



Emotional labor and strategy of the university lecturers in Thailand

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Abstract

Emotional labor is rarely studied in Thailand's higher education institutions but mostly in industrial labor, like studies on industrial laborers. Therefore, this research aims to explain emotional labor among university lecturers in Thailand universities. The main questions focus on the sources or stimuli to provoke university lecturers into emotional labor and these lecturers' strategies to deal with this set of stimuli and provocation. This study is narrative research with a purposive sampling procedure. This research found 16 lecturers of various nationalities who agreed to join online interviews. The analysis of the findings reveals a kind of processes these lecturers must pass through: (1) internal states/processes, (2) external behavioral displays, (3) emotional strategies, (4) emotional regulations (burnout, work engagement, and sense of coherence), and (5) growth mindset. This set of processes points to a positive realization that university lecturers already have inherently internal/external mechanisms to deal with teaching and other academic works as emotional labor. This set of findings should shed light on the universities' attempts to create a healthy working place in academic or intellectual spheres.

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Introduction

The workplace environment can affect workers' work performance, including academic and supportive staff, because of the satisfactory atmosphere (Makhbul, 2012, p. 640). However, every workplace creates its own emotional labor for those working there and provokes emotional strategy in these workers. Emotional labor is managing emotions to meet organizational requirements (Heffernan & Bosetti, 2020). Emotional labor is correlated to feeling management through the physical performance

of emotions that are implicitly or explicitly required by the organization (Hochschild, 1983). As most research on emotional labor focuses on the services industry (bank tellers, flight attendants, nurses, and others), research on emotional labor among university staff and teachers needs to be explored (Postareff & Lindblom-Ylännne, 2011; Woods, 2010). High emotional labor is often associated with "lower well-being, poor work-life balance, and abnormal levels of stress and burnout" (Bezuidenhout & Cilliers, 2010; Salami, 2011). Work intensification is connected highly with emotional labor

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(Berry & Cassidy, 2013; Ogbonna & Harris, 2004). Exploration and findings about emotional labor in Thailand's university environment could inform support or intervention for the staff's sustainable work-life balance. However, the type of research on emotional labor among Thailand-based lecturers/academics still needs to be explored.

Research Questions

1. What is the lived work situation that university lecturers perceive as emotional labor?
2. How do these lecturers strategize their responses?

Literature Review

The literature on emotional labor usually covers the main three areas of discussion. First, the literature discusses how emotional labor begins, and this topic is more popularly represented by a question of how it began. Second, the follow-through question is usually “how does it take place?” Third, a further inquiry would explore the inquiry of “what impact can it bring to workers?” Thus, this Review of Literature will be divided into crucial parts: the beginning of emotional labor, the working it, the impact it has on people, the right to a healthy work environment and the correlation between workplace environment and workers' mental and physical reactions and conditions.

The Beginning

The emotional labor thesis began after Hochschild's book *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling* (1983), which revealed and resisted the danger wrought by the expansive threats of “the commodification of emotions in the form of customer service” (Brook, 2009). This book's core arguments and political conclusions were relevant to the anti-capitalist movement today through the slogan ‘our world is not for sale’ with its “analyses of neoliberalism, corporate power, and consumerism” (Brook, 2009, p. 98). The emotional labor thesis produced extensive studies covering flight attendants and debt collectors. Later, the ‘emotional labor bandwagon’ (Bolton, 2005) covered studies of nurses, laborers in Disneyland, retail and childcare workers, lecturers, bartenders, psychotherapists, hotel representatives, call-center workers, shop waiters, and many others (Bolton, 2005).

Emotional labor begins when, for example, a university department chair does ‘objective tasks’ such as budgets, scheduling, or faculty development (Cowley, 2019). Due to the social interaction demanded in running a department, the daily work of this chair involves emotional self-management besides planning and organization (Cowley, 2019). Hochschild (2003) described three relevant factors to emotional labor's performance: social exchange, feeling rule, and emotion work. When emotional labor takes place, some things happen (Hochschild, 2003). First, social exchange is constricted to formal avenues and their motives (profit-based). Second, socially constructed norms (feeling rules) appear to define and constrain appropriate types of emotional expression. Third, social agents who want to follow the rules perform emotional work (Hochschild, 2003).

The Working and Impact of Emotional Labor

Rayner and Espinoza (2016) investigated how emotional labor appears in the context of the teaching profession and how it appears differently between primary and secondary schools in England. Rayner and Espinoza (2016) found that the government's demands on teachers, their organizations and their “customers” are in tension, contributing to higher emotional labor, which is a component of ‘getting the job done’ (p. 2267). Emotional labor in this environment appeared complex and nuanced (Rayner & Espinoza, 2016); it was experienced in relationships with various stakeholders such as learners, co-workers, parents, and inspectors (Rayner & Espinoza, 2016, p. 2267). Kinman et al. (2011) studied the relationship between emotional labor and burnout (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, personal accomplishment) as well as job satisfaction. Teaching has connections with profound emotional activity (Fried, 1995) that required effective management of personal emotions and the ability to produce the wanted emotional state in other people. Emotional labor can disturb employees' health because psychological endeavor is demanded to ‘manage’ emotions to follow organizational or professional expectations (Grandey, 2000).

Right to a Healthy Work Environment

The World Health Organization [WHO] (1948) defines the concept of “well-being, in any life domain, as more than the absence of disease, pain or stress.” Researchers like Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) added the element of personal growth, vitality, and

optimal functioning to the “well-being” concept. This concept is recognized as a universal right, the right to health care (also called the right to health, the right to health protection or health care). The relevant international human rights instruments, Article 12 of the UN International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, require that states should take the necessary steps so that their citizens can enjoy the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health (Gevers, 2004, p. 29). On the one hand, this requirement means “state protection from external dangers such as dirty drinking water or nutrition, facilities to ensure healthy working conditions, a healthy living milieu, and health education (Gevers, 2004). On the other hand, states must ensure the availability and accessibility of “sufficient and suitable health services for citizens, with proper attention to the needs of vulnerable groups” (Gevers, 2004). The correlation between workplace environment and workers’ mental health conditions has been reported by many researchers. Makhbul (2012, p. 641) cited the viewpoint of Shikdar and Sawaqed (2003) that staff’s productive performance is associated with their health conditions. Workplace environment also impacts “increasing sick leave” (Vultée, 2015, p. 661). When employees were on sick leave for three months, they were more likely to be frequently absent. Ultimately, they were out of labor market participation (Vultée, 2015, p. 661). Therefore, it is imperative to build a healthy workplace to maintain the employees’ pleasant enjoyment at work (Vultée, 2015, p. 666). However, the workers’ physical and mental health issues caused by “occupational accidents or

work-related diseases” were studied rather than mental health resulting from emotional labor at work (World Health Organization [WHO], 2018, pp. 22–24).

Conceptual Framework

Following the research’s unit of analysis, the concepts framed in this research are emotional labor and the emotional strategy to respond to such emotional labor. Glomb and Tews (2004) reported different conceptualizations of emotional labor: based on internal states, internal processes, and external behavioral displays. The internal state conceptualization stresses “the state of emotional dissonance for the incompatibility between what is felt and what is expressed” (Mann, 1997). The internal process approach of Glomb and Tews (2004) points to the “self-regulatory processes used for creating an appropriate emotional display” (Brotheridge & Lee, 2002). The external behavioral display approach focuses “on behavior rather than on the presumed emotions underlying behavior” (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993). Emotion regulation is defined as “the process by which individuals influence which emotions they have, when they have them, and how they experience and express these emotions” (Gross 1999, p. 275). The strategies used for emotional regulation include surface acting and deep acting (Lyndon et al., 2021). The other strategy is known as “spontaneous and genuine emotional labor” (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993). Based on this narrative, the representation of the conceptual framework would appear as the following Figure 1.

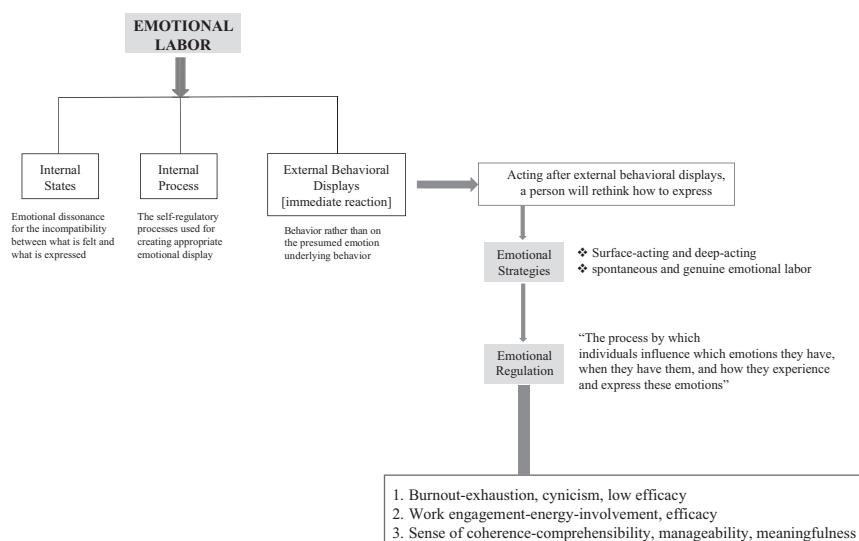


Figure 1 Emotional labor conceptual framework

Source: Authors (2023)

Methodology

This research is a qualitative research project. Before the data collection process, the authors applied for and received a Certificate of Approval from the Institutional Review Board (provided in the journal system).

Participants

The informants include 16 lecturers from seven public universities who are willing to join the research as *participants* who might have a rather expansive set of definitions for what they take as emotional labor. They have worked to meet the internal quality assurance for Higher Education Institutions created by the Office of the Higher Education Commission (Office of the Higher Education Commission [OHEC], 2014). Its standards include two standards (education management and missions), and each of them comprises four sub-standards.

Data Collection

This research applied a non-probabilistic purposive sampling between June and October 2022. The parameters for this sampling method are their status as a university lecturer (nationality is not set) and willingness to participate in the interview (through Zoom) through informed consent. Consequently, this study's purposes are to explore the situation of the staff or lecturers in various Thai universities regarding the emotional labor they experience, and to study the common or usual strategy of these study participants to respond to such an experience at work.

This research's focus or unit of analysis is the lecturers' lived experience of undergoing and responding to what they might perceive and experience as "emotional labor." This exploratory study is inspired by the Interpretive Descriptive Design by Thorne (2016) that examined lived emotional labor by university staff. Interpretive descriptive research is claimed by Teodoro et al. (2018) and Burdine et al. (2020) as ideal for describing the details of the experience to reveal the reality of emotional labor in the everyday work-life of academics and supporting academic staff. The sampling procedure will take between 10 and 50 university staff and lecturers through purposive sampling. Data were collected through interviews (face-to-face or phone calls or other online/zoom communication platforms) or questionnaires. Burdine et al. (2020) found that "Interpretive Description or ID comes from the interpretive orientation that

recognizes the constructed and contextualized nature of human experience." Shortly, the stimuli driving emotional labor include different problems at some levels for the lecturers in Thailand, namely, (1) Institutional Organization Level, (2) Internal Institutional Level, and (3) Personal level.

Data Analysis

This research uses thematic analysis according to the general phases offered by Braun and Clarke (2021): familiarization with written notes, data coding, initial themes, developed and reviewed themes, defined themes, and reported results. The privacy and security of the participants of this research will be highly protected through anonymous reports and informed consent. In no way in reporting the research is anyone allowed to trace back the original sources of information through some information in the research report.

Results

Lived Work Situations that University Staff Perceived as Emotional Labor

Stimuli that drive emotional labor among university lecturers include different levels of problem, namely, (1) institutional organization level, (2) internal institutional level, and (3) personal level.

1. Institutional organization level refers to the following problems such as (1.1) the university's high expectations, (1.2) the bureaucratic system dilemma, and (1.3) inefficient university support.

(1.1) The university's high expectations: Many lecturers criticized the university's overly high expectations for achieving its goals that produce emotional labor. For instance, in the past ten years, the universities have demanded heavier workloads, higher points of assessment (such as business model approach/business mentality is considered a distraction), publications, etc. *"It is hard for me to pass the university assessment"* (Participant #0480). Participant #0480 has been expected to serve in many functions, such as administrative members and other functions. These regulatory-based demands have been counted as harassment by the employees, making them feel insecure (not wanting anymore to support the universities). The supervisors apply the university regulations and enforce them on other lecturers. Younger lecturers feel overwhelmed as they are required to have at least one publication per year in Scopus-ranked journals

(Quartile 1), otherwise, they will not get a renewal of their contracts. This practice can harm or violate the right to “academic freedom,” said Participant #0480.

Participant #253, for instance, claims that excessive university regulations on financial/ budgetary abound. For instance, a THB 2,000 cost for program advertisement is relatively inexpensive; moreover, reimbursement for paid costs could be faster (2–3 months). Participant #253 reported that special lecturers from outside her university’s office must wait one year for payment because there is no proper regulation on a refund.

Participant #629 even asked, “*Why does the university use e-signature instead of onsite sign-up?*” (Participant #629). Moreover, the university expected more students to apply to the programs (Participant #253). Another Participant shared that she must teach five days per week (three courses, including on Saturdays) because of staff shortage.

The university expects the lecturers to open additional special programs at night (Participant #4266). Organizational expectations/regulations on publications and administration workload produce distressful situations. Although the teaching load is manageable, lecturers are required to get an academic ranking, which distressed Participant #0406. “*University Research Grant requirements are becoming more aggressively reinforced,*” as reported by Participant #0406.

(1.2) Bureaucratic System Dilemma: Bureaucratic system causes too much paperwork (including online tasks). There are more layers of paperwork for us to do (Participant #0480). After this ‘madness,’ a lecturer is required to fill out a course syllabus in every column (with too many details) through the online system. When lecturers want to avoid doing it, they transfer this task to other staff, who will then get overwhelmed. Many papers appear to be filled out and be signed, as well as increasingly more forms to take care of. The administrative duties add up according to the number of programs, including BA, MA, and Ph.D. programs, while the lecturers are serving as lecturers and administrators (Participant #0480). Another source (Participant #262) noticed that the top-down connection between managers and lecturers in the university and the individual connection (vertical) produced some forms of emotional labor (Participant #262).

Moreover, a lecturer commented that academic freedom should be applied. However, the strict regulations connected to Thailand’s political and societal structures (cultures, values, and belief systems) affect universities and the Ministry of Education. Thus, this set of structures leads to limited academic freedom. “*Without academic*

freedom, would the university’s roles and academics be able to develop Thailand?” asked Participant #426. Such limitation blocks the opportunities for universities from national development and contribution to the nation. It can discourage many academics from many reasonable expectations. Many academics cannot build academic creativity/productivity. The university policy of Participant #426 and its executive members’ poor mindset bring teaching Participant #426 into emotional labor. Compared to foreign academics in other countries who have better academic freedom, lecturers in Thailand get poor support for their development. “*The lecturers in foreign countries might get well paid; however, they and we in Thailand cannot touch political issues in Thailand*” (Participant #426).

(1.3) Inefficient University Support: Inaccessible documents and systems of the university produced frustration. As a disabled person with limitations, Participant #084 cannot access the university’s written/published regulations. Participant #084 must ask for help to allow her access to the university’s information database to clear frustration. The university’s physical environment is not universally designed (Participant #084). The University management/support in communication between the university and faculty is disturbed; Participant #084 is overwhelmed by a workload that cannot be controlled or based on a deadline. In the management problem, Participant #944 expects the university executive members to set proper plans/systems as executive members. Thus, Participant #944 must take care of the workload by herself creating so much trouble. For instance, the communication system is unclear/vague, and she cannot work properly (Participant #944).

2. Internal institutional level includes the following problems such as (2.1) job insecurity, (2.2) excessive workloads, and (2.3) organizational politics.

(2.1) Job Insecurity: Some lecturers under short contracts raised their concerns about job insecurity. The MA Social Science and Development in Women Studies Program is still open, but not secure because the program does not have enough lecturers (at least three) in the coming future (Participant #26). The Ph.D. program in Women and Sexuality Studies is open, but there are few students (this year, one MA Program got only two students). Every day/week, Participant #26 feels insecure, but no one can find the best solution. However, after launching a campaign for “Saving the Women’s Studies Department!” the situation has gotten better. University executive members have come to help/support (Participant #26). Participant #42 reported a concern

about her job security because of the one-year contract. Furthermore, health insurance does not cover all health risks compared to Thai nationals. Participant #42 had to pay some costs by herself. Lately, it is better because the insurance covers all (Participant #42). Furthermore, a lecturer mentioned that she does not have job insecurity because of her low salary (Participant #4266).

(2.2) Excessive Workloads: Many lecturers commented that workloads (teaching, research, academic services, administrative tasks, cultural activities) had overwhelmed them. They do not have enough time to complete all tasks (Participant #9291 and Participant #084). *"The lecturers are required to provide a full report apart from producing journal articles,"* said Participant #9291. They must read many materials (reported Participant #42). Participant #9291 reported that as a Program Director, he noticed that *"regulations on administration do not support students sufficiently."* The program must manage everything, including student affairs, namely, taking international students to hospitals and so on because only a few staff can speak English properly. The program also encounters insufficient human resources because of poor allocation of human resources; thus, the staff and lecturers need more human resources (Participant #9291). For this poor student support system, Participant #9291 requested additional human resources. Additionally, Participant #9291 mentioned a ton of meetings: the cycle of meetings that cannot be followed through because of the repetitions of the same issues endlessly (said Participant #9291). Similarly, Participant #4266 reported that many lecturers could not do quality work (Participant #4266).

(2.3) Organizational Politics: Conflict among lecturers/between internal executive members and staff caused emotional labor (Participant #944, and Participant #084). Moreover, a lecturer felt frustrated when conflict occurred because the staff or support staff did not collaborate (Participant #0406). Thus, Participant #0406 tried to find a supervisor to resolve the problem; the situation got better than before, but it was only partially solved. The staff later resigned because he could not work better, and thus the problem was solved (said Participant #0406). Some lecturers (Participant #3 and Participant #084) explained that they do not want to be involved in any conflict between any groups in their office because it can affect their renewal of work contracts (Participant #3 and Participant #084).

(3) Personal level is comprised of (3.1) colleagues' inefficient performance, and (3.2) students' disadvantages.

(3.1) Colleagues' Inefficient Performance: Many lecturers felt disappointed and frustrated when some lecturers promised to work on research, but they did not

fulfill the promise, exploited things, or delayed their work submission (said Participant #745, and Participant #629). Presently, he tries to avoid this by searching for only one responsible person/staff. Some lecturers complained that other colleagues were slacking in their work (Participant #944, and Participant #9291). These Participants explained that some colleagues do not want to write three articles within five years because they do not want to undertake extra work besides the regular tasks as advisors. They are not professionally responsible (Participant #9291). These laggards do not want to dedicate themselves "too much" to the program. These laggards want to listen but do not want to share their opinion openly. Participant #253 felt that "she pushed the other staff and lecturer to work too much because she was the program chair" (Participant #253). Some colleagues are becoming very emotional and verbally bully others at the meeting. Participant #253 does not like to confront others besides speaking up when someone does not work properly. Participant #253 used to be assigned to hold one seminar per month, yet she felt "it is too much." Similarly, Participant #629 suggested to her colleagues, "We need to focus on teaching tasks." Other colleagues supported her suggestion after the meeting (said Participant #629).

When students evaluated their teaching and program management poorly, they felt terrible. The students tried to understand that criticism was acceptable because the lecturers were doing their best. The assessment, however, has rather become subjective. The *Participants* had self-doubt at the beginning, but not anymore. The Participants think they have to run the program as best as they can (Participant #704 and Participant #0406).

(3.2) Students' disadvantages: When students did not pay attention in the study, the lecturers could get emotional (said Participant #745). When students graduate and achieve personal growth, the lecturers have deep happiness (said Participant #745).

2. *Lecturers' strategies as their responses to emotional labor*

Most lecturers chose to display "surface acting" more than "deep" and "genuine acting." They tend to smile or greet troublesome people to avoid deeper conflict (reported by Participants #745, #26, #704, #262, #42, #3, #21, #629, #944 and #4266). They know how to behave to recognize what can trigger others' emotions (said Participant #745 and Participant #26). They avoid escalating the conflict and avoid exhaustion by having enough time to rest (said Participant #745). One of them avoids showing negative attitudes to keep the relationship,

get along, and keep the social setting. In case someone provoked him, Participant #745 chose to walk away from any potentially heated conversation. Participant #745 did not want to provoke others, particularly those in administrative positions, because they serve bureaucratic and management purposes. Similarly, Participant #0480 said, “*Let it go!*” Participant #0480 prefers relying on psychologists/psychiatrists rather than showing real feelings/emotions. One of the Participants expressed that she does not confront troubled persons. Participant #944 focuses on student-based interests or workplace benefits (Participant #944). Notably, some want to maintain their job security; therefore, they try to tolerate and remain silent at work.

Other lecturers preferred to express genuine acting when they were provoked emotionally (Participant #9291, Participant #426, Participant #21, Participant #253 and Participant #0406). One of them (Participant #9291) clarified that he wanted to clarify things during discussions. He has chosen to confront senior lecturers. It always ends up badly, but they cannot do anything. Later, after some lecturers did not greet him anymore, he does not mind. He still respects these peers; Participant #9291 does not take it personally, although in the past, Participant #9291 did. He is presently a goal-oriented person. He will not give things up if he thinks about what is good. He thinks restructuring the admin will help him reach/accomplish the program goal. He has self-esteem and self-confidence (Participant #9291). A lecturer explained that he used an eye-to-eye and teeth-to-teeth strategy when somebody confronted and provoked him (Participant #21). One of the participants (Participant #253) used a gentle communication strategy to share her disagreement by addressing student-based interests (Participant #253).

One Participant confessed that when people disagreed with his opinions, his face became serious. Although he did not appear angry, he became more silent. This Participant believed that others should not feel frightened and offended. Participant #0406 reported that sometimes students “feel frightened when the lecturer asks to have a private meeting for better study” (Participant #0406). However, several lecturers tried to balance surface and genuine acting (Participant #0406, Participant #262 and Participant #4266). These lecturers have never been confronted aggressively by somebody and never openly provoked anyone (Participant #0406, Participant #262 and Participant #4266). One of these lecturers said he tries to summarize the main point of the agenda to decrease the tension in a small meeting group. His face will appear in a genuine acting mode. In the bigger group, however, he will only say a little (Participant #0406).

Discussion

This paper agreed with Maslach and Jackson (1986) that burnout was defined as signs of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment among people who work with other people. Nevertheless, much later, Maslach and Leiter expanded the concept of burnout: Burnout was redefined as “a crisis in one’s relationship with work—and not necessarily a crisis in one’s relationship with people” (1997). To measure burnout, Maslach and Leiter (1997) included three dimensions—exhaustion, cynicism, and reduced professional efficacy—in their Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI). In this research, only one of the participants appeared to decide (Participant #21) to move from the previous working office to another office (although still within the same university system). When distress adds to exhaustion, there will appear “a kind of reduced competence, decreased motivation, and dysfunctional attitudes at work” (Schaufeli, 2004). In addition, psychological ill health that could manifest as burnout is a result of “(1) complicated work relationship, (2) time pressure, (3) poor learner discipline, (4) a lack of proper promotion policy, and (5) role over overload, and a lack of resources at the relevant institute” (Viljoen & Rothmann, 2009). All these troubles were reported by Participant #21 before he decided to find a solution to move away to the other office/faculty. These five factors appear among the *participants* and build up the stimuli for the teaching tasks turning into emotional labor.

Work-engagement Concept (Colleague/Peer Level)

On the opposite side of the three burnout dimensions—exhaustion, cynicism and reduced professional efficacy—stand three dimensions for ‘work engagement,’ which are energy, involvement, and efficacy (Maslach & Leiter, 1997). At this level of ‘work engagement,’ the samples of this research return their attention to opportunities for growth and organizational support. For example, Participant #4266 wished to have “a supervisor or department head who represents lecturers’ struggles and not just pleases the higher ranks in the faculty.” Participant #3 decided to focus on her tasks but not involve any conflict between the two ‘political’ groups in her university to be free from the impact of her job contract renewal. To be more precise, work engagement’s components (vigor, dedication and absorption) are characterized by more detailed points. Bakker et al. (2008, p. 188) characterized further vigor by “high levels of energy and mental resilience while working, the

willingness to invest effort in one's work, and persistence even in the face of difficulties."

Sense of coherence/Global-Environmental Level: At an institutional/environmental level, Antonovsky (1987) and Loye (2000) proposed that human beings can make sense of their reality—through SOC or the sense of coherence—despite the complexity they experience. SOC is conceptualized as “a psychological, global orientation that influences how individuals understand their environment; SOC can give rise to individual differences in behavior (Bezuidenhout & Cilliers, 2010, p. 2). The components of SOC are comprehensibility, manageability, and meaningfulness (Antonovsky, 1987). According to Bezuidenhout & Cilliers (2010), the first element or comprehensibility points to stimuli happening from somebody's internal and external circumstances while somebody is settling for structure, predictability, and explanation. Comprehensibility takes place when the individual makes sense of stimuli in the surrounding (Bezuidenhout & Cilliers, 2010).

Furthermore, the second element, or manageability, points to the belief that individuals can avail resources to meet the demands of the circumstances and environment (Bezuidenhout & Cilliers, 2010). Manageability appears when the individual can cope with environmental and circumstantial demands (Bezuidenhout & Cillier, 2010). The third element, or meaningfulness, points to the belief that the demands are worthy of investment and engagement (Bezuidenhout & Cilliers, 2010). This meaningfulness appears when the individuals can identify emotions and commit some efforts to handle the demands (Antonovsky, 1987; Strumpfer, 1990). Participants #0480 and Participant #9291 finally found the meaning of their functions in their universities after some experiences in dealing with the emotional labor and succeeding.

Eventually, these overall three strategies (burnout, work engagement and sense of coherence) can be constructed as a correlated framework of the overall strategy for the cases taken by this research. Integrative reconstruction of “burnout, work engagement, and sense-of-coherence begins” when Schaufeli and Bakker (2001) discovered “two dimensions of work engagement that are logically correlated to burnout,” i.e., vigor to exhaustion and dedication to cynicism. Vigor is intended to represent the activation dimension of well-being, and dedication is meant to identify with work. Within this framework, burnout is a mixture between exhaustion (low activation) and cynicism (low identification). At the same time, work engagement is set vigor (high activation) and dedication (high identification) (Bezuidenhout & Cilliers, 2010). Following some researchers who found a correlation

between burnout and work engagement (like et al., 2009), Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) set a model for “job-demands resources” by putting work engagement (with indicators for health impairment and organizational commitment like low turnover intention) as consequences of burnout and work engagement. In addition, Van der Collf and Rothmann (2009) found an indication that emotional exhaustion was moderately negatively correlated with working engagement and sense-of-coherence among nurses in South Africa.

Burnout brings negative consequences, including ‘worsening quality of service, among others, for the individual, colleagues, learners (or other recipients), employer organizations, and society’ (Golembiewski et al., 1996; Maslach & Jackson, 1986). Regarding the ability of a strong sense of coherence to prevent burnout, Rothmann et al. (2002) found that an individual with a strong sense of coherence was likely to perceive distressing situations as less threatening, thus feeling lower burnout (also Antonovsky & Sagiv, 1986). Schaufeli and Bakker (2001) also noted that vigor (as part of work engagement) is represented by “mental resilience and the willingness to invest efforts and work despite difficulties.” An individual with a growth mindset holds that intelligence and ability are malleable, and thus, success will follow effort (Wolcott et al., 2021, p. 431).

Conclusion and Recommendations

This newer, further connection between important concepts used and apparent in this research occurs as the patterns emerge among most participants. Most of the participants reported three levels of stimuli as causes of emotional labor. The stimuli involve policies or regulations from the institutional (university level), program (faculty), and collegial (working peers) levels. Findings along the analysis on the correlation between burnout, work engagement and sense of coherence on one hand and growth mindset among the participants of this research point to the following processes. The stimuli that provoke the triumvirate of burnout, work engagement and sense of coherence will be confronted by the participants under theoretically two types of mindsets: those with fixed and growth mindsets. For example, Zilka et al. (2023, p. 6) found factors perceived by some samples of Israeli lecturers as enhancers of the growth mindset. The internal factors were given as (1) personal background (education, self-efficacy, diverse experience, openness for change, facing difficulties and failures), (2) inner innovation for teaching, (3) success experiences,

and (4) grit (Zilka et al. 2023, p. 6). The enhancers from the external factors were listed as (1) mentorship and feedback, (2) school learning climate, (3) principal support, and (4) dictated external changes (Zilka et al., 2023).

In conclusion, the participants of this research must first respond to the stimuli that they believe as affecting them and turning the academic, teaching, administrative, and other tasks into emotional labor. They display their external behavior to the stimuli either through acting (surface and deep acting to camouflage true reaction) or spontaneous/genuine emotional reactions. These emotional strategies are not static, as the strategies are modified and remodified over time. Eventually, after some time, the participants must pass through certain stages of 'burnout' (exhaustion, cynicism, and reduced efficacy). Once they survive this stage, the *participants* might reach 'work engagement' (signified by energy, involvement, and efficacy). Then these participants reach a 'sense of coherence' stage where they begin to sense and experience comprehensibility, manageability, and meaningfulness. Through these overall processes, the participants leave some traces of the 'growth mindset' inherent inside their psyche.

After passing through some internal processes (emotional self-regulation) and external behavioral displays to adjust to the relevant situation, these *Participants* must go through the next stage of overcoming the burnout phase (exhaustion, cynicism, and reduced efficacy). Most participants, including the lecturers who decided to move to different faculties/departments to continue working as lecturers, found their next stage of 'work engagement' (energy, involvement, and efficacy). The authors suggest that further research conceptualizes between work/life balance and happy workplace policy for academic lecturers since they have also dedicated their lives to human resources building and development. The findings that most lecturers reach their 'work engagement' through the assistance or support of peers/colleagues or anyone they trust point to the possible venues for the universities to set a kind of psychological counseling using 'peer-assisted therapeutic' counsel. To authorize this setting up of a 'different' counseling system, universities might need to create a policy for this 'counseling system.'

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest since this research is purely intellectual pursuance of the authors' own initiative without external funding.

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