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**Assessment of Emotional Labour for Quality Education System in Doctoral Supervision Process in Zimbabwe Universities**

By

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**Abstract**

The main purpose of the study was to operationalize emotional labour in academic environment and its efficacy on performance. The contention of this study is that every job role requires its own type of emotional engagement. Regardless of how difficult a situation is, the intensity of emotional strain on people is often different. There are differences in how people experience stress. People regulate their emotions differently depending on how easily they get frustrated with controlling their feelings. Our assumptions are that the postgraduate supervision relationship between a supervisor and a student involves productive power relations between two or more pedagogical adults. In this study 20 respondents were used as research subjects. The study adopted a quantitative research approach rooted in the pragmatist paradigm. A cross sectional survey research design was used and the sample was randomly selected from the population. Questionnaires were data collection instruments used in this study. Data was analysed using non parametric Chi-square test of independence and cross tabulations through Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Findings from the study presented sufficient evidence that emotional labour as experienced by postgraduate supervisors and students is present and affect quality of service, innovation, motivation among the parties concerned. The practical contribution of this study applies to the relationship between supervisor and students in the postgraduate supervision process. The study contributed methodologically to the investigation of the process of emotional labour and the application of the findings to explore occupations for the presence of emotional labour. The study recommends that longitudinal studies to be explored to study a cohort of students in universities over a long period of time in an attempt to determine efficacy of emotional labour and how it impact to the quality of education system in Zimbabwe.

**Key words:** Emotional labour, performance, postgraduate research, universities, Zimbabwe

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## **Assessment of Emotional Labour for Quality Education System in Doctoral Supervision Process in Zimbabwe Universities**

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### **Introduction and Background of the Study**

The objective of this study was to operationalize emotional labour in academic environment and its efficacy on performance. The study was based on the premise that emotional labour has been found to be present in all jobs that are service oriented. The emotional labour term was firstly used by Hochschild in 1979 in the meaning of deliberately hiding or expressing the emotions of meeting the organizational aims (Brown, 2011). According to Morris and Feldman (1996) the emotional intelligence is to display the behaviours which are desired by the organisations in interpersonal relationships.

The prevalence of emotional labour is noted by Mann (1997) where it is performed in almost two-thirds of workplace interaction and the maintaining of job standards and job target. The role of emotion at workplace can be even stronger because various factors, including the interaction with supervisors, peers, and followers, generate affective experiences that have potential to influence subsequent behaviours (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). Emotional labour is an essential requisite in most professions. Ecclestone (2012) posit that emotional labour produces multiple consequences for organisations such as constant performance by employees, uniform image and regular satisfied subordinates and customers.

Mendzheritsaya, Hansen and Horz (2010) argue that academicians are subjected to conflicting demands from employers, society at large and students. Hatfield, Bensman, Thornton and Rapson (2014) asserted that demands made by stakeholders in the academic fraternity and workload leads to exploitation and consequently to stress. Emotional labour has been defined as a state that exists when there is a discrepancy between demeanour that an individual displays and the genuinely felt emotions that would be appropriate to display (Berry & Cassidy, 2013). Emotional labour is typified by the way roles and tasks exert overt control over emotional displays (Ecclestone, 2012). This study is aimed at seeking the effects of emotional labour on lecturers in performance of students in the post graduate supervision process in the context of Zimbabwe state universities.

Therefore, displaying the emotions required and determined by the organisations has started to become an important factor of the job performance (Morris & Feldman, 1996). Performance is an important criterion in the evaluation of the degree of achieving the objectives as an organization and the contribution of the employees to this achievement (Özdevecioğlu & Kanigür, 2009), and the sum of each employee's performance reveals the total job performance of the organization. It can be said that this performance has a multidimensional structure (Befort & Hatrup, 2003). Two types of performance dimensions are often mentioned in terms of the theory and implementation, which are task performance and contextual performance (Borman &

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Motowidlo, 1997; Jawahar & Carr, 2007). Another dimension can be added to these two sub-dimensions especially in today's circumstances for organizations in order to maintain their continuity and ensure their competitive advantage. This third dimension is innovative job performance, which allows finding new ideas and implementing these ideas. The task performance means fixed duties and responsibilities that makes a job differed from others (Jawahar & Carr, 2007).

Contextual performance is not included in the definition of the task, but it is similar in most businesses, and can be considered as the behaviours in which the personality and intention of individuals are the determinant factors (Özdevecioğlu & Kanıgür, 2009). The innovative job performance is a complex and challenging definition of the tasks, which contains many mental and social actions such as; creating, developing, discussing, regulating and implementing new innovative ideas (Özdevecioğlu & Kanıgür, 2009).

The job performance can be shown as one of the most common results of emotional labour invested by employees (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002). However, it is thought that real or fake feelings related to display of emotional labour might have positive or negative effects on the performance. In line with this thought, according to some researchers, performing emotional labour with natural feelings might have a positive effect on the performance (Ashforth & Humphrey, 2012); whereas fake emotions, in other words surface acting, might have a negative effect on the performance (Grandey, 2000). When the literature is examined within this scope, it will be seen that in some studies, there are some findings supporting the relationship between the emotional labour and performance. Some of these studies are as follows: A positive correlation has been found between deep acting and task performance along with the deep acting and contextual performance in the study of Onay (2011), which is conducted in order to investigate the relationship between the emotional labour of the nurses and their task and contextual performances. Yet another research conducted in the health sector (Çağlıyan et al., 2013) has identified the relationship between the emotional labour and task and contextual performance.

According to a study carried out with the workers of service industry by Ünlü and Yürür (2011), deep acting and surface acting, which are sub-dimensions of emotional labour, increase the performing intention of task and contextual performance. In the study of Basım and Begenirbaş (2012), it has been specified that the emotional labour of the teachers has an important influence on the organizational citizenship behaviours that can be evaluated in the context of contextual performance. In this regard, it has been found that surface acting reduces the contextual performance, whereas the natural emotions increase the contextual performance.

Different authors have defined the process of supervision in various ways. Pearson and Brew (2002) define supervision in the academic context as a process to facilitate the student becoming an independent professional researcher and scholar in their field, capable of adapting to various research arenas, whether university or industry-based. On the other hand, Cryer and Mertens (2003) define postgraduate supervision as a process involving complex, academic and interpersonal skills. These skills, according to Cryer and Mertens (2003), include guiding postgraduate students towards sound proposal preparation, methodological choices, documenting and publishing their research, maintaining both supportive and professional relationships, as well as reflecting on the research process.

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The commercialisation of education globally, though significantly adding value to the country's economy poses certain challenges especially to the academicians. Hatfield, Bensman, Thornton and Rapson (2014) avers that many universities today around the world have transformed from being a public good to a private good, thus wholly changing the way it operates. In fact, the responsibility to constantly maintain the quality and competitiveness of the education offered is mostly borne by the academic staff. In line with this, commercialisation of higher education has intensified the job characteristics and role of lecturers. Apart from teaching, a lecturer employed at a university is seen obligated to satisfying the students, keeping the ratings of the university as well to ensure the products (graduates) are well received in the labour market as productive (Hall, Swart & Duncan, 2013). Hagenauer and Volet (2014) argue that university lecturer's wellbeing, job satisfaction and performance could be suggested as predicting factors for student satisfaction, performance and retention. Student satisfaction can be further suggested as predictive factors for a university lecturer's level of job satisfaction and emotional labour level (Hagenauer & Volet, 2014).

The customer-driven system warrants that teaching staff perform emotional labour in order to mitigate the negative emotions and to avoid disgruntled customers (Selvarajah & Sulaiman, 2014). The execution of emotional labour is expected at the time of execution of duties, thereby becoming a surplus value to teaching and learning activity experienced by customers (Gaan, 2012). The teaching profession has been established as one that is profoundly emotional (Kinmann, Wray & Strange, 2011). Although there are many studies on teachers' emotional labour but studies on emotional labour in amongst lecturers are limited. Lecturers undertake a disparate range of duties (for example teaching, research, administration, management and student counselling) with each requiring varying degrees of emotional display over an extended period (Ogbonna & Harris, 2004).

Titsworth, McKenna, Mazer and Quinlan (2013) argue that the relationship between Chinese university lecturers and their customers (students) was an important factor in the performance of the university. Titsworth *et al.* (2013) were of the opinion that as a service organisation, universities focus to the manner in which its employees (lecturers) perform at the customer or provider interface, to gain competitive advantage. It is assumed that students and management of higher education institutions expect the academicians (lecturers) to perform emotional labour during the execution of their duties, thereby adding value to the teaching learning or teaching activity. Hagenauer & Volet (2014) asserted that as a service provider, the management is thus meeting the promise of delivering a hedonistic experience to the customer, while it is taken for granted that the academician will perform emotional labour in the classroom for the benefit of the students in the first instance, and consequently for the good of the university in the second (even via the potential for emotional deceit).

At independence in 1980 Zimbabwe had only one state university and to date there are 18 Universities and 11 are state owned whilst 8 are private universities (ZIMCHE, 2015). The expansion of the university system in Zimbabwe was mainly in response to ripple effects created by massive expansion of primary and secondary education soon after attaining political independence in 1980 (Kariwo, 2007). ZIMCHE (2006) asserted that while in 1980 only 2240 students attended university but to date more than 45000 are enrolled for university education in

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Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe government through the Council for Higher Education Act (ZIMCHE) (2006) has set up a body to monitor quality in institutions of higher learning. The studies on emotional labour in higher education in Zimbabwe context is limited, hence this study is conducted to fill the gap in literature. It needs to be established if emotional labour has an effect to performance of university lecturers and students in the context of Zimbabwe.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Within the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), quality education is a cornerstone of the post 2015 agenda, as a goal in itself, as well as a catalyst for broader change. The new global agenda recognises critical role of education for sustainable development, and the inter-linkages between education and transformative change. Although the commercialisation of education contributes significantly to the country's economy, it poses certain challenges to the academics. However, few studies have focused on students' experiences of postgraduate supervision (ASSAF Report, 2010). There is a need for empirical inquiry into the views and opinions of postgraduate studies regarding their supervision experiences.

Simple technique of improving academic success is listening to the study experiences of students. It is assumed that students, as the primary consumers of the education process, are uniquely positioned to understand the nature of their academic problems better, and that their perceptions can be useful in formulating solutions. There is dearth of literature on how university lecturers are seeking to cope with changes and developments in their labour processes and their diverse conflicting demands imposed by higher education institutions. However, the impact of emotional labour on performance of university lecturers and students in the post graduate supervision process has not been well addressed in the education sector in Zimbabwe. It is against this background that the current study attempted to look at the impact of emotional labour on performance of university lecturers and students in the context of Zimbabwe.

### **Objectives**

1. To investigate the effects of emotional labour on lecturers in performance of students in the postgraduate research supervision process in Zimbabwe state universities.

### **Hypotheses**

**H<sub>1</sub>:** Emotional labour positively improves task performance.

**H<sub>2</sub>:** Emotional labour positively improves innovation.

**H<sub>3</sub>:** Emotional labour positively improves service delivery.

**H<sub>4</sub>:** Emotional labour positively improves decision making.

**H<sub>5</sub>:** Emotional labour positively improves quality of service.

### **Methodology**

In this study 20 respondents were used as research subjects. This sample size is calculated from the 10% of the population basing on the rule of the thumb (Heilbron, 2016). The sample was randomly selected from all 200 registered Doctorate students in Zimbabwe State Universities. The study adopted a quantitative research approach rooted in the pragmatist paradigm. A cross



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sectional survey research design was used in this study. Questionnaires were data collection instruments adopted in this study. Data was analysed using non parametric Chi-square test of independence and cross tabulations through Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study is guided by Expectancy Theory by Victor Vroom (1964). The theory assumes that motivation is a conscious choice process. According to this theory, people choose to put their effort into activities they believe they can perform that will produce desired outcomes. Expectancy theory argues that decisions about which activities to engage in are based on the combination of three sets of beliefs: expectancy, instrumentality, and valence. Expectancy beliefs reflect an individual's judgment of whether applying (or increasing) effort to a task will result in its successful accomplishment. Stated another way, people with high expectancy believe that increased effort will lead to better performance, but people with low expectancy do not believe that their efforts, no matter how great, will affect their performance.

All things being equal, people should engage in tasks for which they have high expectancy beliefs. The second belief, instrumentality, is a judgment about the connection the individual perceives (if any) between task performance and possible outcomes. Making an instrumentality judgment entails asking the question, "If I perform this task successfully, is it likely to get me something I want (or something I don't want)?" Instrumentality ranges from strongly positive (the individual is certain that performing a task will lead to a particular outcome), through zero (the individual is certain there is no relationship between performing the task and the occurrence of a particular outcome), to strongly negative (the individual is certain that performing a certain task will prevent a particular outcome from occurring). The third belief important to expectancy theory is valence.

Valence refers to the value the person places on a particular outcome. Valence judgments range from strongly positive (for highly valued outcomes), through zero (for outcomes the person doesn't care about), to strongly negative (for outcomes the person finds aversive). Expectancy theory posits that employees will make these three sets of judgments when deciding which behaviours and tasks to engage in. Specifically, the theory predicts that employees will choose to put effort into behaviours they; believe they can perform successfully (high expectancy) and believe are connected (high instrumentality) to outcomes they desire (high valence) or believe will prevent (negative instrumentality) outcomes they want to avoid (negative valence).

### **Literature Review**

#### **2. Effects of emotional labour on lecturers in performance of students in the postgraduate research supervision process in universities**

Shariff, Ramli and Ahmad (2014) asserted that an effective working relationship between the supervisor and the student thus appears to be crucial. However, the power dynamics in the student-supervisor relationship is perceived to be unequal (Moris, 2011). It is assumed exploitative, aggressive and intrusive supervision result in study problems and negatively affects performance. During the period of supervision both student and supervisor should fulfil their

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roles effectively and maintain a good relationship which often depends upon the characteristics of the persons involved, disciplinary differences in the ways knowledge is advanced, and the different learning tasks students face (Naim & Dhanapal, 2015).

Pillen, Beijaard, & den Brok (2013) asserted that emotional labour can foster both satisfaction and dissatisfaction for employees. As a result, emotional labour has often been described as a double-edged sword (Walker & Gleaves, 2016). Walker and Gleaves (2016) was of the assertion that being both functional for the organisation and dysfunctional for the employee. Emotional labour has long been associated with stress in the workplace. Titsworth, McKenna, Mazer and Quinlan (2013) avers that job demands unique to occupations involving emotional labour can be viewed as a specific source of job-related stress and affect performance. Titsworth, McKenna, Mazer and Quinlan (2013) argue that this is because the frequent requirement to express or display an emotion that is not felt, or which is incompatible with experienced emotions, can be potentially damaging to employee well-being. Titsworth, McKenna, Mazer and Quinlan (2013) has described the consequences of emotional labour as harmful has, in turn, led to the assumption that emotional labour is inevitably experienced this way. In support of such an assumption, a number of dissatisfaction factors have been associated with emotional labour that appear mainly to be due to the dissonance between self and true feelings (Walker & Gleaves, 2016). These include, for example, feeling robotic, un-empathetic, role overload and burnout (Walker & Gleaves, 2016).

Pillen, Beijaard and den Brok (2013) also argue that experiencing high levels of emotional labour can amount to workplace ‘emotion exploitation’ and can cause depression, alienation, exhaustion and loss of identity. Some authors do however report an alternative, positive view of the performance of emotional labour. Zhang and Zhang (2013) was of the opinion that that performing emotional labour can be pleasurable, rewarding, and that often teachers largely enjoy the emotional labour of working with students because this helps them meet their core classroom purposes. McCance, Nye, Wang, Jones and Chiu, (2013) reported that when emotional labour is conducted for the benefit of students, or for a teacher’s own reward and satisfaction, rather than because of organisational demand display rules, then job satisfaction can actually increase.

Wadesango and Machingambi (2011) in their study on postgraduate research experiences found that at least 75 per cent of student respondents were not satisfied at all with their supervisors’ feedback in relation to their research work. Poor feedback by supervisors is a cause for concern, especially in view of Naim and Dhanapal’s (2015) assertion that students demonstrate higher levels of intrinsic motivation when they are provided with constructive and informative feedback. According to Chireshe (2012) emotional labour has been attributed to the supervisors’ busy schedules to the fact that they had many other students to supervise, had heavy lecturing obligations and were required to attend numerous meetings. Workload of the supervisors was a challenge for both supervisors and supervisees (Naim & Dhanapal, 2015). Specifically, due to the lack of time, postgraduate supervisors did not have sufficient time to guide and counsel students and to carry out their duties effectively (Naim & Dhanapal, 2015). It is assumed that some supervisors thus seem to deprive their students of the opportunity hence affect performance.

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Sidhu (2013) asserted that postgraduate supervision has been a subject of close scrutiny all around the globe demanding transparency, parity and rigour. Cryer and Mertens (2003) was of the opinion that the role of the postgraduate supervisor includes guiding postgraduate students towards sound proposal preparation, methodological choices, documenting and publishing their research, maintaining both supportive and professional relationships, as well as reflecting on the research process. Nouredinne (2015) argue that the above description of the supervision process creates a picture of the calibre and stature of a professional who is supposed to assume the role of a supervisor.

Mapasela and Wilkinson (2009) point out that supervising as a scholarly practice might be effectively promoted where academics themselves are closely involved in research, but also when they reflect, write and publish on their supervisory experiences, seek student feedback and allow peers to critique their work. In addition, Calma (2011) argue that supervisors should ensure that they allow their students expertise, time, feedback, support, commitment and allotted working space.

Mutula (2009) adds that postgraduate research is a form of apprenticeship taken under the supervision of senior faculty members and those members must have the right expertise to fulfil the role of a supervisor. Mouton (2001) points out that some of the responsibilities of the supervisor is to guide, advise, ensure scientific quality and provide the required emotional and psychological support. In addition, Abiddin (2007) proposes that good supervisors care for their students by checking their achievements and commenting upon them. In earlier writing, Moses (1992) emphasised that postgraduate research students have to take responsibility for their research by determining what is required as well as carrying it out. In adding to this notion, Abiddin (2007) argue that students should manage their work independently, without being told step by step what to do. Lessing and Schulze (2003) point out that e-research students have to select a suitable topic, apply relevant research techniques and present their findings accurately. How research students or candidates handle and complete these functions depend to a large extent on the guidance provided by the supervisor.

## Results and Discussion

### Respond rate analysis

**Table 1: Response rate analysis**

Description	Questionnaires administered	Questionnaires administered & returned	Percentage of response rate
Respondents	20	20 (100)	100%

Source: Survey, (2020)



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The study results showed that of the twenty (20) administered questionnaires all were returned reflecting a (100%) response rate. The success of high rate of respondents was attributed to self-administering of questionnaires by the researcher. This also suggest that respondents were much willing to articulate factors that might improve the quality and progress of the learning curve in terms of research in Zimbabwe institutions. Table 2 shows correlations between emotional labour and task performance.

**Table 2: Emotional labour and Task Performance**

Emotional Labour	Pearson Correlation	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
	N	20	
Task Performance	Pearson Correlation	0.196	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.047	
	N	20	20

Source: Survey, (2020)

The researcher conducted a correlation analysis between emotional labour and task performance. As shown below in Table 2, the Pearson co-efficient correlation value obtained was significantly positive where value  $r = 0.196$ ,  $p < 0.05$ . The correlation value suggests that emotional labour is reduced with an increase in task performance (Refer to Table 2). Table 3 shows correlation between emotional labour and innovation.

**Table 3: Emotional labour and Innovation**

Emotional labour	Pearson Correlation	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
	N	20	
Innovation	Pearson Correlation	-0.731	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.054	
	N	20	20

Source: Survey, (2020)

The researcher conducted a correlation analysis between emotional labour and innovation. As shown in Table 3, the Pearson co-efficient correlation value obtained was a

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negative value  $r = -0.731$ ,  $p < 0.05$ . The negative correlation value suggests that emotional labour is reduced with an increase in innovation. This is supported in literature where Mapasela and Wilkinson (2009) point out that supervising as a scholarly practice might be effectively promoted where academics themselves are closely involved in research, but also when they reflect, write and publish on their supervisory experiences, seek student feedback and allow peers to critique their work. In addition, Calma (2011) argue that supervisors should ensure that they allow their students expertise, time, feedback, support, commitment and allotted working space to increase quality of work and innovation. Table 4 show regression analysis of emotional labour and service delivery

**Table 4: Regression analysis of emotional labour and service delivery**

The researcher conducted a regression analysis and ANOVA to determine if emotional labour positively improves service delivery. Table 4 is indicative of the outcome of the regression analysis and ANOVA. The R Square value of the model indicated that 97.7% of the variance in the model could be accounted for by service delivery.

<i>Regression Statistics</i>					
Multiple R		0.988881823			
R Square		0.97788726			
Adjusted R Square		0.96683089			
Standard Error		11.63456648			
Observations		4			
ANOVA					
	<i>df</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Significance F</i>
Regression	1	11972.27373	11972.27373	88.44559877	0.011118177
Residual	2	270.7262745	135.3631373		
Total	3	12243			
	<i>Coefficients</i>	<i>Standard Error</i>	<i>t Stat</i>	<i>P-value</i>	
Intercept	101.3764706	18.06831583	-5.6107316	0.030328202	
	20 3.064313725	0.325833035	9.404552024	0.011118177	

Source: Survey, (2020)

The ANOVA on Table 4 on regression is also indicating a rejection of the null hypothesis of no significant effect of emotional labour on service delivery, reporting a p-value of 0.011 on the independent variable, which is less than 0.05 level of significance. Table 5 indicate regression statistics of emotional labour and decision making.

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**Table 5: Regression statistics of emotional labour and decision making**

The study conducted a regression analysis and ANOVA to determine if emotional labour positively improves decision making. Table 5 is indicative of the outcome of the regression analysis and ANOVA. The R Square value of the model indicated that 2.3% of the change or variance in the model could be accounted for by decision making.

<i>Regression Statistics</i>	
Multiple R	0.151888471
R Square	0.023070108
Adjusted R Square	-0.465394838
Standard Error	38.20863264
Observations	4

  

ANOVA					
	<i>Df</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Significance F</i>
Regression	1	68.95078431	68.95078431	0.047229812	0.848111529
Residual	2	2919.799216	1459.899608		
Total	3	2988.75			

  

	<i>Coefficients</i>	<i>Standard Error</i>	<i>t Stat</i>	<i>P-value</i>
Intercept	71.95882353	59.33746159	1.212704784	0.349047199
58	-0.23254902	1.070055746	-0.21732421	0.848111529

Source: Survey, (2020)

The ANOVA on Table 5 on regression is also indicating a rejection of the null hypothesis of no significant effect of emotional labour (independent variable) on decision making, reporting a p-value of 0.848 on the independent variable, which is greater than 0.05 level of significance (See Table 5). Inference to literature is that Calma (2011) argue that supervisors should ensure that they allow their students expertise, time, feedback, support, commitment and allotted working space to achieve quality of work as an output.

**Conclusions and Recommendations**

The study has shown that emotional labour is a disruptive strategy for quality education system in the doctoral supervision process in Zimbabwe Universities. The discoveries unearthed that emotional labour is significantly correlated to task performance, service delivery, innovation and decision making of both the students and the supervisor in delivering quality education system in

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Zimbabwe through research as advocated by the Zimbabwe education thrust 5.0. The examination expounds that responsible Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education in Zimbabwe should enact and implement educational policies for the advancement of motivating researchers to improve education system. By so doing, further investigations in different settings, open, private, assembling, and administration will sprout through longitudinal surveys

Emotional labour must be recognised by university senior management as a persistent feature of the university lecturer role. This recognition is critical because high emotional labour intensity poses a possible commercial risk. High emotional labour levels can be associated with dysfunctional factors which can be damaging for a university lecturer wellbeing, job satisfaction and job performance, resulting in possible implications for student performance and satisfaction and thus impacting on overall university performance. From this research and other related studies, it becomes clear that lecturers are pressured to employ emotional labour to cope with pressures caused by commodification such as increased demands by students, eroding job autonomy and conflicting demands made by management.

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