

Teachers' and Students' Experiences of Positive Relationships in Secondary Education

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Declaration

This thesis is being submitted for the award of Doctorate in Applied Educational Psychology. I declare that this work is my own and has not been previously submitted for any other purpose. I have acknowledged where material used is the work of others.

Overarching Abstract

This thesis explores experiences of positive Teacher-Student Relationships (TSRs) in secondary education from both teachers' and adolescents' perspectives. It is comprised of four chapters: a Systematic Literature Review (SLR), methodological and ethical considerations, an empirical research project and a reflective synthesis.

The Systematic Literature Review (Chapter 1) explores teachers' and students' experiences of TSRs in secondary education settings. Meta-ethnography was used to synthesise five research papers that were identified as relevant to the review. Findings suggest that teachers and students experience positive relationships as being characterised by kind and friendly interactions, informality and humour and communications that are respectful and equal. Teacher responsiveness and sensitivity were identified as important and the concept of going above and beyond for students was discussed. This chapter may support the development of positive TSRs in settings within proximal processes and may also support the development of relational policies in schools.

Chapter 2 aims to act as a link between the meta-ethnography and empirical research. Philosophical assumptions are discussed leading to a rationale for the methodology employed. Key ethical considerations are discussed, paying particular attention to the changes to research design and subsequent ethical decisions due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The empirical research report (Chapter 3) explores TSRs in upper secondary school in one mainstream secondary setting. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with two teachers and two students from Years 10 and 11 and data was transcribed and analysed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. Perceptions of the culture of relationships in school were found to be important. Findings also suggest that reciprocal interactions filled with human responses, playfulness and care were important. Agency, availability, recognition of responsibility, authenticity and consistency were found to be important elements of positive relationships from teachers towards their students. These findings have implications for teachers, school leaders and for Educational Psychologists.

Chapter 4 consists of a reflective synthesis detailing the professional and academic learning acquired through the research journey. In this chapter, what the work means for research and practice is discussed, as well as the next steps for this enquiry.

Chapters 1 and 3 have been prepared for publication and are presented in the style of papers typically published by the British Educational Research Journal.

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Chapter 1. How do Teachers and Young People Experience Positive Teacher-Student Relationships in Secondary Education?

Abstract

Purpose: The overall purpose of this review is to provide an answer to the question: How do teachers and young people experience positive teacher-student relationships (TSRs) in secondary education?

Rationale: Previous research has demonstrated the wide-reaching impact positive TSRs can have. Many previous syntheses focus on correlational studies and do not aim to explore experiences of positive TSRs from the perspectives of both teachers and students in secondary education.

Method: I used a meta-ethnographic approach to search available data and select qualitative papers relevant to the review. Five studies were selected and their quality was appraised. Third-order constructs were generated from the selected papers and these were organised into mutual and non-mutual features.

Findings: Mutual features of positive TSRs included interactions that are perceived as kind and friendly, informal interactions that involved humour and respectful and equal relationships. Non-mutual features included teachers knowing their students' academic dispositions and needs, teachers noticing, adapting and responding to students' emotional needs and the concept of 'going beyond' for students.

Limitations: This meta-ethnography is limited as it offers an interpretation from a single researcher. The papers included in this review were from studies conducted across secondary education and therefore included a range of student ages, and a range of contexts.

Conclusions: This review contributes to the understanding of TSRs in secondary education. It may support the development of positive TSRs within proximal processes as well as support the development of policies that position a relational, interpersonal approach at their core. Implications for education and educational psychologists are discussed.

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 Context and Outline for the Review

This review discusses Teacher-Student Relationships (TSRs) in secondary schools to explore the question: *How do teachers and young people experience positive teacher-student relationships in secondary education?* Research suggests the importance of positive TSRs in the classroom both in terms of cognitive and affective outcomes for students and for improving teacher wellbeing and retention (García-Moya, Brooks, Morgan, & Moreno, 2015; Hattie, 2009; Roffey, 2012a; Spilt, Koomen, & Thijs, 2011). Despite less being known about positive TSRs in secondary education, research suggests that positive TSRs may be more important than ever and the quality of TSRs may decline as children progress through school years (Roorda, Koomen, Spilt, & Oort, 2011; Rucinski, Brown, & Downer, 2018). This might be explained by adolescents' growing interest in peer relationships and an increased focus on academic performance, meaning that classroom interactions can become less personal (Gasser, Grutter, Buholzer, & Wettstein, 2018). Much of the current research is grounded in previous work by Wubbels, Brekelmans, den Brok, and Van Tartwijk (2006) and Pianta (2001) and less is known about students' and teachers' experiences of positive relationships in secondary school settings (Krane, Ness, Holter-Sorensen, Karlsson, & Binder, 2017; Sabol & Pianta, 2012; Yu, Johnson, Deutsch, & Varga, 2018). Throughout this paper, I will highlight the key messages from the current literature. I will explore the commonalities and the differences between experiences of positive TSRs. It is my hope that by doing this, the focus will change from a desire to link TSRs to outcomes, and move closer to understanding the relationship as a unit of analysis, to better inform policy and practice (Liu, Savitz-Romer, Perella, Hill, & Liang, 2018).

1.1.2 A Definition of Teacher-Student Relationships

Teacher-Student Relationships can be understood as a dynamic system, with four primary parts: (1) individual features of teachers and students, (2) each individual's representation of the relationship, (3) interactions between the two parties which can build or constrain this representation and (4) the external influences from the surrounding context (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998; Liu et al., 2018; Pianta, Hamre, & Stuhlman, 2003; Sabol & Pianta, 2012). This review aims to synthesise papers that attempt to understand teacher and student representations of their relationships with one another, by exploring their experiences.

1.1.3 Theoretical Underpinnings and Existing Measures

Pianta (2001) developed the Student-Teacher Relationship Scale (STRS), described by Sabol and Pianta (2012 p.215) as 'perhaps the most frequently used and empirically-validated measure of teachers' perceived relationship quality with individual children'. The STRS consists of three subscales – closeness, conflict and dependency and it draws upon attachment theory (Ainsworth, 1985; Bowlby, 1988; Settanni, Longobardi, Sclavo, Fraire, & Prino, 2015; Tsigilis, Gregoriadis, & Grammatikopoulos, 2018). This scale was originally produced to measure the reports of teachers of young children; therefore, doesn't account for children's or adolescent's views (Murray & Zvoch, 2011). Researchers have highlighted the need for further research into the validity and measurement invariance of the STRS across different groups, and the dependency scale has been particularly criticised for its lack of reliability (Doumen et al., 2009; Webb & Neuharth-Pritchett, 2011).

Another dominant theory in this area is interpersonal theory, which sets out that all interpersonal behaviour can be described along two dimensions: agency and communion (Gurtman, 2009). Agency can be described as the degree to which an individual exerts power, acts independently or establishes control over the interaction (Gurtman, 2009). Communion refers to the degree of friendliness, love and affiliation in an interaction (Gurtman, 2009). Research into TSRs suggests that students preferred teachers who demonstrated high levels of agency and communion, characterised by directing and helpful teacher behaviour (Wubbels et al., 2006). The idea that all interpersonal behaviour can be described as a specific blend of two constructs could be argued to reduce complex relational processes. The Questionnaire on Teacher Interaction (QTI) was designed according to this two-factor model of teacher behaviour (Wubbels, 2017; Wubbels et al., 2014). The reliability and validity of this questionnaire with secondary school students has been tested across different cultures, with mixed results (den Brok, Fisher, Wubbels, Brekelmans, & Rickards, 2006; Telli, Den Brok, & Cakiroglu, 2007). This measure aims to gather information about desired teacher behaviour from students, and teachers own perceptions of their behaviour. As a result, it positions teachers as the sole agents of change in TSR development and does little to emphasise the reciprocity of TSRs and interactions.

Further research into TSRs approaches this area from a motivational perspective, underpinned by self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2004). According to this theoretical perspective, teachers are social partners who can satisfy students' needs for relatedness (promoted by involvement and warmth), competence (promoted by structure) and autonomy (promoted by autonomy support) (Furrer, Skinner, & Pitzer, 2014; Martin & Dowson, 2009; Stroet, Opdenakker, & Minnaert, 2015). Teacher involvement and warmth in TSRs is proposed to support a sense of relatedness and students' motivation and engagement at school (Bakadorova & Raufelder, 2018). Involvement has been described as being expressed through demonstrations of interest in students' wellbeing and by providing emotional support (Wentzel, 2016). Furthermore, it is suggested that the satisfaction of these needs contributes to social relationship quality and overall wellbeing, not just motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2014). Researchers have suggested that, despite the evidence presented above, teachers use controlling strategies, rather than those that support student autonomy (Niemi & Ryan, 2009). This could be explained by external pressures from above and systems that promote the reliance on extrinsically rewarding strategies (Niemi & Ryan, 2009; Roth, Assor, Kanat-Maymon, & Kaplan, 2007).

Current theoretical models that guide work in this area 'typically adopt a causal approach, with the affective quality of teacher-student relationships viewed as the central and critical motivator of student adjustment' (Wentzel, 2009, p. 302). This means that much of the research is focused upon making associations between quality TSRs and student outcomes. Teacher involvement and students' sense of relatedness is most frequently associated with the study of TSRs (Wentzel, 2009). It is therefore unclear how important all three psychological needs presented above are to the overall TSR. It could be argued that the notion of teacher involvement leading to an increased sense of relatedness to facilitate students' adoption of goals and interests valued by the teacher, as described by Wentzel (2009), is at odds with the principles of learner-centred education (Cornelius-White, 2007).

Models of social support have relevance to this field of research too. Some research has suggested that both emotionally supportive teachers and teachers who willingly provide instrumental support are important to students (Federici & Skaalvik, 2014; Wentzel, 2016). Malecki and Demaray (2003) found that only teacher emotional support was associated with positive outcomes. Social support perspectives consider relationships to 'range from highly familiar to relatively impersonal and fleeting', which

may be more reflective of the types of relationships students having with their teachers (Wentzel, 2009, p. 303). It has been suggested that perceived social support is more strongly associated with wellbeing of children and adolescents and school adjustment than actual, received support (Chu, Saucier, & Hafner, 2010; Wethington & Kessler, 1986). However, in their study, Murray, Kosty, and Hauser-McLean (2016) found that attachment-based constructs were more consistently associated with school adjustment indicators than were social support constructs.

Research into TSRs draws upon multiple theoretical perspectives. Wubbels et al. (2014, p. 366) discussed attachment and interpersonal theory as 'two languages to describe teacher-student interactions and relationships' and discussion of these theoretical positions featured most prominently in the papers studied for this review. Murray et al. (2016) suggested that much of the work on TSRs is based on attachment theory and social support perspectives. Wentzel (2009) emphasised the role of self-determination theory in addition to those described by Murray et al. (2016). Sabol and Pianta (2012) discussed the relevance of each of the above outlined theories to research in this area for older children. The investigation into TSRs from different perspectives perhaps highlights the need for additional clarity of relevant concepts and features across the different perspectives, rather than from within.

1.1.4 Teacher-Student Relationships and Outcomes

Positive TSRs have been shown to be associated with academic achievement and engagement (Cornelius-White, 2007; Furrer & Skinner, 2003; Roorda, Jak, Zee, Oort, & Koomen, 2017). Students perceptions of teacher support have been demonstrated to influence their goal orientations and academic effort (Wentzel, Muenks, McNeish, & Russell, 2017). However, once previous levels of achievement were controlled for, some research has indicated small or non-existent associations between perceptions of teacher closeness and academic achievement (Hajovsky, Mason, & McCune, 2017; Hernandez et al., 2017).

Positive TSRs have also been associated with increased resilience (Johnson, 2008; Masten & Reed, 2002); positive subjective wellbeing (García-Moya et al., 2015; G. F. Moore et al., 2018) and social and emotional adjustment of students (Breeman et al., 2015). There is evidence to suggest TSRs are important in the relationship between teacher and student wellbeing (Harding et al., 2019; Roffey, 2012b); teacher burnout (Milatz, Luftenegger, & Schober, 2015) and commitment (Collie, Shapka, & Perry,

2011). Some research into TSRs utilised observational measures (Havik & Ertesvag, 2019). The difficulty in relying on observation techniques has been shown in Mikami and Mercer (2017), whereby student self-reported data and observational data did not indicate similar results.

1.1.5 Teacher-Student Relationships and Adolescents

There is evidence to suggest that TSR quality can decrease with age and school year (Ciarrochi, Morin, Sahdra, Litalien, & Parker, 2017; Hajovsky et al., 2017). Research has found that less-positive perceptions of TSRs can become static over time (Bayram-Ozdemir & Ozdemir, 2019). Information from the Department for Education's 'Teachers' Standards' indicated the need for teachers to maintain good relationships, but only in the context of behaviour management (DfE, 2013). This guidance document discussed TSRs as part of point 7 on a list of 8 which perhaps does not suggest a priority level that is reflective of the research outlined above (DfE, 2013). Secondary school structures have the potential to challenge meaningful interactions between teachers and students (Bernstein-Yamashiro & Noam, 2013) and the prioritisation of academic achievement in government policy pays little attention to relationships in the classroom and their importance (Roffey, 2012a; Wilkins, 2014a).

1.1.6 Links to Education Policy

Advice to educators in the UK highlighted the importance of a relational focus between staff and students and the impact on wellbeing and mental health (Inchley, Mokogwu, Mabelis, & Currie, 2020; Lavis & Robson, 2015). Government departmental advice to schools referenced poor TSRs as a risk factor and outlined good TSRs as a protective factor (DfE, 2016, 2018). Statutory guidance to schools indicated that behaviour policies should include and address staff/student relationships (DfE, 2019). Public Health England, through reference to NICE guidelines, outlined that primary and secondary educators should provide conditions for successful relationships between staff and students (Lavis & Robson, 2015). It could be argued that a deeper exploration of what these conditions may be is missing. Despite the association between TSRs and wellbeing, TSRs are not explored adequately in some government documents pertaining to mental health and wellbeing (Department of Health & DfE, 2017; Weare, 2015) and practical examples do not indicate this is the business of teachers and students (Lavis & Robson, 2015). A possible reason for this may be that if the importance of relationships is viewed to be critical for wellbeing and this is

considered in the context of 'healthy education programs', then no government department has direct responsibility for such programs, with neither the Ministry of Education or the Ministry of Health holding sole responsibility (Hardoon, Hey, & Brunetti, 2020 p.62).

1.1.7 Why is this Educational Psychologists' Business?

The National Children's Bureau expressed the view that past practice assumed mental health and wellbeing in schools was an area for experts alone (Stirling & Emery, 2016). The government's mental health green paper affirmed the view that mental health and wellbeing in schools is everyone's business (Department of Health & DfE, 2017), with Educational Psychologists (EPs) named as playing a crucial role in this agenda. Some advice and guidance suggested that promoting wellbeing and mental health in schools should be done at a systemic level (DfE, 2016, 2018). In 'A Whole-School Framework for Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health', Stirling and Emery (2016) discussed lessons learned from secondary schools that implemented whole-school approaches to supporting emotional wellbeing. They made reference to the idea that 'teaching is about relationships' and they indicated that teachers see when young people are at risk (p.7). In a paper about developing a positive whole-school culture and ethos, the Scottish Government made reference to data suggesting that most teachers are confident in their abilities to promote positive relationships (Scottish Government, 2018).

EPs are in a position to support schools to advocate not only for the robust associations of positive TSRs and positive outcomes, but to work with schools to find out how these relationships are developed and what the core features of them are (Cornelius-White, 2007; Roffey, 2012b). EPs are able to support teachers and young people to be the agents of change in this area, by having their experiences and stories about positive TSRs at the forefront of this research (Hardy & Hobbs, 2017; Todd, 2007).

1.1.8 Rationale for the Current Review

In a meta-analysis of correlational studies, Cornelius-White (2007) identified the degrees of association between person-centred teacher variables and positive student outcomes, with non-directivity, empathy and warmth showing the most significant associations. Johnson (2008 p.396) suggested that it is 'the little things' that teachers

do to connect with their students, such as making themselves available and understanding individual circumstances, that make the difference and they are most remarkable for their ordinariness. Many of the previous syntheses exclusively include studies that are correlational in design, therefore seek to find out about a reciprocal phenomenon using reductionist means and do not aim to explore more deeply the intricacies of TSRs from the perspectives of both teachers and students. For this reason, I aim to answer my research question – *How do teachers and young people experience positive teacher-student relationships in secondary education?* – by looking to qualitative papers that attempt to find out about this phenomenon by asking young people or teachers about their experiences; research that concerns itself with description rather than prediction. This review is qualitative in design as the research aim is focused upon the ‘quality and texture of experience’ and the meanings attributed to experiences and not in pre-conceived variables that preclude an individual’s own sense making (Willig, 2013, p. 8).

1.2 Method

I used meta-ethnography as a method of qualitative synthesis for my review because this allowed me to maintain the integrity and uniqueness of individual accounts; preserving their meanings whilst making new interpretations that go beyond the individual studies (Barnett-Page & Thomas, 2009). This a qualitative approach to synthesis which is iterative in nature and is derived from an interpretative paradigm. According to Barnett-Page and Thomas (2009), the emphasis within meta-ethnography is to examine commonalities to find new interpretations. Ethnography itself is described as thick description; taking ‘complex conceptual structures, many of them superimposed upon or knotted into one another’, attempting to grasp their meanings and present them (Britten et al., 2002; Geertz, 2008 p.314). Meta-ethnography aims to translate these understandings across multiple studies.

The use of meta-ethnography over other methods of qualitative synthesis has been demonstrated to produce findings with greater explanatory power (Britten et al., 2002; Campbell et al., 2003; France et al., 2019). The phases were originally outlined by Noblit and Hare (1988). I followed the 8 steps from the original approach (See Table 1) with guidance from other researchers and reviews of the process (Atkins et al., 2008; Britten et al., 2002; France et al., 2019).

Table 1: The 7 phase process outlined by Noblit and Hare (1988)

Phase	Process
1	Getting started
2	Deciding what is relevant to the initial interest
3	Reading the studies
4	Determining how the studies are related
5	Translating the studies into one another
6	Synthesising translations
7	Expressing the synthesis

1.2.1 Getting Started

Initial scoping of the literature highlighted the key researchers that have contributed to this area. It was also evident that most reviews synthesising studies were based on quantitative data (Cornelius-White, 2007; Hattie, 2009). This helped in developing my review question, which could be informed by a meta-ethnography –

How do teachers and young people experience positive teacher-student relationships in secondary education?

1.2.2 Deciding what is Relevant to the Initial Interest

Meta-ethnographic systematic review methods were employed to locate papers that were relevant to the review question and satisfied inclusion and exclusion criteria. Deciding on the relevant studies involves knowing ‘what accounts are available to address the audiences interests’(Noblit & Hare, 1988 p.27).

Searching took place between June 2019 and September 2019 and involved the systematic searching of three databases (PsychInfo, ERIC and Scopus) in order to include research from both Education and Psychology fields, whilst maintaining manageability. I also conducted hand-, reference- and citation-searching for added rigour. The searching process is visually presented in Figure 1 and Figure 2. Papers that were published between 2014 and September 2019 were included. This was done in order to include the most recent research that is the most relevant to current educational contexts, now that there is more reference to TSRs in policy guidance than there previously has been (DfE, 2013, 2016, 2018). The criteria, outlined in Table 2, were added to following the closer examination of 22 papers whose relevance to the

review itself could not be determined through the screening of titles and abstracts alone (Atkins et al., 2008).

1.2.3 Visual Map of Search Process

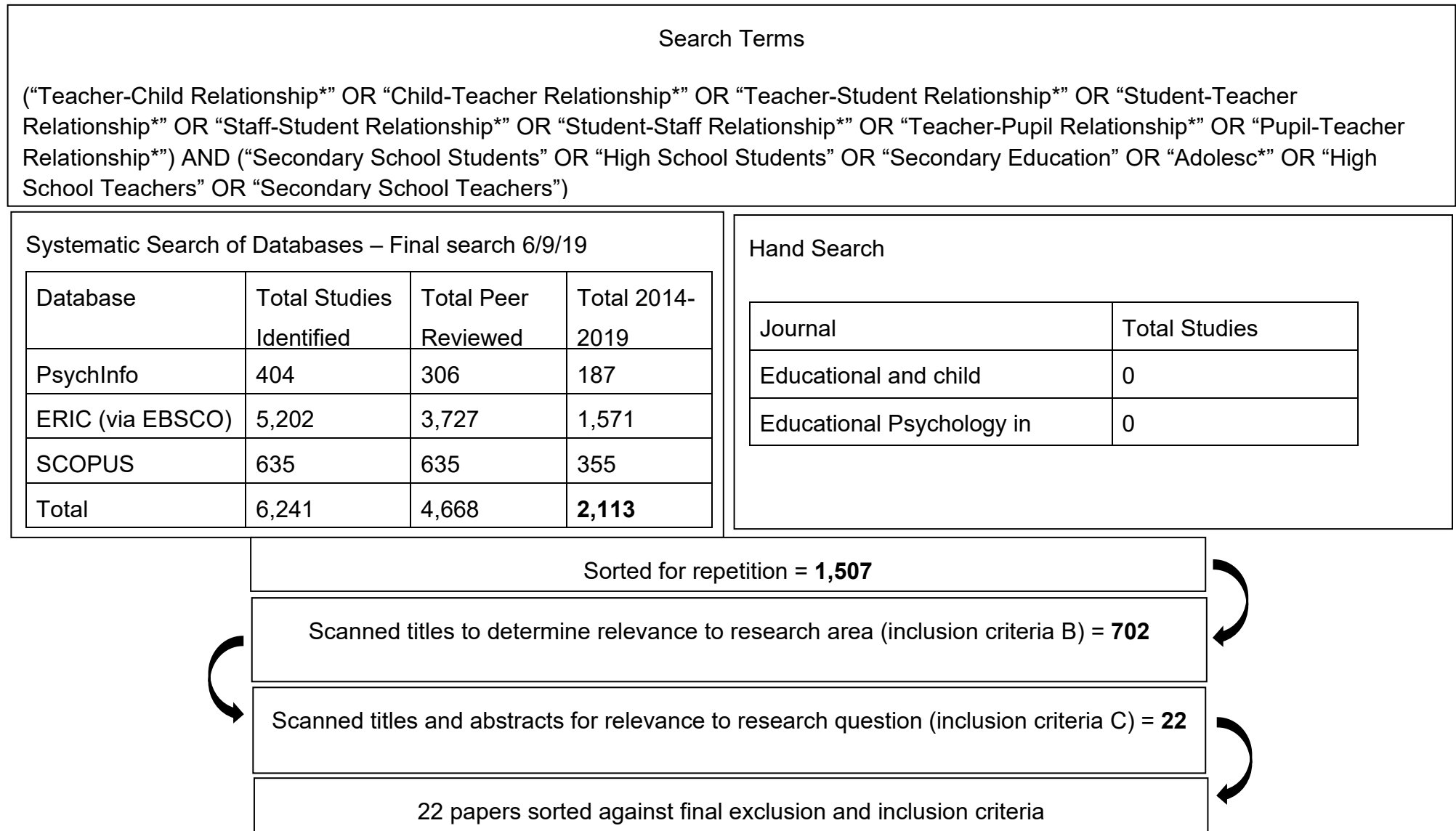


Figure 1: A flowchart depicting the search process, continued in Figure 2

1.2.4 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Table 2: Full inclusion criteria

Criteria	Inclusion Criteria	Rationale
A	Papers from 2014 – 2019	Representing more recent study of this phenomenon
	Peer Reviewed	Papers that have been through a process of quality control
B	Written in English	For accessibility reasons
	Papers about relationships in schools	Relevance to research area
C	Studies that included qualitative data-collection methods	Appropriate method for review question and method of synthesis
	Studies involving young people from secondary education settings and/or their teachers, and this is clearly stated. Secondary education is defined according to the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) as including lower and upper secondary education; after primary education and prior to tertiary education (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2012).	Relevance to research question
D	Papers aiming to find out about positive, in-person teacher-student relationships in secondary education only, as viewed by teachers and/or their students	Relevance to research question

The above criteria was applied to the papers. Papers were initially excluded on the basis that they did not meet this criteria and this was able to be determined by reading the titles and abstracts of papers. The final 22 papers had to be read in more detail as it could not be determined if they met all of the inclusion criteria through reading the title and abstracts alone. On closer inspection, 3 papers were excluded as they were not involving young people from secondary education settings only. A further 7 papers were excluded as they were not investigating TSRs as part of their main research question or research aim. This included one paper that explored students' relationships with mentors, as this broadened the focus of the review too widely. It was

also decided that this may add aspects that are unrealistic and unachievable for teachers, due to the differences in role between mentors and teachers in schools. The decision was made to exclude 2 papers that focused on one element of TSRs (e.g. teacher-adolescent trust) as these papers explored top-down concepts within TSRs and not TSRs generally. In both of these papers, Cooper and Mines (2014, p. 265) and Russell, Wentzel, and Donlan (2016), interview questions asked placed emphasis on specific constructs, for example ‘caring as relation and caring as virtue’, or about trust and distrust in specific, more theory-driven ways. This may have limited the scope of participants’ responses and may have skewed the synthesis within this meta-ethnography towards a particular element of TSRs. Finally, 5 papers were excluded that employed mixed methods approaches to data collection. Following this process, 5 papers were selected, as shown in Figure 2. An overview of the key papers can be found in Table 3.

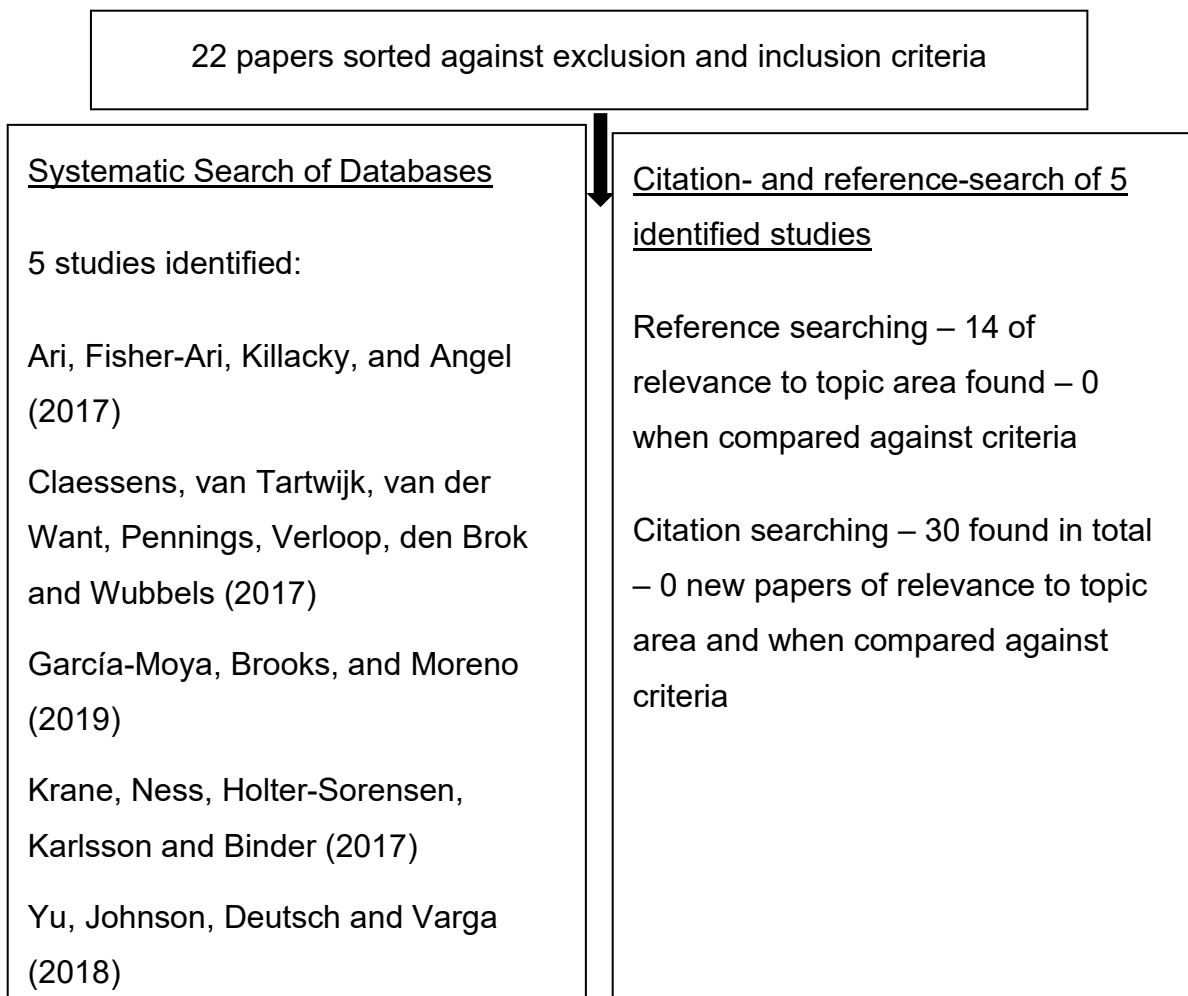


Figure 2: Final visual map of search process

1.2.5 Overview of Key Papers

Table 3: Overview of key papers

Author/Date	Research Question/s or Aim	Context	Sample/ Population	N	Design	Method of Data Analysis
Ari, Fisher-Ari, Killacky and Angel (2017)	<p>What are the lived experiences of care-based relating from the perspective of students and teachers?</p> <p>How are relationships manifested and experienced by teachers and students in an early college setting?</p>	Early College High School Setting in North Carolina (USA)	<p>3 sophomores (UK Year 11)</p> <p>3 seniors (UK Year 13)</p> <p>5 teachers randomly selected</p>	11	Open-ended interviews (30-45 minutes)	<p>Phenomenological analysis from a social constructionist perspective.</p> <p>After listening to the recordings multiple times, author 1 used 'open coding, jotting down the units of meaning from each of the transcribed and audio recorded interviews' (page 15).</p>
Claessens, van Tartwijk, van der Want, Pennings, Verloop, den Brok and Wubbels (2017)	<p>'How do teachers perceive their own and students' interpersonal behaviour in positive and problematic teacher-student relationships?'</p> <p>'Where does this behaviour take place?'</p> <p>'What topics are covered when this behaviour involves talk?'</p> <p>Overall, the researchers aimed to 'add to theory on teachers' perceptions of teacher-student relationships'</p>	High schools in the Netherlands	28 high-school teachers. Selection was based on diversity in years of experience and on diversity in teacher-class relationship measured with the Questionnaire on Teacher-Interaction.	28	Qualitative approach for data collection (semi-structured interviews)	The Teacher-Student Interaction Coding scheme was developed related to four themes: context, topic of talk, interpersonal behaviours of teachers and students and interactions for both positive and problematic TSRs.

Author/Date	Research Question/s or Aim	Context	Sample/ Population	N	Design	Method of Data Analysis
García-Moya, Brooks and Moreno (2019)	What are the central attributes of positive TSRs, from students' perspectives that could help delineate the meaning of student-teacher connectedness?	A southern county in England and Southern city in Spain, as part of a wider EU-funded project.	11-18 year olds from secondary schools in England and Spain	42	Small focus groups conducted by the same researcher, recorded and transcribed verbatim.	Thematic analysis was used to identify meaningful themes using a bottom-up, data driven approach. According to the researchers, directly applying a priori theoretical framework was likely to the limit scope of the findings.
Krane, Ness, Holter-Sorensen, Karlsson and Binder (2017)	'How do students experience that positive TSRs are developed and promoted in upper secondary school?' 'What do students experience as important relational qualities concerning their mental health and dropout in upper secondary school?'	Eastern part of Norway.	Students (mean age 17.9) from upper secondary school (UK equivalent Years 12 and 13).	17	Focus groups and semi-structured interviews, with stakeholders as researchers (participatory research)	Thematic analysis using NVivo software program. The first author obtained initial impression of material through repeated listening and then material was coded line by line. Meaningful units were discussed with competence group and with co-researcher, resulting in five main themes.
Yu, Johnson, Deutsch and Varga (2018)	To understand key interactions and characteristics of high-quality, positive TSRs – 'what interactions youth find important in their relationships with teachers whom they view as significant?', what do these relationships 'look and feel like from the youth perspective?'	Small south-eastern region of US (not explicitly stated)	Students aged 13-17 (Grades 7-11)	13	In depth interviews with students who nominated a teacher as their significant non-parent adult.	Thematic analysis – line by line reading, memo-ing and discussion from the first two researchers, initial codes were identified and then data was re-read within each theme. Coding for 'disconfirming evidence' was also undertaken throughout.

1.2.6 Quality Appraisal

At this stage, I appraised the quality of the papers. The tool used to appraise quality was adapted from Gough (2007) and Pawson, Boaz, Grayson, Long, and Barnes (2003). I used this tool as a series of prompts to assist the process of assessment, rather than a prescriptive checklist (Dixon-Woods, Shaw, Agarwal, & Smith, 2004). I carried out this appraisal by reading each paper in turn, assessing quality in each area of the framework before coming to an overall judgment. An example of this process is provided in Appendix i. The overall judgements of the key papers are shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Overall judgements following quality appraisal of key papers. Criteria for making final judgements is provided in Appendix ii.

1	Ari, Fisher-Ari, Killacky and Angel (2017)	High
2	García-Moya, Brooks and Moreno (2019)	High
3	Yu, Johnson Deutsch and Varga (2018)	High
4	Krane, Ness, Holster-Sorenson, Karlsson and Binder (2017)	Medium
5	Claessens, van Tartwijk, van der Want, Pennings, Verloop, den Brok and Wubbels (2017)	Medium

1.2.7 Reading the Studies

The next stage of meta-ethnography involved careful and repeated reading of the selected papers, in light of contextual information presented above in Table 2 (Britten et al., 2002). As Noblit and Hare (1988) set out, this also involved noting down interpretative metaphors from within each paper to inform the next phase.

1.2.8 Determining how the Studies are Related

France et al. (2019) claim that - when conducting a meta-ethnography - one must first determine how the studies relate to each other. As Noblit and Hare (1988) suggest, in a synthesis the various studies must be 'put together' and this requires an initial assumption to be made about the relationship between studies - are they: reciprocal

(similar and directly comparable); refutational (contradictory) or do they represent a line of argument (a holistic inference). France et al. (2019) determined that the above assumptions are not mutually exclusive; both reciprocal and refutational elements may lead to a greater or new understanding of the whole, based on selective study of the parts. It could be argued that by paying attention to the nuanced differences across the papers, one can prevent the simple reproduction of the main ideas from each of the papers.

I documented the key metaphors from each paper through diagrams and then compared these themes within and across papers, drawing arrows between related concepts. This method was also utilised by Campbell et al. (2012) and Malpass et al. (2009). Through this process, I determined that my papers were directly comparable in more ways than not, and therefore the synthesis took the form of a reciprocal translation. However, I noted refutational elements that I will give explicit attention to. An example of this process is provided in Appendix iii.

1.2.9 Translating the Studies

Following Schutz's (1971) definition of constructs (Schutz, 1971, as cited in Atkins et al., 2008), shown in Table 5, I created a table of metaphors – or concepts (an example of which can be found in Appendix iv). First and second order constructs were taken from the entire findings and discussion sections of the review papers, with the exception of Claessens et al. (2017). Claessens et al. (2017) investigated both positive and problematic TSRs and as the latter was not the focus of this review, the findings that followed interview questions about problematic relationships were not included (the paper was not omitted due to the discussion of the results being in two halves). France et al. (2019) discussed the notion that researchers tend to select direct quotes to illustrate their interpretations; therefore, first and second order constructs from the papers were kept aligned. Following this, I was then able to construct third-order constructs from my own interpretations.

Table 5: Definitions of constructs from Schultz (1971 as cited in Atkins et al. 2008)

Term	Definition
1 st order construct	Constructs that reflect participants' understandings directly
2 nd order construct	Interpretations of participants' understandings by the authors of the studies
3 rd order construct	The synthesis of both first and second order constructs

1.3 Synthesising Translations

Figure 3 represents a holistic view of third-order constructs. These were generated by looking across all first and second order constructs for patterns and arranging them into clusters. I was then able to organise the themes into the structure illustrated below. All features were present from both teachers' and students' accounts and therefore arguably important to both. They have been organised in terms of their degree of agreeableness across the papers. The first group could be described as 'mutual' because they are features of positive TSRs that both teachers and students experienced from each other. The second group of themes were features that students experienced *from* their teachers or that teachers actively *did for* their students in positive TSRs.

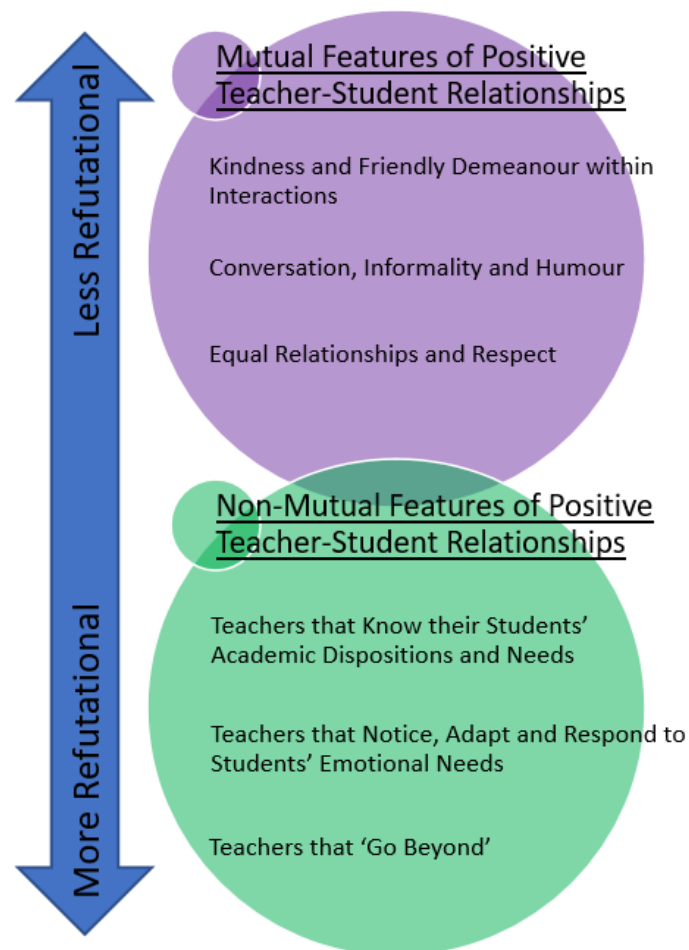


Figure 3: A visual representation of the third-order constructs generated from the review

1.4 Expressing the Synthesis

1.4.1 Mutual Features of Positive Teacher-Student Relationships

The themes presented in the section below were common across 3 or more papers and are mutual features of positive TSRs that both teachers and students experience.

Kindness and Friendly Demeanour within Interactions

The first recurring, mutual theme was the idea of teachers and students being kind and demonstrating a friendly demeanour towards each other. When students talked about this in relation to their teachers, it was often referred to as smiling and being happy in the classroom and seemed to be perceived as consistent and unconditional. Teachers described behaving this way towards their students, and when talking about their students, teachers tended to determine relationship quality based on level of friendliness (Ari, Fisher-Ari, Killacky, & Angel, 2017; Claessens et al., 2017).

This theme is also highlighted in previous literature (Cornelius-White, 2007). Roffey (2012a) discussed quotes from research that suggested pupils warm to cheerful and optimistic teachers. Further research has shown that references to kindness was overt in participants' accounts of the practices and process in their schools, involving young people, teachers and head teachers (Roffey, 2008). The repeated findings from papers in this review of the importance of smiling is reminiscent of the little and ordinary, everyday things that support positive TSRs (Johnson, 2008).

Within this theme, the contribution of moment-to-moment interactions at the micro-level that were friendly and positive to the overall representation of the TSR as positive was discussed in Claessens et al. (2017) and Yu et al. (2018). This is in line with Bronfenbrenner and Morris (1998) bioecological theory that supports the view that the moment-to-moment time scale of interactions, is foundational for the overall TSR (Granic & Hollenstein, 2003).

Conversation, Informality and Humour

The second reoccurring mutual theme related to relaxed and informal interactions between teachers and students that involved humour. The medium of 'talk' reoccurred as providing the space to connect. Informal spaces to connect often extended beyond the classroom – either in assemblies, during break times, trips, after school or outside of school.

This theme also seems to be reflective of the 'little and ordinary' things mentioned in Johnson (2008 p.395); teachers who 'remember the human touches that promote pro-social bonding between teachers and students' promote resilience. The importance of humour and every day interactions is also discussed in previous research (S. Moore & Kuol, 2007; Roffey, 2008). Pianta, Hamre and Allen (2012, p. 370) refer to 'modest efforts' that teachers make to form personal connections with students.

Equal Relationships and Respect

Equal relationships and mutual respect was a theme across most papers. Students talked about teachers having a high regard for their opinions and teachers mentioned treating students as equals. Students also mentioned the importance of them being open to what teachers had to offer; a willingness to give and take. Respect was an important component within this sense of equality. Teachers setting rules and limits

was mentioned in two papers, but within the context of friendly and respectful relationships.

The interest and value teachers in positive TSRs placed on their students' opinions is reminiscent of Rogers and Freiberg's (1969) view of person-centred education and the facilitator's (or teacher's) expression of confidence and trust in the capacity of the other. McCombs (2004) discussed learner-centred education as being within contexts whereby learners can learn with and from each other. Non-directivity in positive TSRs is also discussed in Cornelius-White (2007). This links to research that suggests supporting student autonomy is an important aspect of TSRs (McLaughlin & Clarke, 2010; Niemiec & Ryan, 2009).

This concept emerging from the papers perhaps calls into question the literature researching effective TSRs and high teacher control (Ertesvåg, 2011; J. M. Walker, 2009; Wentzel, 2002; Wubbels et al., 2014). McCombs (2004) discussed enhanced learning environments as places where learners have a sense of control and ownership. Pianta et al. (2012 p.370) talk of 'youth strivings for autonomy and self-expression' as a positive energy to be harnessed; they discussed how this is sometimes viewed as a negative force to be countered and that this view is often promoted in training courses and in school policies.

These findings suggest that the concept of high teacher agency or control in the context of positive TSRs in secondary education is likely to be extremely nuanced. It appears, for most of the accounts in this review, a sense of equality and mutuality, with respect as a fundamental part of that, is more important in positive TSRs in secondary education than one half of the dyad having an increased sense of control over the other.

1.4.2 Non-Mutual Features of Positive Teacher-Student Relationships

The areas below were common across 3 or more papers and are present in teachers and students accounts but are not mutual features of positive TSRs; they were actions or approaches that teachers, not students, take in positive TSRs. The themes below contain more elements of refutation across the papers than the themes above and are likely to be dependent on individual preferences, needs and views of role.

Teachers that Know their Students' Academic Dispositions and Needs

Common across papers was the idea of teachers knowing their students and the important role this played in their instruction and teaching styles. Students also acknowledged that relationships tend to be more positive with teachers who are engaging and enthusiastic. Teachers who noticed academic dispositions and provided support or adaptations were discussed. Lessons that were fun, different and more hands-on were also described by students across the papers. This links to research suggesting that learners benefit from projects and interesting activities that promote active engagement and involvement (Hamre, Pianta, Mashburn, & Downer, 2007). This was also discussed in research into perceptions of excellent teaching from university students (S. Moore & Kuol, 2007). This theme links to the importance of teacher instrumental support that is suggested in research from a motivational perspective (Federici & Skaalvik, 2014; Furrer et al., 2014).

The idea that teachers should know and respond to their students' academic needs was not disputed – but the element of refutation here was in the centrality of this to connectedness between teachers and students. García-Moya, Brooks, and Moreno (2019) reported that facilitating learning reinforced connectedness. Whereas, in Krane et al. (2017), it was reported that the facilitation of learning between teachers and students was at the core of the positive relationship.

Teachers that Notice, Adapt and Respond to Students' Emotional Needs

Another theme present across papers related to teachers who recognised students and responded to them. Students reflected on the teachers that notice everything and pay attention to them. The need for students to feel visible, acknowledged, recognised and to receive individual attention from their teachers was discussed. Teachers in Claessens et al. (2017) referred to responding to individuals differently depending on individual needs and their perception of student intention. Yu et al. (2018) and Ari et al. (2017) discussed the importance of teacher noticing. This involved teachers' noticing emotional dispositions and responding discretely or subtly... or not at all. It appeared that the noticing of emotional needs was more universal across accounts of positive TSRs, but the response was individual, and relied on teachers knowing students' preference and needs.

This theme relates to research from a motivational perspective; specifically the importance of teacher involvement to meet a need for relatedness, expressed through demonstrations of interest in students' wellbeing and provisions of emotional support (Malecki & Demaray, 2003; Wentzel, 2016). This theme could be further explained by teachers' sensitivity to subtleties and changes in students' mood and behaviour. This could be suggested to demonstrate teachers' attunement to the inner experiences of the other (Jordan, 1986). This relates to previous research that has suggested students desire empathetic and emotionally compassionate teachers (Cooper & Miness, 2014; Nemecek & Roffey, 2005; Robertson, 2006).

This finding perhaps offers a critique towards behaviour policies in schools that can suggest a one-size-fits-all response to discipline. Responding for these teachers and students was about sensitivity and adaptability; which is more indicative of a reasonable adjustments narrative than a strict, behaviour policy narrative. It also calls into question the use of questionnaires and other standardised techniques to find out about positive TSRs. A teacher who notices and responds by offering individual, visible attention in more overt ways to some students and adapts and changes this approach towards a student who requires a more nuanced intervention may not be a skill that can be easily captured by a questionnaire.

Teachers that 'Go Beyond'

A theme that was also present across the papers was the concept of teachers 'going beyond' for their students. In one paper this involved teachers in positive TSRs going along to important events in students' lives and sharing times of intense personal struggle (Ari et al., 2017). Conversations between teachers and students that were about private and personal issues and their personal lives were discussed across papers, not just academic related issues. Connecting with students in this way has been highlighted in previous literature (Suldo et al., 2009). Robertson (2006) suggested that effective teachers are those who take an interest in students' lives beyond the classroom.

In two papers, the concept of 'going beyond' was not thought to be a teacher's role; 'they are paid to teach you, not to do anything else' (García-Moya, Brooks, et al., 2019 p.11), 'I am very professional. I am not their friend' (Claessens et al., 2017 p.485). In the context of positive TSRs, some students and teachers appear to draw a clear line between educator/learner and any other role, and some do not.

The idea of drawing a clear line between student as learner and teacher as professional has the potential to distance and thicken classifying narratives - teachers and students as 'others'. Differentiating discourses may lead to judgements about superiority and inferiority between groups (Dervin, 2015). Cornelius-White (2007) discussed feminist and multicultural theorists in the area of TSRs and suggested the dominant culture that exists tends to place an emphasis on separation and distinctness, rather than similarities and relationships (Noddings, 2013; M. Walker, 2004).

The conceptualisation of TSRs as being part of classroom behaviour management, as in DfE (2013) and Wubbels et al. (2014), has the potential to add to this narrative. Carr (2005) wrote about the problematic nature of the modern analysis of teaching as an external relation. This is the view that teaching is about the acquisition of techniques and authority is construed as 'discrete competencies – as management skills' (Carr, 2005 p.263). He argues that authority and discipline are not often experienced like this in classrooms. The key aspects of expertise in teaching are more so 'ordinary, familiar, personal and interpersonal virtues' and qualities (Carr, 2005 p.266). Buyse, Verschueren, Doumen, Van Damme, and Maes (2008) did not find an expected, general effect of teacher behaviour management on relationship quality with young children. They found emotional support to be 'truly protective for the relational functioning of children at risk' of developing less close relationships with their teachers (Buyse et al., 2008 p.384). The above arguments may suggest that good, positive or effective teaching requires teachers that truly know those they teach and establish personal connections with them. The essence of most of the relationships described in the papers included in this review are not conducive to an impersonal, overly professional approach to teaching.

1.5 Implications

As discussed in the introductory sections of this review, positive TSRs have implications for student and teacher outcomes (Hattie, 2009; Spilt et al., 2011). The findings in this review highlight the need for secondary education settings to create opportunities for teachers and students to truly get to know one another. The review findings suggest that space for conversation that covers both the academic and the personal can be a way for this to be achieved. This has implications for the current system in secondary education in the UK, which involves students having several

different classes and teachers throughout one day. Changes to the larger structural context of secondary schools may support the development of positive TSRs between adolescents and their teachers. Previous research has highlighted how EPs can support settings to enhance relationships between staff and students in secondary schools and the positive outcomes of this work (Hayes, Richardson, Hindle, & Grayson, 2011). The findings here have implications for teacher training as well as policy guidance to schools and settings that places TSRs within the wider context of classroom management and behaviour (DfE, 2013). Johnson (2008) warns that an authoritarian, more traditional approach to schooling may be met with passivity and resistance; thus, poorer outcomes.

The findings in this review highlight the positive elements of relationships in school. Academic outcomes are still arguably the primary measure of school success, but there is evidence to suggest that the attention being paid to the crucial role of positive relationships is increasing (DfE, 2016, 2018; Roffey, 2012a; Stirling & Emery, 2016). EPs have important work to do with schools and settings regarding positive TSRs in their preventative and systemic work in promoting psychological wellbeing through evidence-based research (Gillies, 2012; Roffey, 2008).

1.6 Limitations

It is acknowledged that this review is limited to the interpretation of a single researcher and although the review offers transparency and adherence to a process, the limitations of this are important to state clearly. Although generalisability is not the aim here, and some commonalities have been found, it is also noted that the students in the review are from different stages of secondary education which may account for the refutational elements outlined. It is also acknowledged that many participant voices are from the US and North-western Europe. This may reflect an area that is perhaps under-researched in UK secondary school contexts. It is recognised that the views of students regarding their teachers may be more represented in the synthesis than the views of teachers. This outcome reflects the papers that were available as part of the review and may represent a direction for future research.

1.7 Conclusion

The findings here add detail to the information regarding positive relationships in school guidance and policies, which, it could be argued, lacks further explanation

(DfE, 2016, 2019; Inchley et al., 2020; Lavis & Robson, 2015). This research offers a unique contribution to the field via its meta-ethnographic approach to synthesising research from secondary education, its commitment to data-driven analysis and focus on description rather than prediction. This synthesis brings together teachers' and students' perspectives in secondary education and in doing so, offers unique insights into this research area, such as mutual perceptions of equal and respectful relationships. The attention paid to the refutational elements of this synthesis add further unique insight, for example in the discussion about the concept of 'going beyond'. Findings suggest that teachers and young people experience positive TSRs as being characterised by kindness and friendly interactions, informality and humour and interactions that communicate a sense of equality and respect. Furthermore, positive TSRs are characterised by teachers noticing and responding to individuals, according to preference and need in both academic and emotional domains. The concept of a more personal connection is also discussed in relation to positive TSRs. Directions for future research include a greater exploration of teachers' and students' accounts in a UK secondary school context as well as research methods that focus on subjective experiences and meaning (Ansari, Hofkens, & Pianta, 2020; García-Moya, Brooks, et al., 2019; Wilkins, 2014b; Yu et al., 2018).

EPs can intervene by sharing the knowledge of the features of positive TSRs discussed here. This may support the development of positive TSRs within settings regarding small, moment-to-moment interactions within proximal processes. It may also support the development of policies that position a relational, interpersonal approach at their core. Working at various levels within the system is a practice familiar to EPs. This review advocates for the presence of conversations about positive relationships in schools at any level; conversations that include detail and a rich understanding about what is important, to those involved.

Chapter 2. Methodological and Ethical Considerations

2.1 Purpose

The purpose of this document is to share my professional journey through the research process and to bridge the gap from Systematic Literature Review (SLR) to empirical research. I will discuss my philosophical position as a researcher and how this has impacted my decisions to research this phenomenon in this way. I will then discuss subsequent decisions made regarding methodology, research design and analysis. Finally, I will discuss ethical considerations and decisions that were made regarding the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

2.2 Summary of Systematic Literature Review

Through a Meta-ethnography synthesising the findings from 5 papers, I have expressed an answer to the question – *'How do teachers and young people experience positive Teacher-Student Relationships (TSRs) in secondary education?'* Findings from these papers suggest that teachers and young people both experience relationships characterised by informal and humour-filled conversations, kind and friendly interactions and a sense of respect and equality. Positive TSRs are further characterised by teachers noticing, adapting and responding sensitively to their students in both academic and emotional domains. Some teachers and students discussed a preference for a more personal connection, whilst others were very clear about boundaries.

2.3 Moving from Meta-ethnography to Empirical Research

The SLR acknowledges the significance of both teachers' and students' perspectives regarding TSRs and was the first step in exploring experiences of TSRs in secondary education. The SLR allowed me to determine the direction for my empirical research; to identify the gap that my research could fill. What particularly resonated with me was the degree of refutation among some of the areas discussed, and how dependent this was on context and individuals. For example, accounts from Claessens et al. (2017) discussed the clear boundary of 'teacher as professional', whereas the same concept was discussed in Ari et al. (2017) in terms of 'teachers as extended family'. This may suggest that the particulars of positive TSRs are perhaps dependent on setting, ethos and individuals. It was also striking to see how different some accounts may be to accounts of UK students and their teachers, due to variations in types of settings included in the review, from which only one study included UK students as part of their

participant sample. Although the papers included in the review found some commonalities, there are still questions to be explored about this phenomenon in more typical mainstream, large secondary schools in the UK and focusing specifically on adolescents in Years 10 and 11.

Furthermore, I had set out at the outset of this research journey to explore both teachers' and students' experiences of positive TSRs. I discovered a lack of studies that focus on the experiential phenomenon of TSRs; an absence of exploration into how teachers and students make sense of their experiences of positive TSRs. Through the process of my SLR, I uncovered some commonalities regarding features of positive TSRs, directly from teachers and students from a small number of qualitative papers from research in secondary education. What is missing, I believe, is further insight into the thoughts and beliefs about TSRs and how experiences of these have impacted the lives of research participants. I plan to explore this in my empirical research by providing an answer to the question:

How do Key Stage 4 students and teachers experience positive TSRs in one mainstream, secondary school in the North-East of England?

2.4 Ontology and Epistemology

This research aligns with a subtle form of realism in its ontological position. Described by Hammersley (1992), subtle realism attempts to solve the problem of meta-ethnography, a problem that I found myself repeatedly reflecting upon. Meta-ethnography subscribes to a realist ontology, the view that at least a part of reality exists independent of human knowledge of it. By that definition, a meta-ethnographic synthesis attempting to find a 'whole among the parts' by human endeavour, is futile – as it cannot be known. A more subtle form of realism maintains this belief but does not assume that we can have direct and unmediated contact with phenomena and therefore we can't know with certainty whether what we know about them is valid. Meta-ethnography emphasises interpretivism but is less contestable of reality than other methods of qualitative synthesis, such as narrative synthesis, and was therefore an appropriate method of synthesis for me to employ for the SLR.

The research paradigm that this work most closely aligns with is critical realism. As stated above, critical realism rejects the correspondence theory of truth (Danermark, Ekström, & Karlsson, 2019; Denzin, 2004). This work aligns with the view that there is

a world of events that are observable and independent, and that our knowledge about this world is constructed; society is made up with feeling, thinking human beings and their interpretations of the world must be studied (Danermark et al., 2019). This work aligns with the view that social research can aim at explanation, but universal laws cannot be established, nor can they be equated to truth (Byrne, 2009). Critical realism has been argued to be a soft position, unlike social constructionism for example, which demands issues are addressed in society (Denzin, 2004). However, Grix (2018) wrote that critical realism can be understood as a research paradigm that attempts to combine, or bridge, the dichotomy of understanding and explanation in social research. I believe this kind of research is useful, whilst tentative, in learning more about the world around us. This research, through listening to individual experience, attempts to make and interpret links from the observable outcome of having a positive TSR with one or more others in a school environment. Part of this quest, according to Grix (2018), must acknowledge human agency and the notion of the hermeneutic, which brings me on to methodology.

2.5 Methodology

The research strategy undertaken is one that is committed to detailed analysis of a small number of 'persons-in-context', looking for patterns of meaning and reporting them in thematic form through Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) (Larkin, Watts, & Clifton, 2006 p.7). Danermark et al. (2019) discussed the use of retroduction within the critical realist research paradigm – looking for similarity, patterns or co-occurrences. One of the clear aims of IPA is to deal with any object in 'such a way that it is allowed maximal opportunity to show itself, as itself'; attempting to, although not able to fully, without preconceptions (Larkin et al., 2006 p.108). The commitment of IPA to adjust assumptions in response to subject matter and approach research in the most sensitive and responsible way possible, whilst still allowing for engagement with theory, aligns with my view of the role of theory in research. Alase (2017 p.10) described IPA as arguably the 'most participant-oriented qualitative research approach' and one that is distinctly psychological, which fits with my overall aim. Larkin et al. (2006 p.10) discussed the aim of IPA, in an example, to 'capture something of what is important to [the person] in this context and with this topic at hand'. This aim aligns closely with both the purpose of my research and my views about the way in which we can come to know things about the world.

Due to the notion that the objective and the subjective cannot be teased apart, IPA researchers go beyond description and an attempt is made to develop a more interpretative analysis (J. A. Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). IPA as a methodology allows for researchers to draw upon a range of theory in their analysis, whilst centralising the phenomenological account/s (Larkin et al., 2006; J. A. Smith, 2017). The importance of context and shifting away from a single, closed theoretical assumption, whilst still being transparent about making cautious and tentative inferences, aligns with my values and bolstered my decision to use IPA for my research. The literature that exists on TSRs is dominated by two distinct theoretical 'languages', as discussed in Chapter 1 (Wubbels et al., 2014 p.366). In 'More Examples, Less Theory', Billig (2019) discussed the dangers of being overawed by theory in our profession and in research. The notion that IPA does not try to operationalise a specific idea but attempts to draw more widely can mitigate against this danger and is also the reason that I believe my research offers an 'innovative angle' within the context of the previous literature (Grix, 2018 p.27).

2.6 Ethical Considerations and Researcher Reflexivity

This research received full ethical approval from Newcastle University for both in-person and virtual research techniques. This research followed British Psychological Society ethical guidelines fully (BPS, 2018). There were several areas, namely due to the coronavirus pandemic, that required further consideration. I will now discuss these.

2.6.1 Participant's Place of Comfort

A researcher must strive to consider the first choice for their research setting to be the place a participant is going to be most comfortable (Alase, 2017; J. A. Smith et al., 2009). I reflected on this when re-formulating my submission for ethical approval. Our own places of comfort cannot be assumed to be how they once were; it is likely that the places of comfort for teachers and students look quite different during a global pandemic, especially with the emergence of 'bubbles' in schools. At the time of arranging interviews, I had to decide whether these were going to be safely conducted in-person, or conducted virtually, alongside senior leaders in the secondary school. I reflected on how my presence within an established 'bubble' may be uncomfortable or concerning for others. Psychologists must act responsibly, with regard and respect for the welfare of those that we work with (BPS, 2018). This consideration supported me in the decision to conduct the research virtually.

When reflecting on a virtual approach to conducting research, I questioned how this may impact my research. Research by Adams-Hutcheson and Longhurst (2017) suggested using video platforms for research was more likely to disrupt the rhythm we experience in interactions with others; the rhythm of the 'interaction between a place, a time and an expenditure of energy' (Lefebvre, 2004 p.15). At the time of conducting my research, we were 6 months into using virtual platforms more routinely. It may be the case that the use of technological spaces at the time of this research have started to 'sink into the background of human perception' (Ash, 2013 p.20). The use of technology may also be considered to be a form of communication interviewees are more accustomed to, therefore technological spaces may be considered safe and reconfigure power (Prencsy, 2001; Willig, 2013).

The familiar rhythms of life that Lefebvre (2004) talked about look different now. Perhaps an interview conducted at an appropriate 2 metre distance, with face-coverings and in an unfamiliar area of school would do more to disrupt the interview than computer-mediated communication might. Not to mention the impact of the global pandemic on teachers and young people's wellbeing, that we are beginning to only partially understand (L. Smith et al., 2020; Zacher & Rudolph, 2020). Elements of rapport building that may once have been considered important are, in the pandemic context, considered very differently indeed. The notion of a video-conferencing platform as a divider evokes a more positive response in the context of COVID-19, than it was meant at the time of research by Adams-Hutcheson and Longhurst (2017).

When considering conducting my research entirely using virtual methods, I had to think about how each process may be impacted. I was able to offer the same process in terms of informed consent, signposting and debriefing (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Taking part was not going to be impacted due to accessibility issues relating to technology, as at the time of conducting research, students were back in schools, and therefore able to take part using school systems. It does need to be noted, however, that this excluded those who are currently not attending school, for reasons relating to self-isolation, shielding, exclusion or other. I made sure to provide participants with the same opportunities to clarify questions with me, and effort was made to receive answers in similar ways through verbal and non-verbal cues (providing there was no delay or disruption to the connection, which was assessed prior and attended to throughout). It was important to trust in the IPA method to illicit experiences - the belief that humans are sense-making beings, and accounts will reflect attempts to make

sense of their experiences. It was hoped that the use of virtual methods would do more to increase interviewee's sense of comfort than to disrupt it (J. A. Smith et al., 2009). In addition, some ethical considerations are arguably improved, such as participants awareness of the recording facilities being used throughout (a constant flashing light on the screen) and the potential for a greater sense of empowerment to withdraw at any point.

2.6.2 Adolescents and Teachers as 'Homogenous' Group

My research aims to hold both the experiences of young people and the experiences of teachers as being of equal importance. In my empirical research, adolescents and adults with interest or experience in positive teacher-student relationships were considered a homogenous group. Teachers and students as a homogenous group represent a suitable sample for IPA as they have both experienced the phenomenon in question (Polkinghorne, 1989). The unique contribution of the adolescent to our understanding and theorising about our social world, must be explored (James, 2007). In this research, I attempted to position myself as learner and students and teachers as equal educators (Gallacher & Gallagher, 2008).

2.6.3 Positive TSRs

The primary reason I did not explore less positive TSRs, or negative TSRs specifically, as part of my research question was an ethical decision. Asking adolescents or teachers to answer in detail about specific negative experiences in TSRs before returning to the classroom following the interview did not seem a responsible, ethical decision. It is important with any research to consider how talking about sensitive issues might be experienced as harmful to participants (Hopf, 2004). Furthermore, previous literature I have explored indicated that interviewees choose to share less positive examples with researchers, most often to illustrate a point about positive TSRs, when needed (García-Moya, Brooks, et al., 2019; Krane et al., 2017). Participants were recruited based on the criteria that the research area was an area in which they could offer insight from their perspective and experiences of the phenomenon in question. Every effort was made to ensure those who supported the recruitment were aware that the criteria was not just that teachers and adolescents had only positive relationships with each other. Despite this, it does need to be acknowledged that this research could be denying the opportunity for some teachers and young people to talk about less positive experiences, by empowering them to talk

about their positive experiences. This represents an example of how my research question and aim may limit what can be found.

An adult from school was present in the same room during the adolescent interviews. This was due to issues relating to the restriction of areas available in school and the need to use a staff member's computer device to conduct the interview. This was also to support the students with others coming to the room at this time (this was a popular room visited by students). Young people were reassured that this member of staff would be completing other tasks at the time and not present to monitor what they were saying. I checked with young people as to whether this was acceptable to them or if they wished to postpone or leave the interview. This conversation happened prior to beginning the interviews, as we revisited consent (Renold, Holland, Ross, & Hillman, 2008).

Part of the decision to go ahead with this condition was also pragmatic. The interviews with adolescents had taken many weeks to arrange and the choice of room and device to use within school was much restricted. Given the above, it is important to be both transparent about this and reflexive about how this may have impacted what was shared with me by the students. My interpersonal style focused on doing as much as possible to reduce rather than reinforce the interviewees' desire to please, but I recognise that another adult's presence may have impacted on this. Interviewees were recruited by a school staff member and students were in school during the interviews. These factors may have also impacted the students' inhibitions and desire to please, regardless of whether another adult was present at the time of the interview. It must also be considered the influence my role as an adult in the researcher-interviewee relationship may have had on the students' desire to please. However, it could be considered an oversimplification of agency to suggest that all power resides with the researcher and not with those invited to take part in research, whether they are adolescents or not (Hill, 2005). To give the students' accounts a 'deflated level of credibility' due to the above conditions could be considered an example of epistemic injustice (Murrin, 2013 p.4). Furthermore, to miss the chance of hearing from the students due to the above condition would have been a greater act of silencing and exclusion than to go ahead.

2.7 Summary

This chapter has provided an opportunity to connect the meta-ethnography to the empirical research. I have included discussion of underpinning philosophical beliefs and decisions made regarding methodology and methods employed. More specific information regarding method can be found in Chapter 3. I have discussed some issues of ethicality in this research, although recognise that in privileging some issues in writing, other areas considered in practice could not be discussed here.

Chapter 3. How do Key Stage 4 Students and Teachers Experience Positive Teacher-Student Relationships in one Secondary School in North-East England?

Abstract

Purpose: This research aimed to explore the experiences of positive Teacher-Student Relationships (TSRs) amongst a group of teachers and students, within one secondary school setting.

Rationale: This study builds on previous research, including the SLR chapter, by providing a rich and idiographic account of teachers' and students' experiences of positive TSRs within their shared context.

Method: Interpretative and phenomenological approaches were used. Semi-structured interviews were conducted virtually with 2 teachers and 2 students from Key Stage 4. Data was analysed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis.

Findings: Findings suggest that, within this context, reciprocal interactions filled with human responses, playfulness and care are important to those involved. Agency, availability, recognition of responsibility, authenticity and consistency from teachers were also identified as important elements of positive TSRs in this context. At a wider level, perceptions of the culture of relationships in school were also discussed by both teachers and students, in different ways.

Limitations: This research may be limited with regards to the sample size, as in order for a single researcher to do justice to each phenomenological account, only a small number of teachers and students could be invited to share their experiences.

Conclusions: This research offers a rich and idiographic account of positive TSRs in one secondary school in Key Stage 4, adding to previous research to better understand the complex relationships between teachers and students at this age and stage.

3.1 Introduction

The aim of this empirical research study is to explore the experiences of positive Teacher-Student Relationships (TSRs) amongst a small group of teachers and students in Years 10 and 11 in one large secondary school in the north-east of England. As suggested in the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) chapter, evidence supports the importance of positive TSRs throughout schooling, for both students and teachers (Cornelius-White, 2007; Hattie, 2009; Spilt et al., 2011). To discuss TSRs in detail for this chapter, several important concepts from the wider literature will be highlighted. These concepts are present across TSR research in primary and secondary settings and I will make links to the features from my SLR within each introductory section. I will then focus on TSRs and adolescents and the rationale for the current study. I will discuss the concepts of closeness, care, sensitivity and attunement, agency and respect in TSRs.

3.1.1 Positive Teacher-Student Relationships

Closeness

Close TSRs, characterised by warm, emotionally supportive interactions, are understood to promote development and better outcomes for students (Capern & Hammond, 2014; Hughes & Cao, 2018; Koomen, Verschueren, van Schooten, Jak, & Pianta, 2012). The importance of teachers responding to student's emotional needs was identified as a feature of positive TSRs in my SLR (Page 31). Emotional support is identified as one of three major domains in teacher-student interaction research (Hamre et al., 2013). The theoretical basis that underpins much of the previous literature on TSRs is derived from attachment theory (Ainsworth, 1985; Murray & Pianta, 2007; Pianta & Nimetz, 1991) and the dimensions of closeness, conflict and dependency. This is described as an 'extended attachment perspective' and Bosman, Zee, de Jong, and Koomen (2021, p. 29) suggested that this is the basis from which TSRs are often examined in research. Teacher involvement, discussed in TSR research from a motivational perspective in Chapter 1 (Page 13), has been suggested to relate closely to teacher closeness (Roorda et al., 2011).

A considerable amount of the empirical research that supports this theoretical basis comes from preschool and early schooling, and not with adolescents in secondary schools (Ansari et al., 2020; Heatly & Votruba-Drzal, 2017; Lippard, La Paro, Rouse, & Crosby, 2018; Pianta, 2001). Some of the literature supporting this theoretical position,

mirrors what has been seen in the parent-child literature on attachment in relation to poorer outcomes for students over time following less warm relationships, or variable TSRs (Ansari et al., 2020; Hamre & Pianta, 2001; Myers & Pianta, 2008). Although it is important to recognise the strength and influence TSRs can have on student's lives, attachment theory as a theoretical basis could be argued to have little to offer with regards to TSRs in upper secondary education, as the majority of research supporting this theoretical position focused on early schooling. Bergin and Bergin (2009, p. 152) discussed whether teacher-student relationships are simply attachment-like; 'not all TSRs should be characterised as attachment'. Further to this point, attachment theory has a historical, deficit-based familial focus (M. Smith, Cameron, & Reimer, 2017). Although Bowlby's earlier work that proposed determinism was developed to emphasise risk and resilience (Slater, 2007), attachment theory is still often criticised for being mechanistic (Webber, 2017). As Tizard (2009, as cited in M. Smith et al., 2017) noted, the crude elements of the earlier theory are often more notably remembered. As a result, elements of attachment theory have the potential to be applied unhelpfully by those with less of an understanding of the theory and its developments. The application of this theory, and the ubiquity of it in the TSR literature, may provide a similar deficit-based, teacher focus that detracts from wider, external foci. When discussing attachment theory research and educational psychology, Slater (2007, p. 213) stated that 'it would be unfortunate if attachment theory offered another avenue for blame'.

Care

Another important concept in TSRs is care. Previous research has highlighted the centrality of care in TSRs (Ari et al., 2017; Cooper & Miness, 2014; Garza, 2009; Laletas & Reupert, 2016; Owusu-Ansah & Kyei-Blankson, 2016; Schussler & Collins, 2006). Survey-based student perceptions of caring indicated that this included empathic listening, attentiveness and kindness (Liu et al., 2018; Thomas-Richmond & O'Quinn, 2018). Attentiveness and kindness were present in the SLR findings, within non-mutual and mutual features, respectively. Perceived teacher care has been found to act as a protective factor for less favourable outcomes for students (Gallagher, Dever, Hochbein, & DuPaul, 2019). Roffey (2015) discussed receiving care from others as being a critical factor in resilience. In the context of moral education, Noddings (2018) described a distinct component of care as confirmation; knowing what the other is striving for and encouraging it; recognising something in each person

we encounter; seeing a version of the other that is the absolute best of another human.

Sensitivity and Attunement

Teacher sensitivity, characterised in individual teacher-student dyads as a ‘teachers’ provision of comfort, reassurance and encouragement with respect to the child’s academic and emotional needs’ (Spilt, Vervoort, & Verschueren, 2018 p.6) is denoted as another component of the emotional support domain of teacher-student interactions from research with young children (Hamre et al., 2013). This research is underpinned by models of social support and discussed in Chapter 1 (Page 13). Teacher sensitivity in TSRs has been found to be important for children who have experienced trauma (Beckh & Becker-Stoll, 2016), in relation to engagement and independent classroom participation (Spilt et al., 2018) and overall relationship quality (Mayer & Beckh, 2018). Research in secondary school has shown teacher sensitivity is important in students’ emotional engagement and help-seeking behaviour, when measured observationally (Poysa et al., 2019). However, the use of this observational tool with secondary school students has been found to have its limitations, due to the differences between adolescent interpretations of classroom interactions and trained coder interpretations (Wallace, Parr, & Correnti, 2020).

In my SLR, I discussed how student’s perceptions of their teachers knowing them, noticing emotional states and responding as being important in positive teacher-student relationships (Ari et al., 2017; García-Moya, Brooks, et al., 2019; Krane et al., 2017; Yu et al., 2018). This represents attunement and the experience of inter-subjectivity; ‘an interest in, attunement to, and responsiveness to the subjective, inner experience of the other, at both a cognitive and affective level (Jordan, 1986 p.2).

Agency

Another theoretical position often discussed in TSR research is interpersonal theory (Wubbels et al., 2014). Researchers have found that effective TSRs can be characterised by high levels of both communion and teacher agency (which in this sense, is similar to behavioural control) (Pennings et al., 2014; J. M. Walker, 2009; Wubbels et al., 2006; Wubbels et al., 2014). Although, it has been found that teachers and students tend to define the quality of their relationships with each other mostly by

the level of communion rather than agency¹ (Charalampous & Kokkinos, 2018; Claessens et al., 2017). A great deal of the research in support of this theoretical position is conducted using quantitative methods and focuses on teacher agency, rather than the promotion of student or youth agency (Pendergast & Kaplan, 2015). Researchers who fail to account for this and move away from employing techniques that can lead to rich and descriptive accounts of experiences, risk reaching simplistic conclusions from restricted insights (Frelin, 2015). A form of teacher agency that is dissimilar to behavioural control, has been shown to be important in one case study of a successful teacher enacting agency to ‘push back’ against contextual constraints, such as curriculum demands (Howard & Miller, 2017). Evidence from my SLR (Page 29) suggested teachers who position themselves as authoritarians (by imposing order and rigid controls) could have a negative impact on the TSR (García-Moya, Brooks, et al., 2019). Relationships that signaled equality and being on the same level were favoured by students and teachers (Claessens et al., 2017; Yu et al., 2018). In the context of interactions between students and teachers, student agency, and the promotion of this by teachers, has been evidenced to be important in high-quality TSRs (Cooper & Miness, 2014; Talvio, Lonka, Komulainen, Kuusela, & Lintunen, 2015), from a socio-motivational perspective (Roorda et al., 2011) and in student resilience (Henderson, Washington, Hamit, Ford, & Jenkins, 2018; Theron, Liebenberg, & Malindi, 2014).

Respect

Respect is another important component of positive TSRs, as discussed in the findings from the previous SLR (García-Moya, Brooks, et al., 2019; Krane et al., 2017; Yu et al., 2018). The concept of mutual respect in positive youth-adult relationships has been identified in previous literature, which could be argued to push against more traditional, hierarchical constructions of TSRs and respect as student deference (Goodman, 2009; Krane et al., 2017; Mitra, 2009). Mutual respect is understood as a fundamental right and educators and school psychologists ‘share the obligation’ of society to uphold these rights for children and young people (Alatartseva & Barysheva, 2015; Grimova & Van Schalkwyk, 2016; Theron et al., 2014 p.254). Some research in this area positions teachers as requiring training with regards to respecting their students, without acknowledging the policies under which teachers must act that can

¹ Please refer to Page 12 – ‘1.1.3 Theoretical Underpinnings and Existing Measures’ in Chapter 1 for an explanation of communion and agency, within the context of interpersonal theory and TSRs

undermine mutual, bi-directional respect (Pianta et al., 2012; Thomas-Richmond & O'Quinn, 2018; Thompson, 2018).

The above sections provide a synthesis of the available wider literature on TSRs, aiming for convergence with my SLR findings where appropriate, whilst balancing the need to explore beyond the traditions of TSR research (particularly, those derived from an attachment-based framework and research driven by interpersonal theory). I have discussed important concepts in TSRs across ages, covering areas of closeness, care sensitivity, agency and respect. I will now centralise this inquiry within a more specific age group, before summarising the rationale and research question.

3.1.2 TSRs and Adolescents in Upper Secondary School

Research suggests that as adolescents move up school years, the quality of their relationships with teachers becomes more influential on engagement and achievement and the classroom is a powerful setting for these influences to take place (Pianta & Allen, 2008; Roorda et al., 2011). Paradoxically, other findings show that measures of closeness between teachers and students may decrease over time (Hajovsky et al., 2017; Reddy, Rhodes, & Mulhall, 2003). In contrast to the research promoting teacher control and structure, some research has suggested older students desire less adult-control and more opportunities for autonomy (Eccles, 2004). Ciarrochi et al. (2017) found evidence to suggest that when adolescents perceived less support from their teachers in earlier school years, this often remained stable over time, and when they did change, perceptions of support tended to decline rather than improve. Structural challenges and constraints of large secondary schools have been suggested to be a potential reason for this decline (Bernstein-Yamashiro & Noam, 2013; Wilkins, 2014b). Teachers work with great pressures and struggle to maintain enthusiasm; accountability systems in place compound these pressures further and can negatively affect TSRs (Bernstein-Yamashiro & Noam, 2013; Bradford & Braaten, 2018; Ibrahim & El Zaatari, 2020; Nathaniel, Pendergast, Segool, Saeki, & Ryan, 2016). The pressure to teach to the test is arguably greatest as young people and teachers approach the end of Key Stage 4 (Roffey, 2012a) and it is here that I present the rationale for this study.

3.1.3 Research Aim

As established throughout previous chapters, less is known about positive TSRs from teachers' and students' perspectives using phenomenological inquiry. Pianta et al. (2003) discussed the need for research in this area to be approached from multiple points of view and the need for more qualitative work. García-Moya, Moreno, and Brooks (2019, p. 9) extended this further by suggesting phenomenological research methods, such as IPA, could offer 'complementary perspectives in future studies'. It has been recognised that there is a need to know more about TSRs from teachers' perspectives (Wilkins, 2014b) but studies that rely only on teacher reports are limited by the lack of student perspective (Ansari et al., 2020). Yu et al. (2018) discussed the need to examine TSRs as students transition to upper school years and relationships change. The increased pressure and focus on outcomes in later school years further adds to the need to explore how TSRs flourish in these high-pressure systems.

The research reported here aimed to explore the experience of positive TSRs within a small sample of teachers and students in Key Stage 4 in a large, mainstream secondary school in north-east England. This study aims to cast further and sharper light on positive TSRs in this context. Interpretative and phenomenological approaches were used to answer the question:

How do Key Stage 4 students and teachers experience positive teacher-student relationships in one secondary school in north-east England?

3.2 Method

3.2.1 The School Context

The school in which this research took place is a secondary and sixth form academy, with approximately 1,300 students on roll, aged 11-18. The academy is part of a large academy trust in the region, consisting of 24 primary and secondary schools across four local authorities. The school is in the south of a large, rural county in the north-east of England.

3.2.2 Sampling

I established a relationship with a member of the leadership team in this school and liaised with the head of school about the research. Following this, participants were recruited using purposive sampling and via referral from a member of the leadership

team. This was done to ensure those that were invited to take part had an interest and experience in the research area. As discussed in Chapter 2, adolescents and teachers were treated as a homogenous group for the purpose of this research. Their obvious differences are acknowledged; however, it was a purposeful decision to divide the sample in this way, in order to understand the phenomenon from more than one perspective. Larkin, Shaw, and Flowers (2019, p. 183) outlined the purpose of using multi-perspective designs in IPA research as an approach that has the potential to 'maintain commitment to depth but augments this with a systemic and multi-perspectival dimension [that] extends the potential reach and impact of experiential research in the real world'. Furthermore, this design decision is discussed as being particularly important when the object of inquiry has a relational dimension. For this kind of research inquiry, it is suggested that a one-dimensional homogenous group can become self-limiting (Larkin et al., 2019). J. A. Smith et al. (2009) discussed the benefits of conducting IPA research using multiple perspectives and this is presented as a bolder design choice that can be more demanding and time-consuming for the analyst. It is suggested that groups of participants within the sample could be matched on other variables (for example years of experience) to ensure greater homogeneity in other ways. It could be argued that a 'true' homogenous group does not exist. Contexts are 'intersubjectively constructed' and it was not a concern of this research to treat various other contexts as independent variables to be controlled for (Marková, 2015, p. 55). The purpose of this research was not to make claims about generalisability. It is hoped that this design will help to develop a multifaceted account of the TSRs explored here, with greater detail than those that have come before. It is important to also note that the coronavirus pandemic had an impact on staff and student availability and the timeline of the research itself.

Student participants were recruited from Years 10 and 11 and teachers with a significant role in teaching Years 10 and 11 were sought. Parental and student information sheets were shared with those recruited by the key contact in school to gain expressions of interest. Those expressing interest were then sent parent and student consent forms by the key contact. Following initial expressions of interest from school staff, and with permission via key contact to share email addresses, information sheets and consent forms were sent to teachers directly from myself.

3.2.3 Participants

Four participants took part in this research – two students and two teachers. Information about each can be found in Table 6. This information is limited in order to ensure anonymity.

Table 6: Participant details

	Participant	Details
1	Mr Taylor ²	KS3/4 teacher and KS4 form tutor 6+ years' experience
2	Mrs Williams	KS3/4 teacher and KS4 form tutor 6+ years' experience
3	Georgia	Year 11 student
4	Jack	Year 10 student

3.2.4 Semi-structured Interviews

All interviews took place via video-conferencing software with me at home and students and staff in school. Student interviews were arranged in collaboration with the key contact in school to ensure minimal disruption. Staff interviews were arranged directly via email communication. At the beginning of each interview, information in the consent forms was revisited and opportunities were provided to ask questions or withdraw consent.

Semi structured interviews, as the 'exemplary method for IPA', were used (J. A. Smith & Osborn, 2009 p.57). Questions were designed to provide answers to the overall research question, by asking about, for example, experiences of TSRs in school at general and specific levels, asking about differences, feelings, meaning and positive change. Interview schedules for teachers and students can be found in Appendix v. Previous questions used by Claessens et al. (2017) and Yu et al. (2018) were drawn upon as a guide but questions were developed with further guidance from J. A. Smith et al. (2009). Interview schedules were very similar for both teachers and students, although more prompts were used with students. This slightly more interventionist approach is suggested by J. A. Smith (2004) when conducting IPA with different groups.

Questions acted as a guide; the desire to go in the direction of the interviewee outweighed the desire to ask every question in the same order. This allowed for the

² All participants have been given a pseudonym to protect their identity

maximal opportunity for the phenomenon in question to reveal 'itself as itself' and the expert within the interview to tell their story (Larkin et al., 2006 p.108). This approach aimed to encourage an insider's perspective, whilst acknowledging that this did not equate to unmediated access to someone else's lifeworld (Willig, 2013). Prompts were used alongside the interview schedule (Appendix v) that avoided leading questions; instead, prompts were framed to enable an open dialogue (J. A. Smith et al., 2009). Funnelling (beginning with broader questions and moving to the particular) was used as a way of building rapport and hopefully enabling interviewees to feel more comfortable. Novel and unexpected turns in the interviews were treated with curiosity and value as they offered a salient, unprompted avenue for exploration; the potential to capture 'something of what is important to [people] in this context, and with this topic at hand' (Larkin et al., 2006 p.10). I believe that this supported this research to provide original insight in this area.

Interviews lasted between 12-15 minutes for the students and 39-45 minutes for the teachers. Interviews ended once questions had been exhausted and when it was jointly decided interviewees had been given optimum opportunity to share their experiences. They took place via a platform approved by Newcastle University and using a secure university account. Interviews were recorded using the video conferencing software which enabled interviewees to see and hear confirmation that recording had started and when this had stopped. Interviews were transcribed verbatim at the semantic level (J. A. Smith & Osborn, 2009).

3.2.5 Ethical Considerations

Prior to the interviews, written consent was obtained from teachers, from the parents of the students interested in taking part and from students themselves. Parental and student consent were obtained separately, so that students had the right to decline participation themselves. The decision was made to interview students virtually in school, rather than at home for a number of reasons. The interviews were recorded to allow free-flowing conversation without the disruption of note-taking. When using the approved University virtual software, interviews are both video and audio recorded. Interviewing students at home would have meant recording in their own homes, which could be considered a breach of their privacy and a safeguarding concern; 'a comfortably familiar setting (for the participant) is preferable, but this must also be safe (for all parties) (J. A. Smith et al., 2009, p. 63). J. A. Smith et al. (2009) also discussed

the need for an environment free from interruptions. Bassett, Beagan, Ristovski-Slijepcevic, and Chapman (2008) noted the difficulty in controlling for this when interviewing young people at home. This also meant that the option to take part was more equitable. Students who wished to take part would not be unable to on the basis of a lack of access to appropriate technology or internet at home. Borbasi, Chapman, Gassner, Dunn, and Read (2002) emphasised the need to be vigilant for signs of distress from participants and to provide appropriate support if required. The authors suggested that this is more difficult when interviews are conducted in the home setting.

As discussed in detail in Chapter 2, student interviews took place with another adult present in the vicinity (within the same space, taking part in other tasks and ensuring the environment was free from interruptions). In order to look after the students' wellbeing during the interviews, consent was revisited at the outset and interviewees were asked if they felt comfortable with the interview setting. I reminded interviewees that interviews could be rearranged or cancelled if they didn't feel comfortable either at the start or at any point during. I reminded participants that they didn't have to answer any question, didn't have to use specific names and could speak more generally if they wished to. I shared examples (scripts) of how to withdraw their consent at any time, and what they could say if they didn't want to answer any specific question. This action is discussed by Kirk (2007) as a way of managing the power differential between adults and children in research. I checked their willingness to continue participation during the interview, including being vigilant to nonverbal cues such as their body language and facial expressions.

3.2.6 Data Analysis

Data analysis followed Smith et al.'s (2009) guidance for conducting Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). Transcriptions were read and re-read to increase familiarity. Each transcript was analysed in depth before moving onto the next. This involved writing exploratory comments on the right-hand margin of each page of transcript. Commenting in this way increased an already large data set.

Table 7: Smith et al. (2009) definitions of types of exploratory comments in initial noting phase

Type of exploratory comment	Description
Descriptive	Describing the content of what the participant has said, the subject of the talk within the transcript – keywords, phrases, explanations
Linguistic	Exploring the specific use of language by the participant – how meaning is presented through language
Conceptual	Engaging at a more interrogative and conceptual level – shifting focus to an overarching understanding

Initial exploratory comments were then developed further. J. A. Smith et al. (2009) advise translating initial notes into emergent themes. At this stage of the analysis, I noted that generating themes whilst still working at the transcript-level was challenging. I decided that it was too early to be thinking at a thematic level and that too much detail would be lost. I created concise, interpretative statements on the left-hand margin of the transcripts, thinking about what was important in the various exploratory comments attached to that part of the transcript. This significantly reduced the number of statements (data). Once these statements were complete, I printed out a typed list of them and used a large space to move these statements around into clusters, putting like with like and developing a new name for each cluster. Through this process of abstraction, statements were grouped into emergent themes. Once this process had been carried out for each transcript, the emergent themes were inserted into tables and I looked across transcripts to find patterns across cases. Tables of within-transcript emergent themes were printed and a large space was once again used to look for connections or further illuminations across cases. From this, I was able to identify themes with connections across accounts and in some cases, this led to reconfiguration and relabelling. I found higher-order concepts which were shared across cases, and these became super-ordinate themes. The steps of this process are summarised in Figure 4.

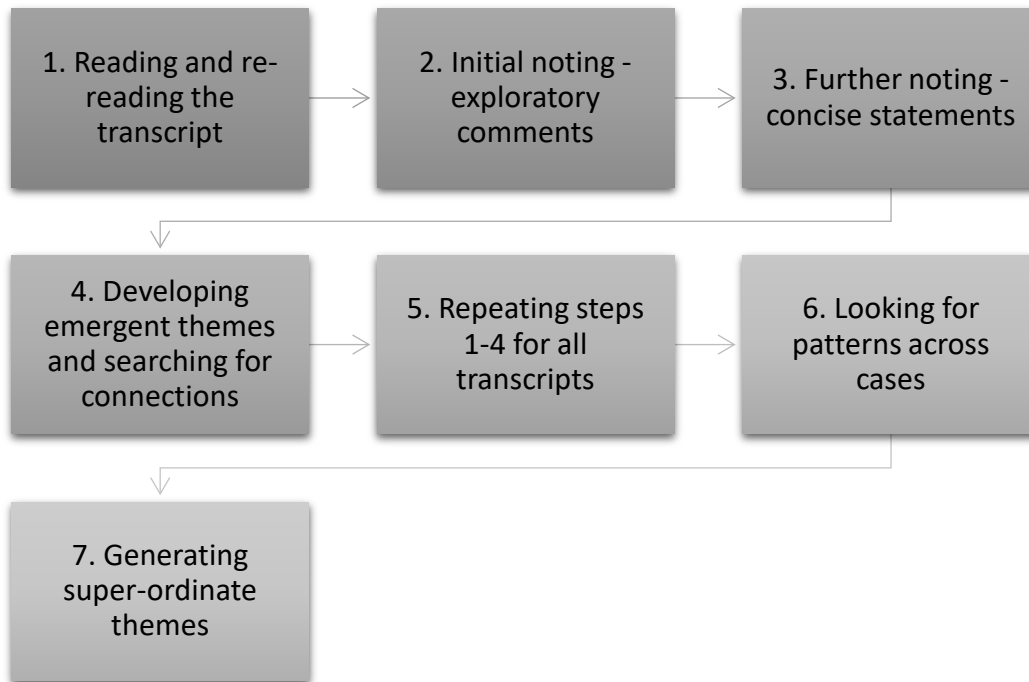


Figure 4: A summary of the IPA process

The ways in which sense-making converged between all the accounts was the primary focus for the analysis. As questions were open and expansive, areas of convergence could be argued to be salient and important. These areas provide an interpretation of what is important to the teachers and students interviewed, regarding positive TSRs, at this point in time and in this context. Nevertheless, attention was paid to the way accounts differed, aligning with the idiographic nature of IPA.

3.3 Findings

Figure 5 visually represents the super-ordinate themes generated from teachers' and students' sense-making. These themes represent concepts that are important to teachers and students in this context, regarding positive teacher-student relationships. Perceptions about School Culture is represented as below because it involved discussion of relationships at a broader, school level. All other themes were generated from sense-making at a teacher-student relationship level. Teachers and Students as Human, Playfulness and Care are represented distinctly below as these themes had within them elements of reciprocity. Within these themes, there was evidence of mutual benefit and exchange. The remaining themes were related to teacher-specific actions or perceptions of actions.

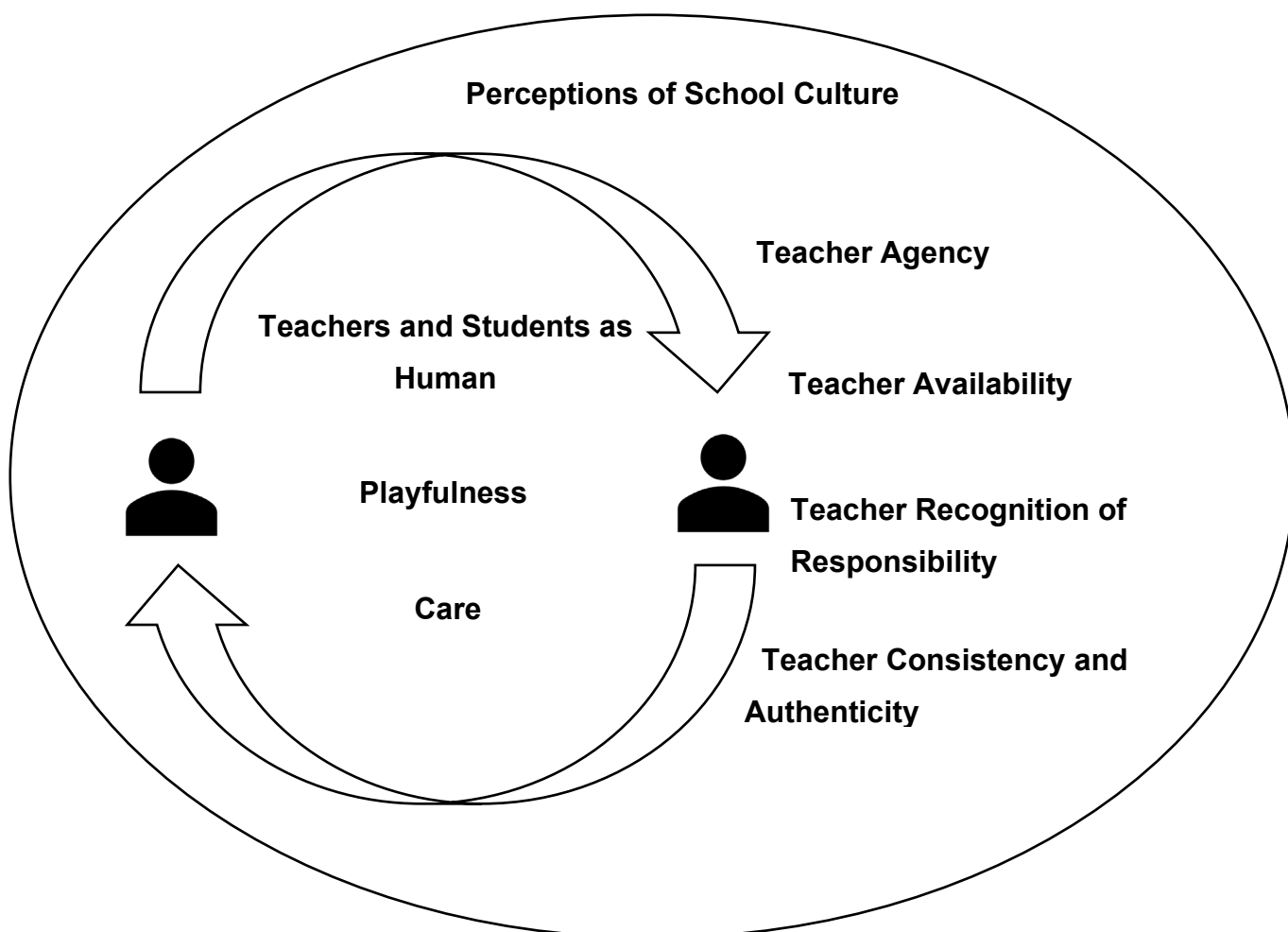


Figure 5: When reflecting on experiences in positive TSRs, teachers' and students' sense-making was built around these super-ordinate themes

Table 8 illustrates the emergent themes that led to the superordinate themes, examples of quotes from the transcripts and information about where they can be found. A more detailed version of this table with interpretative comments is available in Appendix vi.

Table 8: Superordinate themes, Emergent themes and examples of quotes from the transcripts

Superordinate Theme	Emergent Theme	Examples of Quotes
Perceptions of School Culture	<i>Positive perceptions of culture of relationships in school</i>	3.60 ³ 'All the teachers are really, really supportive'
	<i>Teacher identified issues with culture of relationships in school</i>	1.96 'There's a lot of teachers here ... they'll come to work not to not to engage with any students'
Teachers and Students as Human	<i>Sharing personal lives</i>	1.513 'You're human as well, other than [pause] a teacher you know?' 3.141 'Teachers willing to be casual with us'
	<i>Knowing and supporting students personally</i>	2.410 'They just know that you're there for them effectively as a teacher, but also as a person'
	<i>Teachers recognising students as autonomous individuals</i>	1.66 'They [student] start letting people [teacher] in' 2.491 'I don't tell them right or wrong. I always keep the opinions open'
	<i>The importance of fair and just practices</i>	4.229-231 '...Maybe give the teacher another chance. Or the teacher should give the students another chance...'

³ This particular quote can be found in Transcript 3, Line 60

Superordinate Theme	Emergent Theme	Examples of Quotes
	<i>Uncertainties</i>	1.429 'Sometimes your halo slips kinda thing, and you've said something wrong...'
	<i>Teacher surprise at human responses</i>	1.418-420 'Even in Year 10 – so they're 15 year old – that th- they've got that caring nature, you know?'
Playfulness	<i>Fun</i>	4.73 'Do a bit of fun stuff in the lesson'
	<i>Humour</i>	1.615 '...wind them up and so on and just ... because they come back' 3.176 'there's a lot of pressure and the jokes that we kind of tell each other just kind of help relax a bit'
Care	<i>Teacher empathy</i>	1.180 'We just got, we got each other straight away'
	<i>Mattering</i>	2.438 '...Making them more aware that they're more than just a number or a grade...' 3.110 '...Makes me comfortable and confident in myself because they believe in me and they really just try to, again, help me to be like the best version of myself that I can'
	<i>Teacher ongoing care</i>	1.211 'You still like, care about them as they're leaving, you still wanna make sure that they're ok'
	<i>Listening and attentiveness</i>	1.153 'They know where the line is, where it can go too far [erm] and that's where they know when to stop [erm] and the same with me' 1.386 'You could see there was actually care. They were like 'are you alright sir'' 3.28 '[they] would also be just there to listen'
	<i>Unconditionality</i>	4.44 'They like support you throughout no matter what'

Superordinate Theme	Emergent Theme	Examples of Quotes
	<i>Kindness</i>	4.90 'She just says good morning every morning, she's always got a happy face on and [erm] if we have any queries or any problems, she's always open to like go and speak to us'
	<i>Teacher care of student perception</i>	2.701 'And I did feel a sense of that I'd failed in a way - that I'd-I'd-I'd let her down'
Teacher Agency	<i>Lack of punitive approaches</i>	1.133 'Sitting there putting on negative points all day is not really part of my job - well it is but I just find it a bit .. like I'd rather just focus on the positives' 4.240 'if there is someone that's sort of a bit disruptive or someone who doesn't really get along with the teachers as much, maybe sort of reward them more'
	<i>Flexibility</i>	2.392 'like today we deviated with Year 10 ... because they just want to know about [something unrelated to the set curriculum]' 3.152 'If we have like a question that is not directly related to the material we are currently doing, and they will do their like best to answer to meet our like needs and to feed our knowledge and our cu-curiosity'
Teacher Availability	<i>Visibility outside of classroom</i>	1.194 'Keep an eye on them and make sure they see you around school'
	<i>Giving time</i>	2.141 – 'He uses timeout cards and he would just come and I'd just see him stood outside my door' 3.79 'I know I can always stay behind, like either in form or after school, and it will be like one to one'
Recognition of Teacher Responsibility	<i>Adaptation</i>	3.195 'It's really nice to know that that they're willing to change the methods to adapt to each individual student's needs...It really makes me feel like appreciated and just really makes it clear that they really care about us'

Superordinate Theme	Emergent Theme	Examples of Quotes
	<i>Ownership</i>	2.687 'It's sometimes about taking a step back and realising that I'm the adult'
Teacher Consistency and Authenticity	<i>Consistency</i>	4.139 'When you have them for like a long period of time you build better connections'
	<i>Authenticity</i>	2.765 'So they do think that I am genuine when I say that I- I- do care about them as individuals and people'

3.3.1 Perceptions of School Culture

Both teachers and students referred to their perceptions of the culture of relationships in school, but in different ways. Students' accounts remained positive, with an emphasis on help and support from all teachers, and their relationships with teachers in school described as uniformly positive. Teachers' perceptions of the culture of relationships in school differed. There was a sense from one teacher of a divide in school, between those who want to engage in positive relationships with students and those who don't. There was a perception of otherness from Mr. Taylor; he viewed himself to be quite different to others in school, and he recalled support for this view that had been given to him via senior leaders in school as well. Mrs. Williams also gave examples of her perceptions of other teachers who believed that they did not have time to build positive relationships with students, whilst emphasising the importance of this for herself:

“A lot of teachers – and I I get it, because I do myself [erm] I teach myself, there's things to hit and some people will say, I haven't got time. I've got to get through the curriculum ... but I do believe that it has to be made time for”

- Mrs. Williams

Research and policy documents state the importance of whole-school thinking; cultures within schools that include and respect all (Scottish Government, 2018; Weare, 2015). Of interest here is how the students' positive perceptions of the culture of relationships in school did not match teachers' perceptions and therefore perhaps does not represent whole-school thinking or an agreed, shared culture.

Despite being recognised by themselves and others in school as having skills building relationships with students, negative narratives or labels about students were also still present in the teachers interviews. Roffey (2012a) discussed how the way people talk about each other is interlinked with the quality of emotional climate in schools. Conversations in the staffroom can impact what happens in the classroom. Perhaps this research demonstrates that when negative narratives about students and classes exist in schools, this can impact the language that even those who hold relational values to be important use.

3.3.2 Teachers and Students as Human

Both teachers and students emphasised the humanness of their interactions with each other. This involved teachers sharing personal stories with students and students doing the same. This was described by Mr. Taylor as letting one another in to their lives and Mrs. Williams described sharing anecdotes of her family life with students as a way that she does that.

“...but like they know him, because I've shared that memory and stuff with them that... they feel they can have part of it too”

- *Mrs. Williams*

Students described this using language such as ‘casual’ and bringing both students and teachers together by describing them as ‘people’. This has implications for teachers in relation to boundary dilemmas, discussed in Chapter 1 and in Aultman, Williams-Johnson, and Schutz (2009). This is related to what Frelin (2015 p.591) discussed as ‘professional closeness’ in education.

There was also recognition from teachers that student autonomy is important and the lack of this in school as an issue in relation to student engagement and motivation. The importance of opportunities for adolescents to act autonomously is supported by previous TSR research (Hafen et al., 2012; Niemiec & Ryan, 2009; Ruzek et al., 2016). Fair and just practices were present across all accounts and this most often showed up as descriptions of new starts and multiple chances, for both teachers and students.

“Give people a second chance...so maybe if you get off on a bad foot with the teacher, maybe give the teacher another chance”

- *Jack*

A further two elements of this superordinate theme that contribute to the whole is the level of uncertainty present across all accounts and the descriptions of surprise from teachers at the human responses they have received from their students. Both teachers and students found answers to questions difficult to articulate at times. Both teachers made references to making mistakes and presented themselves as humble.

In the teachers' accounts, there was a sense that they weren't afraid to show vulnerability. Most notably in Mr. Taylor's accounts, was the surprise he had experienced following the compassionate reactions from students when he had.

“...strangely enough, kids were asking ‘are ya alright sir’ and all that. And I think when kids like that, ask, you know they care and that they’ve got you, you’ve got them...”

- Mr. Taylor

What was clear from both teachers' accounts was the view of students as ‘human subjects in their own right’ (Biesta, 2013 p.8), and students' accounts also emphasised the humanness of their perceptions of their teachers. In the recognition of student autonomy and the emphasis on fair practices, this theme links to the importance of the recognition of rights in the development of positive relationships, discussed in social care literature (M. Smith et al., 2017). Theron et al. (2014) discussed the teaching of life lessons, mentioned in both teachers' accounts, as promoting student agency and encouraging pro-social youth action.

3.3.3 Playfulness

Present across accounts was the importance of humour. Mr. Taylor and Georgia both talked about the exchange of humour and the impact on the atmosphere in the classroom. Jack experienced having fun and opportunities to talk alongside work as being a part of positive TSRs and Mrs. Williams referred to being inquisitive with students in the classroom and going with them in their curiosities.

“We just have a laugh all day with the kids. Once you get to know them and you can have a bit chit chat with them and a bit of banter, wind them up and so on and just...because they come back”

- Mr. Taylor

The importance of humour in positive TSRs is supported by the findings of my SLR (Page 29). Humour was discussed as being important in giving teachers opportunities to show different sides of themselves to their students in García-Moya, Brooks, et al. (2019) and also present in Yu et al. (2018) and Krane et al. (2017). In Roffey (2008), it

is suggested that a focus on the positive and a sense of humour helped to create school wellbeing through centralising emotional literacy and relational values in school communities. S. Moore and Kuol (2007 p.93) discussed the emotion-related category of humour and laughter in learning experiences as perhaps more significant than ‘simply a pleasant by-product of positive learning environments’.

3.3.4 Care

Teachers and students both spoke about care for each other as being present in positive TSRs. For the teachers, this was most often in stories of knowing and understanding students’ feelings. Both teachers also spoke of their experiences of student attentiveness towards their own feelings and for Mr. Taylor in particular, these experiences appeared to be profound as multiple examples were given and returned to. Both students gave examples which were interpreted as teachers’ inspiring self-belief and encouraging them to believe that they matter. There was a sense of unconditionality to the care that was given to students across both teachers’ and students’ accounts and showing kindness to others was described as important. Both teachers gave examples of ongoing care for students that had since left school. Finally, a strong sense of care about students’ perceptions came across from both teachers. For example, descriptions of intense and emotional reactions when relationships with students have broken down and a sense of wanting to be liked by students. An example of reciprocal expressions of care was given by Mr. Taylor:

“...so I sent him a message just saying ‘ah I was talking to [another teacher] and she says that you’re doing well and like it’s made my day that... and he got back to us ... saying ‘ah like it’s nice to hear from ya sir, hope ya alright’ coz like, George knows me from like when he joined, I took poorly...”

– Mr. Taylor

The more descriptive and detailed stories from the teachers I interviewed had within them descriptions of students’ attunement to their emotions and needs, and students’ empathic responses. This attunement was discussed in the SLR as being a non-mutual finding, present in students’ experiences of their teachers but not in teachers’ experiences of their students. The findings here suggest this was a salient experience

for both teachers interviewed. The experiences of teacher care described by students more closely aligned with Noddings' (2018) confirmation component of care, discussed earlier.

3.3.5 Teacher Agency

Present across accounts was the exercising of teacher agency within interactions. This does not relate to teacher control, as previous research may suggest, but rather in the decisions taken by teachers to respond to students with flexibility, tolerance and in individual, less punitive ways. This was the case even when this went against whole-school policies or had an impact on the delivery of curriculum against external demands.

“Like today we deviated with Year 10 ... because they just want to know about [something unrelated to the set curriculum], I was like ‘well let's have a look, we'll google it together’. It's trying things out, I don't know [erm] but being able to be inquisitive with them”

- Mrs. Williams

Teachers talked about remaining calm and relaxed, the use of natural consequences and attention towards the positive, even when policies demand otherwise. Students talked about teachers with whom they have positive TSRs with leaving space for them to explore their own curiosities in lessons.

“Even if we have like a question that is not directly related to the material we are currently doing, and they will do their like best to answer to meet our like needs and to feed our knowledge and our cu-curiosity”

- Georgia

Students described the opposite of relaxed, less punitive approaches in negative TSRs; the language of strictness, which could be interpreted as high teacher control, was used by both Georgia and Jack and accompanied by the feeling of apprehension and fear for both students.

Relevant here is the idea of teacher wellbeing and mental health. Both teachers discussed the approaches they take in forming and maintaining positive relationships with their students as being important to maintain a healthy work/life balance and their personal wellbeing. This view is supported by previous research (Roffey, 2012b; Spilt et al., 2011; Virtanen, Vaaland, & Ertesvag, 2019).

This theme is reminiscent of the agentic behaviour enacted by one teacher, discussed in Howard and Miller (2017). Enacting agency, on behalf of her students, alongside the establishment of trusting relationships, this teacher resisted contextual constraints and in doing so, more effectively met the needs of her students. Teacher sense of agency has been associated with intentions to leave the profession, and teacher-student relationships may have an important role in mediating this association (Heikonen, Pietarinen, Pyhalto, Toom, & Soini, 2017).

3.3.6 Teacher Availability

Students referred to the knowledge that their teachers are present and available to them – knowing that teacher time was accessible to them was discussed more than experiences of using that time. Mr. Taylor referred to the importance of remaining visible to students outside of the classroom. Both teachers described experiencing the positive impact on students when they gave them some of their time. The availability of teachers outside of the classroom, or after lessons, aligns with the key finding presented by Claessens et al. (2017) and is discussed in Johnson (2008).

“And I think when students see that you’re giving that little bit of time to them and bit of...asking how they are... I always do that if I see students around like the corridor...”
– Mr. Taylor

3.3.7 Teacher Recognition of Responsibility

This superordinate theme consisted of themes present in accounts that related to teacher adaptation and ownership. Teacher adaptation was discussed often by Mrs. Williams, alongside her recognition of her responsibility towards her students. This theme was also present across papers included in the SLR chapter (Page 31). The sense of obligation Mrs. Williams experienced to respond and change towards her students was a prominent feature in her account. Adaptation from teachers in the context of positive TSRs was also a common feature in Georgia's experiences and one that sent messages of genuine care.

[when teachers adapt] "it really makes me feel, like appreciated and just really makes it clear that they really care about us"

– Georgia

Another clear theme throughout the teachers' accounts was their recognition of their responsibility as the adult within the relationship; the responsibility to reach out, to act, to engage, to bring students along, to find resolutions, to change, to get through and to persist. This is reflective of the asymmetrical elements of TSRs, as a function of the difference in role (Pianta et al., 2003).

3.3.8 Teacher Authenticity and Consistency

This final superordinate theme is made up of authenticity and consistency. Consistency related to both the same expectations within and across interactions and the building of relationships with students over time. For Jack, consistency was important in building trust.

"When you have them for like a long period time you build better connections because you know each other more and you kind of like, yeah just build better relationships... you trust them more..."

- Jack

Trust has been associated with consistency in previous research too; Russell et al. (2016) investigated the antecedents of interpersonal trust from teachers' perspectives and findings highlighted consistent student and teacher actions was an important element of interpersonal trust. Other important elements of interpersonal trust building identified in Russell et al.'s (2016) paper, bear a resemblance to students' perceived criteria for determining if their teachers are authentic or not, as suggested in De Bruyckere and Kirschner (2016).

Mr. Taylor's experiences of positive relationships with his students were built around his genuine, authentic self, which he reveals to his students, as this is the only way he can be. Mrs. Williams talked about her hope that her students see her genuine, authentic care for them. Georgia talked about authenticity as being important in multiple ways, via the use of qualifiers (i.e. 'truly' helpful, 'really' listening). This expression of authenticity relates to research in higher education by Cranton (2001), and Rogers' (1983, as cited in Kreber, Klampfleitner, McCune, Bayne, & Knottenbelt, 2007) concern with sharing his true self with his students.

3.4 Discussion

As mentioned above, the themes of 'Care', 'Playfulness' and 'Teachers and Students as Human' are grouped together as there were elements of reciprocity within them. For example, experiences of teachers and students letting each other in, sharing elements of their personal lives and expressions of care from one half of a dyad, leading to perceptions of a similar response from the other. It could be suggested that the presence of reciprocity indicates that both teachers and students value the efforts of the other, and act on these (Theron et al., 2014). This is of interest as it represents interchanges that Wubbels et al. (2006) would describe as symmetrical, rather than complementary. The key difference being whether responses from the other are based on equality or difference. This notion is discussed widely in one of the key theoretical positions taken by previous researchers in this area; one underpinned by interpersonal theory. Wubbels et al. (2006 p.4) discussed the teacher-student relationship, 'with respect to the aspect of power' as being 'structurally a complementary relationship'. They go on to say that 'the teacher is the expert, the grown-up, the elder, the one who is responsible; the student on the other hand has still to learn everything, is a child to whom little responsibility is assigned in most cases' (Wubbels et al., 2006 p.4). The findings here highlight the importance of the symmetrical interchanges that happen

between teachers and students, in forming bonds, rather than opposing, or complementary, exchanges. This view positions teachers and students as having responsibility in how they view and engage with the other. Asymmetry within the findings is also represented above, in the exploration of agency, availability, recognition of responsibility and authenticity and consistency from teachers.

I think that it is important to situate the asymmetrical findings presented here within the current educational context. It would not be right to simply highlight the importance of acting with agency, being available, recognising their greater responsibility and being authentic and consistent in the development of positive TSRs, without acknowledging the systems that constrain teachers (Johnson, 2008). The teachers I interviewed appeared to have a clear view of how their personal identities fit and align with their professional selves. They both told stories of times that they have acted with agency when there had been a lack of congruence between their values and organisation policy. This is described in Howard and Miller (2017) as pushing back against contextual constraints. As Gibbs (2018) suggested, we cannot assume that others would feel able to do the same. The teachers both spoke of times they were unable to do this, and needed to centralise different, more authoritarian selves to deal with situations, and especially with Mrs Williams, her uncomfortable feelings about this. The potential negative impact of this discontinuity of identity, if reflective spaces are not provided, is discussed in Hong, Greene, and Lowery (2017). Perhaps the involvement in this research allowed for a space to reflect on these tensions for the teachers, that isn't otherwise available during qualified practice. This not only has implications for EP practice but for education and teacher support beyond training.

3.5 Implications

Findings indicated a potential lack of congruence between students' and teachers' perceptions of the school culture regarding relationships. The development of shared cultures in schools is primarily the work of school leaders, with whom EPs have direct contact and opportunities to work alongside. In their role alongside leaders, EPs can highlight the importance of empowerment and collaboration in relation to the promotion of shared school cultures that support the development of positive relationships (Roffey, 2012a). This includes how the language people use can impact even those identified as particularly skilled in the development of positive relationships. Also, within EP's systemic role, is the opportunity to advocate for and

promote the importance of teacher agency and its role in positive TSRs outlined above. As well as this, EPs have a role in advocating for more teacher availability and consistency in their relationships with students in upper secondary school, which could be considered lacking in current systems (Bernstein-Yamashiro & Noam, 2013; Wilkins, 2014b).

In their individual work, EPs can reflect with staff and students about their experiences of positive TSRs with one another, perhaps using the above as an example of what was important to those involved, in one context, at one point in time. For example, the importance of actions that made way for reciprocity and the impact of this on individuals. Some of the above may resonate with educators, who struggle with role boundaries and keeping personal selves entirely separate, and for those who find their personal and professional identities at odds with actions they feel required to take in certain situations. Frelin and Grannäs (2015 p.600) discussed the need for teachers to 'work towards improving students self-images and at the same time work within an institutional frame that may result in the opposite'. EPs are likely to have a role in supporting school staff with these tensions.

This research has implications for how settings, or researchers, may wish to gather information about relationships in school, as the nuance and detail generated here differs from what is possible when gathering data quantitatively. Finally, this research may offer a broader, less singular-theory based look into positive TSRs in one secondary school in Key Stage 4, expanding on what has come before in understanding the complex relationships between teachers and students at this age and stage.

3.6 Limitations

The method chosen, (outlined in Chapter 2), allowed for consideration of experiences through rich and detailed data collection and analysis. Due to the constraints of conducting research as a single researcher, it was not possible to have a larger sample size. It is acknowledged that, even within an IPA paradigm, this would have been welcomed if feasible, to add further, rich detail. This study does not make claims about generalisability, due to the focus on the interpretive and unique experiences of the persons-in-context. The sample size here is reflective of what could be reasonably expected of a single researcher, aiming to do justice to each phenomenological

account. The requirement for students in school to have another adult present for their interview is recognised as a limitation and discussed in detail in Chapter 2 (Page 41).

I made the decision to include teachers and students as a homogenous group, whilst recognising the many ways in which they are not. In line with IPA guidance, I analysed and interpreted each singular account in detail, and privileged none throughout the analysis. Teachers provided larger accounts of their experiences. This is likely due to the amount of additional experience of TSRs that the teachers have in KS4, having taught for 6 or more years. Bosman et al. (2021) explained that teachers and children's representations of their relationships with one another are considered to be formed by their previous experiences and thoughts and feelings about themselves. With teachers, this may also include expectations about themselves as teachers, about interactions with classes and individual children (Pianta, 1999). The difference in length is also likely to have been based on the wishes of the interviewees to provide more detailed or more brief accounts and the different interview contexts (Burton, 2000). The likelihood of this impacting the proportionality in the findings was minimised by ensuring each superordinate theme had themes within it that were present across both teacher and student accounts and aiming to be transparent about which themes were generated from which accounts (as illustrated in Appendix vi). This research is interpretative but analysis is rooted in individual's accounts and experiences, as highlighted in the use of quotes throughout.

3.7 Conclusion

The aim of this research was to explore teachers' and students' experiences of positive TSRs within a small sample in Key Stage 4 in a large, mainstream secondary school in north-east England. Through unprompted exploration of multiple perspectives and using a phenomenological approach, this research aimed to add depth to understandings of positive TSRs in upper secondary school. This research is unique and contributes to this field via its use of multi-perspective phenomenological approaches and its focus on Key Stage 4 within this specific context. A deeper exploration within themes such as 'Care' and 'Teachers and Students as Human', and new insights from 'Teacher Agency' and 'Authenticity and Consistency' themes extend the SLR chapter synthesis to provide more detail and description. My hope was to uncover something about what is important to these teachers and students, with regards to their relationships within their shared context. Findings suggest that, for this

group, reciprocal interactions filled with human responses, playfulness and care were important. Alongside this, agency, availability, recognition of responsibility, authenticity and consistency from teachers were important elements of positive TSRs. At a wider level, perceptions of the culture of relationships in school were also discussed, and the differences between these perceptions highlighted. The themes presented here have a likeness to those presented in Chapter 1, however the idiographic nature of IPA offers a depth of exploration for these individuals and their shared educational context.

Findings here have implications for EPs in relation to advocating for shared school cultures that support rather than constrain relational approaches. In the exploration of teacher-specific themes, this research highlights the importance of teacher agency and other salient aspects of TSRs, that may be constrained by current secondary school structures. In the exploration of reciprocal themes, this research supports a shift away from classifying narratives of teachers and students and emphasises similarities and reciprocity within relationships.

Chapter 4. A Reflective Synthesis

This chapter will provide a reflective synthesis on what this research means to me as both a practitioner and a researcher. I will discuss how the process of conducting this research and writing this thesis has impacted my professional development and the implications of this. I will also discuss wider implications for education.

4.1 My Hopes for this Research

My background prior to training to become an EP was the impetus for the focus of this research project. My experiences in primary and secondary classrooms as a teaching assistant allowed me opportunities to sit in many classrooms, with many teachers and students. What I think I was able to see, was the frustration some teachers experienced trying to connect with students, whilst finding themselves at an intersection between behaviour or classroom management processes and external pressures to increase academic standards. As an Assistant Psychologist, I sat in countless meetings with senior leaders from secondary schools. I noted discussions where risks of negative outcomes for students were lowered; instances of promising, positive TSRs that had been able to flourish – sometimes the same names of teachers were heard time and time again. Finally, in a Video Interactive Guidance session in my first year as a TEP, the focus for my research came together. In this session, we watched a video of a teacher in a classroom. In this short clip, the teacher demonstrated attunement with students' emotional needs, engaged in humour-filled interactions, noticed subtleties in dispositions and responded with ease.

It's interesting to note how quickly the member of the leadership team, in the school I asked to be involved in the empirical project, could think of who I *needed* to speak to about this. Schools have relationally-oriented professionals within them, and some that see this as a core part of their professional role. It's also interesting to return to the teachers' humble attitudes towards their own practices and how much they appreciated the interview process as an opportunity to share their practices, and possibly, realise their value. I found that the existing wider literature did little to recognise and value the small and ordinary things that teachers do to connect with their students, and to approach this with an appreciation for the nuance and detail. I also found that a rich exploration of how students experience these connections was lacking, most notably with this age group. I hope that my thesis manages to do this. It means a lot to me that this work orients away from a position of 'this is what teachers

need to do more of' to connect with students. I hope that it positions itself as highlighting relational practice and uncovering what is important to this group. I hope that it can support future thinking at an individual or policy level in schools and points to practices and processes that may hinder the development of positive TSRs.

4.2 Learning and Implications for Practice as a Trainee EP

The opportunity to conduct a systematic search of a range of databases has provided me with skills to ensure I remain aware of and linked in with the evidence-base for a particular area. It has supported me in practice on multiple occasions over the past two years, leading to intervention planning and training with schools that is evidence-based (Health and Care Professions Council, 2016). This is particularly important for EPs when demonstrating effective and efficient practice to the clients with whom they work (Marsh & Higgins, 2018), especially in current traded contexts. I have an appreciation of the need to stay connected to research databases and libraries of resources, as I can't imagine practising without direct access to a wide range of available literature. The degree to which EPSs prioritise this has been highlighted as a strength (Education Scotland, 2019) and Cameron (2006) argued this to be part of the distinct contribution of EPs.

The exploration of TSRs and the knowledge of the literature I now have, will support me greatly in observational practices in the future. I hope to be able to populate the feedback I give to staff and students when I can sit and observe in classrooms, with elements of what the research suggests some teachers and students say is important to them in TSRs. The understanding I have gained has allowed the positively-oriented, collaborative approach to consultation that I espouse, to be extended in the questions I ask and the avenues I explore alongside others (Bateson, 1972; Meyers, 1973; Wagner, 2017), particularly in areas of 'questioning, wondering and challenging' and 'suggesting and explaining' (Nolan & Moreland, 2014 p.67). In direct work with young people, I have been able to use the interview questions I developed to explore similar areas with them, to come to an understanding of what might be important to them, and how this may link with the research-base of which I have an enhanced awareness and appreciation. Finally, in a wider sense, this has allowed me to raise the importance of positive TSRs with senior leaders in school; to have conversations about what the research suggests is impacted when TSRs are prioritised. In the future, as I work with more schools and hold more planning meetings, I hope to have opportunities to refer

to this work often and support others to see how this may align with their development priorities.

4.3 Learning and Implications for Practice as a Researcher

In selecting the best research methods to answer my research questions, as Willig (2013) suggests, I landed upon two methods, meta-ethnography and IPA, that are distinctly lacking in prescriptiveness. This provided challenge for a novel researcher and perhaps more so in relation to my personal need to follow and keep to an outlined plan. I surprised myself with how I experienced the latter method, perhaps because of the learning I took from the first. I have learnt to move to a position of decisive, warranted action, from a position of asking 'is this right?' (for the most part). I noticed that my need for 'examples' changed along the way, as I trusted more in the pursuit of my goal and the way I could reach that, by drawing on methodological ideas rather than following them slavishly (Chamberlain, 2012). This was most notable in the way that I adapted the IPA guidance in the stage between initial exploratory comments and the generation of emergent themes. I noted in my process that the guidance advising me to generate emergent themes appeared too early in the pursuit of my goal. Although looking back, this may have added an additional stage and a drain on my time available, I think this allowed me to centralise individual accounts more firmly within my generated themes, whilst interpreting appropriately. This struck a comfortable balance for me between interpretation and phenomenology. Orum, Feagin, and Sjoberg (1991 p.23) suggested, 'the best methodologies of qualitative and quantitative research have come from those engaged in active research in which methodology has been subordinated to the ardent desire to know and communicate something significant about human life'.

During the data analysis, I used 'binocularity', advocated by J. A. Smith et al. (2009), to examine data through more than one lens. Willig (2013 p.179) suggested that this offers a 'deeper hermeneutic reading' of the data. I think this switching of lenses allowed me to be interpretative and reduced the risk of providing a merely descriptive account, which could be a marker for a low-quality IPA study (Alase, 2017). I think this, again, allowed me to see the value of using guiding principles, rather than a strict adherence to processes, as this is just one way of interpreting IPA guidance.

I also took learning from what Frosh (2007) referred to as the dangers of the desire to make sense of human experience, which is always fragmented and contradictory. This

was evident in the case examples of both teachers centralising different identities, their difficulties with this, and the need for me to recognise that, rather than attempt to 'make sense' in more of a uniform way. In practice, I think this relates to the need to recognise the importance of provisionality in our work and the notion of temporary, rather than firm, conclusions.

4.4 Wider Implications

In smaller ways, I hope that this research has implications for the school in which I conducted this research. I plan to share my findings with those involved, in the hope this information can be shared further and perhaps supportive in making changes at a policy level. I see a role for this in organisational work in settings, in work that supports the development of, for example, initiatives that place TSRs as being of high importance in the relationship between inclusive school climate and student wellbeing (Weare, 2015). This work can hopefully provide some detail that is lacking in the outcome-focused literature. I have already been involved in conversations with other EPs, about how this research might develop. Although findings from the empirical project are not generalisable, they offer some suggestion of what is important in TSRs, to those involved. Future research could extend this within-context understanding of TSRs, inviting more people to share their experiences (with more researchers available to handle the data this would generate).

An interesting development from the Department for Education (DfE) in April 2021 follows a discourse of 'behaviour hubs' and 'expert schools' (DfE, 2021a, 2021b). Some practices within these expert schools (DfE, 2021, April 7) are in direct contrast to findings I present here – for example, silent corridors as places where teachers and students would not be able to share kind words, a laugh, compare fantasy football scores with Mr Taylor or share an anecdote about Mrs Williams' family. Another example is the 'sweating the small stuff so the big stuff doesn't happen' assertion, such as sanctions to students for not paying attention 100% of the time. I wonder how Georgia and Jack would feel in a classroom that did not allow for flexibility and for following their curiosity, even when this meant deviating from the material supposed to be covered. I believe that the coverage of these schools offers what I would consider, the exact opposite of what this thesis is aiming for. It seems particularly difficult to marry this initiative, and its substantial funding, with the evidence supporting the impact positive TSRs can have on student achievement and attitude outcomes

(Cornelius-White, 2007). This kind of policy follows the thread of classroom management, which I have argued in earlier sections is where TSR research has become stuck. Perhaps this work can provide some detail that can support policy change in the future; policy change that attempts to do something different than see TSRs as part of a discrete set of classroom management skills, and instead highlights the virtues and qualities of individuals.

4.5 Summary

Within this chapter, I have discussed my hopes for this research and the implications of carrying out this research project on my professional practice as a TEP and a researcher. I have used this space to describe how this research has already affected by practice and the ways in which I hope it will influence my practice in the future. My more immediate next steps following this is to seek to publish chapters 1 and 3 in the journal outlined (Page iii). I plan to continue working with the setting involved in this research, to disseminate the findings. There may be scope to conduct similar research projects in other secondary settings in the future, speaking and learning from relationally-minded individuals and supporting them to be the agents of change in this area.

Appendix i

An example of quality appraisal criteria

Yu, Johnson Deutsch and Varga (2018) “She Calls Me by My Last Name”: Exploring Adolescent Perceptions of Positive Teacher-Student Relationships							
Weight of Evidence (WoE) A – generic				WoE B – appropriateness of method	WoE C – appropriateness of focus/approach of study to review question		WoE D
Transparency	Accuracy	Accessibility	Specificity	Purposivity	Utility	Propriety	=
Steps to the argument are clear – especially in context of the rationale for exploring students’ perspectives in relation to TSRs. The absence of research directly in this area did not stop researchers from addressing	Knowledge claims are supported by adequate warrant Knowledge claims are offered without certainty Some evidence of participants’	Accessible and easy to understand for the intended knowledge-seeker	Good quality method - Two principal investigators, three graduate students and two full-time research assistants conducted interviews. Analysis done in collaboration. Journal of Adolescent	Qualitative design to explore perceptions of TSRs in order to understand key characteristics and interactions of high-quality, positive TSRs.	Rationale – ‘more research is needed to identify factors that contribute to a positive TSR in adolescence’ (Page 333) Primary goal – ‘to identify and	Evidence of informed consent (both parent and youth) Withholding of names subject to agreement by stakeholders (pseudonyms selected by participants).	

<p>this in full, pulling from wider research to make their point.</p> <p>Relational developmental system approach explained</p> <p>Epistemology clearly stated and explained – interpretivist</p> <p>Detailed information regarding who was involved</p> <p>Analytic process described as well as auditing and reliability</p>	<p>perspective/voice reported in the data</p>		<p>Research (SAGE) aims to publish informative and dynamic articles from a variety of disciplines focused on adolescence and early emerging adulthood development. This journal seeks rigorous qualitative research using a variety of strategies including ethnography, in-depth interviews, case studies, and photo elicitation</p> <p>Main Author – Mark Vincent Yu – University of Virginia</p>	<p>Themes were generated from the data</p>	<p>understand how immediate environmental processes operate in the context of high-quality, positive TSRs’ (Page 337). What interactions do youth find important in their relationships with teachers? What do these relationships look and feel like?</p>	<p>It is clear due care of stakeholders’ voices have been upheld – for example when one participant’s answer contradicts the others, it is discussed and not ‘excluded’.</p>		
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Implications for policy and practice discussed								
High				High	High			High

Appendix ii

Criteria applied for making quality appraisal judgements, created using the Weight of Evidence Framework (Gough, 2007; Harden & Gough, 2012).

Judgement	Rationale
Weight of Evidence A – general soundness of study	
High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly defined aims, objectives and purpose • Some information on researcher positionality • Techniques used in analysis described • Implications discussed • Knowledge claims supported with adequate warrant • Opposing accounts explored (evidence of a balance of viewpoints) • Participant voice evident in data • High quality method described in detail
Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternative perspectives not explored (criticality) • Warrant offered but some evidence that this is historic, minimal or citing same researcher group
Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium not satisfied

Judgement	Rationale

Weight of Evidence B – Appropriateness of method to my review question	
High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualitative research design to explore positive TSRs via interviews, focus groups.. • Themes generated from data and not from prior research or existing theory
Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Method appropriate for my review question • Some evidence of themes generated using prior research, theories or frameworks and not grounded in data
Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium not satisfied

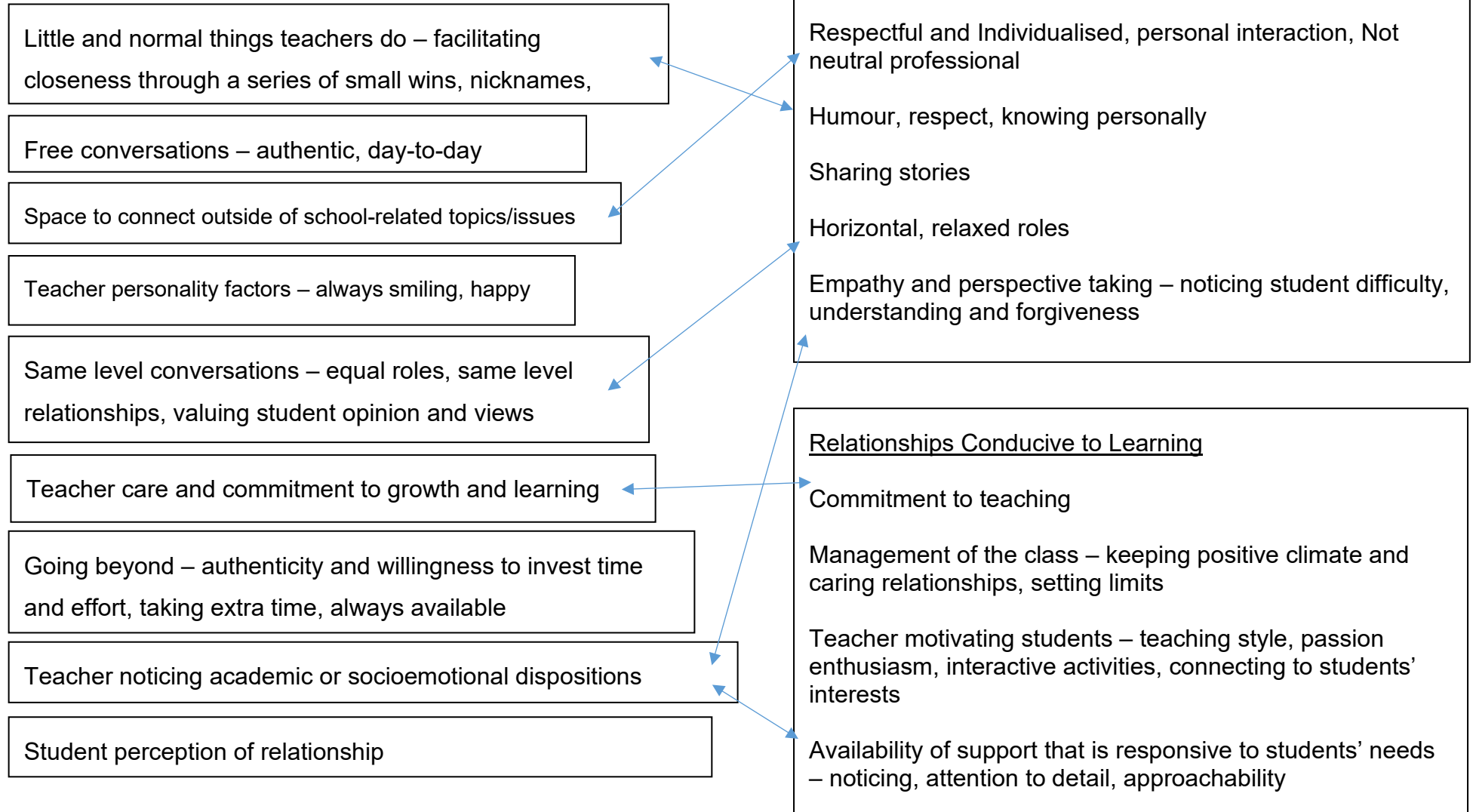
Judgement	Rationale
Weight of Evidence C – relevance of focus/approach of research to my review question	
High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central focus of study to lead to greater understanding of experiences of positive TSRs from the perspectives of those involved (teachers and students) • Clear evidence of due care to relevant stakeholders and adherence to ethical principles
Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A research question that shifts away from my review focus (i.e. not a secondary question but a key research question focussing on the difference between experienced and non-experienced teachers, for example) <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adherence to ethical principles assumed as no information provided
Low	Medium not satisfied (i.e. both of the above criteria are met)

Judgement	Rationale
Weight of Evidence D	
High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>High</i> in every category • <i>High</i> in two categories and <i>medium</i> in the third
Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium in all categories • A <i>low-high</i> spread across all three categories • <i>Medium</i> in two categories
Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Low</i> in all categories • <i>Low</i> in two categories and <i>medium</i> in the third

Appendix iii

Key metaphors from García-Moya et al

Key metaphors from Yu et al



Appendix iv

Third Order Construct Example	Example of First Order Constructs	Example of Second Order Constructs
<p>Conversation, Informality and Humour</p>	<p>Yu et al. (2018)</p> <p>“In class she calls me by my last name. It just makes me feel more accepted, that she notices me a lot. And so, yeah, those types of thing makes me feel especially close to her p.342</p> <p>“Little and normal things” teachers do – interactions do not need to lengthy or in-depth p.342</p> <p>Krane et al. (2017)</p> <p>“...and he talks more to this students than the other teachers. He talks to us one-on-one an he talks while he is teaching in class. We talk about school subjects, but he does it in such an amusing way. He can always tell a joke. We talk about more serious and private things too: how we are doing and stuff like that. I think the whole class loves him!” p.382</p> <p>Claessens et al. (2017)</p> <p>“But I do think we both treat each other in a way that I recognise from my private life, with people of my own age, sort of well in a nice way, a relaxed way. She will see me as her teacher, but she also knows that she can plan a trick on me. And she’s not afraid to do that. And a bit of teasing each other, and some sarcasm every now and then. But she knows I’ll</p>	<p>‘Free’ conversations representing a positive connection. These didn’t have to be long or in-depth conversations - authentic day-to-day interactions</p> <p>Teachers giving nicknames or joking around with their students fostered feelings of closeness and respect</p> <p>‘Formal and informal conversations as valuable experiences that were helpful in getting to know each other’</p> <p>In positive TSRs, conversations were informal and occur in class, during recess or after school.</p> <p>In this paper, informal conversations in positive TSRs took place more outside of the classroom context</p> <p>Topic of talk outside of the classroom was more diverse, happened before or after lesson, at recess, on fieldtrips, in the hallways and even outside of school.</p>

	<p>treat her in a similar manner” p.484</p> <p>Krane et al. (2017)</p> <p>“We go on these trips and you get to know a different side of the teachers, beside teacher. It’s like we are friends when we go on a trip together” p.380</p> <p>“I think we in the sports program have a better relationship with the teachers because of all the trips and the sports events we join together” p.38</p> <p>García-Moya et al. (2019)</p> <p>“If they can have a laugh with you, then you give them more respect for that and then when they tell you to do your work, you will” p.6</p> <p>“When we have parents evening, you can tell which teachers really know you personally” p.6</p> <p>“I just think that you need like a more approachable teacher that would relate to you more, want to speak to you” p.10</p> <p>Yu et al. (2018)</p> <p>“Aside from that he’s different because he will stop class and give an important life lesson, or he just teaches differently” p.350</p>	<p>Mutual interests also mentioned in this paper as an experience that exerts a positive influence on TSRs</p> <p>Importance of humour</p> <p>Humanising, supportive relationships</p> <p>The space to connect with teachers outside of prescriptive curricula – e.g. going to the same church, providing space to talk about bigger and wider issues (race, politics, sexuality, stereotypes)</p>
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Appendix v

Teacher Interview Protocol



1. **What led you to wanting to be a part of research looking into positive TSRs?**
2. **Can you tell me about how teachers and students 'get on' here at your school, in terms of their relationships with each other?**
Prompts – What are students like here? How would you describe students?
3. **Can you tell me about *your* relationships with students here?**
Prompts - Can you tell me more about that? How would you describe them? How do you feel about your relationships with students here? Why?
4. **Can you tell me about a student that you have a good relationship with in school?**

Prompts - Can you answer with a story or a memory? Can you tell me some more about a time that has happened? What did that mean to you, when ___ did *that*?

Is there another story or memory about a different student that you have a good relationship with that you want to tell me about?
5. **Is your relationship with this student different or similar to your relationships with other students in school?**
Why do you think that is? Can you answer with a story?
6. **How does it make you feel, following an interaction like that, with a student you have a positive relationship with?**
7. **What does having positive relationships with your students mean to you?**
8. **What are the main differences, to you, between a positive relationship with a student and a less positive one?**
9. **In terms of developing more positive relationships in schools for more students and teachers, what do you think would be a positive change in this area?**
10. **Is there anything else you would like to tell me or talk to me about?**

General prompts: Why? How? Can you tell me more about that?

Tell me what you were thinking? How did you feel?

- 1. Apart from [key contact] asking you if you wanted to do this, were there any other reasons that you wanted to be a part of research looking into positive relationships between teachers and students?**
- 2. Can you tell me about how teachers and students ‘get on’ here at your school, in terms of their relationships with each other?**
Prompts – What are teachers like here? How would you describe them?
- 3. Can you tell me about *your* relationships with teachers here?**
Prompts - Can you tell me more about that? How would you describe them? How do you feel about your relationships with teachers here? Why?
- 4. Can you tell me about a particular teacher that you have a good relationship with in school?**
Prompts - Can you answer with a story or a memory? Can you tell me some more about a time that has happened? What did that mean to you, when ___ did *that*?
If answering with a particular memory or story - What happened for you, when they did that? What were you thinking?
Is there another story or memory about this teacher or about a different teacher that you have a good relationship with that you want to tell me about?
- 5. Is your relationship with this teacher different or similar to your relationships with other teachers in school?**
Why do you think that is? What do you think they do or don’t do that is different to some others? Can you answer with a story?
- 6. How does it make you feel, following an interaction like that, with a teacher you have a positive relationship with?**
- 7. What does having positive relationships with your teachers mean to you?**
Why do you think that is?
- 8. What are the main differences, to you, between a positive relationship with a teacher and a less positive one?**
Prompt – What tell you it’s a positive relationship?
- 9. In terms of developing more positive relationships in schools for more students and teachers, what do you think would be a positive change in this area?**

10. Is there anything else you would like to tell me or talk to me about?

General prompts: Why? How? Can you tell me more about that?

Tell me what you were thinking? How did you feel?

Appendix vi

Superordinate Theme	Theme	Conceptual Comments and Quotes
General Themes		
Perceptions of school culture	<i>Positive perceptions of culture of relationships in school</i>	1.107 ⁴ Individual teachers' relationships generally positive across context 1.260 Positive individual teacher reputation around school 2.50 Some indication of general positive perceptions of relationships between teachers and students 3.60 Universal help – help from all 3.101 Universal sense of willingness from teachers 4.15 General positive relationships in school 4.31 Experiencing universal support 4.132 Similar relationships with other teachers
	<i>Teacher identified issues with culture of relationships in school</i>	1.492 Perception of the self as different, unique or uncommon 1.499 Senior managers communicating that he is different to others 1.96 Commonality of teacher disengagement and unwillingness to give or share 1.711 Those who avoid connecting with students as visible to all 1.130 Other teachers with zero tolerance 1.658 Other teachers without experience as 'straight-laced' 1.229 Negative student reputation used in experience

⁴ This conceptual comment/quote is from transcript 1, line 107.

		<p>2.265 Negative language about students used</p> <p>2.676 Teacher responsibility as assistant head getting in the way of positive TSRs</p> <p>2.683 Reprimands and punishments getting in the way of positive TSRs</p> <p>2.596 Lots of teachers have to hit targets and haven't got time for positive TSRs</p>
Reciprocal Themes		
Teachers and Students as Human	<i>Sharing personal selves</i>	<p>2.311 'A sense of realness'</p> <p>2.282 Being relatable and real</p> <p>2.650 Helping students to have a sense of grounding</p> <p>2.278 Sharing personal self with students</p> <p>2.594 Openness about self and family</p> <p>2.330 Students feeling as though they know teacher's family - 'they feel they can have a part of it too'</p> <p>1.513 'You're human as well, other than [pause] a teacher you know?'</p> <p>1.93 Students perceive teacher as grounded – real</p> <p>1.641 The need to challenge the perception of teachers being 'other' 'some people have got to break down the barriers'</p> <p>1.395 Vulnerability and difficulties visible to students</p> <p>1.376 Being open about challenges he has faced</p> <p>1.307 Easing off of professional approach as students move up school</p> <p>1.337 Comfortable with social media and sharing as students move on</p> <p>1.436 The self as an example to students</p> <p>1.353-354 Showing personal self opens doors for more connecting</p> <p>1.441 Teacher opening up and letting students in – 'you're kinda letting them in a bit, you know?'</p>

		<p>3.156 Teachers willing to be more comfortable and chilled</p> <p>3.141 Teachers willing to be 'casual with us'</p> <p>4.247, 226 Teachers and students as 'people'</p>
	<p><i>Knowing and supporting students personally</i></p>	<p>1.317 Purpose of connecting goes beyond Teacher-Learner relationship</p> <p>1.400 'Excellent teaching' as a different construct</p> <p>1.548 Teaching goes beyond classroom instruction</p> <p>1.559 Talking about the real-world with students is more important in upper year groups</p> <p>1.486-488 Knowing students – 'getting to know them, getting to know about their backgrounds'</p> <p>2.608 'When we are educating, we are educating a person'</p> <p>2.149 Knowing student's homelife</p> <p>2.493 Knowing the 'person'</p> <p>2.499 Communicating - 'I <i>know</i> you'</p> <p>2.340 Teaching is about <i>more</i></p> <p>2.480 Engage with them in conversation</p> <p>2.489 Being there for students in a family-like way – for advice</p> <p>2.410 'You're there for them effectively as a teacher, but also as a person'</p> <p>2.301 'Ask me anything'</p> <p>2.485 Student asking teacher's opinion about their lives</p> <p>3.26-27 Receiving support for academic and personal issues</p> <p>3.103 Receiving advice and help builds bond</p> <p>4.174 Form tutor communicating that they are students' parent in school</p>

		4.173 'family in school'
	<i>Teachers recognising students as autonomous individuals</i>	<p>1.66 Importance of student autonomy – 'they start letting people [teacher] in'</p> <p>1.501 Student attitude is important</p> <p>1.593 The need for students to 'want to do your work'</p> <p>1.698 Recognition of lack of student autonomy in school and impact on motivation</p> <p>2.491 Respecting autonomy</p> <p>2.505 Recognising lack of student autonomy</p> <p>2.176 Teachers needing to earn students trust</p> <p>2.316 Students' knowing – 'you can't kid teenagers'</p> <p>2.94 Shift as students move up – more autonomy</p> <p>2.99 Student autonomy can be experienced as challenging in upper year groups</p>
	<i>The importance of fair and just practices</i>	<p>1.246 Multiple chances</p> <p>1.242 Basing opinion on own experiences</p> <p>1.475-477 Reflections on the impact confrontative approaches can have on the self and students</p> <p>2.378 Fairness and justice</p> <p>2.545 Lack of fairness and justice – breakdowns, fragility</p> <p>2.539 Common for students to sense injustice</p> <p>2.189 Fresh starts, chances</p> <p>2.409 No judgement in approach</p> <p>2.488 Non-judgmental language</p> <p>2.535 Judgements based on own experiences</p>

		<p>2.525 Tomorrow as a new day – try again 3.225 Unfairness threatens positive TSRs 3.21 Lack of judgement 3.239 Reiterating fairness 4.226 The importance of chances 4.229-231 Students giving teachers chances and vice versa</p>
	<p><i>Uncertainties</i></p>	<p>1.651-652 Questioning self 1.430 Imperfection - ‘your halo slips’ 1.156 Getting it wrong and making mistakes 1.642 Difficulty answering 1.236 Confusion – ‘I dunno what it is’ 1.479, 533 Experiences of asserting power and dominance and loss of control 2.594 Difficulty answering 2.298 Uncertainty in suitability of approach 2.680 Questioning self-efficacy 2.542 Experiences of being wrong 2.363 Humble 2.267 Humble attitude towards self 2.344 Leading but with uncertainty 2.482 Uncertainty 2.340 Growing with students 3.241 Difficulty answering 3.232 Difficulty articulating</p>

		4.116 Difficulty explaining
	<i>Teacher surprise at human responses</i>	<p>1.469 Teacher surprising students with playfulness</p> <p>2.207 Teachers surprising students – keeping on showing up for them</p> <p>2.158 Surprising students</p> <p>1.387 Teacher surprise at student care</p> <p>1.224-225 Teacher surprise at student care – ‘strangely enough, kids were asking...’</p> <p>1.392 Maturity of students beyond expectations – ‘at the time, a Year 10 that actually acted a lot older than they are’</p> <p>1.418-420 Surprise at the level understanding from students – ‘even in Year 10 – so they’re 15 year old – that th- they’ve got that caring nature, you know?’</p> <p>2.138 Surprise at student’s openness</p>
Playfulness	<i>Fun</i>	<p>2.234 Time for non-academic focused activities</p> <p>2.396 Being inquisitive together</p> <p>2.48 Being present in the moment</p> <p>2.129 Rewards</p> <p>3.165-167 Playfulness fosters understanding and memory</p> <p>3.158 Teachers creating fun</p> <p>4.20 Teacher flexibility – allowing talk</p> <p>4.80 Talk</p> <p>4.73 Fun alongside work</p> <p>4.184-185 Happier and more enjoyable experiences</p>
	<i>Humour</i>	1.613 ‘We just have a laugh all day with the kids’

		<p>1.58-59 Making time for humour and conversation is perceived as appreciated by students</p> <p>1.73 Humour discussed as having a big impact</p> <p>1.63-65 Teacher humour signals relaxed atmosphere</p> <p>1.615-616 Humour and ‘winding up’ – ‘they come back’</p> <p>1.289 Mutual understanding of humour</p> <p>2.296 Sharing a joke</p> <p>2.245 Laughter and joy – students as children</p> <p>3.122 Willingness to joke</p> <p>3.174-178 Humour rids tension</p> <p>3.176 Exchange of humour</p> <p>4.23 Good experiences for all</p>
Care	<i>Teacher Empathy</i>	<p>2.181 Empathy – not everyone can trust easily</p> <p>2.120 Greater empathy</p> <p>1.206 Empathy for students’ experiences, backgrounds, history</p> <p>1.187-188 Relating to student difficulty, deep empathy from personal history</p> <p>1.174-175 Empathy for student</p> <p>1.180 ‘We got each other’</p>
	<i>Mattering</i>	<p>2.348 Communicating that students matter</p> <p>2.630 Need for students to know that they matter</p> <p>2.436 Difference in KS4 – communicating that they matter beyond a ‘grade’</p> <p>3.220 Treating students as individuals</p> <p>3.37 Feeling appreciated</p>

	<p>3.42 Feeling appreciated is comforting</p> <p>3.93 Teacher inspiring best self</p> <p>3.110, 114 Reassurance from teacher – belief in student</p> <p>4.114 Teacher encouragement of best self</p> <p>4.119 Teacher inspiring self-belief</p>
<i>Teacher ongoing care</i>	<p>1.211-213 Care for students doesn't stop at end of school – 'you still like, care about them as they're leaving, you still wanna make sure that they're ok'</p> <p>1.148-149 Making connections after students leave</p> <p>2.711 Not knowing how ex-students are doing as uncomfortable</p> <p>2.111 Sadness as students move on</p>
<i>Listening and attentiveness</i>	<p>2.222 Noticing and looking for patterns</p> <p>3.73, 3.81 Genuine listening</p> <p>3.28 'Be just there to listen'</p> <p>3.81 Teacher action if required</p> <p>1.215-221 Reciprocal expressions of care – reaching out to student and receiving the same back</p> <p>1.386 Student noticing and caring about teacher – you could see there was actually care'</p> <p>2.556 Students attunement to teacher</p> <p>1.153-155 Students and teachers knowing each others' boundaries (in relation to jokes and humour)</p> <p>2.551 Students knowing teacher's boundaries</p>
<i>Unconditionality</i>	<p>2.155 Unconditional care – not giving up on students</p>

		<p>2.693 Unconditional respect</p> <p>2.716 Experiencing unconditional joy at students' success</p> <p>3.18 Unconditional help</p> <p>4.44 Help no matter what</p>
	<i>Kindness</i>	<p>2.424 Attentiveness and showing manners to students – greetings</p> <p>4.71 Teacher kindness</p> <p>4.90 Manners – little things</p> <p>4.170 Kind interactions foster happiness and safety</p> <p>2.763 Experiences of students 'coming back' when kindness is shown</p>
	<i>Teacher care of student perception</i>	<p>2.123 Individual student engagement as important as any other</p> <p>2.753 Experiencing other students' happiness from her actions</p> <p>2.726 Inability to 'do enough' experienced as emotionally impactful</p> <p>2.257 Remembering students' expressions of gratitude</p> <p>1.367 Experience of personal offence from student as hurtful</p> <p>1.531 Experiencing student speaking negatively about him as hurtful</p> <p>1.505-508 Wanting to be perceived as fun and lessons enjoyable</p>
Teacher Themes		
Teacher Agency	<i>Lack of punitive approaches</i>	<p>2.565 Lack of punitive approaches – natural consequences</p> <p>2.168 Student wellbeing and happiness takes precedent</p> <p>1.598-599 Use of nicknames with older students conveys respect</p> <p>1.451-452 Rewards often</p> <p>1.244 Lack of punitive approaches</p>

		<p>1.134 Actions against school 'policy'</p> <p>1.191 Awareness of power and efforts to reduce – no shouting, raising voices</p> <p>3.130 Extreme strictness experienced as 'dread'</p> <p>4.200 Teachers rewarding</p> <p>4.210-212 Strictness backfires, less effort from students</p> <p>4.194 Less positive associated with strictness and experienced as 'dread'</p> <p>4.241 Positive attention for those that are struggling</p> <p>1.248 Calm approaches</p> <p>1.17 Sense of being relaxed – a calm state</p> <p>1.326-329 Ease and enjoyment experienced by teacher and his students</p> <p>1.618 Experience is lighter – 'it makes your life just so much happier and easier you know'</p> <p>1.588 Positive affect on work/life balance, experiences of the opposite</p> <p>2.472 Positive TSRs as being important for personal mental health</p>
	<p><i>Flexibility</i></p>	<p>1.195, 182, 243 Flexible and tolerant approaches</p> <p>2.392 Following students' curiosity rather than curriculum demands</p> <p>2.163 Pride whatever students can manage</p> <p>2.319 Students appreciate when you deviate from curriculum</p> <p>3.152-154 Teachers meeting curiosity needs and 'feeding knowledge' beyond curriculum</p> <p>4.80 Teacher using media to support understanding</p> <p>4.79 Teachers playing music</p> <p>4.198 Teachers that are flexible with curriculum commitment</p>

Teacher Availability	<i>Visibility outside of classroom</i>	<p>1.194 Visibility around school – ‘keep an eye on them and make sure they see you around school’</p> <p>1.141-144 Availability and attention shown outside of the classroom</p> <p>4.71 Teacher presence</p> <p>3.74 ‘She’s right there’</p> <p>3.79 ‘I know I can always stay behind’</p>
	<i>Giving time</i>	<p>1.200 The concept of giving students time – ‘when students see that you’re giving that little bit of time to them’</p> <p>1.208 Lots of time spent with student</p> <p>3.80 One-to-one listening</p> <p>3.88 One-to-one opportunities</p> <p>4.55 Teachers always having time for students</p> <p>4.42 Speed of help, anytime</p> <p>4.48 Email teachers for help</p> <p>2.668 Students seeking attention from teacher</p> <p>2.134 Single attention, talk</p> <p>2.141 Students seeking time with teacher</p> <p>2.137 Individual time as time students can open up</p> <p>2.151 Individual time with students as routine and consistent</p> <p>2.229 Giving students space with teacher</p> <p>2.144 Giving time to students unconditionally</p> <p>2.203 Students thrive when given time</p>

Recognition of Teacher Responsibility	<i>Adaptation</i>	<p>2.117 Trying something differently – adapting</p> <p>2.32 Being adaptable</p> <p>3.7 Teachers needing to adapt</p> <p>3.123 Teacher adaptation impacts motivation</p> <p>3.194-196 Teachers willingness to adapt is inclusive</p> <p>3.208 Adapting sends message of genuine care</p>
	<i>Ownership</i>	<p>1.628-629 Teacher responsibility - 'all down to the teacher'</p> <p>1.213 Teacher 'reaching out'</p> <p>1.311 Importance of showing what he can offer to students - 'my pull'</p> <p>1.53-54 Bringing students with you 'on board'</p> <p>1.423 Teacher as role model</p> <p>2.702 Inability to connect as personal failure</p> <p>2.337 Recognition of the size of the commitment</p> <p>2.688 Taking responsibility as the adult</p> <p>2.262 Responsibility on the self to make it work</p> <p>2.518 Teacher responsibility for finding resolution</p> <p>2.114 Difficulty connecting as her problem, lack of experience</p> <p>2.80 Perceives students as challenging her to change</p> <p>2.198 Perceives students with difficulties trusting others as 'testing her'</p> <p>2.722 'I didn't get through enough'</p> <p>2.692 Modelling perseverance, consistency, unconditionality</p> <p>2.160 Modelling resilience</p>

Teacher Consistency and Authenticity	<i>Consistency</i>	<p>1.176 Relationships over time – continuation, the same classes</p> <p>1.453 ‘Setting your stall our early’</p> <p>2.186 Setting out expectations early</p> <p>2.109, 399 Consistency over time</p> <p>2.421 Consistent positive relationships across the board</p> <p>2.376, 184 Trust as consistency, fosters sense of safety</p> <p>2.65 Teachers as consist, dependable</p> <p>2.121 Time to build</p> <p>2.290 Building over a number of years</p> <p>2.383 Building on year after year</p> <p>3.72 Form tutor – consistency</p> <p>4.127 Support over time</p> <p>4.135 Relationships over time are important in upper year groups</p> <p>4.148 Reciprocal trust builds over time</p> <p>4.73 Consistency</p> <p>4.90 Consistency</p> <p>4.139-140 ‘When you have them for like a long period of time you build better connections’</p>
	<i>Authenticity</i>	<p>1.683 Authentic interactions – a way of being</p> <p>1.401 Perception of connecting with students as the way teacher is ‘programmed’</p> <p>2.766 Students believe what I say</p> <p>2.757 ‘I’d like to think that they do feel that I’m genuine ... My desire for them to feel worth is genuine’</p>

		<p>2.402 Safety leads to students being their true selves</p> <p>3.18, 20 Unconditional, true help</p> <p>3.73 True listening</p> <p>3.191, 194 Authenticity and genuine actions – ‘really __’, ‘truly ____’</p>
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