

STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF FACULTY AGE AND TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Abstract.

This paper explores university students' perceptions of faculty age and how it influences their evaluation of teaching effectiveness. Drawing from literature that highlights age-related stereotypes regarding professional competence, the study aims to identify perceived differences between younger and older instructors and assess their impact on the educational relationship. A qualitative research design was employed, using semi-structured interviews with students from various university programs. Thematic analysis revealed five core dimensions: pedagogical style, adaptability to technology, didactic communication, relational attitude, and age-based biases. Findings indicate that perceived teaching effectiveness is more closely linked to professors' behaviour and attitudes than to their chronological age. Senior faculty members who demonstrate openness, empathy, and adaptability are positively evaluated, whereas rigid styles and formal communication are associated with lower student engagement. The conclusions call for institutional strategies to support lifelong professional development regardless of age and to counteract age-related stereotypes in academic settings.

Keywords: student perceptions, teaching effectiveness, faculty age, higher education, educational stereotypes

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