

EMOTIONAL LABOUR AND AUTHENTICITY AMONG ACADEMICS IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES: A THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

BY

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Abstract

The research examined the emotional labour and authenticity displayed by academics in Nigerian universities through an opinion review. Over the course of time, scholars and professionals have increasingly recognized the significance of emotional regulation in the workplace and developed a deeper appreciation for its associated advantages. The growth and development of service businesses are contingent upon the proficient administration of emotional labour. The necessity to have a comprehensive understanding of the factors that contribute to the well-being of employees especially the academics is increasing. Given the considerable impact of work on individuals' lives, it is imperative to acquire knowledge on strategies for maintaining and improving overall well-being within the professional setting. It is on this basis the current theoretical paper x-ray opinions underpinned by scholars on issues surrounding emotional labor and authenticity. The paper revealed that employees have the option to utilize three distinct acting mechanisms, namely surface acting, deep acting, and genuine acting to effectively engage in emotional labour. The study also indicated that there was a significant impact of emotional labour on the concept of academic authenticity. The practical implications of the current research therefore, encompass the need for educational institutions' management to consider the incorporation of genuine emotions within the framework of emotional labour as well as the possible advantages of stress management training in understanding and predicting job-related outcomes.

Keywords: Emotional labour, Emotions, Authenticity, Academics.

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Introduction

Academics and theorists have given emotional labor a lot of attention lately which has made the concept to gain a lot of clout in the academic community (Miller, Considine, & Garner, 2007). The widespread belief that emotions might impede logical decision-making has led many organizations to ignore the value of studies on emotions and the

real expression of emotions by employees (Grandey, 2000). Scholars and professionals alike have come to recognize the value of employees who are able to control their emotions on the job. Understanding the impact of emotions on individual and group performance can be aided by analyzing such values (Grandey, 2000).

Academics' emotion has been suppressed with draconian policies by institutions' governing council and government, overlooking the genuine concerns bothering on academics' welfare. Yet, the academics in Nigerian institutions are expected to suppress and subjugate their painful emotions to render their services professionally. A case of suffering and smiling as it is called in the popular parlance.

Professionals in a wide variety of fields invest significant time and energy into developing their emotional intelligence. Sorrentino, De Nunzio, and Abbate, (2022) found that the successful management of emotional labour is essential to the development any service sectors. Many subfields of management have devoted extensive time and energy to studying the impact of feelings at work. Hochschild (1983) described emotional labour as being calm while serving a customer. Scholars have previously defined emotional work as the series of actions taken by service providers to guarantee the happiness of those who have paid for their services. Alias (2022) argues that the management of emotional labour is more common in sectors where employees often meet face-to-face with customers, clients, or other third parties.

As a result, there is an increasing interest in learning what factors contribute to the subjective happiness of workers. Considering the centrality of work in people's lives, it is crucial that those in managerial positions understand how to maintain and improve workplace well-being (Uwa, 2014). Managers may be more likely to suffer from stress than regular workers due to the additional demands placed on them in the form of emotional labour and the weight of legal and ethical responsibilities (Brett & Stroh, 2003). Managers' curiosity about how authenticity impacts the workplace has increased in recent years (Ilies et al., 2005). There has been a lack of research on how authenticity at work affects managers' happiness, but this is starting to change.

Both academic psychology and popular culture have paid more attention to the idea of authenticity in recent years (Cha et al., 2019). Recent high-level political play outcomes have been shown to correlate with the actors' perceived or actual authenticity (Hobbs, 2015; Miller, 2015). The popularity of positive psychology, which places a premium on genuineness, unsurprisingly influences people to strive for it.

Since they serve the public, Nigerian universities have relationships with students, faculty, and staff. It is expected that academic staff will be needed to do emotional work under this approach. This highlights the significance of properly managing negative emotions and assessing their impact on performance throughout the execution of duties to ensure the efficient delivery of services to end users, in this case

students, in order to guarantee the effectiveness of the service provided.

It has been seen, as pointed out by Gibbs (2001), that faculty personnel in higher education institutions must perform emotional labour in order to attain two distinct goals: student pleasure and work stability. It is important to recognize that the impact of faculty members' emotional labour extends beyond the level of education provided to students (Brown, 2011).

This research centers on examining emotional labour for academics and its role in their professional endeavors as they attempt to maintain authenticity in Nigerian universities.

Emotional Labour

Sociologist "Arlie Hochschild" first used the phrase "emotional labour" in her seminal 1983 work, "The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling. The concept of emotional labour is the conscious control of one's emotions for the purpose of projecting a professional image and performing professional obligations successfully. The act of establishing a personality that is different from one's true self with the goal of achieving career advancement is included in the concept of emotional work. Emotional labour, according to Ashforth and Humphrey (1993), is the act of expressing the proper emotion.

The study of emotional labour required the use of two distinct perspectives, namely "surface acting" (SA) and "deep acting. In their study, Noor and Zainuddin (2011) discovered that the term "SA" is used to refer to the act of "altering emotions" or "displaying emotions that are contrary to one's true feelings. In certain situations, a person dealing with depression in the workplace could make an effort to lift clients' spirits by projecting a cheerful attitude, such as smiling. Conversely, proponents describe Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT) as a therapy approach that aims to control a person's internal emotional state in order to control their outer emotional displays.

Furthermore, when an employee experiences negative emotional states, they may decide to put on a façade of contentment in order to maintain a positive view of themselves within the company (Uford, 2021). According to Yang et al. (2021), performing data augmentation (DA) requires more work than performing static augmentation (SA). Additionally, studies have shown that experiencing subjective weariness lowers one's degree of vitality, which hinders one's capacity to do work-related tasks effectively. Schaubroeck and Jones (2000), in their research noted that emotional labour is the purposeful repression of negative emotional responses while displaying good emotional behaviours. The idea of emotional labour frequently shies away from being overly literal or exacting. The organization gives equal weight to the execution of thorough emotional counselling for its executives and the anticipated social repercussions.

Key Attributes of Emotional Labour in the Workplace

The concept of emotional labour refers to the work of controlling and managing one's feelings in the context of helping professions. Significant emotional labour is often done in a variety of professional situations wherein workers are called upon to express certain emotions on purpose. Employees engage in emotional labour in three distinct ways (Hochschild, 1983; Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993).

In the framework of emotional labour, the governing body of educational institutions should think about allowing for the expression of true emotions. In addition, stress management training can help people foresee and prepare for positive outcomes in the workplace. Ashforth and Humphrey, (1993) noted that displaying feelings that aren't truly felt is called "surface acting. Employees engage in a form of performance in which they act in ways that are inconsistent with how they truly feel on the inside. Moreso, when a person's true feelings are at odds with what's expected of them in a given situation, they may resort to a technique known as "deep acting" to get through it. In order to elicit the desired responses from customers, staff members would rely on their prior experience and training. Finally, authentic acting is the presentation of feelings with minimal reliance on props and other visual aids.

Authenticity

Harter (2002) defined authenticity as "the quality of being aware of one's own identity and acting in ways that are consistent with that identity. The humanistic psychological worldview is the source of the idea of authenticity. Germano, Beatriz, and Jordi (2017), suggests that an increase in authenticity follows the satisfaction of more advanced, self-actualizing psychological demands. Focusing on tasks and difficulties that promote personal development may help one to better understand and recognise one's authentic or intrinsic nature, paving the way for greater self-actualization (Goldman & Kernis 2002).

Goldman and Kernis (2002), opined that authenticity is the uninhibited display of one's true or fundamental identity in one's daily activities. They noted that authenticity entails not only cognitive traits like vigilance and objectivity but also behavioural ones like initiative and concern for others. Understanding and evaluating one's own sense of identity is at the heart of the cognitive traits related to authenticity. Character traits that are wholly self-validated, actively exhibited, and personally meaningful, such as those listed above, have the potential to be incorporated into the theoretical framework of authenticity proposed by Deci and Ryan (2000). However, the way a person acts and interacts with others, as well as the authenticity with which they form relationships, are considered behavioural elements (Goldman & Kernis, 2002).

Emotional Labour and Authenticity

Multiple studies have looked at the link between emotional labour and productivity in the workplace. New studies by Alsakarneh, Hong, Eneizan, and Al-Kharabsheh (2019) and Hwang and Park (2022) show that employees' mental and emotional well-

being improves as a result of engaging in emotional labour. According to the level to which emotional labour has been demonstrated, the psychological repercussions may reveal either positive or negative outcomes. Previous research has suggested that employees may experience emotional incongruity if they are required to exhibit a narrow range of emotions at varying intervals, particularly during extended contact with customers.

Therefore, when people are pressured to put on a front that doesn't match how they really feel, it leads to a drop-in job satisfaction, which in turn leads to subpar service and lower productivity: a vicious cycle. The correlation between time spent on emotional labour and the likelihood of jobs becoming less tightly defined accounts for the observed trend. Due to the increased effort and emotional fortitude needed in these roles, burnout is more common among their holders (Francisco et al., 2022).

Involvement in emotional labour may also lower an individual's sense of self-worth and contribute to other psychosocial problems. Upendo and Kamara (2022) claim that workers' perceptions of dishonesty can get in the way of their concentration on their clients' work. As a result, it's possible that communication and output suffer.

Empirical Review

The emotional labour that educators put in has been studied extensively. Among Dutch math teachers, Maharaj, (2017) looked at four elements of emotional labour: surface acting, deep acting, repression, and emotional consonance. Emotional consonance, or the feeling of being understood and accepted, was found to be related to personal success, another symptom of burnout.

Zhang and Zhu (2008) studied the effects of three types of emotional labour on the job happiness of Chinese university professors: surface acting, deep acting, and authenticity. They found that instructors were less pleased with shallow performances and preferred more involved ones that required fewer resources.

Zapf and Holz (2006) research on emotional work amongst 184 kindergarten teachers, service workers, hotel employees and bank workers using multidimensional construct with dimensions such as requirement to portray positive emotion, negative emotion, sensitivity to client and emotional dissonance where used. Result shows that emotional dissonance was correlated positively with emotion work, whereas the display of positive emotions and sensitivity requirements also displayed positive effects on personal accomplishment. On the other hand, requirement to express negative emotions had little effect on burnout.

To find out how teachers felt about their students, Gates (2000) investigation revealed that expressions of emotional apathy had replaced outbursts of hostility. They claimed they stifled their emotions when they weren't feeling excited about the topic. Instead, they put on an act of enthusiasm in the mistaken notion that it would help them achieve

their goals. Many teachers report that they feel emotionally distant from their students. A professor's negative view of students from low-income backgrounds was changed when he began to think of them as developing students.

Adeneji, et al. (2017) examined the differences in the performance of emotional labour (deep acting and surface acting) among male and female nurses in Obafemi Awolowo University Teaching Hospital Osun State, Nigeria. 164 samples were used and data subjected to t-test, result point out that, male nurses are more likely to regulate their emotions through surface acting than female nurses. However, there was no statistical significant difference in the experience of deep acting among male and female nurses.

Also, Maharaj, (2017) investigation on emotional labour practices amongst lecturers in private higher education institutions in KwaZulu-Natal, responses elicited from the lecturer's shows that academics regulate emotions in order to function effectively at work. Also, there is a high degree of emotion suppression in individuals that work in private higher education institutions. Greater number of academics perceives that there are no support structures to enable them to cope better within this service related work environment.

Equally, Copal (2019) study on emotional regulatory strategies of academic staff at a research-intensive university amongst 15 participants, using interview as means of collecting data and thematic analysis shows that emotional labour is experienced by academic staff within the university context. However, the emotional labour regulation strategies that academic lecturing staff utilizes are those of deep, genuine and surface acting.

Theoretical Framework

The current investigation underpins "Emotional labor theory" as the baseline theory espoused by Arlie Hochschild in her 1983 book, "The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling. This theory explains how individuals manage and regulate their emotions as part of their job roles, predominantly in the service industry that would require face to face contact with customers. Emotional labor theory suggests that people in certain professions are expected to display specific emotions as part of their job, even if those emotions are not genuine or natural to them. This theory forms the essence of the current research as it explains the typical experience of the academics' job where he is expected to suppress his feelings to perform his job professionally.

Findings

The following findings were identified in course of reviewing scholars' opinion on the thematic issue under discussion:

1. There is a strong demand for emotional labour from university instructors because they are responsible for many groups and individuals beyond their own classrooms and departments.
2. People working in academic settings are more likely to be stressed, which might

affect their conduct when interacting with students and colleagues.

3. Workers' perceptions of dishonesty may interfere with their capacity to give their full attention to work for customers. As a result, it's possible that communication and output suffers.
4. Those who suffer emotional labour may like fail to stay truth to their values and believe, as a whole, emotional labor influences academics authenticity adversely.

Conclusions

The study's results show that emotional labour influences both workers' well-being and the efficiency of their workplaces. Therefore, it makes sense for academics, frontline managers and industry experts to adopt personalized selection and training approaches in an effort to boost employee performance. The growing demand for controlled emotional expression and the potential benefits of emotional labour make it all the more important for academics to keep working on theories and metrics that adequately capture the complexities of emotion management in the workplace. These results highlight the significance of human emotion in the field of emotional labour research, especially in the context of academic endeavors. In conclusion, it is possible to have a deeper comprehension of and make more accurate predictions about outcomes related to work when true emotions are present.

Practical Implications

Organizations can help their workers cope with the difficulties of emotional labour by providing them with stress management education and resources. More study is needed to learn how educators feel about the emotional labour they perform and its effects on their students. It is crucial for institutions to take into account the emotional obstacles faced by newly appointed and inexperienced teachers in the process of faculty recruitment, retention, and support. As a result, teachers can adapt to changing needs in the workplace and in society at large by putting more emphasis on emotional labour. Academics frequently encounter difficulties due to the stresses of emotional labour. Therefore, it is crucial for university and departmental administration to be aware of the fact that academic attempts often require the application of emotional labour, which can lead to stress. Academics' productivity, health, teaching effectiveness, and job satisfaction could all suffer from emotional labour that is too intense. Administrators in educational institutions should give some thought to how they handle students' emotional labour.

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