



ISSN: 0975-833X

Available online at <http://www.journalera.com>

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL
OF CURRENT RESEARCH

International Journal of Current Research
Vol. 13, Issue, 01, pp. 15690-15695, January, 2021

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.24941/ijcr.40634.01.2021>

RESEARCH ARTICLE

EMOTIONAL LABOUR AND BURNOUT—A DISCUSSION OF ETHNICITY/CULTURE AND GENDER IN FURTHER EDUCATION IN THE U.K

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ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received 28th October, 2020
Received in revised form
17th November, 2020
Accepted 03rd December, 2020
Published online 30th January, 2021

Key Words:

Culture, Gender,
Teachers, Wellbeing.

ABSTRACT

The UK is culturally diverse, with many further education (FE) colleges serving its communities. This is expected, as the UK participates in a global market. Diversity and ethnicity are linked conceptually and it is argued that in circumstances where teachers and students differ culturally, blocks to communication between the two may serve as a starting point for emotional labour and burnout among teachers in FE. This has yet to be researched. Culture is inextricably linked to gender roles. Where emotional rules differ, emotional labour and burnout may have varying occurrences between genders. This paper argues that there is a need to examine the link between emotional labour and burnout among culturally diverse groups as well as differences between gender. The paper also points out that the environment teachers work in may be a source of stress, and not 'fitting in' may culminate in stress leading to burnout.

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Citation: Walifa Rasheed Karim. "Emotional labour and burnout—a discussion of ethnicity/culture and gender in further education in the U.K", *International Journal of Current Research*, 13, (01), 15690-15695.

INTRODUCTION

Some, Grandey, Diefendorff and Rupp (2013) for example, maintain that a diverse workforce is essential in a global market and that understanding 'culture' is important in this respect. Grandey *et al* (2013) stated that the processing by which emotional labour is managed is not yet a major field of research, but it is anticipated that emotional labour is of little benefit to individuals when a culture dictates organisational goals and reasons for achieving these. Another way of thinking about diversity is through an understanding of the conceptual issues surrounding 'ethnicity'. Smith (1986) defined an ethnic group as people who have a common heritage and share traditions or a cultural understanding. Others point out that ethnicity and culture are related concepts. For example, Desmet, Ortuño-Ortín and Wacziarg (2017) surveyed 76 countries and found that ethnic identity predicts the values of people belonging to a particular culture. For example, American values include maintaining individuality, competition, and efficiency, while Japanese values include living in a harmonious way, being self-critical, belonging according to perceived status and obligation to a group of individuals. A European culture values tradition, family and friendship and appreciation for aesthetics. These kinds of values dictate the student-teacher relationship; this is discussed by Hofstede (2009). Desmet *et al* (2017) concluded that ethnicity is associated with the values, attitudes and preferences people have.

Many teachers see their major aim as helping students to achieve goals in learning and this means they need to understand their students' cultural inheritance as well as their own. There may be cultural clashes with colleagues and students and this may make it difficult for teachers to feel as if they 'fit' in the environment in which they work. Where a teacher is from an individualistic culture which values education as 'teaching students how to learn' and where 'having opinions' is expected, teaching a group of students who do not have these views is a challenge. Teachers may have to encourage students not to depend on the group for the formation of their opinions and will motivate students to be more individualistic in their views. This kind of difficulty, as well as stressors in their workplace, may have a bearing on how lecturers choose to cope. It is envisaged that many would use emotional labour strategies and regulate these to help students learn and achieve organisational goals. However, it maybe that individuals from individualistic and interdependent cultures use emotional labour strategies differently; and when teachers from one cultural understanding experience burnout, another will not. A teacher with little understanding of students and colleagues from other cultural groups/ethnicity may expend more effort in order to communicate points they are making effectively and this may affect their wellbeing. People from different cultures and ethnicities interact with others differently and so burnout levels will not be the same across cultural/ethnic groupings. The culture or ethnicity of a teacher is therefore important to consider in the workplace setting.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ORGANISATIONAL CLIMATE, PERSONAL CULTURE, EMOTIONAL LABOUR AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLBEING

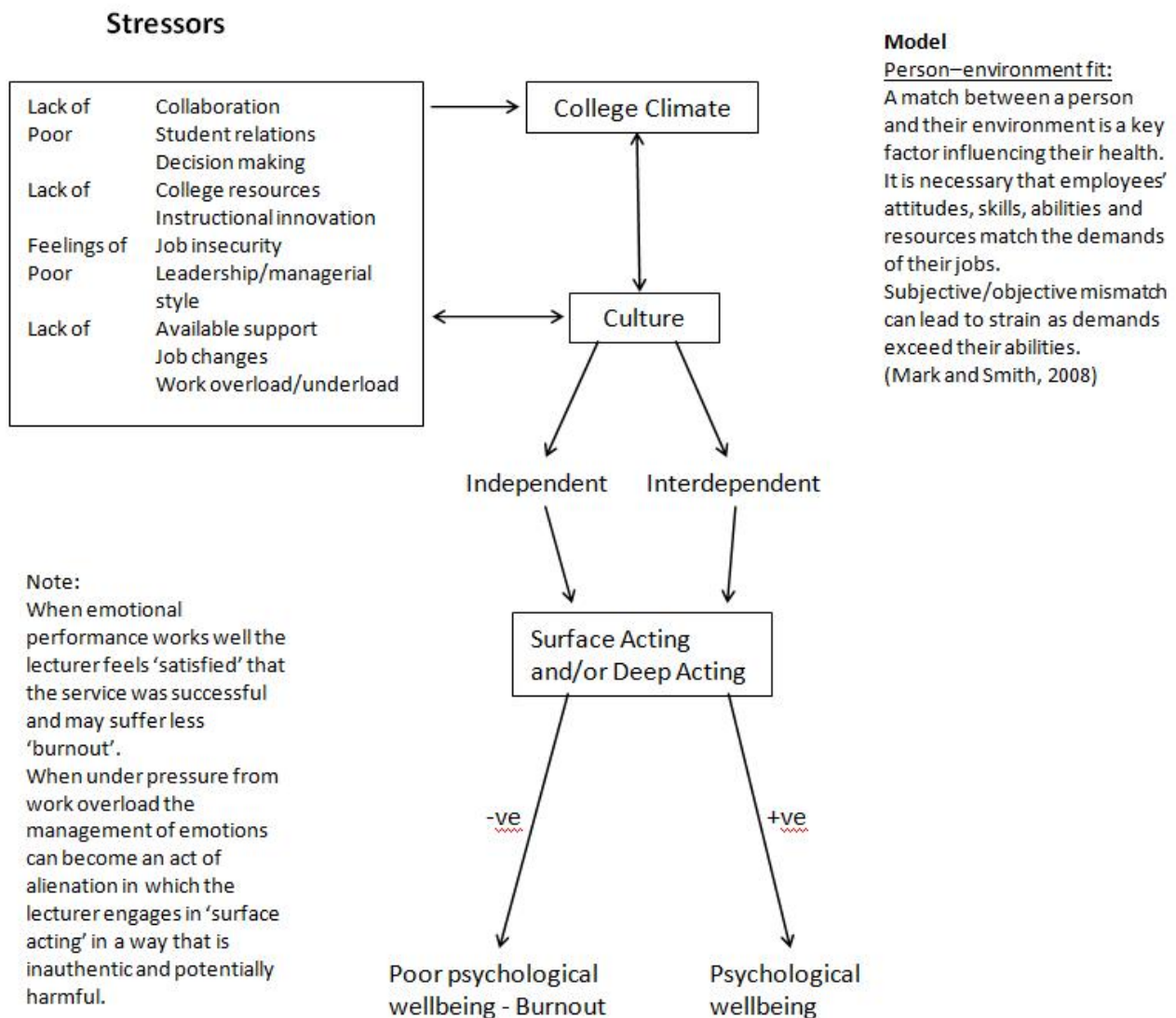


Figure 1. Links between stressors found in the teaching environment, the culture of teachers, person–environment fit and psychological wellbeing

Hofstede (1986) examined the teacher and student relationship as an archetypal role pair where the student and teacher come from different cultures and in this context many perplexities may arise. This can be due to the different social positions of teachers and students in respective societies, and differences in expected teacher–student interactions. The person environment fit (P-E) model (Mark & Smith, 2008) identified that there should be a match between an employee and their environment, and this is key to influencing their health. It is therefore necessary that employees' attitudes, skills, abilities and college resources match the demands of their job. It is asserted that the work environment should also meet workers' needs, knowledge and skills. Hofstede specified that teacher–student interactions and complexity in relationships arise from four dimensions: individualism versus interdependence; large versus small power distance; strong versus weak uncertainty avoidance and masculinity versus femininity. There also may be language differences between teachers and students.

There is therefore an issue of adaptation in cross-cultural learning situations. It has been shown that, within English Language teaching, there is burnout within the cultural dimensions framework explained by Hofstede. A study by Sabouri and Pishghadam (2016) explored burnout among Iranian teachers who taught English as a foreign language (EFL) using the Hofstede cultural framework. The study showed a significant relationship between cultural dimensions and components of burnout. Multiple regression showed emotional exhaustion predicted uncertainty avoidance and indulgence/restraint. Depersonalisation was predicted by masculinity/femininity and indulgence/restraint. Masculinity/femininity, uncertainty avoidance and indulgence/restraint were found to predict personal accomplishment. The risk of burnout among Iranian EFL teachers was also found to increase with low indulgence, high avoidance of uncertainty, and low femininity. The hypothetical model (Figure 1) shows the relationship between stressors, culture and the psychological wellbeing factor of burnout. The PE fit model is

examined because it suggests stress is relevant when discussing the influence of 'culture' on the use of emotional labour strategies. A further aspect of lack of P-E may arise from the gap between what people believe is the culture of the country they live in, and that of their organisation. Clashes between the two may occur and this may have negative effects on the wellbeing of teachers. Based on the literature, it is expected that teachers from interdependent cultures will use surface acting less and with some deep acting will suffer relatively less burnout. That is, a culture within a college/school in certain countries may dictate how teachers and students interact and this could be due to how individuals perceive their culture.

Grandey, Diefendorff and Rupp (2013) discussed that employees in the same sector display emotional rules differently according to whether they originate from individualistic or interdependent cultures. The FE sector is a multicultural environment and emotional labour strategies and regulation are fundamental in achieving the relational goals of lecturers. A gap in the literature relates to identifying the antecedents of emotional labour and burnout with respect to the mediating variables of individualistic and interdependent cultures of FE lecturers. The link between emotional labour, culture and psychological wellbeing has been made in the service sector (Grandey, Diefendorff & Rupp, 2013) but has yet to be examined among FE lecturers. To combat stress and manage workload and relationships with students and colleagues, it is expected that teachers who belong to independent and interdependent cultures will use emotional display rules differently. Independent cultures such as that of the United States may determine types of emotional displays (Brown, Horner, Kerr & Scanlon, 2014). A mixed study design investigated teachers' professional identities through emotional labour; that is, the manner in which teachers display or conceal emotions to achieve workplace goals. All respondents completed the Emotional Labour Teaching Scale. Open-ended questions allowed teachers to describe their surface and deep acting. The investigation showed that all participants use emotional labour. The study also revealed that schools do not communicate explicitly that display rules should be used; finally, it is reported that teachers admitted to role-playing when their image of an ideal teacher conflicted with their feelings. They pretended to be warm and caring. Brown et al concluded that there are implications for retention of teachers, how they prepare their working hours, the type of supervision they receive and how they would benefit from enrichment programmes.

Other countries have various cultural values of behaviour which may influence the experience of emotional labour. Research conducted by Yilmaz, Altinkurt, Guner and en (2015) examined the relationship between teachers' emotional labour and burnout level. The sample for this investigation was 5,600 teachers working in schools in the Kutahya province of Turkey during 2013–2014. The results show that teachers experience symptoms of burnout with emotional exhaustion, then lack of personal accomplishment and then depersonalisation. Regression analysis shows that surface acting and naturally felt emotions predict emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation. However, deep acting does have a significant impact on emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation. Teachers' lack of personal accomplishment is predicted by all aspects of emotional labour.

GENDER, EMOTIONAL LABOUR AND BURNOUT

The Education and Training Foundation (2017) reported that approximately two-thirds of FE staff are female and this is higher for part-time staff. The proportion of female staff in the FE sector is higher than in the general workforce. This proportion is lower than in the school workforce where 80% of staff are female (School Workforce in England, 2015). According to the Education and Training Foundation (2017), approximately half (55%) of senior managers are women and part-time workers. Women constitute 64% of all staff and 58% of teaching staff. The foundation points out that in colleges and independent providers, the proportion of female teachers is consistent with the sector's average. In other types of adult education provider, women constitute three-quarters of all teachers. Teaching in FE seems to be embroiled in a tangle of change, with policy unable to solve problems (Jephcote, Salisbury & Rees, 2008). In turn, much is expected of teachers who are left to resolve the competing pressures they are placed under. Evidence suggests that they expend much emotional labour and employ a range of strategies, but on the whole, while not ignoring the demands of other stakeholders, they privilege the needs and interests of learners in their adoption of an ethic of care.

Emotion rules are thus shown to differ between men and women. When looking at gender from a cultural perspective, the norms of emotions result from what society understands of women and men. That is, women are seen to be relatively more emotional, caring and nurturing than men (Heilman and Okimoto/Grandey, Diefendorff & Rupp, 2013) pointed out that caretaking and nurturing carried out by women is often undervalued socially as they are seen as natural to women. However, Lois (2003) reported that when men display similar emotions, they are likely to benefit monetarily and their efforts are valued more than those of women. Bellas (1999) concluded that women in professional jobs will manage their emotions beyond the job requirement. That is, women self-regulate their behaviour so as to appear to be as active, powerful and pleasant as men. Furthermore, Timmers, Fischer and Manstead (1998) pointed out that men and women differ according to their motives for regulating emotions. While women are more focused on being friendly, men wish to stay in control and will express such emotions as anger and pride more often. Timmers et al concluded that where there is contact with customers, clients etc., men require training on how to manage emotions during interactions in a social environment.

Gender status beliefs attribute caretaking and nurturing skills to women and this kind of social role may also be 'gendered' in the workplace (Ridgeway, 2001). Furthermore, Hochschild (1983) and Wharton (2009) asserted that men and women internalise beliefs which are generally understood. Women will behave in ways that weaken their status in society and the consequence of this is that they are left vulnerable to stress and burnout. Grandey (2000) argued that 'if women engage in more emotional management situations, perhaps they are better at managing emotions (so performance would be better) but they would be engaging in more suppression of true feelings (so stress would be higher)' (Grandey, p. 106). Ridgeway (2001) pointed out that belief of status due to gender is made with the understanding that greater competence and social status is attributed to men in comparison with women. Others such as Lois (2003)

suggested that when men occupy female-dominated professions such as teaching and nursing, men will create a role for themselves that allows them to reinforce their feelings about themselves as males. For example, male nurses will specialise in medical areas where they can utilise their strength and technical skill, and this frees them from the emotionally challenging aspects of their job. That is, men and women have different understandings of their roles in professional jobs. Results from a case study conducted by Isenbarger and Zembylas (2006) showed that female teachers' performance of emotional labour is related to their professional and philosophical stance about the role of caring in teaching and learning. This study is based on a collaborative action research between one teacher and a teacher educator and provides an account of the emotional labour in enacting caring teaching in an inclusive classroom. The emotional labour demanded in caring relationships is an area of research that has not received much attention. The study demonstrates that the performance of emotional labour is an important aspect of the reality of teaching and has an impact on teacher commitment, satisfaction and self-esteem. The implications of this research are discussed in terms of the consequences of emotional labour in teaching. In professions dominated by females, such as teaching, individuals find it easy to abide by the cultural expectations of caretaking, while men fulfil leadership roles which may be expected as a cultural requirement. Men may also not be challenged by others to a large extent when they carry out leadership roles (Koenig, Eagly, Mitchell & Ristiken, 2011). It is suggested that men and women experience stress, emotional labour and burnout at different levels and frequencies. An example of emotional demands on female teachers and consequent emotional labour is evident in departments where 'care' is a common factor for discussion.

Research conducted in this area asks two questions, according to Chowdhry (2013). These are:

1. Do teachers perform emotional labour?
2. How does emotional labour affect teachers?

Research conducted by Chowdhry (2013) investigated the emotional demands on female teachers on care courses in a Scottish FE college. She discusses the findings of a qualitative case study utilising the concept of emotional labour to explore how female care lecturers within a Scottish FE college experience the demands of their work. The findings suggest that the influence of the FE sector, professional and gender identities is evident in the lecturers' teaching and care ethics. It is suggested that these variables are related to the emotional demands faced by the teachers. Teachers found it difficult to challenge excessive levels of emotional labour that are associated with their work. The findings suggest that teaching on care courses involves a variety of demands made on teachers' emotions and these demands are linked to students' levels of motivation. Teachers used surface acting, deep acting or the expression of genuine emotion. Other studies such as that conducted by Kitching (2009) examined teachers' experiences and displays of negative emotion as a way of exploring how identities at work might be formed and regulated. Kitching used the concepts of emotional labour and subjectivation to question the negative emotions teachers may experience and/or express at work. He pointed out that emotional display rules expressed by teachers in response to conveying care, expertise and efficiency help to define them.

The field of emotional labour is explored using diary entries by teachers who were between their second and fifth year of teaching in Irish primary schools. It is argued that spaces for multiple teacher identities of emotional display must be carved out in teacher education. This space might include an acknowledgement of ambivalence towards the profession. A Chinese study conducted by Chen (2010) chose college and university teachers as participants for their study. Chen found no significant gender differences in emotional labour — surface acting, deep acting and naturally felt emotions. However, surface acting for males was higher than for females, but naturally felt emotions were significantly higher for females than for males. Chinese research also identifies gender differences in naturally felt emotions among school teachers. Liu (2007) reported that there are gender differences among primary and middle school teachers; that is, female teachers experienced more naturally felt emotions than males and there were no significant gender differences in surface and deep acting. However, Tian, Zhou and Chen (2009) found no significant gender difference in the emotional labour of special educational teachers. However, surface acting and deep acting were more regular occurrences in females compared with males. This may be because male and females react to stress in different ways.

Brudnik (2011) showed that males and females react in different ways to stress as measured by burnout. That is, PE teachers, for example, reacted to professional stress with emotional exhaustion or reduced personal accomplishment. At a high emotional exhaustion level, women began to depersonalise their pupils and experienced burnout. This occurred in young male teachers, with reduced personal accomplishment at school and with cynicism the effect of burnout increased. It is suggested that the length of time teachers remain in roles may have an effect on stress and emotional labour levels between genders. According to Tunguz (2016), emotional labour in academic tenure varies with length of service and gender. Drawing from previous research on display rules and power, tenure and gender were hypothesised as influencing the extent to which college faculty laboured to provide 'service with authority' when interacting with students. Survey results revealed that faculty low in power (untenued faculty) exhibited higher levels of emotional labour when interacting with students, as compared with colleagues high in power (tenured faculty). Additionally, tenure had a mitigating effect on emotional labour amongst male faculty, but heightened stress amongst female faculty.

In another study, Schaufeli, Daamen and Van Mierlo (1994) investigated burnout among Dutch teachers. They examined the internal consistency of the Maslach Burnout Inventory in a sample of Dutch secondary teachers. The internal consistency of the subscales emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and reduced personal accomplishment was relatively high. Dutch teachers showed higher levels of emotional exhaustion and minimal symptoms of depersonalisation. Van Horn, Schaufeli and Greenglass (1997) further examined scores on burnout among 631 Canadian and 1,180 Dutch teachers. They compared the sex and age of teachers and other factors: experience in teaching, type of school and number of hours employed. They report that Canadian teachers had higher scores on emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation compared with Dutch teachers. Canadian teachers produced higher scores on depersonalisation than their Dutch peers. For

both countries, sex and school type was significantly related to burnout etc. Male teachers experienced higher levels of emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation compared with women. Age was not significantly related to burnout measures. Across schools, secondary teachers reported higher scores than primary schools. To explain these findings, Greenfield, Greiner and Wood (1980) proposed that female-dominated jobs such as teaching engender feelings of importance and satisfaction relating to accomplishment among women compared to male dominated professions. Canadian teachers' feelings of competence are related to the occurrence of more female professionals in the workplace (Schaufeli et al, 1994). Furthermore, Greenglass, Burke and Koniarskie (1997) concluded that burnout is prevalent among men due to the possibility that men possess weaker coping strategies compared with women. Greenglass et al (1990) pointed out that women are better able to reduce burnout than men because of their '...greater investment in and valuation of friendship...and because they are more able to turn to and enjoy activities other than work, that is, socialising, the arts etc.' Greenglass et al also argued that social support found in the workplace buffers women against burnout. It could be that women are more able to use reappraisal strategies and deep acting compared with men. Reappraisal strategies may vary across countries but this is yet to be clarified in studies. In a study conducted by Lee, Perkum, Taxer, Schutz, Vogl and Xie (2016) of a sample of secondary school teachers, reappraisal was found to be associated with deep acting and suppression correlated with surface acting. Suppression and surface acting convey negative emotions such as anger, anxiety and frustration. Reappraisal and deep acting produce positive emotions like enjoyment and are negatively related to emotions such as anxiety, anger and frustration. The extent to which there are gender differences requires investigation.

Conclusion

The link between the culture of FE teachers and the environment they find themselves in, resulting in cumulative emotional labour and burnout, is yet not clear from current research. More research is required in this area. That is, the dynamics between students and teachers in terms of the kinds of teaching strategies and approaches to learning has yet to be elucidated in the FE sector in the UK. Research is important because an understanding of the learning situations, will help students to achieve their goals, and may allow teachers to fit into a culture which helps them achieve and maintain psychological wellbeing. It is also apparent from cross-cultural studies that women and men differ in their experiences of burnout as women tend to be able to use social support to their advantage. The literature shows that emotional labour rules between men and women are culturally derived and this determines gender-related behaviours in professional roles such as teaching. Men create a separate identity in jobs such as teaching where there is dominance of women employees. It is suggested that this 'identity' may have differential effects on levels of emotional labour and burnout experienced by teachers in FE. In such cases, it is expected that women may be unlikely to question their use of emotional labour, although this may define their identity especially when teaching courses related to 'care'. The manner in which male and female teachers react to stress seems to determine their experiences of emotional labour and burnout. This may be related to their length of service in jobs. It is suggested that this conclusion offers many avenues for discussion of research in the

experiences of emotional labour and burnout between men and women teachers in the FE sector in the UK.

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