (regardless of their age or gender) perceived their tutor expectations similarly.

**Student explanations for their tutors’ expectations.**

A total of 456 explanations of students’ predictions of their tutors’ expectations of their academic performance were evaluated using thematic analyses. Overall, students based their predictions on either their own academic achievement and in-class behaviour, or on their tutors’ behaviours during lessons. Similar themes emerged from explanations of tutors’ predictions as were
observed for lecturers; however, there were also differences. For example, slightly fewer students (17% of students who made predictions) stated that they believed that their tutors did not know them, when compared to students who believed that their lecturers did not know them (22% of students who made predictions). When analysed in conjunction with students’ explanations of their lecturers’ expectations for them, the main themes that emerged were:

1. The majority of staff members were high-expectation staff members.
2. Students believed that they communicated their academic aptitude via their in-class behaviour.

**The majority of staff members were high-expectation staff members.**

Students in Study 2 perceived that their staff members held high expectations for their academic success. This is evidenced by the majority of students providing explanations for their predictions which stated that their lecturers and tutors held high class-level or individual-student expectations. For example, most students (68% of those who provided explanations) predicted that their tutor would expect them to attain a grade between an A+ and an A-. The lowest grade predicted was a B-. Students either perceived high individual-level expectations, for example “Hopefully he feels like I will crush it!” (20–24-year-old male student predicted an A), or high class-level expectations “She has high expectations of us” (over-40-year-old female student, predicted a B+), and “I think J would predict all students to get an A+” (25–34-year-old female student, predicted an A+) when explaining their tutors’ expectations of their final grade in the first-year course. Even when students believed that their staff member did not know who they were, they still perceived high expectations from them. For example, one student stated, “I am not really sure what my tutor would predict for my upcoming assessment as I have not met him properly, but hopefully he could have high predictions” (under-20-year-old female student, predicted an A).

Similar to predictions made for their lecturers’ expectations of their academic attainment, some students (less than 1%) believed that their tutor held low expectations for them. Some stated
that their individual characteristics guided their tutors’ expectations for them. For example, “I predict my tutor and lecturer may expect me to get these grades because Māori and Pacific statistics are what I am often defined by. Nothing more might be expected of me” (25–34-year-old female student, predicted a B).

**Students believed that they communicated their academic aptitude via their in-class behaviour.**

Fifteen percent of students believed that their tutor’s expectations for them were based on their academic achievement, whereas 21% of students believed that their tutors’ expectations for them were based on their in-class behaviour. This was consistent with students’ explanations of their lecturers’ expectations for their academic achievement. However, there were differences identified in the specific in-class behaviours in lecture halls when compared to tutorial classrooms. Participating in tutorials by contributing to discussions, as well as asking questions in class, were some of the in-class behaviours that students stated would boost their tutors’ expectations for them. For example, “If I maintain my dedication and participation, he would predict a grade that reflects this” (under-20-year-old female, predicted an A), “I am always present in tutorials and lectures, plus hard work and quality of work” (20–24-year-old male student, predicted an A-), and “I’m quite vocal and clued up in tutorials, so she’d guess I will do well” (under-20-year-old male, predicted an A+). Students who stated that they did not attend tutorials or did not contribute in class stated that their tutor either did not know them or held lower expectations for them. For example, “I don't contribute much in tutorial discussion, so my tutor would probably predict a C” (under-20-year-old male student, predicted a C), “I don't ask much questions during tutorial times” (25–34-year-old male student, predicted a C), and “I never go to tutorials” (under-20-year-old female, predicted a D).

**The Tutorial Environment**

This section explores any potential differences in tutor behaviour towards the students based on student age, as well as the potentially different manner in which mature students perceived their tutorial environment, and by extension their tertiary experiences. In total, 228 student responses
from the online questionnaire (which contained the CUCEI) were included in Study 2. To avoid any biases generated by uneven group sizes, student age group was recoded to mature students (25 years and older) and younger students (24 years and younger) to account for the smaller number of participants from each age group. There was also not a sufficient number of female and male student participants to analyse student gender as an independent variable. Due to the single independent variable that remained (student age), an independent sample t-test was conducted to compare the CUCEI ratings for younger versus mature students. In total, data from 184 younger students and 43 mature students were included in the analysis.
Table 4.16

**Time 2: Independent t-Test and Descriptive Statistics of the College and University Classroom Environment Inventory (CUCEI) by Student Age**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Younger students</th>
<th>Mature students</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personalisation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[Agree somewhat]</td>
<td>[Agree somewhat]</td>
<td>.153</td>
<td>.879</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[Agree somewhat]</td>
<td>[Agree somewhat]</td>
<td>-1.114</td>
<td>.267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Cohesiveness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[Neither agree nor disagree]</td>
<td>[Neither agree nor disagree]</td>
<td>-1.838</td>
<td>.072</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[Agree somewhat]</td>
<td>[Agree somewhat]</td>
<td>-1.191</td>
<td>.235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task Orientation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[Agree somewhat]</td>
<td>[Agree somewhat]</td>
<td>-.367</td>
<td>.715</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[Neither agree nor disagree]</td>
<td>[Neither agree nor disagree]</td>
<td>-.420</td>
<td>.676</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individualisation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[Neither agree nor disagree]</td>
<td>[Neither agree nor disagree]</td>
<td>-.350</td>
<td>.727</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Total N = 227, as one student did not state their gender. M and SD represent mean and standard deviation, respectively. Values in the square brackets represent the likelihood that classroom environment is a preferred classroom environment specific to each psychosocial dimension.

As shown in Table 4.7, there were no statistically significant differences in the manner that younger and mature students perceived their tutorial environment. Based on student ratings on the personalisation scale, both younger and mature students agreed, to an extent, that there were opportunities for them to interact with the tutors, and that their tutors were concerned for their welfare. Both younger and mature students also agreed, to an extent, that students were active and
attentive in class (based on responses to items pertaining to involvement), that the activities in their tutorials were clear and well-organised (based on responses to items pertaining to task orientation), and that students enjoyed their tutorials (based on responses to items pertaining to satisfaction).

Overall, students neither agreed nor disagreed with items which comprised the student cohesiveness, innovation, and individualisation scales.

**Students’ Personal Expectations of Academic Achievement**

To examine the effect of student age and gender on their own expectations, a two-way between-groups analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted, which allowed for the main effects of age and gender to be explored both independently and as an interaction effect.

| Table 4.17 | Means and Standard Deviation of Students’ Prediction of their Final Grade |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Student Age | Student Gender | M (SD) |
| <20 years | Female (N = 382) | 3.84 (1.57) [B+] |
| | Male (N = 192) | 3.76 (1.78) [B+] |
| | Total (N = 575) | 3.81 (1.64) [B+] |
| 20–24 years | Female (N = 159) | 3.83 (1.54) [B+] |
| | Male (N = 90) | 3.40 (1.59) [A-] |
| | Total (N = 249) | 3.68 (1.57) [B+] |
| 25–34 years | Female (N = 40) | 3.70 (1.82) [B+] |
| | Male (N = 31) | 3.81 (1.97) [B+] |
| | Total (N = 71) | 3.74 (1.88) [B+] |
| 35–40 years | Female (N = 12) | 3.08 (1.51) [A-] |
| | Male (N = 7) | 3.14 (1.68) [A-] |
| | Total (N = 20) | 3.00 (1.56) [A-] |
| > 40 years | Female (N = 30) | 4.07 (1.96) [B+] |
| | Male (N = 10) | 4.60 (2.07) [B] |
| | Total (N = 40) | 4.20 (1.66) [B+] |
| Total (N = 953) | 3.77 (1.66) [B+] |

*Note. M and SD represent mean and standard deviation, respectively. Values in the square brackets represent students’ grade prediction.*

The interaction effect between student age and gender was not statistically significant, $F(4,943) = .92, p = .451$. Although approaching significance, there was no statistically significant main effect of student age, $F(4,943) = 2.07, p = .083$, nor was there a statistically significant main effect of student gender on students’ expectations for their final grade in their first-year course, $F$.
These results indicated that, in general, student age and gender did not influence expectations for their future academic performance. The following section examines the factors or themes that students argued had influenced their expectations for their academic performance.

**Students’ Explanations of Their Personal Expectations**

As shown in Table 4.8, students held moderately high expectations for themselves (mean prediction of B+). After making their predictions, students were given the opportunity to provide explanations for their predictions. A total of 721 explanations were evaluated using thematic analysis. In general, students stated that their predictions were either based on positive or negative factors that either enhanced or hindered their academic performance. More students (62%) based their predictions on positive factors that enhanced their academic performance. Fewer students (25%) made their predictions based on negative factors that could hinder their academic performance. This section presents and describes each of the themes that emerged, which were:

1. Students, regardless of age, were motivated by their aims and goals.
2. Students assumed that their hard work would produce good grades.
3. More students found the course and exam structure to be detrimental to their academic performance rather than helpful.
4. Students based their future academic achievement on their previous academic performance.

**Students, regardless of age, were motivated by their aims and goals.**

For the majority of students (32% of students who participated at Time 1), expectations for their final grade on the course reflected their educational aims and goals. For example, “I hope to do well in the test/exam and bring the grade up a little” (20–24-year-old female student, predicted a B+), and “I always predict higher so I’m more motivated to try and get a high grade” (under-20-year-
old male student, predicted a B+). It was also apparent that these students were motivated by their own personal goals, as the final grades that they predicted for themselves varied from an A+ to a C+.

There was a very small group of students (2%) whose goal was merely to pass the course. For example, “I have to pass but not easy” (20–24-year-old male student, predicted a C). Students from competitive-entry courses stated that their predictions were based on their goal of achieving entry into the following year for their course. For example, “Thinking positively. Also, a requirement for next year of study” (20–24-year-old male student, predicted an A), “It’s kind of more the aim, I have to maintain a high GPA to get in next year” (under-20-year-old female student, predicted an A-), and “Hopefully, so that I can get into Law next year and better my GPA” (under-20-year-old female student, predicted an A). Although there was no significant effect of age on students’ predictions of their final grade, one mature student stated, “I am setting my goals higher than previously achieved because I am older and more focussed now” (35–40-year-old female student, predicted an A-).

Students assumed that their hard work would produce good grades.

Students also based their expectations on how hard they had worked on the course, or anticipated working on the course in the future. For example, “Because I am putting [in] the time and effort and also talking to my tutors and lecturers to find out what I need to get A mark” (25–34-year-old male student, predicted an A), “Would have enough time to study so would raise marks” (under-20-year-old female student, predicted a B+), and “This is a hard course, and involves many of my academic weaknesses—but with hard work I might do al (sic) right” (20–24-year-old female student, predicted a B). Considering the individual differences present among the cohort of students who participated in Study 2, students who anticipated working hard had higher expectations for themselves, as depicted by the grades that they predicted (between an A+ to B-). The majority of students predicted an A- (32%), and only 1% of students predicted a B- for their final grades.
More students found the course and exam structure to be detrimental to their academic performance rather than helpful.

The code *course structure* included reading materials and course content, whereas the code *exam structure* included the exam format and exam environment. The majority of students (68%) who based their predictions on the course and exam structure argued that the course and exam structure were unhelpful. Students who generally held lower expectations for their final grade reasoned that the course content and readings were too technical or complicated. For example, “Readings are difficult and hard to remember” (20–24-year-old female student, predicted a C+), “History is a challenging course which requires lots of studies and receiving a C grade to pass is just enough” (under-20-year-old female student, predicted a C), and “A lot of information in a short time” (over-40-year-old male student, predicted a C). In terms of the exam structure, students argued that the exam format and the environment in which they sat for their exams were stressful and caused them to underperform. For example, “My exam mark may be lower, I think because I don't perform as well under pressure” (under-20-year-old male student, predicted a B+), and “Unsure of exam content but know a lot of essays will be involved. May bring grade down” (under-20-year-old female student, predicted a B+). Both younger and mature students reported feeling anxious or nervous in exam environments. For example, “I don't take too well to study, especially under pressure, and exams are not my friend” (under-20-year-old female student, predicted a B), “I struggle with exams which effects (sic) my grades” (20–24-year-old female student, predicted a B-), “Exams are stressful” (20–24-year-old male, predicted a B), and “Struggle in exam environments” (35–40-year-old male student, predicted a B-).

Students based their future academic achievement on their previous academic performance.

A proportion of students (13%) argued that their predictions were realistic as they were based on their previous academic performance. What constituted previous academic performance varied from student to student. Some younger students based their academic performance on their
secondary school grades: for example, “Judging by previous schooling marks” (under-20-year-old female student, predicted an A-), and “Based on my high school grades with a mixture of an unknown course” (under-20-year-old female student, predicted an A-). Other students based their future final-grade predictions on their assignment grades: for example, “Combination of all the assignments” (under-20-year-old female, predicted a B). It could be argued that some of the students who were making their predictions based on their previous achievements were limiting themselves. For example, “Haven’t passed higher for other papers so far” (under-20-year-old female student, predicted a B-), and “I think I should end up with this grade because I’ve never really been an A+ student in Maths but have gotten decent grades before” (under-20-year-old female, predicted a B+).

**Relationship Between Final Grades and Students’ Personal and Perceived Expectations of Success**

A total of 408 students who completed the in-class questionnaire also provided the researcher with access to their final grade for the course. Bivariate correlations helped to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between students’ personal and perceived expectations and their final grades. The means, standard deviations, and correlations are shown in Table 4.9.
Table 4.18

Means, Standard Deviations and Correlations for Students’ Personal and Perceived Expectations from Lecturers and Tutors and Student Academic Performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>M(SD)</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Students’ predictions of their final grade (N = 402)</td>
<td>3.54 (1.48)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.56**</td>
<td>.66**</td>
<td>.24**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Students’ predictions of their lecturers’ expectations for them (N = 355)</td>
<td>3.81 (1.72)</td>
<td>.45**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.73**</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Students’ prediction of their tutors’ expectations for them (N = 358)</td>
<td>3.89 (1.69)</td>
<td>.56***</td>
<td>.73**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.19**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Students’ actual final grade (N = 408)</td>
<td>5.03 (2.84)</td>
<td>.24**</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.19**</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. M and SD represent mean and standard deviation, respectively. Values in the square brackets represent students’ grade prediction. **p < 0.05

Only a subsection of students who predicted in Study 2 provided the researcher with permission to access their final grade for the course. Of those students, the only prediction with a non-statistically significant correlation with students’ final grades was students’ predictions of their lecturer’s expectations for their final grades, as shown in Table 4.9 above. This non-significant correlation indicates that students’ predictions of their lecturers’ expectations had no relationship with their actual final grade. In contrast, the significant correlations indicate that there was a positive relationship between students’ personal expectations for their final grades, and their perceived expectations of their tutor’s expectations for them. These results signified that students who had high personal expectations, and/or students with tutors who had high expectations for their academic performance, achieved a better final grade in the course.

A multiple regression analysis was utilised to further explore the positive relationship highlighted by the correlations. As shown in Table 4.9, student predictions of tutor and lecturer expectations were highly correlated, \( r = .73, p < .01 \). To avoid issues with multicollinearity (i.e.,
independent variables that are highly correlated are explained by other independent variables in the model), the two variables were transformed into a single composite variable, labelled *perceived staff member expectations* via SPSS (see Pallant, 2013). Mahalanobis distance (Pallant, 2013; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007) was calculated in SPSS to assess for outliers. Mahalanobis distance describes the distance of a particular case distance from the means of all other variables, hence detecting outliers. It was observed that seven students had Mahalanobis scores that exceeded the critical value, but the maximum Cook’s distance score (scores above 1 imply that the outliers influence the results of the model) was .03, indicating that these cases had negligible influence on the results as a whole (Pallant, 2013; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). For these reasons, the cases were not removed from the data set.

A statistically significant regression equation was found, $F(2, 328) = 10.191, p < .001$, with an $R^2$ of .059. The two independent variables (i.e., students’ prediction of their final grade, and their prediction of staff members’ expectations of their final grade) explained 5.9% of the dependent variable (i.e., students’ final grade). Student expectations for their final grade, but not their predictions for staff member expectations, made the strongest unique contribution to final student grades, to a degree that was statistically significant, whereas student predictions of staff member expectations for their final grades did not. Student predictions for their final grades uniquely explained 5% of the variance in their actual final grades. Hence, it was concluded that it was students’ own academic expectations, albeit to a very small degree, not the perceived expectations of their staff members, which predicted tertiary students’ actual academic performance.
Discussion

Using a combination of both quantitative and qualitative research in Study 2, the researcher thoroughly examined tertiary students’ perceptions of their staff members’ expectations of their academic success. Overall, tertiary students perceived moderately high expectations—B+ grade for their final attainment on the course—from their both their lecturers and tutors. On average, there were no statistically significant differences in students’ perceived expectations between their lecturer and their tutor (B+ average), although the majority of students predicted a B for their lecturers’ expectations of their final grade, and a B+ for their tutors’ expectations of their final grade.

The Relations of Student Age with Staff Member Expectations

Based on students’ predictions of their staff members’ expectations for their final grade, it was concluded that students perceived equal expectations for their academic success from staff members (average B+ final grade from both lecturers and tutors) regardless of their age or gender. Centred on the underlying premises of teacher expectation models (Brophy & Good, 1970; Darley & Fazio, 1980; Rubie-Davies, 2014), it is inferred that in Study 2 students’ age or gender did not relate to staff members’ expectations for students’ academic success. Based on student’s perception of staff member expectations, staff members did not have different expectations for mature students (aged 25 years and older) when compared to their younger counterparts. The qualitative findings from Study 2 (i.e., students’ explanations of their predictions), validated this inference. Firstly, students perceived staff members as high-expectation educators who held class-level academic expectations for their students. Second, students believed that factors within their control (i.e., their in-class behaviours and academic performance) influenced staff member expectations. These findings are further discussed below.

High-expectation staff members who communicated class-level expectations.

Early teacher expectation research focussed mainly on dyadic teacher–student interactions in primary school classrooms (Brophy & Good, 1970; Cooper, 1977; Cooper & Good, 1983; M. J. Harris & Rosenthal, 1985; Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968) until Rubie-Davies (Rubie, 2004; Rubie-
Davies, 2007) proposed that teacher expectations could be communicated to students at a class level by high- or low-expectation teachers who held class-level expectations. At the individual-student level, it has been shown that teachers had higher expectations for students they believed had more ability, and lower expectations for students they believed had less ability (Rubie-Davies, 2007). As discussed in Chapter 2, these judgements of abilities are often based on stereotypes (Rist, 1970; Rubie-Davies et al., 2006; Turner et al., 2015). Rubie-Davies (Rubie, 2004; Rubie-Davies, 2007) argued that teachers can also form expectations at a class level based on their own teaching-and-learning beliefs whereby observations made regarding the characteristics of individual students do not influence teacher academic expectations. Teachers’ teaching-and-learning beliefs then influence the instructional and socioemotional environment of the classroom (Rubie, 2004; Rubie-Davies, 2007, 2014).

Rubie-Davies (2007) argued that there are differences in the instructional and socioemotional environments of students taught by high- or low-expectation teachers. In high-expectation teachers’ primary classrooms, instructions are used to scaffold students’ learning whereby teachers ensure that their students have clarity and understanding of the concepts being introduced. Teachers also provide their students with adequate feedback on their progress and work. High-expectation teachers create a positive socioemotional climate within their primary classrooms, where the students feel cared for and the relationship between student and teacher can be viewed as a partnership.

It is argued that the majority of staff members who taught students from Study 2 were high-expectation staff members, hence they had equally high expectations for mature and younger students. The majority of students, when asked to provide explanations for their predictions, stated (regardless of their age or gender) that their lecturers and tutors had high expectations for their academic success. Evidence to suggest that students did not consider that their staff members took into account student individual characteristics (i.e., age, gender) when forming academic expectations was gathered when students stated that they did not believe that their staff members
knew who they were, yet they predicted that their staff members would have high expectations for their academic success. These students stated that the staff member would have high expectations for the entire class. Students described their staff members as likeable people who demonstrated that they were confident in their students’ academic abilities, but also described them as competent lecturers or tutors who had efficiently covered the course content. Relating the current tertiary environment findings to that of Rubie-Davies’ (Rubie, 2004; Rubie-Davies, 2007) school environment findings, students in Study 2 described a positive socioemotional class climate driven by staff members who were depicted as personable and caring of their students, and an instructional class climate driven by staff members with reputable teaching skills. The current findings suggest that regardless of the size of the classroom (i.e., smaller school classrooms or large lecture halls) students perceive academic expectations from staff members based on the classroom instructional and emotional climate set by the staff member.

**Student’s beliefs influenced perception of staff member expectations.**

In Study 2, it was apparent that a number of students believed that their in-class behaviour and academic achievement would influence their staff members’ expectations for their future academic performance. Consequently, these students based their predictions of staff member expectations on their own in-class behaviours and academic achievement rather than their individual characteristics. For example, students (regardless of their age or gender) stated that they displayed engagement and effort during the course by contributing during tutorial sessions or taking notes during lectures. They believed that their staff members would notice their behaviours and actions and perceive better academic outcomes for them. These findings contributed to the understanding of why it was that students did not differ by age or gender in terms of their perceptions of staff member expectations, as their perceptions of staff member expectations were more reliant on how their own in-class behaviours would be perceived. These findings also highlighted the difference between school environments and tertiary-based expectation research, discussed below.
In the plethora of naturalistic school-based teacher expectation studies, whereby teacher expectations are not manipulated—unlike Rosenthal and Jacobson’s (1968) seminal study—teacher expectation data is collected from teachers themselves. This is often achieved by asking teachers to make predictions at the beginning of the year/semester for their students’ academic progress, then comparing teacher expectations to students’ actual achievement at the end of the year/semester (Brophy & Good, 1970; Peterson et al., 2016; Rubie-Davies, Peterson, et al., 2012; Turner et al., 2015). In school-based research, it is argued that when teachers form expectations based on students’ individual characteristics, for example based on the ethnicity of indigenous students (Rubie-Davies et al., 2006; Turner et al., 2015), they grossly underestimate students’ actual academic outcomes (controlling for students’ prior academic achievement). Often, teachers attempt to validate their low expectations during interviews, which reveals the negative stereotypes they have applied to the students (Rubie-Davies et al., 2006; Turner, Rubie-Davies, & Webber, 2015).

In the current study, staff member expectations were measured via students’ perceptions. The influence of student characteristics was examined by comparing mature students’ and younger students’ perceptions of staff member expectations that, as mentioned, showed no statistically significant differences. The current methodology allowed for students to choose to participate in this study without staff members having to make predictions for each of those students. In tertiary settings, due to the size of lectures taught by a single lecturer (e.g., 150 students or 1000 students depending on the faculty), other than not knowing or recognising their students (as suggested by the students earlier) staff members might not have wanted to commit to such a workload. The only other study measuring staff member expectations at a tertiary level (Li & Rubie-Davies, 2017) involved two universities in China, and collected teacher expectation data directly from staff members, as opposed to the current study which gathered teacher expectation data from both teaching staff, and students’ perceptions of teaching staff expectations. By examining students’ own perceptions of
their staff member expectations, the current study provided an insight into how staff member expectations are communicated to and received by students at a tertiary level.

**Student gender as a mediator of teacher expectations.**

As noted in Chapter 2, in school-based research student gender often been shown to moderate teacher expectations of student performance (Auwarter & Aruguete, 2008; Hinnant et al., 2009). In Study 2, the intention was to investigate the notion that student gender would mediate staff expectations for students of different ages. However, due to differences in sample sizes when students were categorised by age and gender, the two variables were investigated separately. As such, previous claims by Stone and O’Shea (2013; O’Shea & Stone, 2011), whereby mature female students reported receiving less support in the classroom compared to their male counterparts, could not be examined.

However, when investigated separately, student gender had no significant effect, neither was there a significant interaction effect of student age and gender on students’ prediction of their lecturers’ or tutors’ predictions for their final grade on the course. These findings indicated that, regardless of their age, female students did not perceive different expectations from staff members when compared to their male counterparts. As mentioned above, the current findings indicated that staff members held high class-level expectations based on their own beliefs about teaching and learning. However, there could also have been a lack of an effect of student gender on staff member expectations based on the faculty the staff member was associated with. More than 50% of the students involved in Study 2 were taught by staff members from the arts, and education and social work, faculties. These are traditionally not faculties for which gender-based discrimination has been reported; gender-based discrimination has been largely reported in science-based faculties (Ceci & Williams, 2011; Ceci et al., 2009; Cheryan, 2012; Cheryan, Master, & Meltzoff, 2015; Leslie et al., 2015).

Cheryan (2012) argued that negative attitudes towards women in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics-based fields may exist because the current stereotypes of individuals
in those fields are much more masculine than persistent female stereotypes (e.g., socially skilled, likes helping others, attends to their appearance). It could be argued that if staff members did hold these stereotypes about the female students in their courses then these stereotypes would have aligned to staff members’ beliefs, especially for the students enrolled in education and social work courses. Ceci and Williams (2011) argued that the negative attitudes and discrimination experienced by women in science faculties whereby women researchers are less likely to receive funding, and less likely to be published in journals, and whereby women scientists are less likely to be hired than men, have contributed greatly to women being underrepresented in science-based faculties. Unfortunately, due to a lack of participation and a lack of mature students from the Faculties of Medicine and Health Sciences, and Engineering, previous arguments could not be substantiated. However, based on the findings in Study 2 there is evidence to suggest that both female and male students were perceived to be equally successful in non-science-based faculties such as the Faculty of Education and Social Work.

The Influence of Staff Member Expectations on Student Academic Achievement

Staff member expectations at the beginning of the semester did not influence students’ actual academic performance at the end of the semester. These findings were in contrast with school-based research, whereby teachers’ individual-level student academic expectations have been demonstrated to influence students’ classroom experiences and academic achievement (e.g., Rubie-Davies et al., 2006; Urhahne, 2015; van den Bergh et al., 2010). In the cited studies, it was argued that teachers altered their behaviours and actions towards their students based on their expectations, which was then associated with the students’ learning opportunities and experiences in class, which was ultimately related to students’ academic outcomes (Babad, 2009; Good, 1987; Rubie-Davies, 2010; Rubie-Davies et al., 2006; Rubie-Davies, Peterson, et al., 2012).

In the current study, staff members’ behaviours and actions towards their students were measured when the students answered the CUCEI (Fraser et al., 1986). The CUCEI is most suitable
when used in a smaller classroom and hence was used during tutorials which were smaller in terms of student numbers. This increased the likelihood of direct exchanges between the tutor and students, and thus possibly increased the likelihood that students would observe and notice any differential tutor behaviour. Indeed, students were less likely to report that their tutor did not know who they were, particularly if they reported participating in discussions or asking and/or answering questions during the tutorial sessions.

The data obtained from students’ responses on the CUCEI indicated that mature students’ and younger students’ tutorial experiences did not significantly differ, highlighting that mature students and their younger counterparts reported similar treatment from their tutor and similar classroom experiences, hence, it could be argued that because staff members did not hold expectations for their students based on student age, staff members subsequently did not express differential behaviour based on student age. Of the seven scales on the CUCEI, students neither agreed nor disagreed (on average) on three of the scales (student cohesiveness, innovation, and individualisation). Students somewhat agreed to the rest of the scales in the CUCEI (personalisation, task orientation, involvement and satisfaction). That students somewhat agreed on the scales of personalisation (i.e., extent to which tutors are concerned with and interacted with students on an individual level regarding students’ personal welfare) and satisfaction (i.e., measures the extent of enjoyment of classes) supports the argument posed earlier, whereby it was suggested that the staff members in Study 2 created positive socioemotional classroom environments for all their students.

Due to staff members neither forming nor expressing perceptions of individual-level student academic achievement via differential behaviour, it was discovered that students’ actual academic achievement was not significantly predicted by staff member expectations. Although it was discovered that students who perceived higher expectations from their tutors were likely to achieve a better grade in the course, once both lecturers’ and tutors’ expectations were considered simultaneously (to avoid multicollinearity), a unique contribution of staff member expectations to
student grades could not be established. These findings provide support for Brattesani et al.’s (1984) early claim that teacher expectations or students’ perception of teacher expectations alone, do not influence students’ academic outcomes. In school-based teacher expectation research it has been argued that staff members act differently, both verbally and non-verbally, towards students in the same class depending on their expectations for them (Babad, 1993, 2005; Babad & Taylor, 1992). 

For example, teachers have been observed praising high-expectation students more frequently than low-expectation students or are more likely to rephrase questions for high-expectation students when they have answered incorrectly (Brophy & Good, 1970). In the current study, since staff members had equal class-level expectations for all their students, they may have treated all their students equally and hence did not predict individual students’ academic expectations. In Li and Rubie-Davies’s (2017) study of staff members’ expectations at the tertiary level, they argued that staff members held class-level expectations, as staff members were either high or low-expectation teachers whose expectations significantly influenced students’ academic outcomes. There were a number of reasons that distinguished Li and Rubie-Davies’s (2017) study from the current study.

Firstly, there was a lot of interaction between the teachers and the students as it was a language course that required oral communication and immediate feedback. Therefore, it could be argued that teachers were explicitly expressing their expectations to the students. Secondly, in a more recent article (Li & Rubie-Davies, 2018), the researchers asserted that the teachers stated that they based their expectations on the students’ prior achievement that they were privy to. In the current study, as mentioned above, staff members did not have access to students’ prior academic achievement, and neither was it possible for students to actually base their perceptions of staff member expectations on their academic achievement as data were mostly collected at the beginning of the semester before the majority of students had completed their first assignment.

However, students’ own expectations for their academic performance at the beginning of the semester did predict their academic performance at the end of the semester. Students’ own
expectations correlated more highly with their actual academic achievement when compared to their perceived staff member expectations and made a unique contribution to students’ final grades; 5% of students’ final grade was associated with their own academic expectations. These findings highlight the importance of encouraging students to set high expectations, goals, and aims for themselves in the tertiary environment. The 5% difference in students’ final grade could be enough to move students from one grade level to another (for example, from a D+ to a C-, or from a C+ to a B-).

An examination of students’ explanation of their final grades highlighted that students were motivated by their personal goals and aims, and although not asked directly or specifically, there were no apparent differences in mature students’ aims and goals when compared to their younger counterparts. Previous claims of different motivations and goals between younger and mature students (e.g., Justice & Dornan, 2001; Shields, 1993) were not replicated in Study 2. Both younger and mature students in Study 2 stated that they were working hard towards their personal goals to progress to the next stage of their studies (as demonstrated by the range of grades predicted). Mature students did not identify any more internal or intrinsic attributes, as reported by Shields (1993), but were more in line with Justice and Dornan (2001) who reported no significant difference overall between mature and younger students’ expressed desire to perform well in a particular course.

**Additional Findings**

It was also discovered that a number of students from Study 2 based their own expectations on factors or issues they believed were beyond their control: for example, the structure of the course or examination. Students argued that they held lower expectations for their final-grade performance due to the stressful nature of the examination environment. As the students were undertaking a first-year course, and as for many of the students it was their first year at university, they were perhaps not used to the format of tertiary-level examinations.
**Conclusion**

Findings from Study 2 are positive and encouraging. Ultimately, all students reported positive, supportive treatment from staff members regardless of their age and gender. However, Study 2 asked students only about their experiences specific to the first-year undergraduate courses that they attended, hence it did not accurately capture their full tertiary first-year experience. To gain further clarity and more closely examine a number of findings from both Study 1 and Study 2, both staff member and student participants were interviewed in Study 3, reported next.
Study 3: Experiences and Perceptions of Mature Students

Study 3 was the final study in the series. It was designed to more thoroughly examine the findings and conclusions from Studies 1 and 2, and to investigate the more affective aspects of this thesis, such as students’ personal experiences and potential challenges in tertiary education. In Study 2, it was argued that mature students did not experience incidences of ageism. However, mature students were not directly asked if they had experienced incidences of discrimination or ageism. Study 3 aimed to collate a more complete view of mature students’ tertiary experiences by conducting in-depth semi-structured interviews that would delve more deeply into their experiences in tertiary education during their first year. Although maintaining a focus on staff member expectations and staff member behaviour, students, both younger and mature, were also asked about the support they received while enrolled in tertiary education (i.e., academic and non-academic staff members in the faculty, their coursemates). Students were also asked directly if they had experienced discrimination while enrolled in tertiary education.

Staff member perceptions of mature students were gathered indirectly in Study 1, through their academic and behavioural expectations of mature students. Up to this point in the thesis, however, younger students’ perceptions of mature students, which have previously been unequivocally reported as negative, and often ageist (e.g., Langdon, 2009; Oliver, 2009), have not been investigated. Study 3 attempted to address this gap in knowledge through semi-structured interviews with staff members and students, whereby their perceptions of mature students were obtained.

Method

Participants

A diverse sample of staff members and students from the four faculties, who participated in Studies 1 and 2, were contacted to participate in Study 3. A total of 34 staff members and students
agreed to participate. Of these participants, 10 were staff members (6 females, 4 males), and 24 were students (16 females, 8 males). Four of the staff members were under the age of 40 years (three tutors and a lecturer), and the remainder, who were all lecturers, were over the age of 40 years. Nine of the students were mature students (over the age of 25 years), seven of whom were female. Of the 15 younger students, 9 were female.

**Measures**

**Semi-structured interviews.**

Semi-structured interviews were deemed the best method of data collection in Study 3. Semi-structured interviews allowed for all of the participants to be asked the same questions, but within a flexible framework (Dearnley, 2005). The controlled aspect of semi-structured interviews are the questions and prompts that are prepared in advance. However, an interviewer has the discretion to conduct the interview in a manner that they think is suitable, to skip over questions, to ask the questions in a different order, and to provide explanations if necessary to delve more deeply into particular responses (Kajornboon, 2005).

It has been argued that building a rapport with interviewees is essential to ensure that they answer the questions honestly and are prepared to speak freely (Willig, 2013). Participants were encouraged to be open and thorough when discussing their tertiary experiences but were also told to focus on expectations (i.e., staff member expectations, their own expectations, and the expectations they believed their coursemates held for them).

To prompt student participants to provide their honest opinions and perceptions, they were asked to participate in a sentence-completion task. The sentence-completion task presented open-ended prompts, so as to not influence their responses. The sentences were structured as follows (see Appendix F for the complete list of interview questions for both students and staff members):

1. “The students in my class are…”
2. “The female students in my class are…”
3. “The male students in my class are…”
4. “The older students in my class are…”

5. “The younger students in my class are…”

This format of open-ended questions and asking students to complete sentences discouraged the interviewer from biasing or influencing interviewees’ responses (Dearnley, 2005). To encourage participants to provide well-rounded and thorough responses, probing follow-up questions were used when necessary. For example, “Why do you think that was?” and “Was that a positive or negative experience for you?” were used to elicit more perceptive responses that might have been overlooked otherwise (Smith, Chen, & Liu, 2008).

Procedure

As mentioned in Chapter 3, ethical approval for all three studies in the current research project (Ref. 014598) was obtained simultaneously from the UAHPEC. Hence, data collection for the current study was completed in conjunction with Study 1. According to Patton (2002), purposefully selecting the right participants who can provide the most amount of information and content (i.e., information rich) is the strength of qualitative research. This is in contrast to quantitative research, which yields practical generalisations generated from probability-based random sampling (Patton, 2002). In both the online questionnaire in Study 1 and the in-class questionnaire in Study 2, participants were asked if they would be willing to participate in an interview at a later date. Once a pool of willing participants was identified, a purposeful sampling technique (Patton, 2002) was used to identify suitable participants for Study 3.

Based on the findings from Studies 1 and 2, the recruitment criteria for Study 3 were that staff members were of varying ages, and that students were of varying ages and genders. Staff members and students were contacted via email, and participants self-selected to be involved in the study. Participants who agreed to participate were contacted via email, and subsequently phoned, to schedule interviews. Interviews for both staff members and students were conducted at the end of the student data-collection phase for Study 2. The first round of data collection for the current study
was conducted during the first semester of 2016 (involving participants who participated in the first round of data collection in 2015), and again during Semester 2 of 2016 (involving participants who participated in the second round of data collection at the beginning of 2016). Interviews with staff members were conducted in their offices, and interviews with students were carried out in the library meeting rooms. For each round of semi-structured interviews, students were interviewed first. All interviews were digitally recorded, then transcribed verbatim as Word documents. Following data collection, the interviews were coded and themes were identified. The data-analysis procedure is detailed below.

**Data Analysis**

**Coding the qualitative data.**

The coding scheme developed by Campbell, Quincy, Osserman, and Pedersen (2013) for semi-structured interviews was used to establish intercoder agreement. As opposed to intercoder reliability (which involves two or more coders working independently (Armstrong, Gosling, Weinman, & Marteau, 1997; Krippendorff, 2009), intercoder agreement involves two or more coders—often one with more content knowledge—discussing and modifying themes where necessary (Campbell et al., 2013). Campbell et al.’s (2013) three stages were followed in Study 3, for both the staff member and student interviews. During the first stage, the researcher randomly selected two interview transcripts (beginning with staff member interviews), and analysed the transcripts using thematic analysis (V. Braun & Clarke, 2006; V. Braun et al., 2014). The researcher became familiar with the content of the transcripts by reading each transcript multiple times. Initial semantic codes were then created. The researcher then explained the codes to the second coder including the definition of the codes and how they were developed. This was followed by a discussion in which the codes were further clarified.

Campbell et al. (2013) argued that when one coder is more knowledgeable about the interview subject matter than another, it is important to eliminate any confusion when coding. This was achieved in Study 3 by unitising the text, in which meaningful units of analysis were identified.
The researcher coded the initial three interview transcripts by first identifying a segment of text and placing the appropriate code or codes in a bracket by the text. Once the transcripts had been fully coded, the second coder was provided with copies that had the codes removed, but not the brackets. Hence, both coders coded the same units of texts. The number of units of texts differed depending on the duration and content of the interviews.

The next stage of analysis involved establishing a high level of intercoder agreement through coders discussing and negotiating any disagreements. This was consistent with the recommendations of Campbell et al. (2013). There was an initial 83% agreement on coding between the researcher and the independent coder. Disagreements arose when the researcher and the second coder coded unitised texts differently. After subsequent discussion and modifications agreed upon by both the researcher and the second coder, a 90% agreement was reached. The final stage of analysis involved the researcher using the established coding scheme to analyse the remaining interview transcripts. When new concepts arose from subsequent transcripts, which did not fit the initial codes, a discussion was had to decide if it did fit pre-existing codes or if new codes needed to be created. The same process of analysis was used on both the staff member and the student interviews.

Results

Mature Students’ Tertiary Experience

Mature students were directly asked if they had experienced any forms of discrimination or prejudice during their tertiary studies to examine whether mature students experienced ageism in tertiary environments. Mature students were also asked if they were receiving an appropriate amount of support from academic staff and faculty in general. Younger students were asked the same questions with regard to discrimination and support. Students were also asked to expand on their responses from Study 2. The themes that emerged from mature student interviews were:

1. A lack of support due to the structure of the faculty, rather than student age.
2. Most mature students did not experience ageism.
3. Mature students were more willing to ask for support.

**A lack of support due to the structure of the faculty, rather than student age.**

Mature students who reported a lack of support during their tertiary experience cited issues associated with the structure of their faculty rather than age discrimination. On the other hand, one mature student made a point of stating that she felt supported by the faculty both as a mature student and as a parent. She stated that access to a parent room made a large positive difference to her tertiary experience. She stated “I have access to the parent room which has been fantastic. Not only do I meet other mature students from different faculties, [and] we do tend to talk. We talk about balance and finances and things like that and recipes, cheap recipes to make… I find that is a nice support group as well because we do encourage each other. I am glad for that” (46-year-old female student).

In general, students who did not feel supported were from larger faculties, or faculties that were off-site (i.e., not based at the university’s main campus). One student reported feeling isolated due to the structure of the competitive-entry course, which meant that first-year students were not properly inducted into or associated with the faculty. She stated, “It was like a no-man’s land and I didn’t really enjoy that part. Like I would have liked to have just been included in the Law Faculty as opposed to like... or maybe have it a bit more clear that in fact that was pre-law. There was no place for people who were not doing a conjoint” (28-year-old female student). One student who was based at an off-site campus stated, “I have found it not very approachable, the lecturers they come, they do their lectures and then they head off again” (55-year-old female student).

Other mature students mentioned that they were not given all of the necessary course information; for example, “Well for a start I didn’t even know that Epsom has a lunch time from 12.30 to 1 o’clock... So for the first term one of our lecturers didn’t show up until 1 o’clock but our Canvas timetable said 12.30. So, we had no clue but we just thought, well... and there was quite a few things building up at that time and that was one of them, they just weren’t showing until later”
One mature student did cite her age as a reason for not being offered extra help, but rather than negative age discrimination she argued that she was not offered help due to an assumption that mature students do not require the extra help. She stated, “Because I am an older student too it’s kind of like, well she doesn’t need the help, she most probably knows what she’s doing, that kind of thing you know” (41-year-old female student).

**Most mature students did not experience ageism.**

Most students (83%), regardless of their age, claimed that they had positive tertiary experiences. Mature students stated that they had positive interactions with younger students in their classes; they felt both accepted and respected. One mature student stated, “I think they’re quite respectful because of your age, the young ones are kind of like, yeah they’re really nice… I have an Island uni son and I have a Pākehā uni son. He goes, Hello my Samoan mum” (46-year-old female student). When asked about his experiences interacting with the younger students in his class, one mature student stated, “They are a pretty good positive bunch of people around actually… I think people are generally quite accepting of people’s ways, I think” (46-year-old male student).

A small proportion of students mentioned negative experiences that tainted their overall tertiary experience. Two students (one younger and one mature) reported incidences of racism, and one mature student reported ageism. With regard to others’ (i.e., staff members and peers) expectations for her academic success, the younger student stated, “I don’t know if it’s me or just how I am feeling but of being a PI [Pacific Islander], yeah and being a minority, yeah like sometimes their expectations are quite low and so when we do well, it is surprising” (19-year-old female student). One mature student claimed that her peers did not offer her the same amount of support or help in class due to her ethnicity. She stated, “I am actually Indian, so they think that I know everything, and you’ve got money and you’re okay, so you don’t need to worry about it. But it’s actually the complete opposite of that. You think to yourself, like, I am just like you guys, I’m struggling like you guys, I’m a student. But they seem to get more help than we seem to do. So, it’s kind of divided some of us” (41-year-old female student). The mature student who disclosed an
incident of age-related discrimination stated that she noticed derogatory comments directed at her on a shared social media site used by students in the course. She reported, “I did find that in the beginning and there was all this Facebook comments about all the old nanas… I did not like that, I did not take too kindly and I did not join the Facebook page of the cohorts at the beginning for that very reason” (55-year-old female student). She noted that she spoke to her tutor about the matter and it did eventually resolve as she got to know the cohort of students over time, stating, “So as a mature student I have now gained respect and I respect them. I have worked with them through workshops, and through situations, assignments, and things and now I see them all in a different light.”

**Mature students were more willing to ask for support.**

Compared to their younger counterparts, mature students asked for extra support from academic staff and faculty. Students in general, regardless of their age, did report that they were not individually offered help or support, but were instead informed about the various support systems in place (e.g., office hours, workshops), and were encouraged to seek extra assistance on their own. Mature students stated that they did seek help and support when necessary, whereas younger students regretted not doing so. For example, “I feel like I haven’t sought it out and probably if I had I would have got more support, but yeah I haven’t... I feel like I haven’t needed it that much. I’ve been doing all right” (19-year-old female student); “Yeah, it is there but I have just never gone out to get the support. Like I have my friends and my mentors and family, but I have never gone to the faculty or anyone” (19-year-old female student); and, “That is our fault and we know, I tell myself all right I’m going to go visit them; I’m going to ask a question, and it doesn’t happen” (20-year-old female student). This was in contrast to, for example, “I think if I needed help I would get it, there’s heaps of places to seek help and advice like, for example, I’ve been asking for help with scholarship applications and I’ve gone to the Student Law Centre, I’ve gone through the scholarship office, gone through the clock tower, so I’m getting advice from heaps of different people” (36-year-old female student), and “My experience is, there is help. If you accept the support workshops and things that they offer which I did” (46-year-old female student).
Mature students’ willingness to seek support from staff members extended to their tertiary experiences. Mature students stated that they would have felt comfortable to approach staff members if they had ever experienced discrimination while enrolled at the university. For example, “if it had bothered me I would raise it with the staff” (50-year-old female student).

Younger Students’ Perceptions of Mature Students

The main themes that emerged from semi-structured interviews with younger students (i.e., students who were 24 years and younger) were:

1. Most younger students liked and respected mature students.
2. Mature students’ questions and comments were mainly a boon but sometimes a burden to younger students.
3. Younger students believed that mature students possessed better study habits.

Younger students liked and respected mature students.

During the sentence-completion task, most younger students (67%) associated positive words and traits with mature students. For example, “Wise” (19-year-old female student), and “They are really friendly” (21-year-old female student). Younger students indicated that mature students enrolled within their courses were intelligent, friendly, and hardworking. Some younger students associated negative words or traits with mature students but insisted that those traits were exclusive to the particular mature students in their class, rather than mature students generally. For example, “Annoying!” (19-year-old female student), and “Most of them are pretty supportive but there are, I’ll be honest, there are a couple in my classes that can be a bit oppressive I guess” (21-year-old male student). When asked to elaborate, these students recalled unpleasant experiences with particular mature students in their course. For example, “In my French class there is a woman called K and she is 60 something and she just insists on pronouncing everything incorrectly, asking questions all the time, talking English all the time and my best friend and I have a rage vendetta against her” (19-year-old female student), and “They kept interrupting the lecturer to ask questions that weren’t quite even
relevant to what we were doing. It was getting to a point where it seemed like everyone was, like, please stop” (21-year-old male student).

**Mature students’ questions and comments were mainly a boon but sometimes a burden to younger students.**

Talking to staff members and asking questions during lessons were the most common in-class behaviours younger students associated with mature students. For example, “I think mature students are more likely to actually talk to the lecturers and the tutors, I guess, whereas the younger students, I think they hold back a little bit more” (20-year-old female student), and “They are so driven, so motivated, so full of questions. They are front row students, they are the ones that constantly are in correspondence with the lecturers. They are the ones that do well” (20-year-old female student).

However, when prompted to expand on their responses there was a range of opinions as to whether these behaviours were helpful or a hindrance to the classroom environment, in relation to younger students’ learning opportunities and experience. For example, “She asks the really hard questions and that’s what she’s known for, but people appreciate that” (20-year-old male student), and “He’s got obviously [a] more mature brain to the rest of us and he brings up different things to us that we just don’t think of, so it’s a different dimension but also that it does sometimes disrupt the class” (20-year-old female student). Another of the students noted, “It is wasting our time sometimes, but yeah just the dumb nature of her [mature student] comments were the worst part” (19-year-old female student).

**Younger students believed that mature students possessed better study habits.**

As mature students were seen by their younger counterparts to be asking more questions during lessons and contributing more during group discussions, younger students believed that mature students had different study habits and behaviours when compared to themselves. In general, younger students believed that mature students were more serious about their tertiary education. During the sentence-completion task, a number of younger students (47%) stated that, unlike mature students, they tended to leave work until the last minute. For example, “Again, depending on your
drive, some people tend to study like last minute and I have noticed that some young people study at the last minute. And then I notice that some older people do the opposite” (20-year-old female student); “We want to experience our youth more. We tend to just run away and escape from this reality and then we all come back and sob and do our assignments, but it’s been fun” (19-year-old female student); and, “[a] lot of younger students who try, kind of tend to take things for granted, like we take it for granted that we’ll get good grades or that we’re doing the right thing or that this is what we have to do in order to get a good job… whereas the more mature students like they have [to be] so much more organised and so much more hard working because they have other lives that they need to lead, they’ve got families and everything” (19-year-old female student). When asked to elaborate, younger students stated that mature students’ in-class behaviour showed that they paid more attention to their education. For example, “They take the study very seriously, like, a lot more seriously. They have really good answers to tutorial questions. They’re very serious, they like to answer questions. They like to show what they’ve learned” (19-year-old female student), and “Only because you’re comparing it to the mature students, you see that it’s pretty obvious they’re like outwardly trying” (20-year-old female student).

**Staff Member Expectations of Their Tertiary Students**

Staff members were asked if they observed academic or behavioural differences among students enrolled in their courses, by student age or gender. Subsequently, staff members were asked if they held individual and/or class-level expectations for their students based on student age or gender. The main themes that emerged from the semi-structured interviews with staff members were:

1. Staff members observed behavioural and academic differences among students based on student age.
2. Staff members held high class-level behavioural but not academic expectations.
3. Individual student academic expectations were based on student in-class behaviour.
Staff members observed behavioural and academic differences among students based on student age.

When staff members were asked if they had observed any differences between mature students and their younger counterparts—usually students who had arrived straight from secondary school—there was a resounding “yes.” All staff members interviewed cited behavioural differences brought on by different life experiences or circumstances. However, staff members’ opinions varied on whether mature students’ life experiences or circumstances enhanced, or else limited, their academic achievement.

Age-related differences in motivation and study styles. In general, staff members stated that they observed differences in the level of motivation that mature students displayed, for example, “They are highly, highly motivated” (30–39-year-old female lecturer), and “Yeah, you can tell that they are a bit more mature, a bit more world aware. Sometimes they are better motivated” (over-60-year-old male lecturer). Fifty percent of the staff members mentioned that mature students enrolled in their courses were more likely to ask questions during lessons or engage in class discussions when compared to their younger coursemates. For example, “They will be asking more questions in the lecture and they tend to work a bit harder for assignments and tend to get better marks” (50–59-year-old male lecturer), “I definitely do find that mature students are more open to asking questions but I don’t find it annoying, as long as they are on point that is fine (20–29-year-old female tutor); and “Mature students certainly they were more willing to engage in conversation and have a broader discussion about like society things” (30–39-year-old tutor). When asked whether they believed mature students’ questions or group discussion contributions during their lessons were a hindrance, staff members stated that they were not. One staff member stated, “I mean, if they ask questions, that’s what they’re there for. Your job is to answer it. They are usually very good questions too. From my experience they are very relevant questions” (30–39-year-old female lecturer).

Staff members noticed that younger students were visibly exasperated when mature students’ questions during lessons seemed to disrupt the lesson. For example, “When we do have the large
classes if we had a student asking a lot of questions then I could see that the younger students were getting impatient (over-60-year-old male lecturer), and “Oh they rolled their eyes when this person kept asking lots of questions” (30–39-year-old female lecturer). In general, staff members stated that it was their responsibility to facilitate class discussions to ensure that all students were provided equal opportunities in class.

**Age-related differences in academic achievement.** Staff members indicated that mature students’ life experiences and circumstances influenced their study abilities and motivation. However, staff members’ opinions were mixed when explaining whether they believed those experiences and circumstances enhanced or limited mature students’ overall academic achievement. For example, “They have been working for 3 years and come back here and it’s this pressure and stressful life. They can’t handle this necessarily well if they haven’t done it before” (50–59-year-old female lecturer), in contrast to, “But when they do say something it’s usually based on their own personal experience, it’s based on the things that they have read over the years and it’s based on kind of a sense of what you might call wisdom that the 18 year olds haven’t developed yet” (over-60-year-old male lecturer).

Some staff members cited individual differences among mature students. For example, “The continuing education people they don’t do homework because they don’t need to, they are just sitting there. However, these professional people, they have to submit everything, and they tend to be the best ones in terms of grades as well. But there are only a small number of those people” (50–59-year-old male lecturer), and “Sometimes they can be very bright students but on the whole, they tend to be the ‘B’ kind of achieving students, I think, that come along a bit later. But they are often much more interesting people” (over-60-year-old male lecturer). Overall, however, staff members stated that they did not hold higher expectations for the mature students in their class, relative to younger students. One staff member stated, “I don’t treat them any differently. I don’t have higher expectations. I know typically they tend to do better but it’s not like I put an extra... I expect more
from them. I am delighted when they give me more but it’s not something like ‘Oh, you’re like 40, therefore you must do more.’ It’s not like that at all” (30–39-year-old female lecturer).

In terms of a difference between female and male students enrolled in their courses, all staff members reported no difference in terms of students’ academic achievement. Staff members from the different faculties stated that they had not noticed any academic differences among their students that they could attribute to student gender. However, two staff members who were interviewed did state that they noticed behavioural differences; they reported that the female students in their courses were more likely to ask questions or seek clarification during lessons. One staff member stated, “It’s extremely rare for any of the males to come and ask for advice about the essay… I think it’s a pride thing or something like that. They think that it’s up to them” (over-60-year-old male lecturer). Another stated, “Some of my most vocal students have been women and I have tried to promote women speaking out in my class” (over-60-year-old male lecturer).

**Staff members held high class-level behavioural but not academic expectations.**

Sixty percent of staff members cited high class-level behavioural expectations when asked directly if they held either academic and/or behavioural expectations for their students. These behavioural expectations were centred round the manner in which students were expected to behave in order to pass or achieve a high grade in their course. One staff member stated, “My expectations are preparation and review and coming to class with an inquisitive mind and being engaged. Those are my expectations” (over-60-year-old male lecturer), while another stated, “Yes I do. I expect them to be curious and also enjoy the learning and progress, building knowledge on the subject I teach, especially in the first year” (50–59-year-old male lecturer).

Some staff members did not hold high class-level academic expectations, as they believed that the diverse nature of their students and their corresponding academic abilities would contribute to variability in students’ academic performance. For example, “No, because not everyone can get an A. This is a language course and some people are not cut out to do language, but we don’t want to discourage them, but they don’t do very well” (50–59-year-old female lecturer), and “I can’t
expect every student to be excellent. I can’t expect every student to be outstanding. That is unrealistic. And because I know that this is an open admissions university and especially the faculty, I can’t expect the students to be all in the upper 20th percentile” (over-60-year-old male lecturer). Nevertheless, staff members believed that a combination of students’ positive or beneficial in-class behaviours, combined with their teaching skills, would ensure that most students enrolled in their class would pass the course. For example, “Yes I’d never say I expect everyone to get an A because I pretty much would think it wouldn’t happen. But I would try to convey that there’s generally no reason for people who put in the work, come and ask for help when they’re struggling, not to pass” (50–59-year-old female lecturer), and “So I expect a range of students, but I do have minimum expectations that everyone, you know, I designed the course so that if the students do the work and they attend lectures, they attend tutorials, they do all of the work, they ask questions, they are inquisitive and they try to prove themselves... if the student is trying I am there to help the student” (over-60-year-old male lecturer). Another staff member stated “...anyone who works hard, no matter how limited their natural aptitude for languages are, ought to be able to pass. That’s one expectation is that you can make up for not having a natural gift for languages by working hard” (over-60-year-old male lecturer).

**Individual student academic expectations were based on student in-class behaviour.**

Although staff members acknowledged the large number of students in their classes—especially in lectures—there were observable student behaviours which staff members believed directly influenced student academic achievement. Asking questions, either during lessons or after the lesson, conveyed different expectations based on the type or depth of questions asked. For example, “That’s another thing which is a clear, you know, she asked interesting questions and so you can tell that someone is on top of it because of the level at which they ask the questions” (over-60-year-old male lecturer), compared to “The majority of students who would come and see me are the ones who are struggling” (50–59-year-old female lecturer). Staff members also had higher academic expectations for students who showed an extra interest in the subject material. For
example, “Especially in the early stage of the semester, they normally come and ask, or they introduce, and they tell me about what kind of particular aspect of the subject they are interested in” (50–59-year-old male lecturer). Staff members who had smaller classes noticed student attendance and stated that high-attendance rates often contributed to better academic performance. For example, “The ones who came to tutorials you could sort of see the ones who were really engaged and asking questions so those ones I had expectations that they would sort of improve from where they started” (30–39-year-old female tutor), and “I guess from the moment she stopped attending class regularly I began to guess that she was going to fail one way or another. So, in that particular kind of course you need to show up every time because it’s kind of incremental learning and if you get behind…” (over-60-year-old male lecturer).

### Discussion

**Mature Students’ Tertiary Experience**

Most students, regardless of their age, reported that they had positive experiences while enrolled in tertiary education. In Study 3, most mature students did not report any incidences of discrimination or ageism. A majority of mature students stated that they had positive, respectful, and supportive relationships both with mature students in their courses and their younger counterparts. Currently there is insufficient research and data on mature students’ experience in tertiary education. In the last decade, fortuitously, there has been a minor rise in research surrounding non-traditional (i.e., mature students, first generation students enrolled in tertiary education, part-time students, ethnic minorities, lower socioeconomic groups, disabled students, veterans) in tertiary education (Roberts, 2011; Rumann, Rivera, & Hernandez, 2011; Witkowsky, Mendez, Ogunbowo, Clayton, & Hernandez, 2016) to promote equity through access to tertiary education. These studies have focussed on non-traditional students’ experience in tertiary education and recommended changes in pedagogy and administration (i.e., timetables, access to staff members) that could better support non-traditional students (see Roberts, 2011). The current thesis specifically focuses on mature students,
and the findings from Study 3 contribute significantly to the drive to promote equity as well as academic success for all students enrolled in tertiary education.

Echoing the findings of Witkowsky et al. (2016), the mature students interviewed for the current thesis, too, felt respected and included. In general, mature students reported positive, affable working relationships with their younger coursemates. However, one mature student described an instance of ageism, when she noticed disparaging remarks made about her on social media. Prior to the students in her course getting to know her as an individual, they applied negative mature-student stereotypes to her. As the semester progressed, she worked closely with those same younger students, and their relationship improved. This mature student’s experience highlights the quick and automatic, but adjustable, impression of others that is formed when based on stereotypes (Gilmour, 2015). The younger students were familiar with the negative stereotype of mature students asking too many questions and being disruptive in class. Hence, when the mature student did ask questions in class—regardless of whether she was being disruptive or not—the negative stereotype was possibly activated (Gilmour, 2015). The majority of younger students interviewed did not mind that mature students asked more questions than they did, as they found the questions to be interesting or to add value to the lesson.

There were also two manifestations of race-based discrimination reported by students, which directly related to their peers’ expectations of their academic achievement, whereby a Pasifika student reported that her peers had lower expectations for her, and an Asian student reported that she received less support from her peers because of their high expectations for her (i.e., they assumed that she did not need additional support). In primary school research in New Zealand, the effects of race-based teacher expectations have been well documented (e.g., Rubie-Davies et al., 2006; Turner et al., 2015). It is unfortunate that the current findings indicate that pervasive stereotypes identified by Turner et al. (2015)—specifically, higher teacher expectations for Asian and Pākehā students, and lower expectations for Pasifika and Māori students—might also be held by tertiary students.
Both mature and younger students stated that staff members provided them with enough support throughout the semester to ensure that their educational needs were being met. Mature students stated that they either did or would talk to their staff members when/if they experienced ageism, indicating, in line with previous findings (Witkowsky et al., 2016), that mature students did believe that staff members would stand up for them when/if they experienced prejudice or discrimination while enrolled.

However, some mature students did state that the faculties they were associated with could have been more supportive of their educational needs. At first glance, it would seem that the previously reported lack of support indicated by mature students (Kasworm, 2011) remained, but the issues that mature students raised were not directly related to their age. Instead, the issues raised related to the structure of the faculty and the way that staff were managed (i.e., where their offices were). Nonetheless, there is a need for these issues to be addressed to ensure that all students—regardless of their age—feel supported and have their needs met to ensure equity in tertiary education. It does seem that some measures have been taken to ensure that mature students enrolled in the university involved in the current thesis are supported, with their particular educational needs met. For example, the provision of a parent room as a space mature students who are parents can use. All tertiary institutions should adopt this practice. There is nonetheless room for improvement. In Study 3, mature students suggested that there needed to be better planning and support in terms of the hours of contact students have with staff members, and for information about the course to be disseminated in a timely manner. These suggestions echoed those of Roberts (2011) whereby non-traditional students requested improved sensitivity in regard to their commitments outside of their university timetable, to which Roberts (2011) stated that a complete overhaul of tertiary institutions’ timetables was not necessary, rather there needed to be more consideration and management to ensure that both traditional and non-traditional needs were met. Similarly, using the lack of contact due to staff members’ offices being off-site as an example, it is not that staff members should move
offices (as students from the off-site campus would miss out), rather staff members could perhaps schedule off-site days where they were available for office hours to those students who were based off-site.

**Perceptions of mature students.**

In total, nine complex yet complementary themes were identified in Study 3. Younger tertiary students had positive impressions of, and interactions with mature students, and, indeed, most mature students reported that they had not experienced any incidences of ageism. These findings are in contrast with those of K. Harris et al. (2017), as younger students did not report negative age-based prejudices with regard to the older students in their courses. In fact, younger students praised mature students’ study skills and resolve. As such, the current findings are more consistent with those of McTavish (1971) and Kite et al. (2005), whose meta-analyses found that age discrimination decreased when more detailed information about the older individual, such as good health or reputable employment, was provided. Specifically, McTavish (1971) found that older people with a higher social standing or educational background were negatively stereotyped to a lesser degree, whereas older targets from ethnic minorities had more negative stereotypes applied to them. Being enrolled in tertiary education would suggest higher academic abilities and might therefore potentially reduce negative perceptions of incompetence or a lack of skill.

Much like younger students, staff members also stated that mature students had good study skills, noting that mature students’ life experiences and home lives contributed to their high motivation and diligence in class. A side effect of their diligence and hardworking nature appeared to be a higher number of questions posed during the lessons, often for clarification or to contribute to the content of the lesson. Statements from a number of mature students supported this theory. An unfortunate repercussion of the higher number of questions and comments was that these behaviours were sometimes perceived by younger students to be disruptive to the lesson. As mentioned earlier, the majority of younger students interviewed did not describe mature students’ questions during lessons as trivial or disruptive. Nevertheless, although staff members encouraged questions and
comments during their lessons—as it was a behavioural expectation that staff members regarded as necessary for academic success in their course—they also noticed when younger students were frustrated, which manifested as negative or derogatory behaviour (e.g., sighing, rolling their eyes), and managed the classroom climate accordingly (e.g., steered the conversation in a different direction, or encouraged quieter students to participate in the classroom discussion). In general, the findings from Study 3 supported those of Brinthaupt and Eady (2014) who argued that staff members liked and appreciated mature students, and believed that mature students did differ from their younger counterparts in positive ways.

For some staff members, mature students’ higher motivation or study skills did not translate to higher expectations for mature students’ academic performance. Staff members varied in their experiences and opinions when asked if they believed that mature students out-performed younger students. In general, staff members were more likely to consider individual student differences in ability and skill when they pertained to predictions of academic achievement. When asked if they held high class-level academic expectations, staff members claimed that they did not, as their courses included a diverse sample of students, and it was unrealistic to assume that the large number of students enrolled in the course would all be high achievers. However, a number of staff members believed that regardless of students’ initial academic abilities and skill level, their teaching style and academic abilities would ensure that their students would improve throughout the semester. It is argued that these staff members were high-expectation teachers, based on Rubie-Davies’ (Rubie, 2004; Rubie-Davies, 2007) definition, as they clearly expected their students’ academic performance to improve. High expectations are not the same high grade predictions for all students, rather the notion that there will be large learning gains, relative to students’ achievement.

When asked if they had individual-level academic expectations for their students, staff members did identify students who displayed certain in-class behaviours as being those who would likely perform well in the course. Staff members stated that students who asked questions during
lessons, and had conversations with them about the course content, displayed more knowledge and a deeper understanding of the subject matter, demonstrated behaviours which would directly influence those students’ academic outcomes. Thus, it could be inferred that staff members did not display any differential behaviour based on students’ individual characteristics, yet were more likely to respond to students’ in-class behaviours.

**Conclusion**

This thesis set out to investigate ageism in tertiary institutes, with a particular focus on staff member expectations and the influence of those expectations on mature students’ learning experiences and outcomes. Study 3 was designed to expand on and further explore the findings from Studies 1 and 2. On average, mature students reported positive learning experiences, bolstered by their peers and staff members. The formation and expression of staff member expectations was also explored in Study 3 and it is concluded that staff members have high class-level behavioural expectations for their students that are communicated verbally, and well received by their students. These behavioural expectations are widely agreed-upon in-class behaviours that could improve students’ academic achievement and academic outcomes. Staff members’ expectations of their students are based on students displaying these behaviours, rather than students’ personal characteristics such as their age or gender.
Chapter Six: General Discussion

To ensure equity is available to all ages, the focus of ageism research may need to shift from defining what ageism is to defining conditions or environments in which older and younger individuals are treated differently (Kite & Johnson, 1988). The questions central to the current thesis have been whether the phenomenon of ageism occurred within tertiary education settings and whether there were specific effects on mature students’ learning experiences and outcomes. It was argued that if staff members in tertiary education held lower expectations for mature students’ academic performance when compared to younger students (especially if all other information about the students was identical), it would indicate that staff members held ageist attitudes whereby they automatically assumed mature students performed differently relative to their younger counterparts and, hence, would treat them as such.

In this closing chapter, the research questions posed in Chapter 2 will be addressed by summarising the findings from the three studies and interrelating them within the broader context of the existing literature base. The novel contributions offered by these findings are also highlighted and the broader implications discussed. The current chapter will conclude with a discussion of the limitations of this research, and some suggestions are offered for future research into the field of teacher expectations in tertiary environments.

Do Academic Staff Members Hold and Enact Ageist Attitudes Towards Mature Students?

Findings from all three studies in the current research project highlighted that staff members did not hold nor enact ageist attitudes towards the mature students enrolled in their courses. Results from Study 1 (a vignette-based study) indicated that teaching staff held moderately high class-level academic expectations (i.e., predicted a B+ final grade), with no significant influence of individual student characteristics on the predictions made. In Study 2, it was revealed that both younger and mature students of staff members who participated in Study 1 did not perceive different academic expectations from their lecturers and tutors; rather, their perceived expectations matched the
moderately high expectations of the teaching staff observed in Study 1. When staff members were asked during interviews about mature students enrolled in their first-year courses, they did not report attitudes that were inconsistent with what was reported in Study 1. In both Study 1 and Study 3, staff members reported that mature students were highly motivated and displayed good in-class behaviours. The current research also highlighted that mature students were more likely to be identified and differentiated from younger students by their in-class behaviour, rather than by their age alone.

Findings from Study 1 are in contrast to teacher expectation research carried out within the primary and secondary school environments. Such studies have indicated that school teachers rely on stereotypes that are based upon individual student characteristics such as ethnicity (Rubie-Davies et al., 2006; Tenenbaum & Ruck, 2007; Turner et al., 2015; van den Bergh et al., 2010), gender, or socioeconomic status (Auwarter & Aruguete, 2008), when making predictions about students’ future academic performance. Although the age of mature students in the current thesis was salient to staff members, in that staff members made age-based behavioural predictions, tertiary staff members were less engaged in forming expectations based on student characteristics. Even when forming their expectations for older hypothetical mature students (45-year-olds) in Study 1, there was little evidence to suggest that they drew from negative age-related stereotypes such as incompetence or a lack of willingness to learn (K. Harris et al., 2017). Even when staff members noted stereotypical mature-student behaviours that had previously triggered negative responses from younger students—for example, that mature students asked questions during lessons at a higher rate when compared to younger students, which disrupted lessons and indicated a lack of understanding or intelligence (Langdon, 2009; Oliver, 2009)—these factors did not elicit negative attitudes or sentiments, neither did they influence staff members’ academic expectations for mature students.

Teaching staff described noticing differences between younger and mature students in their attitudes, study style, and behaviours within the classroom, which they attributed to the different
levels of life experience between the two age groups. Opinions varied as to whether a greater level of life experience helped or hindered mature students in the classroom. Whereas some staff members noted that mature students’ previous experiences in employment or at-home responsibilities motivated them to better manage their time, consistent with the assertions of Smithers and Griffin (1986), others suggested that being away from an education environment for a period of time might cause mature students to lack the academic skills required for success at the tertiary level, relative to those entering tertiary study soon after their completion of secondary school. The latter perspective aligns more closely to the statements of Day et al. (2011), whose interviewees stated that they were concerned that mature students, although being highly motivated and eager to learn, lacked preparation in terms of study skills and confidence. Interviewees also noted that mature students often juggled multiple roles (e.g., parent, employee), and thus faced the challenge of balancing their home and tertiary lives to a degree that might have been greater than for younger students. The varied opinions gathered in the current thesis suggested that teaching staff did not rely on a mature student’s age alone when making predictions about their future academic performance.

Staff members were found to consider both the positive and negative influences of the different life experience and circumstances acquired by students as they grew older. These findings support a multidimensional perspective on ageing, whereby both positive and negative elements of ageing and subsequent age-based stereotypes were identified by the perceiver (K. Harris et al., 2017; Hummert, 1999; Kite et al., 2005). For example, approximately half the staff members interviewed did notice and comment on a popular mature-student behaviour stereotype of asking more questions in class when compared to their younger counterparts (Langdon, 2009; Oliver, 2009). Yet, contrary to previous accounts, staff members did not report this stereotypical mature-student behaviour as being disruptive to the class. Instead, they stated that they welcomed questions and participation from mature students. Teaching staff in Studies 1 and 3 indicated that the ability and willingness to
ask questions either during or after lessons, in person or via email, was an important and useful student trait for students enrolled in tertiary education. They noted that students (regardless of their age) who asked questions about the lesson or subject content were more engaged, and the staff members held higher academic expectations for those students.

In the current thesis, students who asked questions about the subject matter possibly indicated to teaching staff that they were putting in the effort and energy to better understand the content. Hence, it was unsurprising that staff members encouraged mature students’ questions in their classes. Interviews with staff members highlighted the idea that rather than discourage mature students’ higher rate of questions or more active participation during in-class discussions, some managed the classroom climate by actively facilitating in-class discussions and encouraging younger students to participate or ask questions as well. Student engagement is a robust predictor of learning and personal development (Carini et al., 2006; Kahu, 2013). Indeed, researchers who recently investigated the accuracy of staff members’ judgement of students’ chances of success at university argued that staff members based their predictions of student success on students’ engagement and motivation, rather than students’ prior achievement (Wijnia, Loyens, Derous, & Schmidt, 2016).

The higher rate of questions from mature students could be indicative of a different learning method compared to younger students. Some have suggested that mature students, motivated by intrinsic as opposed to extrinsic goals, adopt a deep approach to learning whereby they have more intention of understanding, and/or increased ability to relate new ideas to already-held knowledge, relative to younger students (Richardson, 1994a, 2013). Certainly, a deep-learning method could explain a higher rate of questions from mature students, in addition to the sometimes-mentioned tendency of mature students to relate their personal experiences to the subject matter of class discussions, as detected in the current thesis.

The current findings relating to staff members’ expectations of mature students in tertiary education cannot be compared directly to previous research as no other researcher to date has
completed a similar investigation involving this student subgroup. There is currently a scarcity of published literature relating to the existence and effect of teacher expectations beyond primary and secondary school environments (Timmermans, Rubie-Davies, & Rjosk, 2018). Li and Rubie-Davies (2017, 2018) have recently contributed to this much-neglected area of teacher expectations research with a focus on English-as-a-foreign-language classrooms at a Chinese university. Their findings paralleled those of the current thesis whereby staff members in the Chinese university held class-level expectations—across multiple classes—for their students (Li & Rubie-Davies, 2017).

**Do Mature Students Perceive Different Staff Member Academic Expectations or Differential Treatment?**

Whether students perceived and accepted the academic expectations held by staff members was considered as part of the current thesis, given that such a transactional process has been identified as an important component of existing teacher expectation models (Brophy & Good, 1970; Cooper, 1979; Darley & Fazio, 1980; Rubie-Davies, 2014). In Study 2, mature students did not perceive different staff member expectations, nor did they report differential treatment when compared to their younger counterparts. Rather, findings from Study 2 further strengthen the findings from Study 1, in that all students perceived moderately high class-level expectations from teaching staff. In general, students perceived similar academic expectations to those expressed by staff members (specifically, a B+ final grade on average for both lecturer and tutor expectations), regardless of their age and gender. Mature students did not perceive lower or higher expectations for their academic performance from teaching staff, relative to the expectations held by younger students, and there were no differences in the expectations held by male and female students. It was concluded that the expectations of staff for hypothetical students in a “laboratory” setting were accurately perceived by their actual students during lessons. In Study 1, when in-class behaviours, student age, and student gender were controlled for, staff members were found to hold uniformly
high class-level academic expectations for the hypothetical students. These findings were corroborated by students in Studies 2 and 3.

During interviews, teaching staff indicated that students enrolled in their courses were aware of the importance of putting in the necessary effort required both in and out of class. When combined with the support and scaffolding provided by the teaching staff themselves, the students were expected to show improvements in their academic performance by the end of the course. Indeed, a number of staff members stated that regardless of a student’s natural abilities or skills, it would be a combination of a student’s beneficial in-class behaviour and their own teaching skills that would ensure that most students enrolled in their course would show academic improvement by the end of the course, if not pass the course. This tendency for teaching staff to base their expectations for student academic achievement on factors other than individual student characteristics was consistent with the concept of high-expectation teachers as defined by Rubie-Davies (Rubie, 2004; Rubie-Davies, 2007). Among high-expectation teachers in school-based research, individual student characteristics did not influence teacher academic expectations (Rubie-Davies, 2007).

It was initially speculated that if staff members did hold different expectations for the mature students in their courses, they would be communicated via differential behaviour which would then influence students’ experienced instructional and emotional classroom climate (Rubie-Davies, 2014). Student responses to the CUCEI were compared by student age, and no differences in perceptions of tutor treatment and assessment of the tutorial environment by student age were observed. This observation strengthened the conclusion that staff members did not apply negative ageist views to mature students enrolled in their courses, as student views from Study 2 triangulated the staff data to suggest that teaching staff did not hold nor demonstrate different expectations for students based on student age. Mature students also did not report experiencing any incidences of ageism or discrimination from staff members. Some mature students did describe a lack of support from the tertiary institution or faculty administration, echoing previous claims made by mature students.
These concerns did not relate to ageism per se, rather problems that could affect all students (e.g., information dissemination).

In school-based studies (Auwarter & Aruguete, 2008; Rubie-Davies et al., 2006; Tenenbaum & Ruck, 2007; Turner et al., 2015; van den Bergh, Denessen, Hornstra, Voeten, & Holland, 2010), teacher expectations have been shown to influence the academic outcomes of individual students through the provision of different learning opportunities and experiences, based on a teacher’s stereotyped beliefs. In the current thesis, it was discovered that staff member expectations did not influence the academic outcomes of tertiary students in the same manner. In Study 2, it was inferred that teaching staff did not display differential behaviour for individual students (based on students’ responses to CUCEI), and subsequently did not influence individual students’ academic achievement. In accordance with Rubie-Davies’ (2014) model of class-level teacher expectations, teaching staff expressed their expectations to all of their students both implicitly and explicitly. Implicitly, students perceived staff members’ expectations via their teaching style and skills. For example, students who found their staff members to be personable and friendly assumed that they held high expectations for their academic achievement. Explicitly, staff members informed students during lessons about the average grade for the course or the likelihood that students had passed their course. Some students reported lower motivation in their course when staff members told them that the course was difficult and had a low pass rate. Rather than motivate the students (which was possibly the staff members’ intention), this strategy acted to reduce the self-expectations held by students.

The self-expectations and predictions held by students likely depended upon their level of self-efficacy, or their confidence that they could succeed in a particular task (Carmichael & Taylor, 2005; Jinks & Lorsbach, 2003). When staff members told students that the course was difficult with a low pass rate, students might have experienced an erosion of confidence in their ability to achieve a passing grade, and might thus have expressed lower expectations for their future academic
performance, which influenced their actual academic performance to a degree. Interestingly, the degree to which students’ self-expectations influenced their final academic achievement in Study 2 (5%) was consistent with the extent to which Brophy (1983) found teacher expectations influenced student academic achievement in the school environment. Brophy (1983) argued that although 5% could be perceived as a small amount, a compounding effect of expectations formed over time could exert a noticeable influence over student achievement and eventual life outcomes. Also, as mentioned in Chapter 4, 5% is equivalent to one grade level difference, which can have an important effect on student Grade Point Average.

Sideridis (2008) argued that achievement goal theory has been influential in understanding students’ in-class behaviours, and perhaps could further explain the differences in frequency of in-class questions posed by mature students and their younger counterparts. Based on the findings from the current thesis, it could be argued that mature students’ behaviour of asking questions during lessons and requesting extra support or guidance reflect mastery goals that relate more to a desire to understand a task or acquire new knowledge, while younger students’ relative reluctance to ask questions perhaps related more to performance goals, whereby they were trying to evade looking like they were underperforming in order to avoid negative judgements (Darnon, Butera, & Harackiewicz, 2007). Perhaps mature students were more likely to notice when they needed extra support and consequently more likely to seek out extra support when needed, whereas younger students were less likely to do so because they were wary of looking like they were underperforming.

**Do Younger Students Hold Ageist Attitudes Towards Mature Students?**

Little is currently known about how mature students experience relational dynamics in tertiary education (Mallman & Lee, 2016). Research into mature students’ experience in tertiary education has tended to focus solely upon mature students’ accounts of their experiences (Kasworm, 2003a, 2005, 2010; Mallman & Lee, 2016; Pearce, 2017). Although mature students’ perspectives are
undoubtedly valid, they do not in isolation allow for a thorough investigation of mature students’ complex relationships with the tertiary environment.

It appears that the mature students within the current thesis were not subjected to significant stigmatisation, unlike those described by Mallman and Lee (2016). This might relate in part to some previous articles drawing on the perspectives of individual students (e.g., Langdon, 2009; Oliver, 2009), whose beliefs might not have accurately represented those of students in general. In contrast, Study 3 involved in-depth semi-structured interviews with a diverse group of both younger and mature students, in addition to staff members, which provided more detailed insights from and about mature students in tertiary education.

Younger students reported liking and respecting mature students in their classes. Much like the staff members who were interviewed, younger students also noticed that mature students asked more questions and generally participated more in class but often found the questions interesting and helpful to their own learning. The majority of younger students interviewed stated that they appreciated the perspectives and knowledge that mature students brought with them to the classroom. Younger students who did report negative feelings about mature students maintained that these were specific to individuals in their classes who behaved in a negative manner (e.g., disrupted the class often), rather than associating these feelings with all mature students in general. Mature students also reported valuing their younger coursemates and described sharing positive relationships with them overall.

Only one mature student described an instance in which she had experienced discrimination from younger students. However, her experience with these students subsequently evolved to become a positive working relationship as they became more familiar with each other, and as implicit stereotypes about the mature student were presumably challenged. Within the New Zealand context, whakawhanaungatanga, or the process of intentionally establishing quality relationships (Bishop, 2009; Bishop et al., 2003; Bishop, Russell, Berryman, Cavanagh, & Teddy, 2009), has been
found to improve the classroom climate and improve student relationships. McKegg (2005) observed that students who were scaffolded to form learning communities were provided with more opportunities to form social connections within their learning environment. Students reported that they had more supportive peers who cared about each other and helped each other on difficult assignments (McKegg, 2005). More tertiary environments or more specifically classes, especially tutorials with smaller class sizes should adopt the practice of whakawhanaungatanga. By giving students the time and space to build meaningful relationships with their peers might decrease the incidences of stereotyping or isolation.

**Mature Students and the Influence of Gender**

A secondary research aim in Study 1 was to investigate the potential mediating effect of gender on staff member expectations of mature students. The intention was to further the work of Maguire (1995), Merrill (1999), and Parr (2000), by contributing to the limited research on the intersection of gender and ageist stereotypes within the tertiary education environment. Merrill (1999) argued that mature women were more likely to report receiving less encouragement and support to further their education, as further education was perceived by others to be unwarranted for their future. According to Merrill, mature women were seen to be more suited for motherhood and low-skilled work. In the employment industry, mature women were more likely to experience criticism about their limited physical capabilities than mature men. Perhaps, as a consequence, mature women continue to enrol in tertiary education in an effort to upskill and empower themselves (Merrill, 1999).

Unfortunately, the simultaneous analysis of the relative influences of student age and gender on staff member expectations for academic performance and in-class behaviour could not be carried out in Study 1. When the influences of student age and gender were analysed separately, there were no significant gender differences with regard to *academic* expectations, although when asked to predict the likelihood of various classroom behaviours, staff members did predict that female
students—regardless of age or vignette description—would be more anxious and insecure learners than their male counterparts. Interestingly, female mature students have been reported referring to themselves as unconfident or anxious learners (King, 1998; Merrill, 1999), although these findings were not replicated in the current study. Neither younger nor mature female students, however, reported lower self-expectations that could have been linked to lower self-efficacy or confidence in succeeding on the course. These contrasting findings between staff expectations and student female students’ beliefs perhaps indicate that there is a need for continued vigilance and staff professional development regarding gender expectations in tertiary environments. For vignettes in which the hypothetical student was described as complimenting other students of the opposite sex, female students were rated by teaching staff as being attention seeking and distracted in class, more so than when the hypothetical student was identified as male. Of note, all but two teaching staff reported no gender-specific differences in student classroom behaviour during later interviews in Study 3, which was somewhat contrary to the noted differences in their earlier behavioural expectation ratings.

How might this disparity between teaching staff predictions in Study 1 and later statements in Study 3 be accounted for? It might be that staff reported their implicit gender biases during expectation ratings in Study 1, but explicitly reported no gender differences during later in face-to-face interviews in Study 3. The use of explicit measures like interviews in which participants are asked directly about their opinions can prove to be complicated, as respondents might not always be willing to report their views (Duehr & Bono, 2006). For example, in the employment industry, explicit stereotypes of women in the workforce incorporate images of the successful professional, yet implicit stereotypes of female managers as being incompatible with managerial success still exist (Latu et al., 2011). Hence, although research utilising explicit measures points to a temporal decline in negative gender-based workplace stereotypes, women are still reporting sexist attitudes and lower opportunities within the workplace (Latu et al., 2011).
In Study 1, staff members were not informed prior to making their predictions that the study was measuring their expectations of student academic achievement and in-class behaviours based on student age and gender. It could be speculated that although the study did not include a “true” implicit measure such as the implicit association test (Greenwald et al., 1998), staff implicit biases were triggered and influenced their predictions. In contrast, staff members in Study 3 were asked directly about their opinions and perceptions of female and male students enrolled in their courses. In this context, they might not have reported or elaborated on their opinions of female students as they were aware that such opinions could be regarded as sexist. In Study 1, implicit sexism might have contributed to the notion expressed by a small number of teaching staff that female students who were complimenting male students in the class were more likely to underperform academically.

**Practical Implications and Future Directions: So What and What Now?**

The unique difference of the tertiary education setting—its wider age distribution of students—provided an opportunity to examine both the relations of teacher expectations with other factors the tertiary level and the potential associations of student age with the formation and expression of these expectations by teaching staff. Furthermore, the current thesis extended upon existing ageism research by focussing on an “older” group that was, in fact, still relatively young compared to the decidedly more elderly subjects involved in other studies, but who still faced something of an age gap in the context of their engagement in tertiary education.

The findings from the current thesis suggested that staff members perceived, accepted, and accommodated mature students’ in-class behaviours and learning styles. Staff members were aware of the different life circumstances and experiences of mature students and supported their education needs and aspirations. In addition to highlighting an absence of ageist attitudes among teaching staff in tertiary education, the findings from the current thesis clearly demonstrated that tertiary students—much like younger students in primary and secondary school settings—perceived staff member expectations that were communicated and perceived at the class level.
Findings from the current thesis highlighted that, in general, staff members who were both implicit (via positive attitudes and in-class relationships with students) and explicit about their high behavioural expectations for their students were perceived as high-expectation teaching staff by their students. Although dyadic teacher–student relationships have been shown to influence students’ perceptions of their teachers’ expectations for them (Brophy & Good, 1970; Good, 1981; Urhahne, 2015), consistent with the findings by Li and Rubie-Davies (2018), the findings from the current thesis suggested that, in the tertiary setting, academic expectations were communicated at the class level. In addition, it was staff members’ behavioural expectations for their students that were perceived by students to communicate staff members’ class-level expectations.

Based on a number of student accounts, there were also a small number of staff members who held and communicated low expectations to their students. Study 1 highlighted the different expectations that staff members held based on student gender. Some staff members also stated that it was unrealistic for them to hold high class-level academic expectations for their students, given the diverse nature of students’ academic abilities in a large class.

Such teaching staff might benefit from an increased awareness of the influence that their expectations can have on students’ in-class experiences, and how their expectations can be used to boost and improve students’ learning outcomes. Within primary school settings, an intervention programme known as the Teacher Expectation Project (TEP) has been shown to successfully alter the understanding and knowledge of teachers regarding the influence of their expectations on the classroom climate and ultimately upon student achievement (McDonald et al., 2016; Rubie-Davies, Peterson, Sibley, & Rosenthal, 2015). TEP improved teacher expectations for their students by informing teachers about the strategies and practices used by high-expectation teachers (McDonald et al., 2016).

For an intervention such as TEP to be successful in tertiary settings, it would be vital to first successfully identify the beliefs of high-expectation teachers at the tertiary level. One particular
belief held by high-expectation teachers in the current thesis was that, with their guidance and knowledge, their students would show improvements in their academic performance, regardless of their initial abilities or natural talents. This spoke to staff members’ high self-efficacy in their teaching abilities. Li and Rubie-Davies’ (2018) investigation of the effect of teacher variables on expectations demonstrated that low-expectation staff members had poor self-efficacy, and simply accepted that their students would underperform academically. Thus, a successful intervention programme at the tertiary level would examine staff members’ teaching self-efficacy and offer help where needed to improve staff members’ teaching skills. This, in turn, could instil in staff members the belief that they could successfully influence their students’ academic abilities and achievement. Conversely, teaching staff should also be encouraged to avoid developing and maintaining rigid beliefs about student achievement based on previous student cohorts. Perhaps staff members from Study 1 previously had female students who were anxious or insecure learners, hence they predicted that future hypothetical female students would behave in the same manner. Similarly, Li and Rubie-Davies (2018) argued that tertiary staff members in their study formed academic expectations for future cohorts based on the achievement of their past students (plausibly more so if they were teaching the same subject content), in addition to their past teaching experiences and student outcomes. These rigid teacher expectations were difficult to alter even when presented with contradictory information.

As discussed, both mature and younger students were motivated to perform well in their courses, and their actual performance was in fact influenced by their own academic expectations. It could be argued that a student’s self-expectations and predictions of success could be influenced by staff members fostering beliefs in their self-efficacy. Carmichael and Taylor (2005) argued that tertiary students’ confidence to succeed in a given task motivated desirable learning behaviours, which in turn influenced their academic outcomes. Zepke and Leach (2007) have suggested a number of practical ways in which staff members teaching first-year courses can increase students’
self-efficacy. For example, academic tasks and activities can be set at a level of difficulty that is challenging yet achievable in order to increase a student’s sense of development, achievement, and overall self-efficacy. Students can also be provided with timely and focussed feedback that identifies not only where they need to improve their academic work but where their strengths lie.

Regarding the differences in study approaches between mature students and younger students, the current findings of younger students’ hesitation to ask for help or support when necessary echoed that of Li and Rubie-Davies (2017). As such, teaching staff would benefit from being aware of the needs of students at both ends of the age continuum. The current thesis highlighted the idea that informing younger students of the availability of academic support tended not to be sufficient; instead, teaching staff could consider adopting a more proactive approach to encouraging younger students to engage with all of the supports that were available to them. For example, each course could have an induction day whereby staff members show students the location of their offices or rooms in which office hours are to be held, or introduce students to the academic support staff usually available at libraries in tertiary institutions. Students could also be encouraged to attend office hours in pairs or in groups to avoid any feelings of embarrassment or of attracting negative judgement.

Findings from the current thesis also highlighted a need for further examination of the transactional and dynamic nature of teacher–student relationships at the tertiary level. For example, although the age and gender of individual staff members did not influence their academic expectations, younger staff members did identify negative behavioural characteristics for students (for example, students losing their temper with teaching staff, or not following instructions), to a greater extent than older and more experienced teaching staff. Teaching staff also held different behavioural expectations for female students and perceived in-class behaviours differently depending on the gender of the student being evaluated. Suggestions as to why staff members had differing expectations and explanations of female students’ in-class behaviours have been discussed above.
However, given the broad importance and influence of teacher expectations on students’ emotional and instructional classroom climate, and the potential to guide and modify expectations with targeted input, further research is warranted.

**Challenges and Limitations**

Selecting the student ages to be compared in the vignettes in Study 1 proved to be an interesting challenge due to the multiple definitions of mature students currently available in the literature. Ultimately, the current thesis defined mature students in a manner that was consistent with the majority of earlier definitions (e.g., Tones et al., 2009; Western et al., 1998), and consistent with educational review publications in New Zealand (Education Central, 2015). However, Pearce (2017) argued that categorising all students over the age of 25 years as mature students disguised significant diversity.

As it was important to ensure mature students were well represented in the current research project, only faculties with 5% or more mature students enrolled in first-year courses were approached. This decision excluded both the Faculties of Engineering and Business. The Faculty of Creative Arts and Industry, as well as the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, chose not to participate. Although there was a clear attempt to ensure that faculties of varying specialities were included to ensure a diverse range of participation and perspectives, most of the staff members and students who participated in the study were from the Faculty of Education and Social Work. However, this was also the faculty that had the highest population of mature students enrolled.

Due to the random assignment of vignettes to each staff member, in conjunction with voluntary participation in the studies, the interaction effects of student age and gender could not be explored. It was discovered following the data-collection process that there were not enough “types” of hypothetical students (maximum of 15 per type; minimum of 3 per type), due to the randomisation of vignettes to staff members. Although it was considered prior to data collection that staff members could be asked to make predictions for more than two vignettes (to increase the volume of data
collected, but also to enable more types of students to be examined), this was ultimately not possible as the current study was a single-blind study (i.e., staff members were not informed that researchers were investigating their expectations of students based on student age and gender). Having staff members make predictions on vignettes where student age and gender were clearly manipulated would be confounding and of limited value. A similar limitation stemming from a lack of participation was observed in Study 2. Due to the low response rate to the online questionnaire at Time 2, the classroom experience of female students in general and female mature students, in particular, could not be explored. It would be beneficial to expand on this study to include a number of tertiary institutes rather than only one, which would, in turn, increase the number of staff members available to participate and allow for a comparison of teacher expectations and teacher–student relationships across sites and institutions.

Female students stated during interviews that they did not experience any forms of sexism while enrolled in tertiary education. It would be potentially beneficial to examine this further with a larger sample. The students who participated in the current research were not enrolled in faculties that traditionally had fewer female students, and where gender-based discrimination has been reported (Ceci & Williams, 2011; Ceci et al., 2009; Leslie et al., 2015). It has been argued that female students in predominantly science-based faculties are less encouraged and supported by teaching staff (e.g., receive less funding; less likely to be published in journals), and subsequently by employers (for example, female scientists are less likely to be hired when compared to their male counterparts; Ceci & Williams, 2011). It has been suggested that women in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics-based fields (STEM) are subject to traditional female stereotypes (e.g., socially skilled; likes helping others, attends to her appearance; Ceci & Williams, 2001), traits that are perceived as not being beneficial in the STEM fields. Regrettably, these findings could not be examined in the current research project.
Significant Contributions

To reiterate and summarise, the current research project has provided a number of significant contributions to the fields of teacher expectations, tertiary education and mature-student experiences, along with a number of educational implications. Firstly, the current findings contribute to an area of teacher expectations that has not been thoroughly explored—the tertiary environment—as well as providing support for the notion that teacher expectations are communicated at a class-level. The current findings clearly depict—from both the student and teaching staff perspective—how teacher expectations are formed (i.e., via specific student in-class behaviours, staff teaching-and-learning beliefs) and communicated to large classrooms (i.e., both implicitly and explicitly via teaching staff in-class behaviour). The current research project emphasises the importance of teaching staff being aware of and demonstrating high expectations as students do perceive teaching staff expectations. Students’ perspectives of teacher expectations at the tertiary level have not been previously explored. Although teaching staff expectations do not significantly influence student academic outcomes, they do influence the class instructional and socioemotional climate and hence, could influence students’ overall tertiary experience. It has been suggested that programmes to inform tertiary staff members about the influence and perception of teacher expectations would be beneficial to increase staff member awareness of the implications of their in-class behaviours and potential implicit biases.

The current research has also highlighted the importance of fostering high self-expectations among students. As well as contributing to the discussion surrounding the influence of student age on teacher expectations (the current findings indicate that teacher expectations are not related to student age), it has been discovered that, among tertiary students, self-expectations significantly influence their academic outcomes. A number of educational implications to increase students’ self-efficacy and, by extension, students’ self-expectations have been discussed above.

In general, previous reports of discrimination and prejudice towards mature students have not been replicated in the current research project. However, the current research project has provided a
number of students a platform to report negative interactions with their classmates, which are often triggered by negative stereotypes. Ways to reduce automatic stereotyping, through helping students to build better working and personal relationships, have been suggested.

**Conclusion**

The current thesis offers a hopeful glimpse into the world of tertiary education as it stands for students who are older than the norm. To ensure equity for all, in all contexts, it is no longer a question of whether ageism exists, but rather under what conditions it occurs. In contrast to other settings where unfortunate stereotypes about age can negatively influence the experiences of those perceived as “older” or “other,” mature students in the current tertiary setting described feeling accepted and supported by teaching staff and younger students during their studies. Indeed, there was little evidence to suggest that teaching staff held different academic expectations for mature students, despite being sensitive to age-related behavioural differences within the classroom, and mature students reported perceiving no significant difference in the manner that their teaching staff engaged with them, relative to younger students. The current thesis has emphasised the phenomenon of high-expectation teaching staff forming academic expectations at the class level rather than for individual students, based jointly upon their confidence in teaching the curriculum and their observations of in-class student behaviour. It has also highlighted the manner in which class-level expectations are communicated to and perceived by tertiary students and the importance of students’ own expectations at the tertiary level. Taken together, these findings offer something of a positive report card for the tertiary education in its engagement with and support of mature students returning to study, which, by extension, offers encouraging insights for counteracting ageism in other contexts.
Appendix A: Participant Information Sheets and Consent Form (Dean and Course Coordinator)

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET
(Dean)

Project title: Investigating the relationship between student and tertiary teacher beliefs and academic performance at university.

Principal Investigator: Professor Christine Rubie-Davies, Faculty of Education

Co-Investigators: Dr Penelope Watson, Faculty of Education Tel: +649 373 46424
Dr Kane Meissel, Faculty of Education Tel: +649 373 48722

Researcher: Rajshree Gopala Krishnan
My name is Rajshree Gopala Krishnan, a doctoral candidate from the Faculty of Education. I am conducting research focusing on the relationship between teacher perceptions, student perceptions and student performance.

Project description and invitation
The aim of this research project is to investigate the relationship between the academic and behavioral expectations for mature students (25 years and older) of academic staff (lecturers and/or tutors), and the relationship that these potentially different expectations might have with mature students’ academic performance and overall tertiary experience. This research project will contribute to an understanding of teacher expectations about students’ academic performance at the tertiary level, providing insight into whether student age influences teachers’ expectations. Since research will be conducted at the University of Auckland, I would like to seek your permission for me to invite the academic staff members in your department and students enrolled in their courses to participate in this research project.

Project Procedure
The project comprises three studies. Academic staff will be invited to participate in Study One and Study Three, while students enrolled in their tutorials will be invited to participate in Study Two and Study Three. In Study One, academic staff will be contacted via email and will be asked to participate in an online survey. They will read brief descriptions of two hypothetical students and be asked to predict each student’s final performance as well as the student’s in-class behaviour and
approaches to studying. Academic staff will also be asked if they would be willing to participate in an interview at the end of the data collection phase (Study Three). Students in tutorials from courses taught by academic staff who completed the survey for the first study will be invited to participate in Study Two. In Study Two, at the beginning of the semester, students will be asked to predict their own academic performance for the course. Students will also be asked if they believe that the academic staff, more specifically their tutor for the course has high or low expectations for them. Those who choose to participate in the study will be asked if they would be willing to provide the researcher with consent to access their academic performance for the course. They will also be asked to provide their email address to enable further contact. Students who provide their email address will be contacted via email and asked to again predict their final grade for the course and if they believe that the academic staff have high or low expectations for them. They will also be asked to fill out a short questionnaire that relates to their perceptions of their tutorial. At the end of Study Two, students will be invited to participate in Study Three, which will be an interview to expand on their questionnaire responses. Participation in the study is entirely voluntary for both staff and students and I ask for your assurance that participation or non-participation by academic staff and students will not affect their relationship with you or the department.

Data storage and future use
The data will be stored in a locked cabinet on university premises for 6 years. After 6 years, shredding the paper records will destroy all information and any remaining digital files will be deleted. The data will be used for my doctoral thesis and may also be used for academic purposes, including presentations at conferences and in academic publications.

Right to Withdraw from Participation
Participants have the right to choose whether or not to participate in the study, as participation is entirely voluntary. Participants will also have the right to go through their transcribed interview and confirm whether any part of it needs to be changed or altered and will be able to withdraw participation up to one month after the interviews. This will be explicitly communicated to participants.

Anonymity and Confidentiality
The researcher will be the only person with access to the identity of academic staff and participants. This will be explicitly communicated via the relevant information sheet and consent form provided to potential participants prior to participating in this research. However, participants will be given an absolute assurance that their data will be reported in a way that ensures individuals cannot be identified.

If you would like a summary of the study findings please provide your email address and circle the appropriate response in the consent form below. It is anticipated that the summary will be provided to you in February 2016, following the completion of the research.

If you have any queries or wish to know more please contact me, by email: rg.krishnan@auckland.ac.nz

Contact details:
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Yours sincerely  
Rajshree Gopala Krishnan

For any queries regarding ethical concerns you may contact the Chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland, Office of the Vice Chancellor, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142. Telephone 09 373-7599 extn. 83711.

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE ON 18th May 2015 for (3) years, Reference Number 014598.
CONSENT FORM
(Dean)

THIS FORM WILL BE HELD FOR A PERIOD OF 6 YEARS

Project title: Investigating the relationship between student and tertiary teacher beliefs and academic performance at university.

Principal Investigator: Professor Christine Rubie-Davies, Faculty of Education

Co-Investigators: Dr Penelope Watson, Faculty of Education Tel: +649 373 46424
Dr Kane Meissel, Faculty of Education Tel: +649 373 48722

Researcher: Rajshree Gopala Krishnan

I have read the Participant Information Sheet, and I understand the nature of the research and why academic staff from my department and their students have been selected to participate. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered to my satisfaction. I understand that participation in this research is entirely voluntary.

I agree that academic staff and students enrolled in my faculty can take part in this research.

I agree that participation or non-participation by academic staff and students will not affect their relationship with the department.

I understand that I am free to withdraw academic staff and students at any time up until one month after submission of participants’ questionnaires and interviews.

I understand that confidentiality will be completely guaranteed to participants, but the questionnaire cannot be anonymous because the data obtained from students needs to be tracked and matched. If any provided information is reported or published, I understand that it will be in a way that ensures individual students and academics cannot be identified as a source of the information.

I understand that interviews will be recorded and, once transcribed, available for participants to access, review, and/or change if they wish to do so.

I agree to participate in this research.
Name ___________________________

Signature ___________________________  Date _______________

Faculty and/or School:____________________

I wish / do not wish to receive the summary of findings.

If yes please provide your contact details:

Email/Postage address:
PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET
(Course Coordinator)

**Project title:** Investigating the relationship between student and tertiary teacher beliefs and academic performance at university.

**Principal Investigator:** Professor Christine Rubie-Davies, Faculty of Education

**Co-Investigators:** Dr Penelope Watson, Faculty of Education Tel: +649 373 46424  
Dr Kane Meissel, Faculty of Education Tel: +649 373 48722

**Researcher:** Rajshree Gopala Krishnan
My name is Rajshree Gopala Krishnan, a doctoral candidate from the Faculty of Education. I am conducting research focusing on the relationship between teacher perceptions, student perceptions and student performance.

**Project description and invitation**
The aim of this research project is to investigate the relationship between academic staff perceptions of students and student academic performance and their own beliefs about tertiary education. Since research will be conducted at the University of Auckland, I would like to invite you and other academic staff members in your course as well as the students enrolled in your course to participate in this research project.

**Project Procedure**
The project comprises three studies. Academic staff will be invited to participate in Study One and Study Three, while students enrolled in their tutorials will be invited to participate in Study Two and Study Three. In Study One, academic staff will be contacted via email and will be asked to participate in an online survey. They will read brief descriptions of two hypothetical students and be asked to predict each student’s final performance as well as the student’s in-class behaviour and approaches to studying. Academic staff will also be asked if they would be willing to participate in an interview at the end of the data collection phase (Study Three). Students in tutorials from courses taught by academic staff who completed the survey for the first study will be invited to participate in Study Two. In Study Two, at the beginning of the semester, students will be asked to predict their own academic performance for the course. Students will also be asked if they believe that the academic staff, more specifically their tutor for the course has high or low expectations for them. Those who choose to participate in the study will be asked if they would be willing to provide the researcher with consent to access their academic performance for the course. They will also be asked...
to provide their email address to enable further contact. Students who do provide their email address will be contacted via email and asked to again predict their final grade for the course and if they believe that the academic staff have high or low expectations for them. They will also be asked to fill out a short questionnaire that relates to their perceptions of their tutorial. At the end of Study Two, students will be invited to participate in Study Three, which will be an interview to expand on their questionnaire responses. Participation in the study is entirely voluntary and I have assurance from the Dean that the participation or non-participation by you or other academic staff will not affect yours or their relationship with the department. I would also like to ask for your assurance that participation or non-participation by academic staff and students will not affect their relationship with you.

If you agree for the researcher to approach the academic staff in your course, please be informed that you will need to provide the researcher with a list of academic staff teaching on your course along with their email addresses. Also, once consent has been obtained from the students, you will need to provide the researcher with the students’ academic performance in the form of their assignment grades and final grade.

Data storage and future use
The data will be stored in a locked cabinet on university premises for 6 years. After 6 years, shredding the paper records will destroy all information and any remaining digital files will be deleted. The data will be used for my doctoral thesis and may also be used for academic purposes, including conferences and academic publications.

Right to Withdraw from Participation
Participants have the right to choose whether or not to participate in the study, as participation is entirely voluntary. Participants will also have the right to go through their transcribed interview and confirm whether any part of it needs to be changed or altered and will be able to withdraw participation up to one month after the interviews. This will be explicitly communicated to participants.

Anonymity and Confidentiality
The researcher will be the only person with access to the identity of academic staff and participants. This will be explicitly communicated via the relevant information sheet and consent form provided to potential participants prior to participating in this research. However, participants will be given an absolute assurance that their data will be reported in a way that ensures individuals cannot be identified.

If you would like a summary of the study findings please provide your email address and circle the appropriate response in the consent form below. It is anticipated that the summary will be provided to you in February 2016, following the completion of the research.

If you have any queries or wish to know more please contact me, by email: rg.krishnan@auckland.ac.nz

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Yours sincerely  
Rajshree Gopala Krishnan

For any queries regarding ethical concerns you may contact the Chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland, Office of the Vice Chancellor, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142. Telephone 09 373-7599 extn. 83711.

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE ON 18th May 2015 for (3) years, Reference Number 014598
CONSENT FORM
(Course Coordinator)

THIS FORM WILL BE HELD FOR A PERIOD OF 6 YEARS

Project title: Investigating the relationship between student and tertiary teacher beliefs and academic performance at university.

Principal Investigator: Professor Christine Rubie-Davies, Faculty of Education

Co-Investigators: Dr Penelope Watson, Faculty of Education Tel: +649 373 46424
 Dr Kane Meissel, Faculty of Education Tel: +649 373 48722

Researcher: Rajshree Gopala Krishnan

I have read the Participant Information Sheet, and I understand the nature of the research and why academic staff from my course and their students have been selected to participate. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered to my satisfaction. I understand that participation in this research is entirely voluntary.

I agree that academic staff and students enrolled in ______ can take part in this research.

I agree that participation or non-participation by academic staff and students will not affect their relationship with me.

I understand that I am free to withdraw academic staff and students at any time up until one month after submission of participants’ questionnaires and interviews.

I understand that confidentiality will be completely guaranteed to participants, but the questionnaire cannot be anonymous because the data obtained from students needs to be tracked and matched. If any provided information is reported or published, I understand that it will be in a way that ensures individual students and academics cannot be identified as a source of the information.

I understand that interviews will be recorded and, once transcribed, available for participants to access, review, and/or change if they wish to do so.

I agree to participate in this research.
Name __________________________

Signature ___________________________ Date ________________

Faculty and/or School:__________________________________________

I wish / do not wish to receive the summary of findings.

If yes please provide your contact details:

Email/Postage address:
Appendix B: Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form (Academic Staff)

(Was emailed to academic staff)

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET
(Academic Staff)

Project title: Investigating the relationship between student and tertiary teacher beliefs and academic performance at university.

Principal Investigator: Professor Christine Rubie-Davies, Faculty of Education

Co-Investigators: Dr Penelope Watson, Faculty of Education Tel: +649 373 46424
Dr Kane Meissel, Faculty of Education Tel: +649 373 48722

Researcher: Rajshree Gopala Krishnan
My name is Rajshree Gopala Krishnan, a doctoral candidate from the Faculty of Education. I am conducting research focusing on the relationship between teacher perceptions, student perceptions and student performance.

Project description and invitation
The aim of this research project is to investigate the relationship between academic staff perceptions of students and student academic performance and their own beliefs about tertiary education. Since research will be conducted at the University of Auckland, I would like to invite you and your students to participate in this research project.

Project Procedure
The project comprises three studies. Academic staff are invited to participate in Study One and Study Three, while students enrolled in your tutorials will be invited to participate in Study Two and Study Three. Study One is the attached online survey. You will read brief descriptions of two hypothetical students and be asked to predict each student’s final performance as well as the student’s in-class behaviour and approaches to studying. You will also be asked if you would be willing to participate in an interview at the end of the data collection phase (Study Three). In Study Two, the researcher will approach your students at the beginning of the semester during a tutorial class. Students will be presented with a questionnaire and asked to predict their own academic performance for the course. Those who choose to participate in the study will be asked if they are willing to provide the
researcher with consent to access their academic performance for the course as well as their email address for further contact. Students who provide their email address will be contacted via email and asked to again predict their final grade for the course. They will also be asked to fill out a short questionnaire that relates to their perceptions of the tutorial. At the end of Study Two, students will be invited to participate in Study Three, which will be an interview to expand on their questionnaire responses. Participation in the study is entirely voluntary and I have assurance from the Dean and your course coordinator that your participation or non-participation will not affect your relationship with the department. I would also like to ask for your assurance that participation or non-participation by your students will not affect their relationship with you.

If you agree to participate in this research please be informed that you will need to fill out the brief online survey attached and allow the researcher to approach the students in your tutorials.

**Data storage and future use**
The data will be stored in a locked cabinet on university premises for 6 years. After 6 years, shredding the paper records will destroy all information and any remaining digital files will be deleted. The data will be used for my doctoral thesis and may also be used for academic purposes including presentations at conferences and in academic publications.

**Right to Withdraw from Participation**
Participants have the right to choose whether or not to participate in the study, as participation is entirely voluntary. Should you agree to be interviewed you will also have the right to go through your transcribed interview and confirm whether any part of it needs to be changed or altered. You will be able to withdraw participation up to one month after the interviews.

**Anonymity and Confidentiality**
The researcher will be the only person with access to the identity of academic staff and participants. However, I give you an absolute assurance that your data will be reported in a way that ensures individuals cannot be identified.

If you would like a summary of the study findings please provide your email address and circle the appropriate response in the consent form below. It is anticipated that the summary will be provided to you in February 2016, following the completion of the research.

If you have any queries or wish to know more please contact me, by email: rg.krishnan@auckland.ac.nz

**Contact details:**

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k.meissel@auckland.ac.nz

Yours sincerely
Rajshree Gopala Krishnan

For any queries regarding ethical concerns you may contact the Chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland, Office of the Vice Chancellor, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142. Telephone 09 373-7599 extn. 83711.

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE ON 18th May 2015 for (3) years, Reference Number 014598
CONSENT FORM
(Academic Staff)

Project title: Investigating the relationship between student and tertiary teacher beliefs and academic performance at university.

Principal Investigator: Professor Christine Rubie-Davies, Faculty of Education

Co-Investigators: Dr Penelope Watson, Faculty of Education Tel: +649 373 46424
Dr Kane Meissel, Faculty of Education Tel: +649 373 48722

I understand that by selecting “YES”:

I have read the Participant Information Sheet, and I understand the nature of the research and why I, and the students in my tutorial have been selected to participate. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered to my satisfaction. I understand that participation in this research is entirely voluntary.

I agree that the students enrolled in my tutorial may be approached to take part in this research project. I agree that participation or non-participation by students will not affect their relationship with me.

I understand that I am free to withdraw at any time up until one month after submission of questionnaires and interviews.

I understand that confidentiality will be completely guaranteed, but the student questionnaires cannot be anonymous because the data obtained from students needs to be tracked and matched. If any provided information is reported or published, I understand that it will be in a way that ensures individual students and myself cannot be identified as a source of the information.

I understand that interviews will be recorded and, once transcribed, available for me to access, review, and/or change if I wish to do so.

PLEASE SELECT “YES” IF YOU WISH TO CONTINUE OR “NO” IF YOU DO NOT WISH TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS ONLINE SURVEY.
Appendix C: Online Survey

(An example of the online survey presented to an academic staff member via Qualtrics)

Investigating the relationship between student and tertiary teacher beliefs and academic performance at university.

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this short survey! Before we proceed with the survey please indicate that:

- You understand the nature of the research and why you, and the students in your tutorial have been selected to participate. If you had any questions that you had the opportunity to ask questions and have had them answered to your satisfaction.
- You understand that participation in this research is entirely voluntary.
- You agree that the students enrolled in your tutorial may be approached to take part in this research project. You agree that participation or non-participation by students will not affect their relationship with you.
- You understand that you are free to withdraw at any time up until one month after submission of questionnaires and interviews.
- You understand that confidentiality will be completely guaranteed, but the student questionnaires cannot be anonymous because the data obtained from students needs to be tracked and matched. If any provided information is reported or published, you understand that it will be in a way that ensures individual students and yourself cannot be identified as a source of the information.
- You understand that interviews will be recorded and, once transcribed, available for you to access, review, and/or change if I wish to do so.

If you agree with the information provided, please select 'Yes' to begin the survey.

- Yes
- No

Next screen

Student G is a student enrolled in your class. She is 21 years old and she was born in Auckland. She enjoys music and swimming. This is her first time at university. You have noticed her complimenting males in the class.

Based on the brief description of the student above, please rate how often you predict to see the student exhibit the behaviours listed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behaviour</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>More often than not</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Very often</th>
<th>Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Controls temper/emotions when in conflict situation with peers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controls temper/emotions when in conflict situations with you</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Follows your directions/Complies with your directions 1 2 3 4 5
Attends to your instructions 1 2 3 4 5
Produces correct coursework 1 2 3 4 5
Listens to classmates when they present their work or ideas 1 2 3 4 5
Easily makes transitions from one course activity to another during class 1 2 3 4 5
Seems to be an anxious and insecure learner who lacks confidence 1 2 3 4 5

Now, please take a moment to predict the student’s marks for their final grade.

Final grade:

- A+
- A
- A-
- B+
- B
- B-

Please explain your prediction:

Next screen

Student A is a student enrolled in your class. She is 21 years old and she lives in Auckland. She enjoys golf and baking. She asks lots of questions in class. You have noticed that she often chats with other students in the class.

Based on the brief description of the student above, please rate how often you predict to see the student exhibit the behaviours listed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behaviour</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>More often than not</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Very often</th>
<th>Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Controls temper/emotions when in conflict situation with peers</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controls temper/emotions when in conflict situations with you</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follows your directions/Complies with your directions</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attends to your instructions</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Produces correct coursework</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Listen to classmates when they present their work or ideas
Easily makes transitions from one course activity to another during class
Seems to be an anxious and insecure learner who lacks confidence

Now, please take a moment to predict the student’s marks for their final grade.

Final grade:
- A+
- A
- A-
- B+
- B
- B-
- C+
- C
- C-
- D+
- D or less

Please explain your prediction:

Next Screen

Background Information

You will now be asked a number of background questions. This is to allow the data obtained from your students to be tracked and matched to you. Names will not be reported or published, and any demographic information used will be published in a way that ensures individual students and yourself cannot be identified as a source of the information.

Name: _____________________
Faculty:
- Faculty of Education
- Faculty of Arts
- Faculty of Law
- Faculty of Creative Arts and Industry
- Faculty of Science
- Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences

Course code of courses taught: ___________________

Years of teaching experience: ___________________

Gender:
- Male
- Female

Age group:
- 20-29 years
- 30-39 years
- 40-49 years
- 50-59 years
- > 60 years

Ethnicity:
- NZ European
- Māori
- Pasifika
- Asian
- Other (Please specify): __________________

Interview
- I agree to be approached for a follow-up interview
- I disagree to be approached for a follow-up interview
PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET
(Student)

Project title: Investigating the relationship between student and tertiary teacher beliefs and academic performance at university.

Principal Investigator: Professor Christine Rubie-Davies, Faculty of Education

Co-Investigators: Dr Penelope Watson, Faculty of Education Tel: +649 373 46424
Dr Kane Meissel, Faculty of Education Tel: +649 373 48722

Researcher: Rajshree Gopala Krishnan
My name is Rajshree Gopala Krishnan, a doctoral candidate from the Faculty of Education. I am conducting research focusing on the relationship between teacher perceptions, student perceptions and student performance.

Project description and invitation
The aim of this research project is to investigate the relationship between academic staff (lecturers and/or tutors) academic and behavioural perceptions of students and the relationship of these perceptions with students’ academic performance and their overall tertiary experience. This research project will contribute to much-needed research in teacher expectations of students’ academic performance at tertiary level. Since this research will be conducted at the University of Auckland, I would like to invite you to participate in this research project.

Project Procedure
You will be asked to predict your own academic performance for this course. You will also be asked to consider your academic staff expectations for your academic performance. You will also be asked to provide your email address for a follow-up questionnaire at the end of the semester. If you are willing to participate in the second phase of the research project, you will be asked to provide the researcher with consent to access your academic performance for the course as well as your email address for further contact.

Participation in the study is entirely voluntary and I have assurance from your dean, course coordinator and lecturer/tutor that your participation or non-participation will not affect your relationship with them or your department.
Data storage and future use
The data will be stored in a locked cabinet on university premises for 6 years. After 6 years, shredding the paper records will destroy all information and any remaining digital files will be deleted. The data will be used for my doctoral thesis and may also be used for academic purposes including conferences and academic publications.

Right to Withdraw from Participation
You have the right to choose whether or not to participate in the study, as participation is entirely voluntary.

Anonymity and Confidentiality
Your identity will be exposed to the researcher, which is why anonymity is not possible in this research. However, data will be reported anonymously. Confidentiality in relation to your participation in this study is completely guaranteed. The data collected will be collated and reported anonymously, and the researcher will not be exposing your identity when reporting the findings from the interview data.

If you would like a summary of the study findings please provide your email address and circle the appropriate response in the consent form below. It is anticipated that the summary will be provided to you in February 2016, following the completion of the research.

If you have any queries or wish to know more please contact me, by email: rg.krishnan@auckland.ac.nz

Contact details:

Rajshree Gopala Krishnan
School of Learning, Development and Professional Practice
Faculty of Education
The University of Auckland
Private Bag 92601, Auckland
Tel: 373 7599 Ext 48384

Prof Christine Rubie-Davies
School of Learning, Development and Professional Practice
Faculty of Education
The University of Auckland
Private Bag 92601, Auckland
Tel: +649 373 82974
c.rubie@auckland.ac.nz

Dr Penelope Watson
School of Learning, Development and Professional Practice
Faculty of Education
The University of Auckland
Private Bag 92601, Auckland
Tel: +649 373 46424
p.watson@auckland.ac.nz
Yours sincerely
Rajshree Gopala Krishnan

For any queries regarding ethical concerns you may contact the Chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland, Office of the Vice Chancellor, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142. Telephone 09 373-7599 extn. 83711.

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE ON 18th May 2015 for (3) years, Reference Number 014598
CONSENT FORM  
(Student)

THIS FORM WILL BE HELD FOR A PERIOD OF 6 YEARS

Project title: Investigating the relationship between student and tertiary teacher beliefs and academic performance at university.

Principal Investigator: Professor Christine Rubie-Davies, Faculty of Education

Co-Investigators: Dr Penelope Watson, Faculty of Education Tel: +649 373 46424  
Dr Kane Meissel, Faculty of Education Tel: +649 373 48722

Researcher: Rajshree Gopala Krishnan

I have read the Participant Information Sheet, and understood the nature of the research. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered to my satisfaction. I have understood that participation in this research is entirely voluntary.

I understand that as part of the project I will answer a brief questionnaire provided by the researcher. I will provide the researcher with my email address to be emailed the follow-up questionnaire at the end of the semester.

I agree to provide my university ID number in this research.

I understand that I am free to withdraw myself at any time up until two months after submission of the questionnaires.

I understand that confidentiality will be completely guaranteed. As my academic achievement will be tracked, my responses cannot be anonymous but if any provided information is reported or published, it will be in a way that does not identify myself as a source of the information.

I understand that I may be invited to participate in an interview but that my participation or non-participation will be completely voluntary. All interviews will be recorded and, once transcribed, will be available to me to access, review, and/or change if I wish to do so.

I agree to participate in this research.
I give / do not give permission for the researcher to access my marks for this course using my ID provided in the questionnaire.

Name ___________________________

Signature ___________________________ Date ________________

Email ________________________________

I wish / do not wish to receive the summary of findings.

I agree/disagree to be approached for a follow-up interview.
Thank you so much for taking your time to participate in this research project.

**Background information**

Student ID: _________________________________
Email address: _______________________________
Course code: _________________________________
Tutor’s name: _______________________________

Please circle the information that applies to you:

Gender:  Female  Male

Age group:  <20 years  20-24 years  25-34 years  35-40 years  > 40 years

Ethnicity:  NZ European  Māori  Pasifika  Asian  Other:  ____

University entry status (please circle one):  University Entrance  Special admissions

Which programme(s) are you enrolled in:  _________________________________

In which year did you start your studies in your current programme(s)?  ___________

Is this your first time at university:  Yes  No

If No, which year were you enrolled and in which programme(s)?  _________________________________

Please take a moment to **predict your marks** for your upcoming assignment as well as your final grade.

**Next assignment:**

+A  A  A-  B+  B  B-  C+  C  C-  D+  less than D

Please explain your prediction:

________________________________________________________________________

**Final grade for this course:**

+A  A  A-  B+  B  B-  C+  C  C-  D+  less than D

Please explain your prediction:

________________________________________________________________________
Now please take a moment to indicate the marks you think your tutor would predict for your upcoming assignment as well as final grade.

**Tutors prediction for your next assignment:**

+ A    A    A-   B+   B   B-   C+   C   C-   D+   less than D

Please explain your prediction:

_____________________________________________________________________

**Tutors prediction for your final grade for this course:**

+ A    A    A-   B+   B   B-   C+   C   C-   D+   less than D

Please explain your prediction:

_____________________________________________________________________
Appendix E: Student Online Questionnaire at Time 2

Investigating the relationship between student and tertiary teacher beliefs and academic performance at university.

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this short survey! Before we proceed with the survey please, once again indicate that:

- You understand the nature of the research.
- You understand that participation in this research is entirely voluntary.
- You understand that you are free to withdraw at any time up until one month after submission of this questionnaires.
- You understand that confidentiality will be completely guaranteed. If any provided information is reported or published, you understand that it will be in a way that ensures that you will not be identified as a source of the information.

If you agree with the information provided, please select 'Yes' to begin the survey.

- Yes
- No

Background Information

Firstly, you will again be asked a number of background questions. This is to allow the data obtained from this questionnaire to be matched to the initial questionnaire that you answered. Again, names will not be reported or published, and any demographic information used will be published in a way that ensures that you cannot be identified as a source of the information.

Background information

Student ID:

Course code:

Tutor’s name/Day and of Time tutorial:

Next screen

You are going to be asked about your in perceptions of your class experience for this class. Please read the following statements that may or may not have occurred in your tutorial. There are no ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ answers. Select a rating that best corresponds to your thoughts about the class.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree somewhat</th>
<th>Neither nor disagree</th>
<th>Agree somewhat</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. My tutor considers students’ feelings.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>2. The tutor talks rather than listens.</td>
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<td>3. The tutorial is made up of individuals who don’t know each other well.</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. I look forward to coming to the tutorials.</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Students know exactly what has been done in our tutorials.</td>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>New ideas are seldom tried out in tutorials.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>All the students in this tutorial are expected to do the same work, in the same way and in the same time.</td>
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<td>8.</td>
<td>The tutor talks in a friendly manner individually, with students in this tutorial.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Students put effort into what they do during tutorials.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Each student knows the other members of the tutorial by their first name.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Students are dissatisfied with what is done in the tutorial.</td>
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<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Getting certain amount of work done is important for this tutorial.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>New and different ways of teaching are often used in this tutorial.</td>
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<td>14.</td>
<td>Students in this tutorial are generally allowed to work at their own pace.</td>
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<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>The tutor goes out of his/her way to help the students in this tutorial.</td>
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<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Friendships are made easily among the students in this tutorial.</td>
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<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Students ‘clockwatch’ in this tutorial.</td>
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<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>After the tutorial, students have a sense of satisfaction.</td>
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<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>This tutorial often gets side-tracked instead of sticking to the point.</td>
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<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>The tutor thinks up innovative activities for the students in this tutorial to do.</td>
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<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>Students in this class have a say in how class time is spent</td>
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<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>The tutor helps each student who is having trouble with work in this class.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>The students in this tutorial pay attention to what others are saying.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>Students don’t have much of a chance to get to know each other in this class.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.</td>
<td>These tutorials are a waste of time</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.</td>
<td>This is a disorganised tutorial.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>27.</td>
<td>Teaching approaches in this class are characterised by innovation and variety.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>28.</td>
<td>Students are allowed to choose activities and how they will work in this class.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>29.</td>
<td>The tutor seldom moves around the classroom to talk with students.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>30.</strong> Students seldom present their work during tutorials.</td>
<td><strong>31.</strong> It takes a long time to get to know everybody by his/her first name in this class.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>32.</strong> These tutorials are boring.</td>
<td><strong>33.</strong> The assignments for this class are clear so everyone knows what to do.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>34.</strong> The seating in this tutorial is arranged the same each week.</td>
<td><strong>35.</strong> The teaching approaches in this class allow students to proceed at their own pace.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>36.</strong> The tutor is not interested in students’ problems.</td>
<td><strong>37.</strong> There are opportunities for students to express opinions in this tutorial.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>38.</strong> The tutor is unfriendly and inconsiderate towards students in this class.</td>
<td><strong>39.</strong> Students enjoy going to this tutorial.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>40.</strong> This class seldom starts on time.</td>
<td><strong>41.</strong> The tutor often thinks of unusual tutorial activities.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>42.</strong> There is little opportunity for a student to pursue his/her particular interests in this tutorial.</td>
<td><strong>43.</strong> Students in this tutorial get to know each other well.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>44.</strong> The tutor dominates tutorial discussions.</td>
<td><strong>45.</strong> Tutorials are interesting.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>46.</strong> Students in this tutorial are not interested in getting to know one another.</td>
<td><strong>47.</strong> Activities in this tutorial are clearly and carefully planned.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>48.</strong> The tutor does the same type of activities in class every time.</td>
<td><strong>49.</strong> The tutor decides what will be done in class.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix F: Semi-Structured Interview Questions

Semi-structured interviews for students
1. Thinking back to the course in which you answered the questionnaire, what do you think your lecturers’ expectations were for you? Why do you say that?
2. What do you think your tutors’ expectations were for you? Why do you say that?
3. Were the teaching staff academic expectations for you, important to you?
4. What about your personal expectations?
5. Have you had enough support from your lecturers, tutors and faculty for your learning? Why? How so?
6. Have you received support from your classmates/peers?
7. Moving onto your general experiences, what has your tertiary experiences been so far?
8. Have you experienced any forms of discrimination?
9. We are now going to play a quick sentence-completion game to delve into your classroom experiences:
   a. “The female students in my class are…”
   b. “The male students in my class are…”
   c. “The mature students in my class are…”
   d. “The younger students in my class are…”
Semi-structured interviews for teaching staff

1. Do you have academic or behavioral academic expectations for your students?
   a. If Yes: What are these expectations based on?
   b. If No: Why not?
2. Do you have specific expectations for certain types of students? What are these expectations based on?
3. Are you explicit about your expectations? Do you communicate your expectations to your students?
4. Do you see a difference between mature students and the rest of the students enrolled in your course?
5. Do you see a difference between the female and mature students enrolled in your course?
6. Is there anything that you would like to add?
References


doi:10.1177/1473325002001003636

Peterson, E., Rubie-Davies, C., Osborne, D., & Sibley, C. (2016). Teachers' explicit expectations and implicit prejudiced attitudes to educational achievement: Relations with student achievement and the ethnic achievement gap. *Learning and Instruction, 42*, 123–140. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.learninstruc.2016.01.010


doi:10.1017/S0144686X07006605


