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## A Qualitative Study of Emotional Lives of Teaching at Two Nigerian Universities

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**Abstract:** The emotional lives of teaching at the universities have remained under research. This study used a qualitative approach to investigate the emotional lives of lecturers teaching at two selected universities. This study sought to identify, understand and interpret the emotional lives of teaching with interpretive phenomenology research design. In purposefully selected two universities, 12 lecturers participated in the study. Semi-structured individual interviews were employed, the data generated were interpreted, the emerged themes were: work condition, resources and accreditation panel, trade union and government disagreement, and experienced emotions and effects on participants. A further interpretation of the emerged themes revealed that the emotional lives of the participants are dependent on teaching resources, academic war and convenient behaviour. The dependence is thereby suggestive that change in the management of teaching resources, academic war and behaviour of lecturers could positively influence the nature of their emotional lives. The paper used two universities, which lays the foundation for subsequent studies because this is the first study to examine the emotional lives of teaching in Nigerian universities. The study made recommendations for further studies and drew implications for policy and practice.

**Keywords:** *Emotional lives, Nigerian universities, qualitative approach, teaching resources, trade union.*

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### Introduction

Salovey and Mayer (1990) reported that emotions as reactions to an event, either internal or external have a positive or negative valence for an individual. Goleman (2004, p.289) described emotion as a "feeling and its distinctive thoughts, psychological and biological states and range of propensities to act", while Darling-Hammond et al. (2003) interpreted the term emotions as complex states of mind and body, consisting of cognitive, behavioural and physical responses to circumstances that could be managed and directed. The above three definitions of emotions revealed that emotion is an outcome of an experience that may be sad, dangerous and joyous. Behavioural, people may seek comfort when they are sad or run and seek help when they face danger. Physical, an unpleasant situation may yield pains, or a dangerous situation might lead to an elevated heart rate (Darling-Hammond et al., 2003).

From the above definitions, the term 'emotion' is a deepened experienced state, which causes an individual to be emotionally happy or unhappy, compelling the individual to seek survival strategies or appropriate emotional response after assessing the constraints within the environment. Roux-Girard (2011) identified negative emotions such as anger, frustration, sadness, and positive emotions as happiness and excitement as prominent types of emotion. In describing the role of emotions on human life, Goleman (2004) elaborates on how emotional events over time imprint on the emotional brain of people shaping their emotional lives.

Research by Coetzee and Jansen (2007) reported that the teaching profession is faced with strong emotions as they struggle to beat the university timeline, expectations and increasing demands from changing roles and responsibilities amidst limited resources and poor work conditions. Researches in the universities have shown that circumstances, such as limited teaching resources, poorly equipped laboratory, lecture halls, libraries, studio, and workrooms (Akomolafe &

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Adesua, 2016) could trigger emotions (Igbafe, 2016). Limited teaching and office spaces compelling the sharing of small office spaces with barely any confidentiality and comfort (Okebukola, 2005) could trigger a state of helplessness. While deplorable work condition, worn-out buildings with deprived airing, poor electrification and old equipment in bad conditions (Asiyai, 2005; Gberville, 2008) could also trigger a feeling of sadness.

Additionally, a circumstance where lecturers struggle to procure working materials like laptops, internet, and data, seek to conduct high-quality research without a well-equipped laboratory, library and publish on high rated journals from the small salary paid (Nnaji, 2020) could activate frustration. Using Nigeria as an example, Nnaji (2020) explains that "a good laptop costs between #200,000 (530 US dollars) to #500,000 (1,216 US dollars) or even more depending on currency exchange rate. For graduate assistance earning #120,000(300 US dollars), it may take more than six months to buy a laptop given other personal issues demanding financial attention. Also, a senior lecturer will save to acquire a laptop." Numerous studies conducted on teaching, research, and engaging in community responsibilities without required resources have been linked to the constant call for the withdrawal of services by the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) to compel investment in the universities (Asiyai, 2006; Osakede, et al., 2018; Vanguard, 2011).

In Nigeria, the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) is a trade union comprising lecturers at public and state universities. The goal of the trade union is to ensure quality education and better work conditions for members by supporting them as a group in negotiation, dialogue, and signing of implementation agreements with the government. From its inception, the trade union has been engaging the government concerning the work condition of lecturers (Arikewuyo, 2009). The trade union uses the withdrawal of services (strikes) to compel the government to take practical action. The withdrawal of services or strikes can be defined as the stoppage of work responsibility by trade union members because of work conditions or failure of the government to implement an agreement signed with the trade union (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). For example, in Nigeria, from 1981 till date, the trade union has used definite and indefinite calls for the withdrawal of services to force the government to increase funding of higher education to enable universities to procure modern teaching resources, maintain existing facilities and pay salary-related numerations to lecturers as presented in table 1 below.

*Table 1. The chronology of the ASSU strikes 1981-2020 (adopted from Igbafe 2016 with additions of recent strikes)*

<b>Year</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>Reasons for the withdrawal of teaching services</b>
1981	Six months	Salary increases and university autonomy
1992	Six months	Gross underfunding of Nigerian universities, conditions of service, university autonomy and academic freedom, the resumption of negotiation
1993	three months	Parity in salary
1994	Three months	An increase in salary
1995	Three months	The review of the 1992 agreement
1996	Seven months	The dismissal of ASUU president Dr Assisi Asobie
1999	Five months	Over Salaries, Wages and Other Conditions of Service in the University System
2000		The resumption on the negotiation of basic salaries, university funding, and autonomy
2001	Three months	Over the stalemate in the negotiation
2002	Two weeks	Over perceived non-implementation of the 2001 agreements
2003	Six months	Because of inadequate funding, non-implementation of the signed agreement on the disparity in salary. retirement age and non-implementation of allowances
/		
2004		
2005	Two months and 1-week warning strike	Because of the autonomy bill, funding, governing councils, union matters, conditions of service, licensing of additional private universities, private sector participation in the provision of student hostels, the introduction of fees, parity in basic salary, the entry point for fresh graduates, parent forum and an enlightenment programme
2006	One week	From 2006-2013 the ASUU demanded the payment of:
2007	Three months	each postgraduate student's research project supervised
2008	Two weeks	each student on teaching practice supervised
2009	Four months	each examination paper supervised
2010	Five months	Funding for infrastructure development in public and state universities and managed by ASSU holdings
2011	Three months ended in 2012	Transfer of landed properties in public universities to ASSU holdings. Study grants, external assessment of readers or professors, call duties and clinical duty, hazard and excess workload allowance. ASUU demanded the payment of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Non-salary conditions of services and clinical loans</li> <li>▪ Research leave, sabbatical leave, sick leave, maternity leave and injury pension; Pension of university staff and compulsory retirement age</li> <li>▪ Patronage of university services; and</li> <li>▪ Funds from the alumni association</li> </ul>

Table 1. Continued

Year	Duration	Reasons for the withdrawal of teaching services
2012	Six months	Compel the government to implement the 2012 signed agreement
-		
2013		
2014	Six months	Because of failure to keep to an agreement on a payment scheme
2015	Indefinite	Because the government failed to Implement a previously signed agreement
2016	One week	Because the government failed to Implement a previously signed agreement
2017	Three weeks	Compel the government to implement signed agreement
2018	Three months	Compel implementation of the signed agreement
2019	Two weeks	Compel the government to implement the 2013 and 2017 memoranda of understanding (MOU)
2020	Nine months	Compel the government to fund the university. Refusal of ASSU members to join the government's Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System (IPPIS).

According to Igbafe (2016), the chronology table comprises the trade union (ASSU) warnings of the strike, definite and indefinite withdrawal of services, the year, duration and reasons. The chronology table shows that every year from 1981 to 2020, there was a call for service withdrawal in the federal and state universities. The chronology table on duration shows that the call for service withdrawal lasted a week or nine months. The reasons for the service withdrawals have remained the poor work condition, government's failure to implement agreements signed after dialogue and negotiation. In all these withdrawals of services, there is no existing record that the universities and trade unions have initiated any emotional support programme. Hence, the chronology table provides background information on lecturers' experienced events that could trigger fear of losing one's job, frustrations and uncertainties. Fear produces insecurity and worrying (Ashkanasy & Daus, 2002; Igbafe, 2020). Frustration influences the cognitive process necessary for assessing situations for quality decision-making (Bar-On et al., 2003; Wilhelm et al., 2013).

Fear could also disrupt cognitive ability to interpret an experience as happy, unhappy, or unsafe (LaBar & Cabeza, 2006; Mather & Knight, 2005; Schmeichel et al., 2008; Sze et al., 2010). For example, appraisal of experienced emotions as happiness attracts positive action, while appraisal of emotion as unhappy or unsafe provoke action depending on individual and available emotional support. The appraisal of emotions as positive could enhance mental activities, and evaluating activities as negative constricts them (Eysenck et al., 2007; Huntsinger, 2013). The lecturers' cognition could prepare them to respond with action, influencing their physical health (Frija & Sundararajan, 2007; Ortony, 2009; Webb et al., 2012). Several studies have tried to outline the effects of emotions on the physical health of lecturers as a display of anxiety, experience an elevated heart rate, and shedding a tear (Lakoff & Kövecses, 1987; McCraty et al., 1998; Sze et al., 2010).

Physical effects of emotion could occur as confusion and unhappiness (Kensinger & Corkin, 2003; LaBar & Cabeza, 2006; Mather & Knight, 2005; Schmeichel et al., 2008), in turn, affect the lecturers' ability to innovate teaching to meet students' needs (Biggs & Tang, 2007). Physical effects of emotions could manifest as aggression (Bar-On et al., 2003; Barsade, 2002; Coetzee & Jansen, 2007; Dolan, 2002; Russell, 2003), which could interfere with the interactive, collaborative knowledge development and sharing (Graczyk et al., 2000). Persistent experience of negative emotions could contribute to high blood pressure, heart disease, dehydration, compromised immune system, diabetes and digestive problems (National Institute of Mental Health, 2021).

The cognitive and physical effects of emotions could influence the response after observing and interpreting a situation (Matsumoto & Hwang, 2011) resulting in the raising of the voice with gestures and gesticulations, display of anxiety and sadness (Bennett et al., 2005; Owren & Rendall, 2001). Sadness could lead to demotivation, influencing lecturers' ability to connect, relate and interact within the university environment (Igbafe, 2016). Emotional recognition, respectful communication, connection and interaction are vital for lecturers' work responsibilities and promotes an emotionally literate environment. An emotionally literate environment describes an environment that acknowledges, respects and supports the appropriate display of emotions.

Given, researchers reported the ability of emotions to provide information on events that affect teachers, who are lecturers, because the focus of this study was on teaching staff at the universities (Igbafe, 2016; Taxer & Frenzel, 2015; Tyng et al., 2017). This study provided detailed information of the circumstances and sources of activities triggering positive (pleasant to experience emotions such as happiness, joy and inspiration) and negative emotions (undesirable to experience emotions such as frustration, sadness and fear) (Frenzel et al., 2009) and how the effects of the experienced emotions shaped the emotional lives of the lecturers. To date, no known study has examined the emotional lives of lecturers teaching at Nigerian universities. Moreover, there is barely any research that used the ecological system theory of Bronfenbrenner (1994) to understand how the circumstances within the lecturers' environments interact to produce

emotions that shape their emotional lives. This study made few recommendations for lecturers teaching at two selected universities.

### *Theoretical framework*

The ecological system theory of Bronfenbrenner (1994) stipulates that individual (lecturers) exist and function in five different environments: microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem. Bronfenbrenner (1994) argued that activities within the environment could advance or thwart the success depending on the support within the system. Becker (2016) and Bronfenbrenner (1994) explain that reciprocal interaction, a two-way relationship contributes to the success of individuals. The five environments as illustrated in figure 1 below.

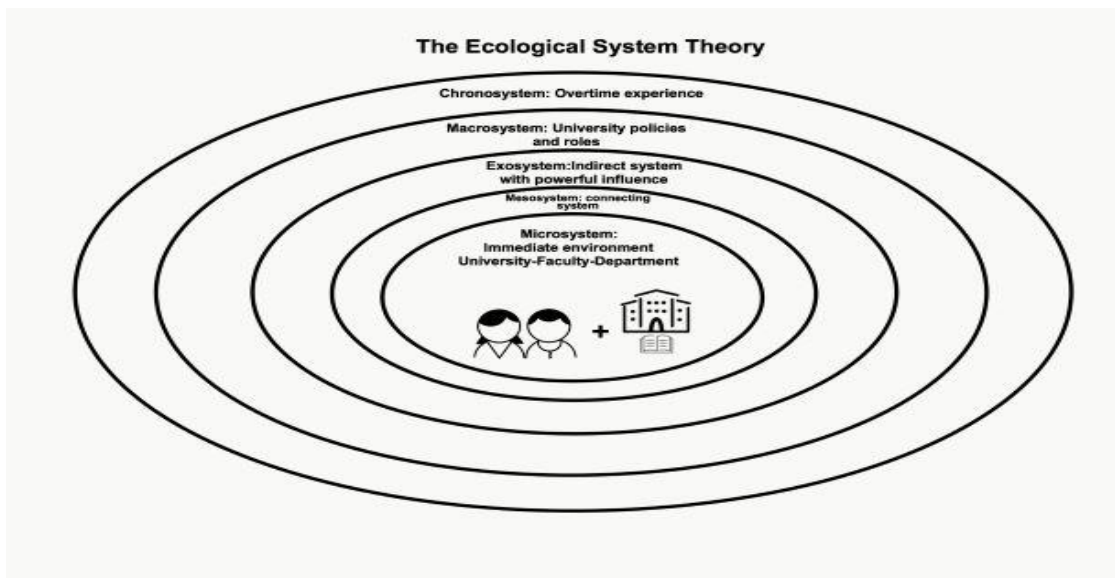


Figure 1: Bronfenbrenner's (1994) Ecological Theory adapted from Igbafe and Silinda, 2021

The first environment is the microsystem, comprising the Department-Faculty-other units within the university in which the lecturers' function daily. The activities within the microsystem require quality working conditions and resources to function effectively. The university management is to provide needed resources to achieve university goals. The second environment is the mesosystem, comprising the two or more components of the microsystems, for example, the Department and Faculty or Faculty and University. The mesosystem connects the activities and experiences of the university and faculty or department and the university. Swart and Pettipher (2011) explain that experiences of the mesosystem could expose an individual(s) to problems if there is limited support and nurturing. The exosystem is an external environment that has a direct impact on lecturers (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). The exosystem is regarded as an external environment because it comprises the trade union and the government. The macrosystem is the outermost layer comprising the policies and regulations that guide the university activities. The macrosystem policy and guidelines determine support and problem-solving strategies within the university. The fifth environment is the chronosystem, which is the historical context of all the activities within the environments. The chronosystem records the significant experiences of the individual lecturers in the system that shapes their emotional lives.

## **Methodology**

### *Research Design*

In this study, the interpretative phenomenological research design enables participants to create meaning from their experiences. This helped to generate data that have richness and depth to clarify the complexity associated with the issues under study (Flick et al., 2004; Larkin et al., 2011; Ritchie et al., 2003). Thus, the use of interpretative phenomenological research design was applicable since the aim was to understand the emotional lives of lecturers from the activities within the university.

### *Sample and Data Collection*

#### *Research sites*

The research site population considered 44 universities. The following set of criteria guided the purposive selection of the research sites (universities): a) age-the university must belong to an old or new generation university; b) the university must belong to the federal or state government; c) the university must give informed consent (Eyal, 2011) to participate and must allow their lecturers to participate voluntarily. Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) and Maree (2012)

explain that the purpose of using specific criteria for purposive selection is to achieve a set objective, such as the need to understand the activities that influence and shape the emotional lives of lecturers. Thus, the researcher selected two universities, one from the federal and one from the state category. The federal university is one of the oldest universities in Nigeria; it is in a safe environment and easily accessible by road. The federal university was 'FU'. The state-owned category of university selected is one of the youngest universities and has achieved tremendous success. The state university was 'SU'.

#### *Research participants*

After purposive selection of the research sites, the researcher used the gatekeepers (faculty deans and heads of the department) to negotiate easy access to the lecturers (Singh & Wassenaar, 2016). The criteria for selection are: the lecturer must be a teaching staff with a doctoral degree or a doctoral candidate in the Faculty of Education and Social Science; either sex; lecturer must be teaching for more than two years in the participating university (federal or state); lecturer must give informed consent for the interview to be audio recorded at the natural environment. 30 lecturers indicated interest and 12 lecturers were purposive. It implies that six lecturers from each university type as participants. The 12 participants consented to be interviewed, the interview audio recorded. The use of the twelve participants was motivated by the research design, which allows purposive sampling to select the number of participants to provide rich information relevant to answer the research question (Bryman, 2012). Again, phenomenology research is to gain a research perspective on a lived experiences familiar to those participants taking part. Thus, information power describes the participants with much-needed lived emotional experiences (Malterud et al., 2015). The information of the lecturers that participated in the study is in Table 2 below.

*Table 2. Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Participants*

No	Demographic Characteristics	Federal University	State University
1.	Gender		
	Male (6)	3	3
	Female (6)	3	3
2.	Educational Qualifications		
	With doctoral degree	3	3
	Without doctoral degree	3	3
3.	Participant's code and university type		
	▪ Federal university (FU)	Age	Sex
	▪ State University (SU)		
4.	P1, FU	58	M
	P2, FU	59	F
	P3, FU	53	M
	P4, FU	35	F
	P5, FU	50	M
	P6, FU	45	F
	P7, SU	48	M
	P8, SU	35	F
	P9, SU	50	M
	P10, SU	57	F
	P11, SU	55	M
	P12, SU	46	F

Table 2 above represents the Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Participants based on university types such as Federal University (FU) and State University (SU). The code FU and SU is an abbreviation derived from the universities to reflect the participant's university. There are two genders associated in this study, male represented with (M) and female (F), the various number selected from each university type. Although the age of the participants was not a criterion, it was necessary to understand the emotions expressed by the participants. The educational qualification for each selected participant was grouped as with a doctoral degree and without a doctoral degree justified by the study's inclusion criteria. As shown in Table 2, the participants' code numbers ranged from 1-12. The numbers were for easy identification among participants and across the participant universities. Thus, as an example, the code reflects (the participant (p), Number (1) and federal for F, or S for state and U for university (P1FU).

### Data collection methods

The language for data collection was English. The data collection method was a semi-structured interview supported by probing questions (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). The interview questions were clear and relevant to the study and pretested to ascertain the suitability of the questions. In the use of semi-structured interviews, the researcher maintained the standpoint that positioned her as a tool that gathered and interpreted the data with an unbiased method (Maree, 2012; Wellington, 2000). The interviews took between 45 minutes and 60 minutes. The semi-structured interviews were audio-recorded and translated for analysis to understand the emotional lives of university lecturers as they adapt and sustainably manage the self.

### Data analysis

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was employed to understand the activities in the university environment with a capacity to produce emotions that shape the emotional lives of the participants. The texts were grouped into meaningful units, comparing the participants' data, selecting the most reoccurring units that answered the research questions, and grouping these units into themes and sub-themes. Giorgi (2009) five stages of phenomenological psychological data analysis were also applied to compare selected texts consistently to ensure the grouped texts support each theme. The emerged themes were further interpreted (Bryman, 2012; Eatough & Smith, 2008).

## Findings

The three themes that emerged were: Theme 1: work condition and accreditation panel. Theme 2: the trade union and government disagreement. Theme 3: the effects of experienced emotions on the participants.

### Theme 1: Work condition, resources and accreditation panel

From many participants, positive emotions were developed and strengthened through the visit to the accreditation panel because their coming compelled the university to equip the department with teaching materials. The accreditation panel is a professional body that approves programmes of study. The accreditation panel engages on the site visit to inspect and evaluate the quality of the resources available for the programme. To ensure the programme meets the expected standard before a certificate of approval to the university-faculty department. The participants saw the visit of the accreditation panel as an opportunity to obtain teaching resources and a better work condition which act as the motivator of positive emotions. The participants expressed themselves with shouts of joy and happiness, an expression that became the defining factor of the kind of emotional life they wanted:

*I always scream with joy when the university management allocates teaching and research equipment. Generally, the university management at the departmental or course level makes available teaching materials because of the coming of the accreditation panel. (P2, FU)*

A participant, P10, SU, confirmed that the visit of the accreditation panel became the reason for contentment at work. P10, SU confirmation is an indication that teaching resources had contributed to the kind of emotional life P10, SU expected. P10, SU identified shouting to be heard by students as one of the challenges of teaching without required facilities. Shouting to be heard revealed the physical efforts P10, SU put in when there was a lack of resources. Thus, the allocation of teaching resources is a sign of relief to continue to work despite the challenges:

*I am happy when I have the teaching materials I need for my subjects. During accreditation, when they said the delegates were coming, most of the facilities were given, and then, it helped to teach a large class without shouting, and we had some of the things that would aid learning, and it made us feel more like surviving. (P10, SU)*

A participant further confirmed the value attached to teaching resources and the consequent emotions. Thus, P3, FU saw the allocation of teaching resources that promote and advance inclusiveness as a contributor of happiness to the existence within the university environment:

*When I have the resources to innovate my teaching [style], I feel happy. Some students are visual learners, and some are experimental, so I have to consider their needs to create an inclusive learning situation. (P3, FU)*

P8, SU and students entered into a willing agreement to collaborate as a means of acquiring basic facilities. P8, SU description of the collaboration process revealed the efforts of the lecturer and students to ensure quality teaching and learning. Although P8, SU explanation showed that the initiatives were born out of trust and good relationships with students, it revealed the neglect of the university management, which promoted the desire to collaborate with students, a situation indicating frustration and desperation. The collaboration could be a new strategy aimed at maintaining a positive emotional life:

*Sometimes, we have to borrow and, sometimes, you have to tell the students why you don't get this or that. The students unanimously agreed and got one; such collaborations made me happy. Again, we achieved such because of the trust and a good relationship I have with my students. We became tired of waiting for management, so we acted and solved our problems. (P8, SU)*

Another participant, P7, SU, explained that the collaboration at the departmental level to acquire teaching resources and needful facilities. P7, SU pointed out the effectiveness of the initiative both at the collaboration and implementation phase. A strong indication of their compassion for each other and the power of collaboration in handling challenges. This departmental initiative raised concern about the struggle the participants went through to create work condition that advances positive emotional lives:

*Okay, the way we did it was that we organised to generate internal revenue to use the generated internal revenue to obtain the equipment and construct the facilities we needed. (P7, SU)*

P1, FU described the lives of lecturers as tense supporting their desperation to collaborate among themselves and with students to obtain teaching resources. P1, FU reported the university environment as increasingly worse and expressed unhappiness about the physical condition of the reading room and workroom. Unhappiness that depicts a state of helplessness because of the university management failure to provide needful teaching resources:

*The lives of lecturers in many Nigerian universities are tense because we don't have the necessary teaching resources. Generally, it is openly visible, [the] existing facilities are not maintained. The laboratories and libraries lack modern equipment and new books. I am not [happier], and most lecturers I know are not [happier] with this working condition. (P1, FU)*

P6, FU had the same understanding with P1, FU in the appalling work environment. P6, FU linked it to poor maintenance culture. By mentioning the culture of maintenance. P6, FU revealed that the work condition is a lingering problem, which can be human behaviour. Maintenance cultures from the participant's perspective suggest that the nature of the university environment contributes to the type of emotions they experienced and goal achievement. The maintained facilities function at their optimum to lessen the pressure of disruption. This poor maintenance culture was part of the reason the trade union called for the withdrawal of services:

*Also, there is a 'poor maintenance culture', as some of the equipment is barely maintained. The buildings are painted once in many years instead of every year. These are some of the reasons. ASSU (trade union) always calls for strikes. (P6, FU)*

The unavailability of teaching resources produced negative emotions, and to maintain positive emotions, the participants took the initiative to collaborate among colleagues or with students to procure needful facilities. The visit of the accreditation panel influenced the shifting of participants' emotions from sadness to happiness, an indication that positive emotional lives depend on teaching resources.

#### *Theme 2: Trade union and government disagreement*

The trade union and government's disagreement over how to better the universities and lecturers emerged as a source of emotions. The participants described the withdrawal of services as a strategy to compel the government to increase its investment in higher education. Most of the participants suggested that the withdrawal of services affected them emotionally because of its constant nature. For example, using the concept of time, P11, SU used the term deceitful to describe the continuous failure of the government in the implementation of the agreement signed with the trade union:

*Over the past years teaching staff members have consistently taken to service withdrawal as the best strategy to seek the betterment of Higher Education. Trade unions' call for service withdrawal is to get the government's attention. The government's response has always been deceitful and immediate with a haphazard plan. (P11, SU)*

From the constant withdrawal of services, most of the participants developed annoyance, frustration and sadness associated with the government's delayed implementation of the agreement signed with the trade union. The delayed implementation of the signed agreement leads to a warning, definite or indefinite withdrawal of services, a model of waiting that increased the workload of participants, thereby forcing them to work under pressure as evident in P12, SU comment:

*It is annoying when we have to wait indefinitely for the government and our trade union representatives to agree on how to solve our problems. There was a time we [lecturers] had to wait for over six months., it is both frustrating and sad because we must cover both previous and present course units. (P12, SU)*

P2, FU used mayhem to figuratively describe the disruptions, helplessness and unavoidable nature of the trade union's conflict with the government. Mayhem also highlighted the crippling chaotic problems of trade unions and government disagreements that resulted in emotions:

*The strike is a disruption. You see! the government and ASSU members are yet to reach a consensus due to the mayhem that erupted in the signing of the 2009 agreement lecturers are sad because we are waiting. (P2, FU)*

Some participants referred to the trade union and government conflict as an academic war. P5, FU was more vocal in the narration of the experienced war. The war had physical, emotional and behavioural effects. P5, FU also mentioned the helplessness of the lecturers and students during the withdrawal of services. P5, FU described the outcome of the war as

both positive and negative. Positive, when the government attended to the trade union and negative when the government failed to meet the needs of the trade union:

*Of course, when we talk of strikes, we are talking of war, academic war. In any war, there are casualties. It will affect everybody. Sometimes, it is disruptive, I think I can do something, but I won't even conduct research. Once the students are all gone, as a teacher, your passion is gone. It's like you have no job. It is very frustrating. And then the students themselves who were supposed to spend three years will end up spending five to six years. You see, these are issues that make us sad and happy. Sad because they disrupt academic calendars and increase our workload. We are happy when the government attends to our requests. (P5, FU)*

A participant blamed the constant withdrawal of services to the trade unions and the government's rigidity during negotiation, dialogue, and implementation. P1, FU views suggested that the trade union and the government's created constant disagreement because of their attitude towards finding a lasting solution. A situation that has deepened the conflict and disrupted the university calendar as the trade union remained determined to lessen the challenges facing lecturers:

*Unfortunately, the trade union and the government's rigid behaviour before and during the strike action increased the problems of lecturers. Consistently, both groups displayed stubbornness that is the reason it will always end in withdrawal of service. It makes me sad and sick of the system. (P1, FU)*

The participant used the concept of time, mayhem, and academic war to describe the activities of the trade union and government with effects on the participants. The activities constantly shifted participants' experienced emotions from positive to negative, or negatively to positive depending on the outcome, thereby making the emotional lives of participants unstable.

### *Theme 3: Experienced emotions and effects on participants*

The experienced emotions affected participants and created problems in the way they felt. Some participants felt deprived and lacking strength because of the psychological, cognitive and physical effects. One of the participants, P4, FU used strong constructs to explain the situations that shaped the emotional life. Three constructs were a mental challenge, psychological tasking and, emotionally exhausting with an overwhelmingly weakening effect as evident in this comment:

*It is cognitively demanding, psychologically tasking, and emotionally draining, especially if you are a lecturer without a PhD. Struggling to coordinate work and study challenges can be difficult for me. Because the department or faculty does not care about what you are going through. (P4, FU)*

According to P12, SU, the effect of the experienced emotions created a disconnection between work and doctoral studies because of extreme tiredness and physical pains evident in this comment:

*As a doctoral student struggling with my studies, it can be emotionally draining, cognitively frustrating. It limits my ability to think sharp and straight. I can't make the right decision, and I am emotionally severely affected suffer excruciating pain. (P12, SU)*

A participant, P8, SU reported the experienced anxiety which resulted in the adoption of quietness, engaging in self-blame, and self-criticism as a personal management style:

*When I am afraid or anxious, I remain quiet. Occasionally I blame and judge myself for getting involved in activities that affect me emotionally. (P8, SU)*

P11, SU mentioned that events within the department provoked negative emotions and used the term 'protective' to describe the struggle to hide emotional vulnerabilities from colleagues. P11, SU mentioned personal rejection of display of negative emotions as a reason for the protection:

*Although there are issues within the department that make me angry, I do not display my emotions. The display of emotion is generally not acceptable to me. I choose to hide my negative emotion so nobody can use my weakness to harm me. I am protective of my negative emotions more than the positive ones. (P11, SU)*

P5, FU mentioned that dealing with experienced negative emotions within the university was difficult. P5, FU reported personal struggles and the adoption of avoidance and suppression of experienced emotions as management strategies, it had physical effects on the body:

*Avoiding negative emotions is difficult, particularly in a university environment, yet I try as much as I can to avoid expressing it..., but I enjoy suppressing the way I feel within this university. It is painful because I feel it in my body. (P5, FU)*

P3, FU used repetition of the term 'painful' to describe the intensity of the effects of experienced emotions. P3, FU blamed the government for the experiences because historically, the trade union had used the withdrawal of services to compel the government to implement the signed agreement. Thus, the government has failed to learn that without implementation of the signed agreement, the trade union will always withdrawal their services:



*It is painful, yes! Painful but, it's just that we have a government that does not learn, especially when it comes to trade unions. The government has very little knowledge of the understanding of how to handle it. (P3, FU)*

In contrast to other participants, P9, SU presented a picture of other lecturers who experienced upset, unhappiness and irritation because of work conditions. P9, SU revealed that lecturers hid the way they felt:

*Lecturers feel sad, angry, and frustrated; you don't expect us to carry placards to know some of us are very sad with the working conditions. (P9, SU)*

In this theme, the participants expressed how the experienced emotions made them feel and the problems in the way they felt. The participants mentioned their adopted personal management style to ensure positive emotional lives. Further interpreted of the participants' narratives emotional lives can be said to be teaching resources dependent, teaching resources, academic war dependent and convenient behaviour dependent as presented in figure 2 below.

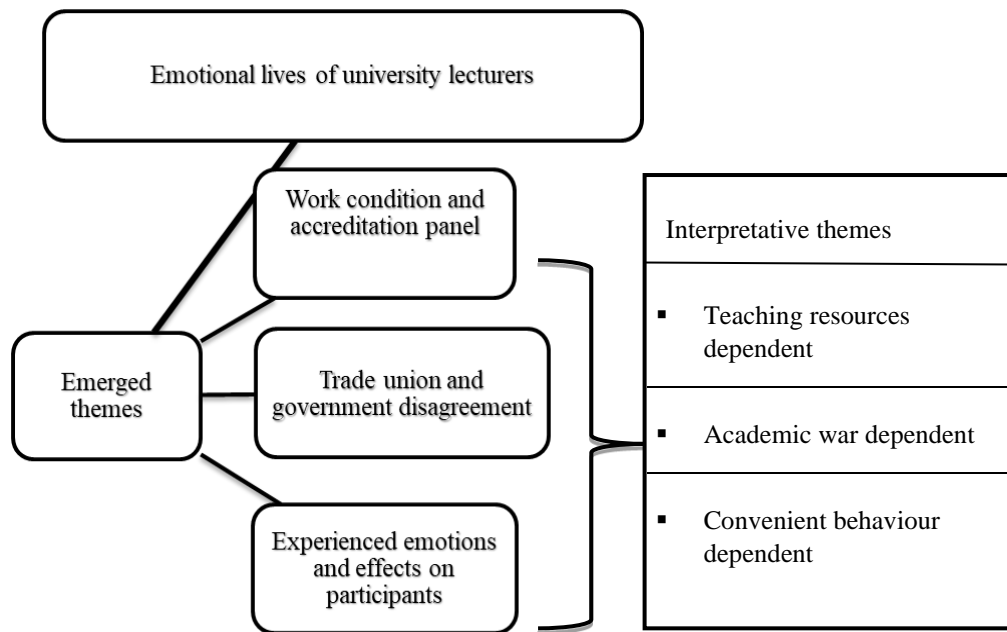


Figure 2. Emerged themes for emotional lives

## Discussion

This study examined the emotional lives of lecturers at two selected universities. The study aimed to provide qualitative evidence on how activities triggered emotions that shaped and reshaped the lives of lecturers. Purposively selected 12 lecturers from two universities as the participants. The emerged themes and extracted narratives were teaching resources, academic war and convenient behaviours. The findings suggested that participants' emotional lives are dependent on teaching resources, academic war and convenient behaviour.

### *Emotional lives as teaching resources dependent*

The concept of 'dependent' describes the reliance on working resources that determined the participant's emotions and how they made them feel. Acknowledging emotional lives as teaching resources dependent revealed that participants are rooted in the availability and unavailability of resources. This finding creates awareness that participants had a strong emotional attachment to teaching resources because it is one of the determinants of quality of delivery and productivity reported in Trigwell (2012). The finding highlights that the availability of teaching resources increases productivity in education through guided determination (Galatzer-Levy et al., 2013; Onyeonoru, 2004; Osakede et al., 2018). The availability of teaching resources produced experiences of joy and happiness. These positive emotions shaped the way lecturers feel and behave within the university because it connects, inspires and promotes teaching strategies that meet the needs of students and support lecturers' teaching skills (Makhanya, 2007). The finding is in line with the work of Zito et al. (2019) that suggests that the availability of teaching resources promotes positive emotions and productivity at work. This study also found that the unavailability of teaching resources produced sadness, anger, and frustration, which caused body pains for the participants. This finding is similar to the work of Bakker (2008) that suggests that lack of teaching resources produced negative emotions with effects on the individual that experienced it.

The emotions that resulted from the availability and unavailability of teaching resources shifted from positive to negative and created emotional instability. Participants in the study mentioned that emotional instability promoted the experienced psychological drain and cognitive frustration. This finding is in line with the report of Coetzee and Jansen (2007) that instability placed participants in a situation where needs for positive emotional lives are unmet with effects.

The effect is, participants became accustomed to a constricted way of experiencing positive emotional lives. This constricted way had implications for participants emotional lives as nervousness or pressure could increase their need for medical intervention (Goleman, 2004). The inability to navigate the wellbeing problems may result in frequent excuse duties reported in the work of Spalek (2021). This finding highlighted the effects of the emotional drain and intense disorientation mentioned by participants without a doctoral degree. The need for mentorship for young lecturers to build emotional skills for sustainable adjustment and adaptability is in line with the work of Atanda (2017). Interpretively, it implies that unavailability of teaching resources affected either gender, lecturers with a doctoral degree or those without a doctoral degree, participants without a doctoral degree felt more distressed and disoriented in coordinating work and study activities.

#### *Emotional lives as academic war dependent*

Academic war metaphorically described the continuous conflicts between the trade union and government. The war also described the state of hostility between the trade union and government because of work conditions. The academic war did not involve a physical fight, but warning strikes, definite or indefinite withdrawal of services as a strategy to compel the government to implement the signed memorandum of agreement. Thus, the terminology 'emotional lives as academic war dependent' describes the influence, control and pressure the continuous conflict between the trade union and government had on shaping the emotional lives of the participants. The findings of the study identified mayhem, sadness and frustration as prominent emotions from academic war. Mayhem in this study means extreme disruption; interpreting and linking the concept of mayhem to emotional lives reveals the extensive effect on the emotions experienced by participants. Sadness is the absence of happiness, which could be a result of pressure, frustration and mayhem. Participants without emotion control may experience adjustment problems leading to poor performance and low productivity reported in the work of Harnois and Gabriel (2000). Frustration is the act of blocking, interfering with or disrupting anything capable of achieving specific goals (Reber et al., 2009). Linking frustration to emotional life reveals a state of helplessness triggered by academic war characterised by fear of uncertainties of work performance and productivity problems. This finding is in line with the work of Singh and Singh (2016) that neglected frustration produces confusion and disorganisation in goal achievement. The disorganisation was because of the government's continuous resistance to agreements signed with the trade union. This finding aligns with the works that reported frustration as a reaction to a situation likely to thwart the achievement of professional and personal goals (de Botton, 2011; Jeronimus & Laceulle, 2017). The lack of emotional support from the university management at the departmental and faculty may also limit participants ability to navigate the effects of mayhem, sadness and frustration.

#### *Emotional Lives as Convenient Behaviour Dependent*

Emotional lives as convenient behaviour dependent revealed the behaviour participants adopted to endure the effects of the experienced emotions because, in the universities, there was barely any emotional support. The convenient behaviours represented the paradigm for an individual managing approach. The three prominent behaviours are remaining quiet, avoiding emotional expression, and engaging in emotional suppression. In remaining quiet, there was the absence of open reaction and noticeable emotional expression. The act of being quiet could be complying with control guidelines of managing pressuring situations (Harvard Women's Health Watch, 2020). However, to remain calm is an outcome of feeling helpless and submission to the events that produced the emotions because quietness forced the participant to engage in self-blame and self-criticism which, can result in depression (Blatt, 2008; Ehret et al., 2015). Thus, to remain quiet depicted excessive struggles to assure sustainable managing of self as a lecturer. Avoiding emotional expression refers to restraining self from displaying any emotions causing discomfort to self and other people (Calkins et al., 2002; Degnan et al., 2008). Avoiding emotional expression entails preventing the display of felt emotions and problems associated with the emotions that made the lecturers feel (Igbafe, 2020). Avoiding emotional expression has been identified to provide short-lived relief and have a more pronounced effect on the individual as self-disconnection from colleagues and work activities (Igbafe, 2016; Tull & Kimbrel, 2020). Disconnecting from colleagues could negatively influence lecturers limiting their ability to enjoy more positive emotional lives. Emotional suppression refers to participants disguising experienced emotions as a way of managing themselves. Suppressed emotions could negatively affect the body and mind, leading to illness (Evans & Johnson, 2000; Goleman, 2004; Steptoe & Kivimäki, 2013). These adopted convenient behaviour to manage self-sustainably raised concerns as the behaviours can increase the effects of emotions.

#### *A theoretical contribution to the findings*

The core contributions of Bronfenbrenner's (1994) ecological theory are in the participants' environments. The macrosystem lack of defined policy increased the participants need to adopt convenient behaviours to manage and sustain themselves. The behaviours adopted have health implications (Harvard Women's Health Watch, 2020; The National Institute of Mental Health, 2021). The microsystem also revealed that some participants used their financial resources to procure teaching materials. This initiative could increase family financial hardship by constraining them from addressing needs before and during withdrawal of services. Financial constraints could produce emotional issues because of the poor salary of lecturers and the rising cost of living in Nigeria. This finding aligned with Swart and

Pettipher (2011) report that microsystem and mesosystem are connected. However, the study is ongoing on the extent of lecturers' financial involvement to ensure teaching resources are available where universities had failed to provide prerequisite teaching resources. This present study found that lecturers invested their funds but did not focus on the effects on lecturers' emotional lives. The exosystem conflict may be a model for compelling the government to better the universities, but the experienced emotions could compromise the wellbeing of lecturers. The macrosystem revealed that the lack of policies and regulations advancing emotional support at the university, faculty, and department contributed to the unstable nature of the emotional lives of the lecturers. A careful interpretation of emotional experience revealed that lecturers without doctoral degrees require emotional support and mentoring. The chronosystem over time experience of teaching with limited resources and increased academic wars produced emotions that ingrained and shaped the emotional lives of lecturers more negatively than positively.

### Conclusion

This present study qualitatively investigated how teaching at the selected Nigerian universities produced emotions that shaped and reshaped the emotional lives of lecturers as they adapt and sustainably manage the self. Although the findings of this study revealed a consistent shift from positive to negative emotions and vice vices, living with sadness, frustration and anxiety predispose the lecturers to a mental disorder such as depression (Harnois & Gabriel, 2000). Notwithstanding, the findings are specific to the Nigerian environment or any context with issues of teaching resources, conflicts leading to the withdrawal of service without emotional support units for the lecturers. Using Bronfenbrenner (1994)'s ecological theory, lack of emotional support enabled negative emotions to dominate the emotional lives of lecturers. None of the participants received emotional support from the university at the faculty and departmental level, the trade union or the government. Thus, this study has shown that providing teaching resources, improving work conditions to reduce constant conflict between the government and trade union could positively influence the emotional lives of lecturers. Promotion of support may also require the inclusion of emotion in a professional development programme.

### Recommendations

Based on the findings of this present study on emotional lives as the teaching resources, academic war, convenient behaviour dependent, the university management, trade union and government should address the issues to ensure a more balanced emotional life characterised with less intense emotions like sadness, frustration and anxiety. Thus, there is a need for policy to support emotion as part of a professional development programme to strengthen the emotional lives of lecturers. Similarly, the trade union can facilitate emotional support for members to adjust during and after the academic war. A mentorship programme for their young members as a strategy of adapting to the environment is necessary. It is for further study to investigate the soundness of the findings across other categories of universities and geopolitical zones of Nigeria with a large population.

### Limitations

This study tried to identify, understand and interpret from an emotional perspective how events that occur within the university develop and affect the emotional lives of university lecturers. The emphasis of the study was on the emotional lives of teaching at the university and the events that contributed to the development of emotions, hence by focusing on the emotional lives in two selected universities, it will be difficult to generalise the findings of this present study. Notwithstanding these limitations, as far as the researcher is aware, this study is the only study that explores the emotional lives of university lecturers in Nigeria.

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I wish to acknowledge everyone who critiques the study at one point. I also declare there are no conflicts of interest to disclose.

### Ethical consideration

The paper was part of the researcher's doctoral thesis from the Faculty of Education, University of Pretoria, South Africa. The University of Pretoria and the two Nigeria universities that participated in the study gave ethical clearance for this study.

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