LECTURERS' PSYCHOSOCIAL EXPERIENCE OF CHANGE IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

by

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submitted in accordance with the requirements for
the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in the subject

Psychology

at the

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

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Lecturers' psychosocial experience of change in higher education in South Africa

I declare that the above thesis is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

I further declare that I submitted the thesis to originality-checking software and that it falls within the accepted requirements for originality.

I further declare that I have not previously submitted this work, or part of it, for examination at Unisa for another qualification or at any other higher education institution.

Nicolene van Vuuren

23/12/2022

SIGNATURE DATE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Undertaking a PhD is often thought of as a lonely journey, though there is some truth to this, this journey would not have been possible without the sage advice of my supervisor Professor Vasi van Deventer who was committed to seeing me through this process and who has kept me motivated even when I was in the “valley of despair”, making me reflect throughout the process and pushing me beyond what I thought my limits were to realise the potential within me – I am forever grateful and thankful.

To the following people, I am forever indebted and eternally grateful:

My husband Marius, thank you for your support during the completion of this thesis. Thank you for encouraging me when I was at my lowest and for all the lonely walks you had to take in nature on your own. Thank you for your prayers and that from a distance you walked with me till the finish line.

My daughter Donne, thank you for your prayers that sustained me and for encouraging me, making me feel like I have “superpowers”.

My sons Marnus and Dewald for providing those humorous moments that made me laugh and energised me.

My mother, thank you for your faith in my ability to reach my goal. A big thank you for those days doing my house chores, giving me time to focus on this journey.

To all the generous participants who were so willing to participate and gave up their time to be interviewed – without you, this study would not have been possible.

Lastly, to my colleagues who inspired me and who had long reflective conversations with me. Your presence in academia reminded me that I was not alone.

DEDICATION

To my Family

Abstract

The global higher education landscape is rapidly changing as it re-organises itself to keep up with the demands and challenges of the 21st century. The corporatisation of higher education institutions, the emergence of managerialism, economic restructuring, and the incorporation of information and communication technologies (ICT) into educational teaching and learning environments are significant shifts occurring currently. In addition to these challenges, South African higher education institutions also grapple with social inequalities inherited from apartheid, economic stratification, and the challenge of reaching their transformation goals. These changes challenged the existing ideological beliefs of academia, with its long-standing traditions such as professional autonomy, academic freedom, intellectual discourse, and knowledge production.

The study aimed to explore how lecturers working at South African higher education institutions experienced, responded to and coped with the changes. A cross-sectional, qualitative approach was employed. Individual face-to-face interviews were conducted with twenty participants from various private and higher education institutions. Interpretative phenomenological analysis was employed to analyse the semi-structured interviews. The analysis of the data was aligned with phenomenological, hermeneutic and idiographic principles, and both inductive and deductive approaches were used.

The findings were structured in terms of three key considerations: (1) participants' experiences of the changes in higher education, (2) how they responded to the changes and (3) how they coped with the changes. Four concerns reflected academics’ experiences of change, namely a shift in governance, intensification and extensification of administrative workload, a change in student profile and the integration of information and communication technologies (ICT) in higher education learning environments. Academics’ responses to these concerns played out as resistance or acceptance. Resistance was reflected in

preferences for the status quo (i.e., a collegial culture of decision-making, having autonomy and freedom), relying on self-interest (i.e., personal valence) and silence to discreetly maintain some level or feeling of control. Accepting the changes in higher education were justified ideologically, such as respect for authority. Academics' ideological orientations offered interpretations through which they could make sense of the changes in their work environment and, as such, reduce feelings of uncertainty. The ways academics coped with changes in higher education centred on social support, active coping, distraction coping, interpersonal communication, and turning to religion.

The study concluded that the changes in higher education institutions in South Africa directly impacted academics' work environments. Academics highlighted the shift in the governance of higher education institutions and the rise of new managerialist approaches (i.e., an auditing culture) as key changes. They perceived the increase in institutional control as a threat to academic professionalism and status. They experienced being marginalised and excluded. They had to rely on various strategies to cope with a changing student profile and the impact of integrating information and communication technologies (ICT) into higher learning environments. The study concludes with the recommendation that the unique history of higher education in South Africa justifies the establishment of mechanisms that encourage authentic engagement between academics and management to sustain change through redesigning institutions for change.

Keywords: higher education, academic, lecturer, psychosocial adaptation, change, governance, managerialism, corporatism, information and communication technologies (ICT), academic logic, institutional logic, entitlement, #feesmustfall , response, coping, governance, bureaucracy

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Glossary

Higher education: Higher education refers to all post-secondary or tertiary institutions. In some contexts, the word higher education is used interchangeably with the word university. Modern higher education is defined as organised tertiary learning and training activities. It includes all institutions, such as universities and specialised institutions, such as the arts, humanities, sciences, agriculture, engineering, and technology (Alemu, 2018, p. 211).

Academic profession: It is a "process of learning and maturation" during this process, a new lecturer develops and grow until their peers perceive them as productive members of the inner academic circle." (Höhle and Teichler (2013, p. 23).

Lecturer: "means any person who teaches, educates or trains other persons or who provides professional educational services at any college, and who is appointed in a post on any lecturer establishment under this Act" (Government Gazette, 2006, p. 8).

Psychosocial adaptation: "Psychosocial adaptation is defined as the process of putting oneself in harmony with the changing circumstances of life to enhance one's sense of well-being and long-term survivorship" (Reker & Woo, 2011, p. 2).

Managerialism: Managerialism can be described as a belief system promoting a specific ideology advocating the interests of management and the ideas of management. The central function of managers is to ensure growth and profitability using controlling measures such as setting targets, measuring employee performance, and ultimately taking control and exercising their authority (Shepherd, 2017).

Corporatism: Chen (2018, p. 602) defined corporatism as a "system of social and political organization in which major societal and interest groups are integrated into the governmental system, often on a monopolistic basis under state guidance, tutelage, and control, to achieve coordinated national development.".

Governance: Governance is made up of five key concepts namely: (1) new non-hierarchical structure and mechanisms; (2) governing and the criticism of hierarchy as steering principle; (3) emergence of new actors, either private or non-profit; (4) increasing complexity of political actions, and (5) increasing cooperation and collaboration among stakeholders. (Ysa, 2014, p. 9).

Coping: Coping can be defined as "action-oriented and intrapsychic efforts to manage the demands created by stressful events, which is coming to be recognized both for its significant impact on stress-related mental and physical health outcomes and for its intervention potential." (Taylor & Stanton, 2007, p. 377).

#feesmustfall: Covering the period between October 2015 and February 2016, South African public universities experienced a wave of student protests initially over proposed fee increases for the 2016 academic year. The protests further broaden the scope to include students' disgruntlement with a number of issues in South African higher education, such as student accommodation and language of instruction policies (Mavunga, 2019).

Chapter One

"Educational change is technically simple and socially complex."

Fullan & Stiegelbauer, (1991, p.65)

Introduction

> "Successful institutions will be those developing innovative and effective institutional approaches that restructure the learning process, both independently of, and in conjunction with, key external partners." (Baker et al., 2012, p.1).

Change is recognised as an inherent part of our everyday life. Every day we are confronted with changes in society. What was acceptable practice yesterday or last year might be outdated today. Globally, change has become a more dominant feature and endemic factor across the higher education sphere. The changes in higher education institutions in South Africa are compelled by major drivers such as transformation, globalisation, information and communication technology (ICT), corporatisation and the idea of consumer dominance. Further to this, there is an expectation of higher education institutions to play a role as agents of "…social justice and economic growth" (Briefly Speaking, 2022, p. 5), responding to the changed demands, and recreating and consolidating "…an alternate set of social relations and social, economic, political, ideological and cultural institutions, policies and practices." (Briefly Speaking, 2022, p. 6), thus harnessing the different dimensions of transformation for sustainability.

Traditionally, the functions of academics are characterised as teaching and research, with the overall performance of higher education institutions depending on academics and their level of commitment to their role. Ian Hawke, former chief executive officer and commissioner of the Australian Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (Dell,

2014, para. 1), stated the following: “The higher education teaching and learning environment has never been more challenging for the global academic community, requiring a multifaceted response from lecturers and leaders…”. To be an effective lecturer is complex, and many lecturers start out with no formal education qualification or preparation for teaching. To these novice lecturers, the teaching and learning environment can be intimidating, especially if it is continuously changing. The workload in higher education is demanding, and academics are expected to devote their time, energy, and attention to becoming experts in their field and expert educationists. A day in the life of an academic includes many responsibilities, including preparing and planning for lectures, delivering lectures in the classroom or online, designing and developing curricula and creating quality teaching materials, setting assessments and memorandums, administrative tasks, consulting and helping students, attending meetings, and conducting research.

It can be argued that change impacts almost all aspects of the work environments of academics, which includes their responses to the change and coping with the change. Rothman and Barkhuizen (2008) contended that the transformation of the work environment of academics in South Africa affected them and induced stress. They mostly ascribe this to increased teaching and research demands and the change in the student profile. Viljoen and Rothman (2009) reported from their study conducted at a South African university of technology that there was a correlation between employees’ work-related experience, stress, and psychological and physical well-being. Further to this, they found that the stress experienced impacted on staff member commitment. A study by Goldman (2012) revealed that academics from the former Technikon Witwatersrand in South Africa slated those in management positions, accusing them of poor leadership and labelling them as incompetent. In addition, they referred to huge workloads.

This study seeks to explore lecturers’ psychosocial experiences of change in higher education in South Africa. What sets it apart from other studies is that the focus of the study

was on the lecturers' lived experience regardless of the higher education institution in South Africa they were employed at. The researcher was thus interested in the lecturer's (i.e., academic) voice and not in specific higher education institutions in South Africa. Being an academic herself, the motivation for this focus stems from the researcher's curiosity about if there was a connection in how lecturers experienced their academic work environments at the various institutions (i.e., public and private). The researcher further presumed that these changes had an impact on academic staff regardless of the higher education institution they were employed at and further wanted to explore how they responded and coped with the changes. The researcher acknowledges that the lived experiences of lecturers (i.e., academics) depended on their interaction with the reality at the institution they were employed at and their interpretation of this reality.

Background of the study

Since 1994 the higher education landscape in South Africa has been transformed from a system that catered to a privileged minority to an inclusive system that aimed to provide access to all and redress the past inequalities. Part of the transformation processes of higher education institutions in South Africa was implementing the higher education act 101 in 1997 and the national plan for higher education in South Africa in 2001. This was followed by the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), a level descriptor of an individual's learning achievement and assisted in assessing the national and international comparability of qualifications and part qualifications (South African Qualities Authority, 2014). Some institutions lost their identity as they were subjected to merging with other institutions as the National Plan for Higher Education strived to redress past inequalities by deploying strategic policies, which included a change in the governance of higher education institutions in South Africa (Adams, 2006).

Numerous changes accompanied the transformation and restructuring process. For one, the Education White Paper 3 (1997) stated that `it was the responsibility of higher education institutions to manage their own affairs'. This implied that higher education institutions were given the autonomy to organise and govern themselves without the government's interference (Adams, 2006). However, it had to be carried out in conjunction with public accountability (South Africa Department of Education, 1997).

One result of the redressing and transformation processes employed was an increase in student numbers which presented a new challenge as the capacity of higher education institutions in South Africa to accommodate the influx of students was tested. The increase in student numbers further meant an increase in expenditure as the government had to stretch available funding to assist more students (National Plan for Higher Education in South Africa, 2001). The fiscal constraints that higher education institutions faced meant a shift in how they were being governed. The traditional models of a collegial style of governance where academics had a voice and were part of the decision-making processes made way for a managerial approach, a concept embedded in neo-liberalism that was characterised by a bureaucratic style of governance (Coaldrake, 2000). This neo-liberal concept of globalisation claimed that it could improve service delivery and provide financial accountability and quality. Though the shift to managerialism in South Africa started later than in the developed countries, it was a phenomenon that could not be ignored when referring to changes in higher education institutions in South Africa.

Other challenges not unique to South African higher education institutions were a change in the student profile, change in socioeconomic status, the diverse backgrounds of students, the diverse needs and expectations of students, and global connectedness.

Research into how academics experienced the changes was a key aim of this study, as a gap existed in the extant literature. Available literature focused on transformation in the

global arena of higher education institutions and addressed issues such as stress, workload and work-life balance. A large proportion of research was devoted to studying how students in South Africa coped and adapted to the transformation and changes in higher education, but research exploring lecturer's lived experiences of the changes in the same educational arena was lacking. Thus, the objective of this study was to contribute to existing knowledge by providing insight into how lecturers experienced the changes within a South African context and how they responded to the changes and coped with them.

Problematising change

Before exploring the experiences of academics of the changes in South African higher education institutions and how they responded and coped with them, it was necessary to develop a conceptual framework for understanding what was meant when referring to these changes.

The South African landscape of higher education was especially under scrutiny to change. Since apartheid ended in 1994, higher education institutions have had to recalibrate their traditions and systems to meet the requirements and aims of transformation. This meant previous existing traditional systems were confronted with new challenges, new processes, and ideologies that they perceived as a threat to traditional systems causing endogenous tension. The dysfunction inherited from history included inequalities in terms of financial resources, access to quality education, and racial segregation.

One of the changes in higher education institutions in South Africa and part of the transformation processes after apartheid ended was around the accessibility of higher education for all South Africans which included students from all diverse backgrounds for example, students from affluent families as well as those from low-income families, those students who were adequately prepared at school and those who were inadequately

prepared at school (Boughey & McKenna, 2021). Student numbers increased vastly, and higher education institutions in South Africa struggled to meet the demand (Mlambo, 2021). Further to this, the democratising of education coupled with a global view of prioritising the global economy intensified the increase in student numbers (Boughey & McKenna, 2021; Mlambo, 2021; Long 2020). Statistics reported by the National Research Foundation for 2022 was that the number of students enrolled in public higher education institutions in South Africa was 1 094 808 (National Research Foundation, n.d.).

A direct result of the increase in student numbers was the need for funding. It can be argued that, in seeking a solution for this imbalance, higher education institutions in South Africa followed the global trend of leaning towards adopting an ideology of corporatism that in "…nature is entrepreneurial and market driven." (Dlamini, 2018, p. 54). The concept of corporatism, also referred to as corporate managerialism, has strong roots in 'neo-liberalism' and 'economic rationalism' and can be regarded as a strategy that enables public establishments such as higher education institutions the flexibility to manage themselves and act autonomously while still receiving funding from government (Mok, 2010; Adams, 2006; Johnson, 2006; Wei, 2002; Olssen, 2002). In other words, corporatism allows public entities to operate like a business and can be viewed as interconnected corporatist systems that rely on managerial governance principles to drive (Mok, 2010).

Thinking of higher education as a business enterprise was foreign to many academics, and for them, it was synonymous with the reduction of their professional academic values and morals.). According to Bauer et al. (1999), academic identities are predominantly linked to two entities, namely the discipline and the higher education institution, with the discipline being regarded as the dominant influence. Discipline is thus the key driver of membership of a particular discipline, for example, social sciences or physics. It can thus be argued that the academic's sense of self is embedded in their professional role that encompasses their sense of membership of a discipline (i.e., belonging to a community of scholars), responsibilities (i.e., teaching and research), and the autonomy they have to

make decisions (Henkel, 2005). Traditionally the academic profession was well respected and viewed as influential in most social environments. Their role and functions centred around teaching and research, and they had autonomy which was referred to as 'academic freedom'. Teichler et al. (2013, p. 12) defined autonomy as "a situation in which academics might choose what they assert in their teaching, in their choice of research subjects, and their publications…". Further to this, Henkel (2000, p. 145) refers to academic identity and academic autonomy as key driving ideas in the lives of individual academics within their work environment.

New managerialism as a mode of governance is aligned with neoliberalism and attempts to impose management strategies for profit purposes (Farrell & Morris, 2003; Lynch, 2014). Further to this, the characteristics of new managerialism included the emphasising of power and dominance by those in management positions, the continuous monitoring of productivity and employee performance, meeting of targets, adopting audit processes to measure quality and service delivery, and setting objective goals to measure and track accountability (Clarke & Newman, 1997; Chandler et al., 2002; Meier & Hill, 2005). This neo-liberal concept of managerialism claimed to improve service delivery and provide financial accountability and quality of education. In other words, the traditional models of a collegial style of governance, where academics had a voice and were part of the decision-making processes, made way for a managerial approach, which was a neo-liberal concept and was characterised by a bureaucratic style of governance (Coaldrake, 2000). Further to this the characteristics of new managerialism included the emphasising of power and dominance by those in management positions (i.e., hierarchical systems), the continuous monitoring of productivity and employee performance, meeting of targets, adopting audit processes to measure quality and service delivery and setting objective goals to measure and track accountability (Clarke & Newman, 1997; Chandler et al., 2002; Meier & Hill, 2005). More and more academics were expected to get involved in non-teaching and non-research activities. This meant they had to continuously adapt and reinvent themselves, drawing on

an array of diverse skills (Lazarsfeld-Jensen & Morgan, 2009). Thus, the ideologies of the tradition of having autonomy clashed with the ideologies of control found in the characteristics of new managerialism. To academics, academia was a sacred place where 'communities of scholars' were founded to contribute to knowledge (Deem et al., 2007). Some of the effects that managerial governance principles had on the work environment of academics were an increase in workload, pressure to perform, and prescribed instructions linked to forms of control which impacted their academic freedom (Carvalho, 2018). The shift from a traditional collegial model of governance to a profit market-driven model was perceived as a threat to their academic freedom.

In “Mapping Academic Resistance in the Managerial University” Anderson (2008) postulated how academics resist adapting to the ideologies of managerialism. In a research study of Australian academics, Anderson (2008) reported on covert strategies academics employ as forms of resistance, such as avoidance or forgetting. Alvesson and Spicer (2016) confirmed the ideological objections to managerialism. For example, Archer (2008) reported how young British academics relied on four discourses of self-preservation while Teelken & Deem (2013), who conducted 48 interviews in 10 universities in The Netherlands, the UK and Sweden, found that academics respond to instructions with tardiness or compliance out of professional pragmatism. It would seem from the above-mentioned studies that academics tend to resist managerial practices as they underpinned the traditional ideology of academia opposing its norms and values (Anderson, 2008). Resisting managerialism will be further unpacked in chapter 4.

Another change was that of the profile of students entering higher education. Globally, lecturers have commented on the unrealistic high expectations of students. In adopting a corporate style of governance with an emphasis on service delivery, students have increasingly been viewed as 'customers' (Lomas, 2007). Many academics rejected the view of students as 'customers' as they meant the 'service' they delivered was not the same

as other forms of service delivery. In many instances, they expected to receive high grades in exchange for little effort (Greenberger et al., 2008). Lecturers also reported on students entering their classrooms with high expectations strongly linked to entitlement attitudes. They wanted instant gratification, were impatient and demanding and expected their study material to meet their needs. They also wanted their timetables to be flexible, and they expected lecturers to accommodate their individual needs in class. Though limited research has been conducted on student entitlement, studies have reported that many students believe that if they attended their classes and handed in their assignments, they would pass. Students thus expected institutions to provide effective learning environments tailored to their individual needs. This included having access to wireless internet, access to previous exam papers and memorandums as well providing them with lecturer notes. Many students exhibited disengagement attitudes and low motivation, such as not preparing for classes, reading the assigned material, or skipping classes. When they were in class, they were disengaged. This disengagement could be linked to a 'consumerist ethos' where education was viewed as the product or services rendered by the business. A further effect of this perception was that lecturers were perceived as service providers, not as teachers (Ansburg, 2001).

In South Africa, many students entering higher education were first-generation students as they were the first in their families to have the opportunity to access higher education. Many of these students were underprepared for higher education, and they would need more support to be successful. While they had the abilities, they were often overconfident, which meant that they did not always seek the necessary academic support they needed. This was because they thought they knew when they did not know (Kift et al., 2010). Students also lacked academic skills like critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

Another challenge was adopting information and communication technologies (ICT) in higher education learning environments. It was used as a support function and has

increasingly been the driver behind automated academic processes, the enhancement of teaching and learning processes, and student self-service applications such as learning management systems (LMS) (Ng'ambi et al., 2016; Upadhyaya, 2020).

Though not a new phenomenon, the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) in delivering teaching and learning since the onset of the 21st century, has been regarded as fundamental by many educational leaders and has led to the blended learning approach. The implementation of ICT has evolved teaching and learning, which has presented the more seasoned and traditional academic staff with new challenges. Fundamental to these changes was the moving away from traditional instructor-centred models to learner-centred models with a heavy emphasis on utilising technology inside and outside the classroom (Wake et al., 2007). 21st-century learners were the first generation who grew up with technology. Students who were born after 1995 were referred to as generation z. They were digital natives who had never experienced a life without technology. As digital natives, these students relied on technology in their day-to-day existence. The evolution of ICT has thus changed how they learn and want to be taught. ICT has altered their expectation of higher education and lecturers and integrating ICT as a mode of delivery in the classroom meant the expectation placed on academics increased. An unspoken assumption was that lecturers would adapt to ICT and adjust how they delivered lectures. However, the challenge was that many lecturers were born when ICT was not as freely accessible, so they would need development and support to make the transition (Johnson et al., 2012).

Further, the initiation of technology into learning environments in different stages and on different platforms impacted how lessons were delivered in and out of the classroom. These changes meant that academics had to continuously reinvent themselves and adapt (Quinlan, 2014). In his article, Orlando (2014) referred to a research study that applied an analytical framework to track teaching practices that focused on the behaviour of lecturers.

The specific focus was on the use of technology as a communication method, students' entertainment, and if lecturers applied technology as a constructivist teaching style. The study found that academics were not changing regarding the two investigated behaviours. The resistance of academics could be linked to the following:

- Some academics only saw a "one size fits all" approach to teaching and learning and tended to view traditional teaching practices as the only way to teach and
- The unreliability of the infrastructure at many higher education institutions, for example, access to the internet and computers.

According to Cooley (2001), the solution was to empower academic staff by providing them with development sessions that enhanced their understanding of technology.

Rationale and Objective of the Study

The increase in student numbers, the change in the student profile, the marketisation of higher education, changing curriculums, changes in teaching and assessment strategies, and changes in how higher education institutions were being governed have, without a doubt, impacted the academic role.

Though the adoption of the ideologies of managerialism in higher education institutions was well-researched, not enough consideration was given to the impact that this had on academics and the existing ideologies found in academia. A research study conducted by Sang et al. (2015) aimed to understand the lived experiences of academics in the UK and, through the lens of the 'ideal worker' found that new managerialist approaches changed the academic culture and have identified a gap suggesting more research was needed to understand how the added responsibility of administration and the pressure it caused impacted on academics work-life balance. For one, it held an implication for their

workload and increased focus on their performance and how it was measured. Lecturers were more and more treated as employees that were subjected to measurements of performance output.

Altbach (2000) also painted a negative picture of the stance of academics as professionals within the changing environment by managerialism and stated that there was a deterioration of salaries and working conditions, increased bureaucratisation, and decreased professional autonomy. The extent to which the changes in higher education institutions in South Africa impacted academics and the nature of their academic profession still needed to be explored. Literature reporting on the experiences of academics was lacking.

This study aimed to contribute to existing knowledge by providing insight into how lecturers experience changes in higher education within a South African context, how the changes impacted them, and how they responded to and coped with these changes.

The Research Questions

The following broad research questions guided this study:

- How did lecturers experience the changes in their work environments in higher education institutions in South Africa?
- How did lecturers respond to the changes?
- How did lecturers cope with the changes?

Philosophical considerations

Qualitative Approach

Qualitative research focused on the way people interpret and make sense of their experiences and the world in which they live (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Denzin & Lincoln, 2017). A qualitative approach was particularly useful for this study as it allowed the researcher to explore participants' experiences (Willig, 2021). Furthermore, qualitative research approaches also acknowledged the researcher as a primary instrument because of their involvement in the research process, for example conducting semi-structured interviews (Denzin & Lincoln, 2017). The research questions and aims also required an approach that would enable the researcher to form an understanding of the lecturer's lived experiences of the changes and how they made sense of the changes. This approach was further suitable as it recognised that the researcher brought subjectivity (i.e., own perspectives and experiences) into the research process.

Interpretivist paradigm

The study was located within an interpretivist paradigm and relied on an individual's subjective interpretation of the experienced phenomenon epistemology. Creswell and Poth (2016) delineated five qualitative inquiry approaches: the narrative approach, the grounded theory approach, the phenomenological approach, the ethnographic and the case study approach. Within this broad range of qualitative methods to choose from, interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) was chosen because it allowed the researcher to explore the meaning participants (i.e., lecturers) attached to their lived experiences (Larkin et al., 2006). For this study a discourse analysis approach was considered, but because the focus of discourse analysis was on participants' use of discourses and language in constructing their lived experiences, IPA was more suitable as it focused on the meaning and sense-making of their lived experiences, which seemed a better fit for the current study and what the researcher wanted to explore.

Research Process

Data collection

Twenty lecturers from various public and private higher education institutions were approached and interviewed regarding the changes they experienced if any. The interviews were conducted using a semi-structured interview method. Before the interviews, participants completed a pre-interview biographical online questionnaire. This questionnaire provided information such as their age, gender, qualification(s), the discipline they lectured in, how long they had lectured, and whether they experienced changes. It also sheds light on whether they perceived these changes as continuous and substantial.

The purposive sampling technique was used as the researcher wanted to select participants who met the criteria relevant to the study. For this study, they had to have actively lectured to enable the researcher to explore shared experiences (Willig, 2008). It was also considered useful for conducting in-depth studies and seeking information-rich cases.

Data Analysis

The data analysis followed the principles of IPA (Smith & Nizza, 2021). The data was analysed by moving from the parts making sense of the text to the whole (i.e., what was shared meaning between participants). Further to this, a double hermeneutic formed part of the analysis as, during the interview process, participants reflected on their lived experiences trying to make sense of their experiences; engaging with the data, the researcher, in turn, reflected on the experiences of the participants trying to make sense of the data and form an understanding (Smith & Nizza, 2021). Group experiential themes and personal experiential

themes that were identified from the data were presented and discussed. These findings and discussions shed light on how the participants reacted to the changes in their workplaces at the higher education institutions where they were employed and the coping mechanisms they adopted.

Since a gap was found in the current literature on how lecturers in South Africa experience the changes in their work environment, the findings in this study attempted to address these gaps and further contribute to the overall literature. The findings could provide insights into how the challenges lecturers experience in their work environment due to the changes could be bridged.

Thesis structure

Chapters 2 to 4 focused on the literature of relevance to this study. **Chapter 2** addressed the changes in the higher education sector in South Africa and provided an overview of the history, both before and after apartheid, of higher education in South Africa, followed by a discussion of (a) the bureaucratisation of higher education institutions, (b) the increase in student numbers, and (c) technology as a catalyst for change. **Chapter 3** focussed on the academic as a professional subject to the changing environment in higher education, while **Chapter 4** discussed psychosocial adjustment and theories and models of adjustment.

Chapter 5 outlined the research methodology used to conduct this study. It provided an overview of this study's qualitative framework, and detailed consideration was given to Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) as both a philosophical framework and method of inquiry. Further to this, consideration was also given to the theoretical perspectives underpinning IPA. This was followed by an account of the research process including the data collection and analysis methods. The chapter ended with a description of the data analysis process.

Chapters 6 to **11** presented and discussed the findings of this study. **Chapters 6** and **7** focus on the lived experiences of participants regarding the changes in South African higher education institutions. In chapter 6 four group experiential themes were presented each with their personal experiential themes and in chapter 7 these findings were discussed. **Chapters 8** and **9** focus on how participants responded to the changes. In chapter 8 two group experiential themes were presented each with its personal experiential themes and in chapter 9 these findings were discussed. **Chapters 10** and **11** focus on how participants coped with the changes. In chapter 10 five group experiential themes were presented each with their personal experiential themes and in chapter 11 these findings were discussed.

Chapter 12 provided a summary of the key research findings and highlighted the significance of the research findings. It also discussed the limitations of the study, the potential contribution that this study has made, as well as potential areas for future research.

Chapter Two

Changes in Higher Education

Change and transformation are two dominant discourses in the South African higher education sector. Following the end of apartheid, the Education white paper 3: A programme for the transformation of higher education act of 1997 aimed to (a) restructure higher education from an authoritarian, elite system to a more inclusive, democratic system in order to make tertiary education more accessible and affordable to students; and (b) transform curriculum design and standards. However, the expectation was that this transformation would also include an internal restructuring to address other challenges, such as globalisation and equity of access.

Economists argue that globalisation is grounded in capitalism and that the emergence of information technologies have advanced the free flow of products, people, and knowledge, allowing the world to become more and more borderless. This globalisation has a far-reaching impact on social institutions like universities and colleges (Hutton & Giddens, 2001). Green (2003) stated that globalisation significantly impacted education and that this called for change. One of the changes could directly be linked to the re-organisation and restructuring of higher education intuitions (Enders, 2004; Council of Higher Education, 2000). Some of the re-organisational changes included the marketisation of education and how higher education institutions were governed (Enders, 2004; Vaira, 2004). Further to this the internationalisation of these institutions broadened the choices students have of where they want to study and thus, increased the cultural diversity on campuses.

Higher education institutions' core functions primarily focused on cultivating intellect and adding to the knowledge economy. Globally these institutions were regarded as one of the oldest social establishments, deeply grounded in ideologies of traditions and

conservatism (Taylor, 2006). It can be argued that the fifth industrial revolution characterised by globalisation and emerging technologies, re-shaped higher education institutions shifted the landscape to adopt neoliberal ideologies promoting market driven re-forms especially to market principles, funding, and performance measurement. Further to this, emerging technologies and the rapid pace of technology change did not come without its challenges for developing countries such as access to data and adopting technology as teaching and learning delivery methods.

This chapter focused on the changes in the governance of South African higher education institutions and the emergence of new patterns in how they were managed. It also considered the resultant change in the student profile and how increased access and decreased funding have impacted higher education institutions. Lastly, it considered how technology has affected lecturers and their experience of teaching and learning in higher education.

Historic Background of the Governance of the South African Higher Education Sector

Higher Education in South Africa Prior to 1994

South Africa's history has shaped how individuals thought about higher education institutions. Prior to 1994, South Africa was a fragmented society, segregated by race and favouring a white minority (Boughey & McKenna, 2021; Moore, 2015; Ndimande, 2013). The ruling Nationalist Party (i.e., government) implemented various acts, which became pillars of division as the government prescribed how institutions should be governed. Two acts pertinent to this study are The Bantu Education Act of 1953 (Act No. 47 of 1953), later renamed The Bantu Education Act of 1953, and The Extension of University Act 45 of 1959.

During apartheid, the education sector was divided into fifteen Departments of

Education across four provinces and six so-called homelands. The Bantu Education Act of 1953 came into effect on 1 January 1954, placing the governance of all Black South Africans under the complete control of the ruling Nationalist Party (i.e., government) (Moore, 2015). One needs to discern between apartheid education and Bantu Education. To clarify, when referring to apartheid education it encompassed all Black, Coloured, and Indian learners collectively, whereas Bantu Education was offered only to Black learners (Ndimande, 2013). The Bantu Education Act of 1953 made primary education compulsory for all young black learners however, it was designed to ensure that black learners would only receive primary education focusing on skills that would aid the economy and at the same time provide cheap labour (Moore, 2015; Ndimande, 2013). Thus, a system designed for social stratification.

The Extension of University Act 45 of 1959 separated students based on race. Black students could not attend historically white universities unless they had special government permission. This resulted in the formation of separate black universities that could only admit certain ethnic groups. For example, Fort Hare could only admit Xhosa-speaking students, the University of Zululand was only for Zulu and Venda students, the University of the Western Cape was for Coloured students, and the University of Durban Westville was for Indian students (Muthivhi, 2022). At the beginning of 1985, the higher education landscape was unequally divided by race, with 19 higher education institutions exclusively for white students, two for Indian students, two for coloured students, and six for African students (Bunting, 2006).

The racial division of higher education institutions into what has become known as "historically white" and "historically black" institutions was a key characteristic of the South African higher education landscape prior to 1994. Historically white universities were further divided by language as the medium of communication, with six using Afrikaans as their official language and four using English as their official language. By law, these higher education institutions were prohibited from allowing black students to register for courses or

appoint black academic staff (Bunting, 2006). After the introduction of the tricameral parliament in 1984, the four English universities took a stand against the ruling government by admitting black students. They argued that the government should not prescribe how they (i.e., the universities) govern themselves and believed that academics should form part of institutional governance systems. Governance systems at these institutions were a blend of a collegial approach and an authoritarian approach. The systems comprised the professoriate, the principal, the registrar, and senior academic staff members who managed the institutions. At more junior levels, the authoritarian approach to management remained in place (Bunting, 2006).

The founding of historically black universities was based on political, rather than academic, ideologies. These institutions' governance was authoritarian, and the apartheid government ensured that these institutions supported the ideologies of the national ruling party by employing predominantly white Afrikaans academic staff members who had been previously trained at white Afrikaans universities. These academics focussed on training rather than on research and the production of new knowledge. They also filled key roles in the administrative departments with white Afrikaners. Even when black vice-chancellors were appointed at a later stage, the ruling government remained in control through the members of council (Bunting, 2006). In the late 1980s and early 1990, historically black universities openly showed their resistance to the apartheid system. When these institutions became too disruptive by, for example, interrupting classes, the government responded by closing the institutions (Bunting, 2006).

By 1994, the South African higher education landscape was resistant to the apartheid regime. In the historically black universities and some white historically universities, it was clear that the higher education system in South Africa needed change.

A Call for Change and Transformation of Higher Education in Post-1994 South Africa

After 1994, redressing inequalities in the higher education landscape in South Africa became a key focus. The term redress originated six centuries ago in Athens and referred to "amends for wrongs done or to make fair adjustments" (Moja & Hayward, 2005, p. 33). Transformation in South African higher education institutions were needed to:

(a) redress the inherited legacy of inequality in educational access based on race, gender, and class that the apartheid era left behind; and

(b) ensure a system of governance rooted in the new constitution of a democratic South Africa.

Higher education institutions were expected to play a fundamental role in reconceptualising an inclusive social society in South Africa. In 1995, the National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE) was appointed by President Mandela. This commission drafted a policy framework for education and training to ensure a “well-planned and integrated, high-quality national system of higher education linked to national and provincial reconstruction, in particular to human resource development and production of scientific and other knowledge to service the economic, cultural and intellectual development of our communities and nation.” (National Commission on Higher Education, 1996, p. 113). This policy framework also highlighted the following deficits in higher education:

> A chronic mismatch between higher education's output and the needs of a modernising economy; Higher education has not succeeded to contribute significantly to a democratic ethos and a sense of citizenship perceived as commitment to a common good; It is still characterised by teaching and research policies which favour academic insularity and closed-system disciplinary programmes. (Green paper on higher education transformation, 1996, pp. 3-4).

These highlighted deficits further emphasised the importance of transformation and change in higher education institutions in South Africa. It also argued that the fundamental principles guiding the transformation process were "equity and redress, democratisation, development, quality, effectiveness and efficiency, academic freedom and institutional autonomy and public accountability" ((Green paper on higher education transformation, 1996, p. 5). The governance of higher education institutions, therefore, had to include both democratic principles, such as transparency, academic freedom, and institutional autonomy, and decision-making processes that were representative and participatory. The principles of academic freedom and institutional autonomy implied that there should be no interference, regulation, or censure from bodies outside the institution. Consequently, it allowed higher education institutions to exercise their autonomy regarding self-governance and administrative independence ((Green paper on higher education transformation, 1996). By addressing historical racial inequalities, hiring staff members who are representative of South Africa's demographics, and reorganising the disjointed institutional governance, it was hoped that higher education in South Africa would be accessible to all South Africans.

It was after the second democratic election in 1999 that the Council of Higher Education (CHE) was asked to review the higher education landscape of South Africa to assess the progress made by transformation. The Council of Higher Education (2004) produced a report in which three key challenges were identified:

- Effectiveness concerned with the relevance of higher education to the labour market.
- Efficiency concerned with quality and throughput.
- Equity, concerned with setting equity targets for the distribution of students and staff by race, gender, and social class in different fields of learning and teaching (Hall et al., 2004).

Although many higher education institutions in South Africa embraced transformation initiatives seeking to redress the legacy of apartheid, others have lost their passion for

transformation due to the conflicting transformation issues they grappled with. These issues include (1) the growing demand for access to higher education and funding, (2) the under-preparedness of previously disadvantaged students who do not complete their qualification in the designated time frame, (3) the under-resourced previously disadvantaged institutions (Mlambo, 2021; Mzangwa, 2019; Bozalek & Boughey, 2020). According to Jansen (2002), the discourse found in the transformation policies was mainly symbolic, and there was an unrealistic expectation that implementing transformation would address all challenges. Bozalek and Boughey (2020, p. 1) agree with Jansen (2002) that there was a "…disjuncture between policy aimed at promoting inclusivity and the experiences of students and staff in the higher education sector.". Drawing on Fraser's normative framework on social justice, which refers to the economic domain, the cultural domain and the political dimension, Bozalek & Boughey, 2020 focused on the political dimension to unpack the (mis)framing of South African higher education. Using this lens, they highlighted how a segregated education system continued to impact Black students on various levels post-apartheid. For example, the location of previous separate Black universities in 'remote rural areas and the challenges these institutions have in attracting 'highly qualified staff'. Students also tended to prefer enrolling into higher education institutions previously not accessible to them. Coupled with these challenges was the challenge with the language of instruction (i.e., English or Afrikaans) that further highlighted the division as it impacted the quality of education. Further to this, the post-apartheid government also had challenges with funding these institutions due to 'inherited budget deficits' (Bozalek & Boughey, 2020).

One of the suggested strategies for redressing access issues and rectifying past inequalities was for the government to award a "disadvantaged subsidy" to each black student enrolling on a higher education institution. However, it was instead decided to focus on developing policy and funding schemes to diminish the existing inequalities, although these were ultimately unsuccessful (Cloete et al., 2002). For example, the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) was introduced to make higher education more accessible

to previously disadvantaged students. Although the post-apartheid government implemented many policies to transform higher education, some unforeseen challenges were encountered, including a slowdown in economic growth, an increase in the number of students who wanted access to higher education, and high poverty and unemployment rates. Transformation addressed the racial disparities in higher education access to a certain extent. However, a global economic recession curbed economic growth in South Africa and, as such, marginalised students even more from gaining access to resources that would enable them to access higher education.

In 1997 the Council of Higher Education (CHE) was established by the Higher Education Act of 1997 (Education White Paper 3, 1997). The CHE were given several functions but was mostly responsible for ensuring the delivery of quality education. One of the key functions of the CHE was to supervise higher education institutions by acting as a coordinating governing body between these institutions and the state. After 1994 there were significant changes to the senior leadership of most South African higher education institutions. However, at lower levels, the transformation was slow, especially in senates, administrative departments, and faculties, although many consider these to be the entities with the most power. Thus, many of the dominant symbols and ideologies of the former leaders remained intact, which led to intense debates as those that supported neo-liberalism called for cooperative governance (Deem & Brehony, 2005). This cooperation between higher education institutions and the government led to some instances of the government making decisions without consulting institutions. This had far-reached implications for the institutions, including that they now had conditional autonomy rather than complete autonomy (Cloete, 2016). The controversies that arose from the conflicting ideologies of the government and higher education institutions left both academics and students disgruntled.

An important part of the South African higher education landscape is the interconnected, systemic transformation process that is still taking place. Because of the

complexities within higher education institutions, one needs to acknowledge that there were many challenges to transformation, including student access, student support and success, infrastructure, leadership structures, longstanding traditions, student protest movements, and funding. A key dilemma facing higher education institutions that became a burning issue in 2015 was student funding. In 2001, a revised funding framework was implemented. This new funding framework, which involved block grants and was made available by the government, allocated a percentage of the Gross Domestic Product to the education budget and provided a systematic institutional approach to funding (Stumpf, 2001). These block grants were meant to assist higher education institutions with operational costs such as research and teaching.

As higher education institutions were required to show a shift in their throughput and graduation rates and enrol more students, they became more concerned with efficiency, costs, and quantity delivery than with quality education (Ntshoe, 2002). While some perceived higher education as social institutions with the key aim of developing, cultivating and nurturing individuals to become contributing citizens of society, others perceived it as an industry that provided a service to clients with the main aim of promoting economic development (Maassen & Cloete, 2006). The first phase of the transformation of higher education institutions in South Africa focused on restructuring these institutions with a specific focus on the governance structures. This argument was supported by the Education white paper 3 (1997), which proposed a new governance structure embedded in a cooperative model linked to a form of new management.

The Rise of Managerialism

The struggle for liberation from apartheid also called for democratising the governance of South African higher education institutions. The following summarised the six

goals identified to transform higher education institutions in South Africa as found in the Education White Paper 3 (1997).

(a) Developing a single coordinated higher education system.

(b) Increasing and broadening participation.

(c) Promoting cooperative governance.

(d) Institutions that produced relevant knowledge and curriculum.

(e) Promoting quality assurance and articulation and

(f) Mobility and transferability across the education and training system through incorporating higher education into the National Qualifications Framework (NQF).

As part of the transformation implementation plan, the National Commission on Higher Education (1996) recommended a framework for institutional governance that included entities like the CHE and other public institutions like the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) that were tasked with overseeing institutional governance in a supervisory capacity. Institutional autonomy was to be exercised within the provided framework, and the Higher Education Act 101 of 1997 centralised the power to make certain decisions (i.e., what language policy the South African higher education institutions should adopt) (Education White Paper 3, 1997).

Between 1990 and 1997, South African higher education institutions responded to demands that transformation placed on them. The government was concerned with democratising higher education institutions by reorganising their governance structures. However, some higher education institutions, particularly historically white institutions, tried to protect their traditions (Bunting, 2006). Between 1997 and 2001, higher education institutions focused more and more on implementing long-term institutional reform plans, which included reorganising leadership structures such as considering candidates external to the institutions to fulfil senior management leadership roles. The latter statement referred McKenna (2020, p. 83) who in her article, *The Rise of the Executive Dean and the Slide into Managerialism*, discerned between the elective dean and the executive dean. In this article,

she contended that an elected dean is appointed through a vote by faculty from the inner circle of academia whereas an executive dean is approached by the faculty committee and appointed to take up the role as an external individual for a fixed period (i.e., contracted for the role). Coughlan (2008) referred to the appointment of professional managers skilled in matters such as "…human resources, industrial relations, finance, fundraising and administration…" (Coughlan, 2008.p. 589). She suggested that:

> "a balance is needed between collegial and more corporate-style management if a university is to protect its academic work while surviving in an external environment that could be perceived to be increasingly hostile to the traditional collegial model." (Coughlan, 2008.p. 582).

Theoretical models underpinning higher education academic environments

Collegial Model

Academic systems were systems rich in culture and discipline. The culture of the academic profession provided the academic with an identity that embraced traditional beliefs, values and norms, for example belonging to a community of scholars and having academic freedom (Akerlind & Kayrooz, 2003). Defining the concept of academic freedom can be challenging because academia has little agreement about what it is. Ultimately it could be described as a right of academics of "…non-interference in their activities…." (Akerlind & Kayrooz, 2003, p. 328). Tight (2014) posed the question if this freedom applied to all activities academics were involved in or only selected activities. Others meant academic freedom should not be viewed only as an individual phenomenon but also in the context of the institution that:

Usually included autonomy or self-government according to the terms of its constitution, with power to determine academic policies, the balance between teaching and

research, staffing ratios, the appointment, promotion and discipline of students, curricula, standards, examinations and the conferring of degrees and diplomas; and with the control over the material resources needed to undertake these activities. (Akerlind & Kayrooz, 2003, p. 329).

From the above, it could be assumed that academic freedom also included the right to form part of the governance and the right to be included in the institution's decision-making processes. Akerlind & Kayrooz (2003, pp. 333-335) identified five different perceptions of academic freedom, namely:

> An absence of constraints on academics' activities…; an absence of constraints, within certain self-regulated limits…; an absence of constraints, within certain externally regulated limits…; an absence of constraints, combined with active institutional support for academics' activities… and an absence of constraints, combined with responsibilities on the part of academics.

Academic autonomy signified that academics have the freedom to apply collegial principles to self-regulate and organise their academic work environment and to contribute to decisions made by the higher education institution (Abramov, 2012). Traditionally the culture operating within the academic profession favours collegial self-governance and was characterised by a form of elitism with a professional right of power (Trowler,1998). Trowler (1998) identified four broad ideological orientations found in higher education, namely:

- A 'traditionalist' or 'liberal' view of education as 'learning for its own sake'. From this perspective, students and academics were engaged to advance knowledge through intellectual enquiry.
- A 'vocationalist' view that embraces human capital theory and establishes a clear link between university education and the economy's needs. Thus, it focused on the vocational function of higher education.

- A 'progressive' or 'emancipatory' position focused on the student's personal choice, growth and development.
- A 'social constructionist'…that perceived higher education as a vehicle for criticality and transforming society. (Fanghanel, 2009, p. 571).

Traditional practices such as collegiality and collaboration were strongly recognised in and associated with higher education institutions (Tight, 2014). Singh and Manser (2002) described collegiality as a process of integration that encouraged individuals to share their concepts to form a shared vision built on collaboration. While Shrifian (2011, p. 1170) defined collegiality as follows:

> Collegiality assumes that organisations determine policy and make decisions through a process of discussion leading to consensus. Power was shared among some or all members of the organisation who were thought to have a mutual understanding about the institution's objectives.

Lazega (2005) refer to Waters (1989), who characterised collegiality as:

(a) a shared theoretical knowledge that was specialised or differentiated,

(b) a professional career linked to a vocation,

(c) the autonomy that included self-management and control,

(d) collective decision-making in the form of a committee,

(e) individuals sharing equal status (e.g., deans or professors), and

(f) peer evaluation as a form of informal control.

Traditional academics viewed themselves as central to decision-making processes. These decisions included, for example, decisions around curricula, the appointment of lecturers and professors, quality assurance, teaching and learning strategies, research, and allocation of resources, to name but a few. Tapper (2020) highlighted the autonomy that existed in collegiality, which further emphasised a self-governing community in which academics have the freedom and power to appoint members to their group and collectively

make decisions. Through the collegial process, academics acknowledged each other's professional abilities and autonomy which cultivated mutual respect and trust. Collegiality thus became the vehicle they used to reach a consensus strengthened by a common set of values and beliefs propelling their shared vision. Hazlewood and Bosher (2008, p. 17) asserted that: " the process of collegiality [being] about collective accountability and responsibility for those engaged in education, it places leadership in a different conceptual place where the future is predominant, not the present."

Thus, at the heart of the collegial model lay the mutual process of participation in decision-making with a strong emphasis on autonomy and academic freedom. In no way did it postulate that there were never differences in the opinions of academics but that, through the collaboration process, members voiced their opinions and reached a mutual agreement. Collegiality as a governance strategy continuously shaped and developed the community of academic professionals by participating in active scientific discourses (Bennett, 1998). Collaborating with peers and being involved in the decision-making processes further supported the development of individuals' self-efficacy and self-worth, which in turn led to professional satisfaction (Cemm, 2011). Hazlewood and Bosher (2008, p. 79) asserted that: "collegiality recognises that anyone can lead at a given time and the leader will emerge from consensus and negotiation by the team.".

Managerial Model

The global shift in the economic sphere, including the free flow of capital, consumer goods, products, and people, has impacted most social, business, and political environments. In order to adjust to what was happening in the global economic sphere, enterprises and institutions inevitably needed to adjust how they were governed. The end of apartheid marked a new era of democracy for South Africa, which included new political

discourses and transformation plans for the social environment. In addition, the government required higher education institutions to display institutional accountability and align themselves with the proposed government transformation processes (Stewart, 2007). These challenges prompted higher education institutions to adopt a managerial approach.

Managerialism also referred to as ‘corporate managerialism’ and ‘public management’, was a corporate governing practice and a global phenomenon not unique to South Africa. Further to this, ‘academic managerialism’ in higher education was not a new phenomenon. It is well-researched, documented, and usually driven by a top-down governance approach (Klikauer, 2015; Shepherd, 2018; Teichler, 2021).

Managerialism has been defined by its ends and the methods managers use to establish corporate ideologies systematically in an organisation (Klikauer, 2015). Urbanek (2022) distinguishes between “soft” managerialism and “hard” managerialism. Soft managerialism observed managerial effectiveness as an important element in the provision of higher education of quality at its lowest cost; it was focused on improving the ‘efficiency’ of existing institutions. However, Pollit and Bouckaert (2000) described it as how management adopted structures and processes to measure outcomes. According to Deem (2020) The term new managerialism is generally used to refer to the adoption by public sector organisations of organisational forms, technologies, management practices and values more commonly found in the private business sector.

Managerialism was best described as an ideological reform resting on functional logic that supported the generalisation of management tools to effectively assist managers in their decisions and actions to manage organisations or institutions. The use of specific corporate terminology promoted the ideologies of corporatism that were being messaged using specific corporate language. For example, in the higher education context, reference was made to ‘students as customers’, ‘student numbers were being referred to as targeted

numbers', also found was a reference to 'the tracking of performance', 'the providing of evidence', 'student experience' and 'making a profit'.

Managers were responsible for the nurturing and profitability of an organisation to ultimately satisfy the expectations of the shareholders and customers. Managerialism became the vehicle that assisted these managers in achieving their goals (Klikauer, 2015). It was thus an ideology created by those in corporate management to serve their interests and justify the methods and principles implemented by them (Deem & Brehony, 2005). New managerialism in organisations was characterised by an emphasis on the management of business-like aspects, such as monitoring and measuring the performance of employees, implementing auditing processes and systems to ensure the quality-of-service delivery and emphasise targets and accountability. Thus, the ideology of new managerialism focussed on the interests and power of those in management positions (Deem & Brehony, 2005). The perception of higher education institutions as corporate entities emphasised neo-liberalism's ideologies that "all social interactions were contextualised as part of a market" (Taylor, 2017, p. 115).

For the South African government to monitor and oversee the transformation processes in higher education institutions, adopting a new managerialist approach to managing higher education institutions could support their supervisory role. While the private sector was market-driven, chased targets, and measured performance, the public sector seeks to meet its political goals of ensuring the transformation of public higher education institutions (Shepherd, 2018). Managerialism as an ideology could assist both sectors in meeting their goals. There were six core ideological principles informing managerialism. Firstly "management was important, and a good thing" (Shepherd, 2018, p. 5), the assertion was that without management, an organisation or institution would struggle to be successful and show economic growth. Secondly, "management was a discrete function" (Shepherd, 2018, p. 6). This spoke to management in a supervisory capacity, which ensured that the day-to-day operations of the institution or organisation were seamless and that tasks were

executed according to processes (Ward, 2011; Broadbent et al., 2013). Thirdly "management was rational and neutral" (Shepherd, 2018, p. 6).

Managers were seen as neutral professionals who had to set objectives and oversee performance processes to enhance the performance of both employees and the organisation/institution. Fourthly "management was generic and universally applicable to all organisations and institutions" (Shepherd, 2018, pp. 6-7). This meant that management approaches and styles were transferrable to more than one social environment. Fifthly "managers must have the right to manage" (Shepherd, 2018, p. 7). Although managers might not have the particular knowledge or skills of a certain sector, the fact that they were managers qualified them as competent as they possessed general management knowledge (Freidson, 2013).

Implementing managerialism in higher education institutions required that these institutions compromised and, in many instances, gave up their traditional practices. According to Barry et al. (2001), if the superiority of academic professionals was rejected, individuals who fell into this category would adopt behaviours that were in the best interest of the organisation or institution. Applying managerialist ideologies in an academic environment reduced academics' freedom and autonomy. As a corporate governing practice, managerialism mainly focused on measurable outputs. It further gave those in central management positions authority and control over academics, compromising the opportunity for academics to engage in decision-making processes, leaving them with less professional autonomy (Johnson, 2006). Thus, the independence of academics was eroded while they were being subjected to managerialist practices and the corporation's ideals. According to a comparative survey undertaken in 2007 ('The changing Academic Profession' - CAP), it was found that "in many countries, the power of university management has been strengthened and the role of faculty in governance was mixed." (Teichler et al., 2013, pp. 114,171).

Further to the survey findings, academics in all the countries which formed part of the study indicated that they felt powerless.

Corporatism thus rejected the vocation and traditional academic ideologies of the academic professional by implementing mechanisms and processes that included elements of control and auditing to increase profit and encourage lecturers to engage in behaviours that were in the interest of the institution (i.e., the corporation) as a business unit (Kolsaker, 2008). When applying managerialism, specific control strategies were put in place, for example, setting targets to be achieved, measuring performance and the requirement for evidence (Clarke & Newman, 2006). Focussing on measurable outputs reduced academics' traditional beliefs and values, such as their autonomy. Whitchurch and Gordan (2017) identified key characteristics of how the ideologies of managerialism were being embedded in higher education. This included: " separating academics and managers; giving an increased control of the institutions or organisation to those in management; a shift in power from academics to management and market-orientated and profit-driven goals" (Shepherd, 2017, p. 1).

Focused on redesigning the academic work environment to adopt a hybrid organisational form (Hoyle & Wallace, 2005), managerialism highlighted the contradiction between the ideologies of traditional academic professionals and that of corporatism. Academics were thus caught between two conflicting systems of meaning (Henkel, 2002). On the one hand, they needed to uphold traditional professional academic ideologies, while on the other hand, they were impelled to adopt and adapt to the ideologies of corporatism. Thus, the rise of managerialism has diminished the role of collegiality and shattered the traditional ideologies of higher education institutions (Macfarlane, 2005; Olssen, 2002). Dowling-Hetherington (2013) found a correlation between the rise of managerialism and a lower level of morale and a sense of disillusionment among academics.

Changing Student Profile

While higher education institutions in South Africa were committed to the transformation process and to providing quality education to students, they have been subjected to many complex challenges. These challenges included inequalities resulting from the country's political history and economic and social segregation, increased student numbers, a diverse student body, and a lack of funding and access to resources. In South Africa, many students entering higher education were first-generation students, which meant they were the first in their families to have the opportunity to access this level of education. These students were vulnerable as they were usually academically underprepared and had limited access to resources, which places pressure on (a) the institution to support the student and (b) the student to be successful. The under-preparedness of students entering higher education has been well documented, and numerous intervention strategies have been suggested and implemented (Mulvey, 2009; Monnapula-Mapesela, 2015; Mungal & Cloete, 2016).

When referring to the concept of 'academic preparedness' what comes to mind is having the following skillsets intact: academic reading, writing skills and communication skills, being able to think independently (i.e., critical thinking and problem-solving skills), time management and study skills, being able to work independently and an overall motivation and dedication towards academic goals (Brussow, 2007; Wollscheid et al., 2020). Being academically underprepared meant that the skillsets needed for academic success are lacking (McDaniel, 2014). Scott et al. (2007, p. 42) argued that under-preparedness should not be confused with "lacking potential to succeed" but that various prevalent factors should be considered. For the South African government, the transformation policies became a vehicle to promote economic development and accessibility for all South Africans to higher education. Although equal access was the goal of the transformation policies, not all South Africans benefited as the reality was that socio and economic inequality still prevailed.

With the influx of students coming from diverse backgrounds and an attempt to understand the challenges of the student, higher education framed the students as lacking academic and cultural resources laying at the door of their previously disadvantaged positions. Thus, students were perceived as not having the necessary cognitive, social and cultural abilities to succeed in their studies. Conceptualising the under-preparedness of students in this manner served to alienate students further while turning a blind eye to the role the institution played in creating barriers to student success (Haggis, 2009). In other words, blaming the victim for lacking what it takes to succeed academically. In "The Evolution of Deficit Thinking", (Valencia, 2012) explained how deficit thinking played a role in learners failing at school, especially those from economically and racially disadvantaged backgrounds. Researchers argued that while the focus was on addressing the under-preparedness of students, higher education institutions needed to turn their focus to the institutions themselves (Boughey & McKenna, 2021; Case, 2013; Haggis, 2009) In other words, instead of higher education institutions placing the burden of academic success on students, they had to interrogate the role they played and how they were structured for inclusion for example, peculiar cultural practices, curricula, theories about teaching and learning and ideologies about literacy practices (Boughey & McKenna, 2021). There is also the matter of the "…lack of commitment to developing African languages for academic purposes…" and specific "…ways of reading and writing of the academic disciplines…". Boughey and McKenna. (2021, pp. 60, 65) referred to Bourdieu & Passeron (1994) who postulated that academic language is no one's mother tongue.

Another strategy higher education institutions employed to address the under-preparedness of students was offering extended programmes (i.e., by offering a three-year degree over four years), though the extra year was non-credit bearing, it was meant to support students. The challenge with this intervention strategy is that in essence it again

served to stereotype students as it can be argued that students who opted for the extended programme fall within the category under-prepared (Boughey & McKenna, 2021).

Another factor affecting student profile was that of the generation to which current students belong. The 21st-century student was generally either a millennial or from generation z, was more diverse, and had different goals, expectations, and needs. Compared to previous generations (Kinnear et al., 2008). For example, they wanted instant gratification, were impatient and demanding, and expected their study materials to meet these needs. They also wanted their timetables to be flexible. In class, they expected lecturers to teach their diversity. These students have unrealistic expectations and an attitude of entitlement (Lippman et al., 2009; Roosevelt, 2009; Schaefer et al., 2013). According to Glater (2006) entitlement was an individual's perception that they deserved something or that society owed them something, even when they did not take ownership or responsibility for their actions. Historically, self-entitlement was synonymous with consumer or citizen-government expectations and was not usually perceived as a student's behaviour or attitude.

Greenberger et al. (2008) reported that academics have complained that students expected high grades for minimal effort. At the same time, Ansburg (2001) argued that there was a belief among students that they were customers and were therefore entitled to certain concessions and services, which implied that education was a service that was rendered and guaranteed. For this reason, students believed they should receive good grades regardless of their effort (e.g., if they attend class but do not take notes or study). This belief system contradicted the traditional student-academic model, where students took ownership of their learning and knowledge acquisition (Lippman et al., 2009).

Student academic entitlement may be related to the emergence of managerialism since the change in governance placed a greater emphasis on performance, measurement,

and quality assurance leading to the marketisation of education (Henkel, 2000). However, Barnett (2003) warned against perceiving higher education as a service industry aiming to satisfy its customers and postulated that this could be to the disadvantage of students and higher education institutions in the long term. Thus, students with an attitude of entitlement might easily feel frustrated if their expectation of gratification is not met, which could result in them struggling with their academic performance (Anderson et al., 2013). Another consideration regarding student entitlement was that they might disengage from their academic work because they believed they should be treated the same as customers who always get what they wanted. According to Trout (1997), some disengaged behaviours included not reading, not engaging in class discussions, expecting high grades for average to below-average work, and complaining about their workload and the lecturers who hold them to a high standard. Thus, the students transfer their responsibility to the lecturer who gave in to students for fear of, for example, not getting their promotion or losing their job.

Student Funding

According to Cloete (2016), South Africa has one of the world's most diverse higher education systems, and the affordability of higher education in South Africa has become a point of many discussions and debates. Historically, the funding for public higher education institutions in South Africa was obtained from government subsidies. Currently, the government contributes approximately 40% of funding to public universities. However, the inflation rate and the economic climate posed a challenge, government funding is insufficient, and the only other source of income for higher education institutions are student fees.

However, expenditure on higher education institutions has increased due to the rise in student numbers, and government subsidies have not been able to keep up with the growing numbers of poor students in need of funding and available funds have had to be

stretched (Naidoo & Mckay, 2018). Minister Blade Nzimande reported that since 1994, NSFAS had supported 1.5 million students. There were also accusations of corruption within the scheme as some students who received this assistance either did not pay back their loans or used the money for purposes other than their studies. At the beginning of 2016, the chairperson for NSFAS, Mr Sizwe Nxasana, announced that outstanding student repayments totalled R21 billion (Tandwa, 2016).

In 2015, students embarked on a series of protests that were sparked by an announcement by public higher education institutions that there would be a fee increase in 2016. These protests were referred to as #FeesMustFall protests. One key issue was that students wanted equal and affordable access to higher education (Nyamupangedengu, 2017). Professor Habib (2015, p. 1), a former vice-chancellor of Wits University, stated the following:

> We are at a strategic moment in our history. We have to confront issues of student fees and the underfunding of the sector at a time when we have unprecedented levels of student activism at all our universities. The only resolution for a decline in student fees is for it to be matched by increased subsidies from the state or through new partnerships with the banks.

Students embarked on these protests, and common narratives found could be linked to both redressing the inequalities of the past and transforming South Africa's colonised higher education systems. Further to this, issues raised by student protesters were not only focused on free education but also on the decolonisation of curriculums and how neo-colonial, corporatised higher education institutions play a role in sustaining the fundamentalism of Eurocentric frameworks and gendered-based violence (Mbembe, 2016).

In many instances, the #FeesMustFall protests were characterised by violence reminiscent of post-apartheid protests, and in 2015 and 2016, the public higher education institutions felt the brunt of these protests (Langa, 2017). In 2016 it was announced that

there would be no fee increase, which signalled a victory for protesters. The news that a moratorium would be placed on fee increases was disappointing for higher education institutions, which were already struggling to address systematic and structural challenges (Du Preez et al., 2017).

What remained open to speculation was the impact that free higher education for qualifying students would have on South African higher education institutions. Because #FeesMustFall happened as recently as 2015 and 2016, available literature mainly focused on the reasons for the protests. Making higher education free would make it more accessible to disadvantaged students who cannot afford the current fees. It would also pressure higher education institutions to continue delivering quality service to students (Cloete, 2016). This could result in a decrease in retention and completion rates. Majozi (2016) compared free higher education with free public health services and concluded that since the quality of public health services was poor, the same could be true for the quality of education from free higher education institutions. This change would impact not only the institutions themselves but also all staff members employed at the institutions, as it could lead to increased demands on lecturers. Implementing a free higher education system for all qualifying students remains a challenge, especially in the current unstable economic climate, as it would burden an already slow-growing economy (Bitzer & de Jager, 2018).

The Integration of Technology Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in Higher Education Learning Environments

One of the most visible changes in education in the 21st century has been the integration of information and communication technologies (ICT) (Moerschell, 2009; Addam, 2014; Mbugua, 2015; Bates, 2015; Ng'ambi et al., 2016; Upadhyaya et al., 2020). The integration of information and communication technologies enhanced learning and supported students through various automated processes (Lowther, 2008; Peeraer & Petergem, 2011; Ng'ambi et al., 2016; Upadhyaya et al., 2020). Since the onset of the 21st

century, technology in higher education institutions has become more prominent both in the classroom and in managing administrative tasks. Individuals from generation z (i.e., born after 1995) were regarded as 'digital natives' and were the first generation born into a digitally connected world (Rothman, 2016). Cilliers (2017) found that as digital natives, individuals from generation z expected information to be instantly available, generally preferred visual interaction with their learning environment, and wanted to interact rather than communicate. When entering higher education, these students expect technology to be integrated into their learning environment (Gomis-Porqueras et al., 2011; Ng'ambi et al., 2016). Higher education institutions expected lecturers to alter their teaching strategies accordingly. The expectation was not that lecturers become IT specialists but that they transfer ICT methodology to support their pedagogies. Using ICT in pedagogy enriched students' learning experience as it acknowledged diverse learning needs and promoted critical thinking and synthesising skills (Castro Sánchez et al., 2011). Newhouse (2002) further postulated that it supported a constructivist teaching approach that allowed students to construct knowledge through scaffolding. In other words, using ICT enhanced the learning environment.

While the advantages of using technology could not be argued, the potential negative impact on the user could not be ignored. Moerschell (2009) highlighted this and reported that according to Rodriguez (2005), there were "over 2,574 documents in the ERIC database when he searched teacher education *and* resistance.". Regarding adopting technology and changing traditional teaching strategies, lecturers were reluctant and often employed delaying tactics (Bingimlas, 2009). Batson (2011) and Weimer (2008) argued that technology was generally not integrated into teaching practices because lecturers did not understand this integration's importance. Thus, lecturers' attitudes, beliefs and values played an essential role in adapting to change. These attributes were also predictors of whether the lecturer would use ICT as a methodology to support their pedagogies or resist it. Johnson et al. (2016) highlighted the following contributing factors:

(a) a lack of infrastructure (e.g., slow internet connections and inadequate hardware and software).

(b) low levels of technical expertise and self-confidence among instructors.

(c) a lack of recognition for embracing new technological pedagogies in tenure and promotion decisions; and (d) technology anxiety.

The two key barriers found in literature associated with the resistance to using ICT in the classroom were a lack of sufficient training and development and a lack of adeptness and capability to use technology (Marzilli et al., 2014; Mbugua, 2015; Kamilah & Anugerahwati, 2019; Upadhyaya et al., 2020). Another challenge that lecturers faced was the time it took them to prepare for and set up online lessons. Recent studies have shown that preparation for online teaching requires more time (Kenny & Fluck, 2017). They first have to familiarise themselves with the institution's learning management system, and they also have to learn how to develop content and activities and how to engage with students in the online space. Teaching online also required lecturers to monitor the online learning environment, for example, to monitor discussions and provide students with feedback (Gomis-Poqueras et al., 2011). Being constantly available influenced the lecturer's work-life balance as it eroded the boundaries (Bezuidenhout, 2015).

One of the main challenges hindering the integration of ICT into higher education was the inability to master the use of technology which could refer to both the hardware (i.e., devices) and the software (i.e., applications and systems). Moerschell (2009, p. 2) identified the following two key barriers to lecturers integrating technology into their teaching: “firstly, a lack of awareness of available types of teaching technology or an interest in teaching technology and secondly, a lack of motivation to learn how to integrate technology in their teaching practices.”. This inability to master the use of technology could lead to feelings of inadequacy, insecurity, anxiety and stress. Stress linked to the use of technology was also referred to as "*technostress*". According to Chuang et al. (2015), technostress can be ascribed to an incongruence that an individual experiences when there is no alignment

between the expectation from their surroundings and their competence. However, little research has been done on the experience of technostress in an educational environment. Further to this, the occurrence of this phenomenon in this field was not less significant (Glenn, 2008). Technostress could manifest in different forms. The manifestations could be physical (e.g., feeling flushed, chest pains, exhaustion, heart palpitations, and light-headedness). It could also be experienced psychologically (e.g., difficulty remembering and articulating what one wants to say, difficulty concentrating, feeling overwhelmed, feeling frustrated, and having spells of anxiety or fear (Dupin-Bryant, 2002).

Another key area of focus was linked to the impact of the use of ICT in learning environments on students. In other words, did it benefit student performance in a positive or negative way? Studies reported mixed results, and the relationship between the use of ICT and student performance needed to be clarified. In some instances, the findings were contradictory. It was established that the use of ICT and its impact were contextual. For example, some studies reported that using ICT in the learning environment significantly positively influences students' academic performance and can enhance learning (Bransford, 2000; Wong et al., 2006; Sari, 2014; Ismail et al., 2018). Other studies found that if students were not proficient in the use of technology, did not have access to resources that adequately supported their learning or had anxiety about using technology; it would not have a positive effect on student learning (Frederick et al., 2006; Whelan, 2008; Castro Sánchez et al., 2011; Karamiti, 2016).

Student performance was further impacted by the attitudes and proficiency skill levels of lecturers deploying ICT in the learning environment. Hoffmann et al. (2009) found that if lecturers had positive attitudes towards the use of ICT in the classroom and could apply this to their pedagogies, it significantly affected students' performance. Analyses of the literature indicated that teachers played a key role in the integration and diffusion of ICT in the classroom. They must have the competence and the right attitude towards technology to

improve their teaching methods and contribute to students learning by technological means in a planned and pedagogically sound way (Vernadakis et al., 2011; Carle et al., 2009; Brill & Galloway, 2007). Teachers' perceptions regarding the usefulness of ICT directly affected their intention to use technology. Furthermore, positive attitudes must be paired with appropriate ICT pedagogical use to significantly affect student performance and achievement (Hoffmann & Oreopoulos, 2009).

The changing landscape of education has caused a paradigm shift in how teaching and learning were delivered in the classroom. The digital age has played an essential role in this shift, which called for integrating information and communication technologies (ICT) in education environments. Therefore, it was important to conceptualise ICT as more than just the use of technology but also understood how it influenced pedagogical methodology and the inter-relationship in enhancing and supporting learning and knowledge construction.

Given this, it is necessary to overcome the obstacles to effective ICT integration. This is especially relevant given the potential digital divide between students and lecturers. Along with the inaccessibility of technology and the internet, there is a need to address the skills and ability gap. Also not taken into account is the lack of adequate training and development for lecturers to effectively use ICT as a pedagogical instrument to support and enhance teaching and learning.

Conclusion

In any society, higher education is considered to fulfil an important role. In the 21st century, words like ‘quality’, ‘excellence’, and ‘innovation’ described what higher education institutions strive for globally and locally. South African higher education institutions have not been left unaffected by global educational changes and developments. This chapter outlined the history of higher education in South Africa, mainly focussing on the post-1994

transformation processes and changes in governance. It further provided an overview of two influential theoretical models informing and driving governance strategies found in higher education institutions. This chapter also discussed the change in the profile of students enrolling in higher education institutions. It highlighted the expectations of students and the impact that these have on the teaching and learning environment. This chapter further addressed the challenges stemming from the accessibility and affordability of South African higher education. It would be irresponsible not to include a reference to the 2015-2016 protests and the changes needed to address the broader challenges of social and economic inequalities. Although existing literature was not clear about the long-term impact of the #FeesMustFall protests on South African higher education institutions, the impact of the pressure that this movement had placed on higher education institutions' resources would only be seen in the future. Finally, this chapter explored the role ICT played in educational practices and the impact of this change on lecturers. Chapter 3 explored the academic profession in a changing academic environment.

Chapter Three

Introduction

Higher education institutions are probably the "most value-laden institutions in modern society" (Scott, 2004, p. 439). At the center of higher education institutions were the academic staff. The term 'academy' originated in ancient Athens and referred to a formal organisation focused on education. Another type of 'academy' was later associated with museums and the protection of knowledge, and individuals affiliated with these 'academies' were referred to as independent intellectuals. Over time, individuals who associated with academic institutions became known as academics (Teichler et al., 2013).

The academic profession involves independent intellectuals employed by a higher education institution for their specialised knowledge and who perceive 'academic work' to be their career. This chapter considered the changes in the role and expectations of academics in an increasingly changing work environment. With a strong advocacy for quality education, the move to a more corporate governance model has made the higher education environment demanding and restrictive, with academic working conditions becoming increasingly less favorable.

The traditional academic system could be divided into various existing cultures, for example, the culture of discipline, the culture of the profession and the culture of enterprise (Brennan, 2010). Academic systems found in higher education institutions were generally divided into areas of specialty (i.e., core disciplines and subdisciplines) to which academics, according to their areas of specialty, would belong. These pockets of specialties were usually referred to as departments, faculties, or schools. Within these pockets of specialties, academics would be socialised and start to develop their academic identities, and they would also start to form a shared value, norm and belief system. In other words, each

department, faculty or school would form their own distinct culture within the discipline that, for example, consisted of unique admission criteria and a code of ethics. Thus, the various disciplines provided its members with the primary culture, which set them apart from other disciplines, such as a school of law culture and education culture.

The academic profession, in turn, provided a secondary culture to the academic, which included their academic identity and comprised of cultural phrases such as freedom, autonomy, collegiality, and self-governance. It further depicted a selfless, noble sacrificial commitment to creating new knowledge and transmitting knowledge that ultimately served societies (Brennan, 2010).

The culture of the enterprise was what tied the academic to the higher education institution and the traditional norms and values embedded in each institution. Ultimately the culture of the enterprise played a role in the academics' loyalty and commitment to the institution (Brennan, 2010). Thus, the existing cultures cultivated and nurtured in academics found in higher education institutions would contribute to their struggle to adapt to changes (Brennan, 2010).

The Academic Profession in a Changing Environment

The changing conditions of the academic environment should not be seen as a phenomenon particular to South Africa but rather as a worldwide trend. Academics have been hauled away from their traditional views, beliefs, and values by realities such as massification, globalisation, and the privatisation of higher education (Altbach, 2011). While massification has contributed to a fragmented academic environment, privatisation forced academics to generate income for the institution, leading them to get involved in many non-teaching and non-research activities, such as driving student retention initiatives. These higher education business enterprises came at the price of a tightly regulated environment,

which limited the traditional work of the academic, like research, creating new knowledge, and teaching (Altbach, 2011).

Other challenges that academics grappled with were a lack of available funding and growing student numbers. These challenges required lecturers to adapt and display an increasing array of skills continuously. At the same time, conditions in the higher education work environment were becoming more unfavourable (i.e., the loss of professional autonomy, inadequate resources, lower than market-related salaries, increased contract employment, and a loss of public recognition and status (Altbach, 2011; Lazarsfeld et al., 2009).

For professional academics, academia was not just another occupation but formed part of an academic identity to which they were committed. This academic identity referred to the extent to which individuals perceived themselves as academics. They primarily defined themselves not just in terms of an occupation, but also a vocation. What was found to be challenging was clarifying the difference between professions and occupations (Neal, 2000). The Latin root '*occupare',* which meant 'to occupy', referred to a role with certain activities that an individual performed for remuneration, including for some hours. It did not call for commitment but was concerned with aspects of quality and efficiency (Lester, 2020). Mitchell and Mansfield (1996) stated that an occupation could be divided into various functions that, as a whole, contribute to a common purpose. Functional analysis was a known process used to analyse the different key functions of a role using a downward approach that mapped all the activities the role should cover. Each activity was usually described in detail to promote output and efficiency to achieve results (Carroll & Boutall, 2010). Applying this approach to an education environment has been critiqued, stating that if one placed too much focus on the competence of an educator, then what made them competent became lost (Lester, 2020).

A profession was believed to be a calling guided by a moral belief that positioned the individual as having certain expertise and responsibilities. This expertise granted the individual a certain status and professional rights, such as self-regulation and occupational autonomy (Lester, 2020). In the 1950s and 1960s, the profession concept was linked to a specific occupation. Most researchers aligned the concept of a profession with "the knowledge-based category of service occupations which usually followed a period of tertiary education and vocational training and experience." (Evetts, 2013, p. 781). Traditionalists defined professionalism as a set of beliefs, values and norms that justifies privileges linked to a profession. Sociologists defined professionalism as the set of beliefs, values, and norms that legitimise the occupational autonomy and social privileges of professionals. Evetts (2013) link professionalism to occupational groups and postulates that these groups rely on ideologies of professionalism that includes being autonomous, having expert knowledge and collegial work relations. Höhle and Teichler (2013, p. 23) provided the following description of the academic profession: Firstly, there was a "process of learning and maturation" during this process, a new lecturer developed and grew until their peers perceived them as productive members of the inner academic circle.". According to Höhle and Teichler (2013, p. 23), a lecturer could be considered competent and senior after a period of 10 to 15 years if they productively contributed to the academy. Secondly, pursuing an academic career was often difficult as it involved "rigorous exams" or other assessments before entering the academic arena and was linked to advanced qualifications (i.e., doctoral degrees). Thirdly, the academic profession allowed for more freedom as academics could plan their workdays and regulate their own work schedule as they saw fit. This was referred to as "academic freedom" and positioned the academic as a professional who had autonomy and influence, which was "considered necessary in order to generate new knowledge and in order to prepare students for indeterminate work." (Höhle & Teichler, 2013, p. 24).

Larson (2017) identified five key components of the ideology of professionalism: profession as a calling; profession guided by an ideal of service to the general good of the

community; profession positioned the individual in a position of '*noblesse oblige*' in other words the responsibilities of privilege; profession as having a high social status and professionalism also justified the individual's right to self-regulation and autonomy. The ideologies found in traditional academic professionalism thus postulated that the academic should be viewed as an individual who belonged to a community of scholars conditioned by disciplines and sub-disciplines. The advocates for traditional academic professionalism believed that higher education institutions should function according to their intended purpose, which included preserving academic traditions, the free flow of information and producing and sharing knowledge (Evetss, 2013), Further, academic professionals were perceived to be experts in their disciplines and sub-disciplines, providing them with a certain status and right of power within the higher education work environment.

Academic professionals were only defined by the institution where they were employed, and their occupational existence depended on their role and function at the institution. For example, "a doctor is a doctor wherever he may be, but a professor is a professor only if employed by a college or university" (Marski, 2018).

The Academic as Lecturer

Globally, academics were believed to be united by their commitment to teaching, creating new knowledge, and transferring information to students. The academic role was closely tied to these central functions aligned with the institution's expectations. The role could further be divided into three aspects, namely: (1) the expected role, (2) the perceived role, and (3) the enacted role.

The expected role included functions like adhering to formal institutional rules, the procedures and complying with the general expectations of management. The perceived role signified how the academic as an individual perceived their role and function, including their

personal beliefs about teaching and learning, which could be teacher- or student-centred. The enacted role referred to how the academic would act out their role according to their beliefs about their role and the institution's expectations (Akerlind, 2004; Kember & Kwan, 2002).

Traditionally, the role of the lecturer was synonymous with teaching students and developing their minds. Lecturers were rarely challenged by their students as they were viewed as experts. As a result, in the classroom, students mostly acted as passive listeners while lecturers spoke most of the time. The role of the lecturer came under review in the 1980s and 1990s because it was thought that the traditional method of instruction favoured able students but was ineffective for reaching less prepared students (Hyde et al., 2012). In other words, the traditional approach did not encourage student participation. Because the lecturer was perceived as a fountain of all knowledge, there was little opportunity for students to develop skills like critical thinking and problem-solving. Lecturers who favoured the traditional approach to teaching gave the following explanations for their views. They claimed that traditional lectures should last an hour to ensure the entire curriculum was covered. They also believed that during traditional lectures, the lecturer could ensure that students take notes properly as they could not do this on their own (Hyde et al., 2012).

It was also important to consider lecturers' personal perceptions, beliefs, and conceptions regarding their role, as these would influence how they form their professional identity and how they act out their role and function as an academic. Studies investigating lecturers' beliefs about teaching found that lecturers focus on the transmission of information, their teaching strategies, and how students learn (Kember, 1997; Akerlind, 2004). Kember (1997, pp. 265-268) identified five conceptual categories of lecturers' perceptions of teaching. The first three were mainly teacher-centred perceptions that focused on content and knowledge and the transmittance thereof, while the last two were student-centred and focused on student learning.

- "Imparting information,
- Transmitting structured knowledge,
- Student–teacher interaction/apprenticeship,
- Facilitating understanding,
- Conceptual change/intellectual development."

Associated with the belief of teachers and their attitudes about education (i.e., students, learning, teaching, and schooling) the following different definitions are provided:

- teachers' beliefs are preconceptions and implicit theories.
- teacher beliefs are orientations to teaching (Ameron, 2009)

Yero (2002, p. 21) defined beliefs as "judgments and evaluations we make about ourselves, others, and the world around us." Yero (2002) distinguished between mindful and mindless lecturers. One type of 'mindless' lecturer was those who perceived themselves as gatekeepers of knowledge. They often described their students as problems and preferred to use the same study material and teaching style repeatedly. However, the 'mindful' lecturer could move beyond their comfort zone (Siegel, 2007).

Conclusion

While previous studies found that the academic profession involved considerable pressures, expectations, and changes (Altbach, 2000; Trader-Leigh, 2002; Dowling-Hetherington, 2013; Teichler et al., 2013), information was lacking about how academics interpreted, viewed, and responded to these stressors. To conclude this section, Teichler et al. (2013) stated that modern higher education was moving away from traditional academia to a more relevant one. What academics did on a day-to-day basis was not so common, and academics needed to realign their role and functions with the changing expectations of the higher education environment. The current study explored how lecturers perceived, reacted to, and coped with the rapid changes in higher education. The results could assist

institutions in implementing effective, cost-efficient interventions to help academics adapt to the changes they experience. Enders (2006, p. 19) stated that “overall, the fate of the academic profession may lie solely in how it responded to changes that impact universities and higher education systems worldwide in the coming years.”.

Chapter Four

Psychosocial Adjustment

Evidence from organisational research show that an individual's psychological well-being is strongly influenced by their social environment, which includes their work environment. The continuous change in higher education requires lecturers to adjust to new working situations. Rothman et al. (2008) stated academics employed at higher education institutions in South Africa have been exposed to stress that can be associated with the changes (i.e., changing student profile, teaching and research demands and continuous transformations processes). A study conducted by Viljoen and Rothman (2009) found a correlation between perceived organisational stressors and illness.

From the previous chapters, it is clear that lecturers were often caught between tradition, the challenges of change and the complexities of accepting the changes they experience. How these changes impacted lecturers and how they responded to them can be linked to their ability to adjust. There is little consistency in definitions of adjustment found in literature, as each researcher define adjustment from their own theoretical framework. Stubley and McCroy (2014) refer to psychosocial adjustment as the ability of an individual to adapt to new situations while Hoyt and Stanton (2018) describe it as multidimensional which include intrapersonal dimensions as well as interpersonal dimensions. Moss-Morris (2013) postulates that it can be describe by outcomes such as the ability to preserve functioning under challenging conditions.

Lecturers experience multiple stressors due to the continuous changes they encounter in their work environment. The continuous change they experience such as a change in their workload, administration processes and managerial governing strategies could play a role in how they cope effectively with these changes that could promote positive

psychological adjustment. For example, employing effective coping strategies that can reduce anxiety, uncertainty and negativity caused by the changes and can assist lecturers in adjusting to their environmental changes.

Resistance to Change

All individuals experience change throughout their lifetime. Some changes are inadvertent, and some changes are intended. Any change, to some degree, has an impact on the individual. Though some changes in an individual's life could be associated with excitement, most organisational changes are associated with good or bad stress. How individuals absorb and deal with the changes they experience, depend on their ability to adapt. Higher education has seen dramatic and frequent changes in the last decade, which means that academics have had to continually deal with and adapt to change and reinvent themselves, both from an institutional and a personal perspective.

To change is to act in a way that is different from how one has always act or react. It should not be innately categorised as good or bad as change will always be evaluated against what was before (i.e., existing traditions, values and beliefs), and the outcomes will be measured against what existed (Hultman, 2003). Although individuals reacted differently to change, any form of change could be challenging and is associated with key terms like loss, anxiety, and stress (Hultman, 2003). Bovey and Hede (2001) distinguished three stages of resistance to change. First, an individual would deny the change, then resist it, and in the end, they would explore new options before committing to the change. Thus, resistance should be seen as a process, not a single event. When the environment changes to the extent that individuals do not feel they belong or need new skills to perform their functions, a sense of loss of identity occurs. Trader-Leigh (2002) outlined the following factors that contribute to the resistance of change:

- Self-Interest: This refers to how individuals see the change as harmful in one way or another.
- Psychological impact: refers to the perceived impact of the change on job security, professional expertise and social status in the organisation.
- Tyranny of custom refers to the tendency to be caught up in the web of tradition.
- The redistributive factor: suggests that people resist change because, through the redistribution of tasks and responsibilities, they could stand to lose some or all their privileges.
- The destabilisation effect pointed towards introducing new people into the organisation who are unfamiliar with its culture and operations. The destabilisation that accompanies such change would be resisted strongly.
- Culture incompatibility: suggests that a clash between, for example, an academic- and a business-oriented culture would be resisted.
- The political effect: refers to the power relationships in the organisation and the degree to which they are threatened.

Lecturers' approaches to change often went hand in hand with a great deal of scepticism as they wanted to be sure of a positive outcome before giving up what they believed was working. Traditionally lecturers are set in their ways and did not abandon their comfort zones easily (Badley & Habeshaw, 2006; Chandler, 2013). Academics who view their profession as a "calling" and are passionate about their teaching practice are intrinsically motivated, as they believe in what they did and how they did it. This is often reason enough for them to resist change (Anderson, 2008). Many higher education institutions are known for their rich and long-standing traditions. However, many of the long-standing traditions at South African public universities had to change and transform after the end of apartheid in 1994 to promote equity of access to all South Africans and to eradicate all forms of discrimination.

According to Hultman (2003), the state of mind of an individual is made up of facts, beliefs, and values, and they would act on what they believe and felt was right and important. Depending on how an individual perceived the change and its demands, they would react differently to it when it was brought to their social environment. According to Lane (2007) academics tend to resist change because of existing strong traditions and conservative educational practices and a fear of losing their autonomy and independence as academics. Hultman (2003, p. 1) defined resistance as a "state of mind reflecting unwillingness or unreceptiveness to change how people think and behave." He further explained that resistance could be compared to readiness and manifest itself by opposing or avoiding the change. However, when an individual complied with change, it did not necessarily mean that they accepted it. Thus, acceptance should not necessarily be seen as the opposite of resistance, as individuals may not always display typical resistant behaviours (Hultman, 2003).

Resistance can be active or passive. The tyranny of custom was many individuals' first choice of resistance. The phrase is borrowed from the philosopher Bertrand Russell. It can be described as beliefs and practices found in a society that becomes a habit and provides them with a sense of identity, belonging and cohesiveness (Sams, 2017).

This is especially true of academics who clung to traditional beliefs and values because they cannot fathom any benefit in the proposed change (Trader-Leigh, 2002). Active forms of resistance include public displays where academics verbally voice their resistance (e.g., at faculty meetings or other public forums). Passive forms of resistance include ignoring requests to implement a change, like becoming forgetful or withholding needed information, thus delaying the change process. They could also feign ignorance or resistance by complying or adhering to the minimal requirements. In many instances, resistance to change is just a way for academics to state that they did not want to be told what to do or how to do things, as they prefer doing things on their terms.

The Concept of Psychosocial Adjustment

The concept of adjustment is found in different disciplines and is defined differently. According to Alao (2014, p. 6) in its juristic sense, adjustment referrs to the "process of setting right" and is still found in modern-day legal practices. In biology, the concept refers to "life's evolutionary processes" (Alao, 2014, p. 6). As a psychological concept, adjustment refers to "the behavioural processes by which humans and other animals maintain equilibrium among their various needs or between their needs and the obstacles of their environment." (Alao, 2014, p. 6). The American Psychological Association (2019) defines adjustment as "a change in attitude, behaviour, or both by an individual based on some recognized need or desire to change, particularly to account for the current environment or changing, atypical, or unexpected conditions.".

Psychologists refer to adaptation as *psychological adjustment*, whereas the health sciences refer to it as *psychosocial adjustment*, a broader, more inclusive term (Larsen, 2000). The concept *of psychosocial* is related to psychological development and the individual's interaction with their social environment, while *psychological* is a one-dimensional term (Larsen, 2000). The current study was interested in the individual and the change happening in the social environment; therefore, the term psychosocial will be used when referring to adaptation.

Biologically, adjustment refers to the gradual adaptation of an individual to stimuli in their environment and includes compliance with the environment's physical, social, and cultural patterns. This suggests that humans act from social, cultural, and biological perspectives towards their environment. However, human adjustment also refers to humans attempting to adapt to their environment to suit their needs (Sarbin, 1940). People could adapt to their environment by manipulating it or purposefully seeking out parts of the environment that match their personality or characteristics through selective and goal-

directed behaviour. Adjustment should not only be thought of as biological because a person exits both as an individual and as a social group member. Thus, a person's psychological individuality and social environment will determine their behaviour. If a person's psychological individuality is dissatisfied, it could cause frustration, conflict, and hostility. This might lead to individuals modifying the stimulus function without changing the stimulus, resulting in the development of "new attitudes towards those segments of the situation which cause the conflict" (Sarbin, 1940, p. 242).

Previous literature has generally focussed on psychosocial adjustment individuals experienced because of chronic illnesses or disabilities or students transitioning to higher education. Some studies have focussed on how humans are adjusting to climate change. However, a gap existed in research that focussed on the psychosocial adjustment of lecturers in higher education to change in their work environment. The current chapter drew on the literature's available theories and adjustment models. It linked some key ideas to the phenomenon of lecturers' psychosocial adjustment to change.

Adjustment, according to Larsen (2000), is dynamic. It refers to the continuous changes an individual has to make and the impact of these changes on their life (e.g., being diagnosed with a chronic illness). Adjusting to change also affects how individuals cope with the demands and stress they encounter due to the change. Individuals' responses to their environment are determined by their perception and interpretation of events (Fife, 1994). This is also true for lecturers who needed to constantly adapt to stay abreast of ongoing changes in higher education. Van den Heuvel et al. (2013) pointed out that reflecting on their lived experience is how a person make meaning, of their environment which they consider as central to adjustment. Individuals have unique perceptions of how they fit into their environment. In the case of chronic illness, the patient has to redefine their lifestyle by adapting their behaviour to the limitations imposed on them by the illness (Pierobon et al., 2011). As in the case of chronic illness, lecturers also have to redefine the existing meanings

they have assumed to be true about the higher education environment, such as how the traditions and values they believed to be true no longer apply. This also calls for psychological adjustment as they need to adapt to the changing work environment.

Hoyt and Stanton (2018) postulated the following regarding adjustment:

(a) the adjustment was multidimensional and could influence a person both on an intra- and an interpersonal level,

(b) resulting in the two being interrelated.

(c) that diversity was part of the context and was not an exception, which meant if any number of individuals were exposed to the same changes simultaneously, each individual would adjust to the changes differently, and some may not adjust at all.

This suggested that adjustment should be understood from each individual's perspective and that adjustment could be negative or positive depending on how the individual perceived the change and attaches meaning to it. Yeatts et al. (2000) pointed out that lecturers who have been with an institution for an extended period will want to retain traditional methods of teaching and would doubt new practices like blended learning. These lecturers may also view their experience and knowledge gained over the years as valuable to the institution. They could perceive any change as a threat to their seniority and status or be worried that it may impact their benefits.

Research by Dawis and Lofquist (1984) suggested that individuals constantly try to find a balance between their needs and interests and the expectations from their role and function to experience job satisfaction. When a change is introduced, it will disrupt this balance and could lead to negative feelings and behaviours (e.g., anxiety and resistance; Yeatts et al., 2000).

Theories and Models of Adjustment

Theories and models are useful for explaining behaviour. They offer a means for researchers to explore beliefs and the links between beliefs and behaviours. Explanatory theories and models are rooted in understanding the social determinants of behaviour and can be either *realistic* or *epistemic*. A realistic interpretation of the behavioural explanation results in a literal description of external realities, while an epistemic interpretation views the existence of external realities as a simple, rather than a literal, explanation for human experience. The current study was interested in the individual and the change happening in the social work environment. Relying on more than one theoretical model offer different perspectives and conceptual frameworks to understand phenomenon as each model may emphasise different viewpoints that fosters a holistic approach. In other words, the value of this approach could serve to enhance the depth of analysis as it allows the researcher to explore multiple dimensions of a phenomenon.

Discussed in this section are the Minnesota Theory of Work Adjustment a psychological theory, that explains how individuals adjust to their work environment; Kleiman's Explanatory Model that explains how individuals create their own models of frameworks to explain phenomena based on their beliefs, values and experiences and the Roy Adaptation Model that was developed by Sister Callista Roy and is based on the beliefs of individuals that they are dynamic beings who constantly interact with their environment to achieve a state of balance. The rationale for including these three models were that they share some similarities in terms of their focus on human behaviour and adaptation but bring to the table different applications and emphases. For example, the Minnesota Theory of Work Adjustment focuses on the interaction between individuals and their work environments providing a framework for understanding individuals behaviour to seek and a balance between the expectations and requirements of their job and their personal characteristics (Dawis, 2004). The Kleiman's Explanatory Model focuses on the cognitive

explanations and experiences of individuals and is a psychological framework that focuses on how individuals explain and interpret their lived experiences (Kleinman,1980). The Roy Adaptation Model focuses on the adaptations of individuals to various stimuli especially on the importance of adaptation for maintaining health and well-being (Roy, 2009). Though the Roy Adaptation Model was created with a focus on the nursing and healthcare work environment, the underlying theory can be applied to investigate adaptation in other humanities contexts.

The Minnesota Theory of Work Adjustment

Changes in an organisation or institution (i.e., restructuring or introducing new methods, rules, and strategies) directly impact individuals' work routines and environments (Herold et al., 2007). For individuals to continue to perform effectively, they need to adapt to the consequences of the change. Not only does change require a person to learn new skills and information, but it also requires a person to think and feel differently about their work environment (LePine et al., 2004).

The current study aimed to understand how lecturers experienced the ongoing changes in the higher education work environment in South Africa and how they responded to and coped with the changes. Researchers have applied the Minnesota theory of work adjustment to investigate various workplace challenges, including gender-related issues and discrimination in the workplace (Dahling & Librizzi, 2014). The Minnesota theory of work adjustment was developed by a research team from the Work Adjustment Project in the Industrial Relations Centre at the University of Minnesota and was first published in 1964.

The Minnesota theory of work adjustment aimed to measure and predict individuals' adjustment to their work environment (Dawis, 2004).

The Minnesota theory of work adjustment is described as a person-environment fit model that is made up of two models, namely the predictive model that explains the correspondence between a person's needs and the environment and the interaction model that explains the ongoing interaction processes between the individual and their work environment (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984). The Minnesota theory of work adjustment views work adjustment as a result of an interaction between the individual's characteristics (e.g., needs, abilities) and the work environment (e.g., reinforced system and ability requirements). It postulates that an individual has certain expectations and requirements from their work environments. For example, to gain job satisfaction, remuneration, social status and specific conditions. However, environments also have certain expectations from the individual, for example, to meet the job's requirements, to be on time and to perform. Thus, the relationship between the person and the environment should reach a correspondence stage. The premise of this theory is that all individuals want to maintain a positive connection with their environment and that correspondence drives job satisfaction (Dawis, 2004).

The Minnesota theory of work adjustment further suggested that individuals and environments had four states of experience. The first state is called the satisfied and satisfactory state or the vocational preference state. During this state, the individual develops preferences for certain types of work linked to their personal interests, characteristics, and values. Further to this, they consider factors such as their skills, past experiences, personal goals and education to explore and form an understanding of their work type preferences. Once they form an idea of their preferences, they will align their behaviour to their preferences which will then serve as the foundation for their behaviour and

choices. They will continue to engage in behaviour to achieve correspondence and maintain the satisfied and satisfactory state (Dawis, 2000).

The other three states, namely the satisfied and unsatisfactory, dissatisfied and satisfactory, and dissatisfied and unsatisfactory, will produce work adjustment behaviour to get to a correspondence stage. When individuals no longer experience satisfaction, they are confronted with the need to adjust. Further to the four states, the Minnesota theory of work adjustment also proposes four adjustment styles, a) flexibility, which refers to a person's level of tolerance to an imbalance between themselves and the environment, b) activeness, which refers to whether a person actively engages in behaviour that will reduce the imbalance, c) reactiveness, which refers to a person's inclination to choose self-adjustment to regain imbalance with the environment and d) perseverance, which refers to the degree to which a person will want to resolve the imbalance and how persistent they are before choosing to leave the environment (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984).

Linking the continuous changes in higher education to this theory's premise that all individuals seek to maintain a positive connection with their environment, it could be concluded that lecturers continually needed to adjust to regain correspondence and satisfaction with their work environment. The four adjustment styles of the Minnesota theory of work adjustment offered a valuable explanation for the behaviours that lecturers could engage in to regain correspondence and satisfaction with their work environment.

Kleinman's Explanatory Model

Kleinman conceptualise the explanatory model in 1978. This model provided insight into how individuals gave meaning to their experiences when their environment changed. Although this explanatory model has been used to explain illness, the model can be used to

explore how lecturers adjusted psychosocially to change as it can be helpful to understand the phases lecturers could go through when confronted with change.

Kleinman's explanatory model is a conceptual framework that provides an analysis of the belief that patients hold about their illness. It provides the physician with an illness narrative, giving the physician insight into the patient's unique understanding of their condition (Kleinman,1980). These illness explanatory frameworks may function as pointers to the cause(s) of the illness and is viewed as domain specific. This domain-specific hypothesis postulates that the explanatory framework for certain phenomena (e.g., illness) is tied to specific cognitive domains that facilitate the interpretation of what may have caused the phenomenon. Some healers believed that many illnesses resulted from negative thinking patterns (Lynch & Medin, 2006). Lynch & Medin (2006, p. 4), stated that "the majority of physical illnesses result from an overload of emotional, psychological, and spiritual crises and negative attitudes create a negative response in the physical body.". Lynch & Medin (2006) further asserted that "people who become ill are engaged in one or more dysfunctional psychological patterns, such as "unresolved or deeply consuming stress or negative belief patterns."

Individuals use their cognitive abilities, such as schemas, to process and interpret their experiences (Beck, 2019). Schemas are fundamental beliefs and norms about the self, others, and the environment. If the individual experiences a sudden shift in their environment or circumstances, their existing schemas will be challenged. However, individuals will continue to apply their existing schemas even though these schemas no longer sufficiently explain their environment. This imbalance between schemas and the changing environment can lead to individuals denying or resisting the changes. If they start to feel overwhelmed, it can lead to negative feelings like anxiety, depression, or anger. However, when an individual reaches the point of acceptance, they can adopt and develop new schemas and adapt to the changing environment (Karpman et al., 1986).

Based on the explanatory model, lecturers' existing schemas (i.e., beliefs, values, and traditional positions) about the higher education environment and their role in it were tied to specific cognitive domains. Using their pre-existing schemas in the cognitive domain, lecturers assigned personal reasons, causes, or justifications for their reactions to the change. If these reasons were predominantly negative, they could result in an overload of emotional and psychological crises that could lead to negative behaviours (i.e., resisting the change). Suppose lecturers felt they had lost control over their environment due to the changes and perceived the resulting environment as dysfunctional. In that case, they could experience unresolved emotions like stress and anxiety, leading to behaviours like denial or resistance. Kleinman described four phases that were important when interpreting an entire illness experience, namely:

- The symptom onset,
- Pathophysiology,
- Expected course of the patient's illness, and
- The expected treatment and effectiveness thereof.

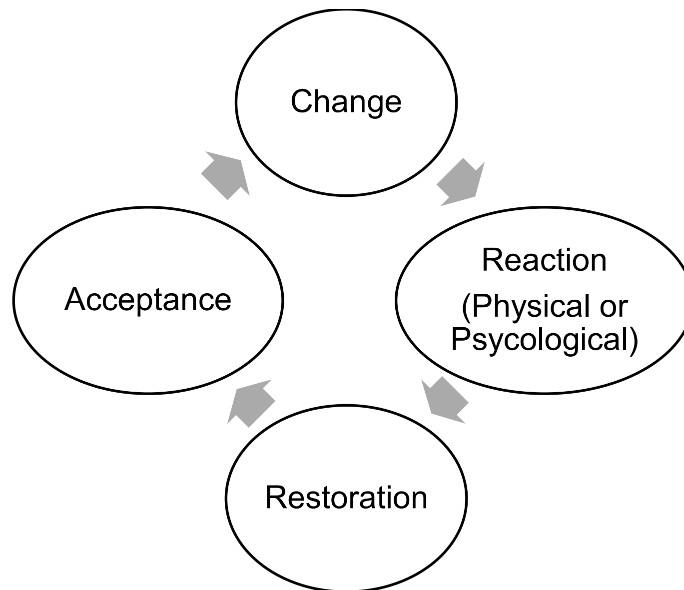
These four phases for understanding the experience of illness could be applied to the experience of change as follows:

- The onset of change (the symptom onset),
- Reactions to change (physically or psychologically),
- Expected time to restore the imbalance to change,
- Expected point of acceptance of the change (developing new

schemas; see Figure 1.

Figure 1

Kleinman's explanatory model: Phases of interpreting change



The Roy Adaptation Model

The Roy Adaptation Model provides a framework that looks at the abilities of individuals and groups to deal with change in their environments (Roy, 1970). Today it is a highly valued model for nursing practices, and the underlying theory could help investigate adaptation to change in other contexts. For this study, the context would be the higher education environment.

According to the Roy Adaptation Model, the individual is perceived as a holistic, adaptive system constantly interacting with the internal and external environment. Adaptation was defined by Roy and Andrews (1999, p. 54) as "the process and outcome whereby thinking and feeling persons as individuals or groups use conscious awareness and choice to create human and environmental integration.". Individuals might achieve optimal health and general well-being if they adapt to their surroundings.

Roy (2009) postulates that there are levels to the adaptation process. These levels are divided into three: (1) the integrated life process, (2) a compensatory status, and (3) a

compromising status. These statuses can change as individuals adjust, or do not adjust, to changes. Linked to the adaptation level processes are coping processes consisting of innate and acquired coping mechanisms (Roy, 2009). An individual's genetics determine innate coping mechanisms. Individuals use both innate and acquired coping mechanisms to control the processes between the stimulus input and the adaptation level output. Innate coping mechanisms will be driven by a lecturer's genetic makeup and a regulator subsystem that responds automatically to environmental stimuli as they enter through the senses linked to the nervous system. Acquired coping mechanisms refer to learned responsive behaviours to stimuli through the cognitive and emotional channels. This could include lecturers defending their pre-existing cognitive schemas about the higher education environment or judging the changes according to their existing standards and perceptions.

With reference to figure 2, the stimuli adaptation level represents the balance between the demands and resources in the environment and the individual’s ability to cope with the demands. From their environment they receive stimuli from the cognitive and emotional channels that are classified into three categories: (1) focal stimuli, (2) contextual stimuli, and (3) residual stimuli. Focal stimuli are internal or external stimuli that individuals or groups are most aware of in the immediate consciousness. Focal stimuli require the individual to pay immediate attention to the stimuli (i.e., lecturers having to move suddenly to online marking) (Roy, 2009). Contextual stimuli contribute to the environment's effect on the human adaptive system, but it is not the centre of attention (Roy, 2009). Residual stimuli are stimuli from the environment that individuals are either unaware of or might not fully experience. The regulator subsystem responds automatically to and assess the stimuli that enters through the senses and triggers adaptive responses. There are four adaptive modes through which an individual's behaviour can be observed, namely:

- The physiological mode includes basic needs (i.e., nutrition, oxygen, activities, and rest) and the various physical systems (i.e., the endocrine and neurologic functions).

- The self-concept group identity mode refers to identity integrity, group self-image, culture, and shared responsibility in a group. It further refers to the need to know who one is to exist with a sense of unity.
- The role function mode refers to the need to know who one is and how to act concerning others. Thus, how to co-exist with others and social integrity.
- The interdependence mode refers to feeling secure and being respected and valued. It also includes respecting and valuing others (Roy, 2009, pp. 43-45).

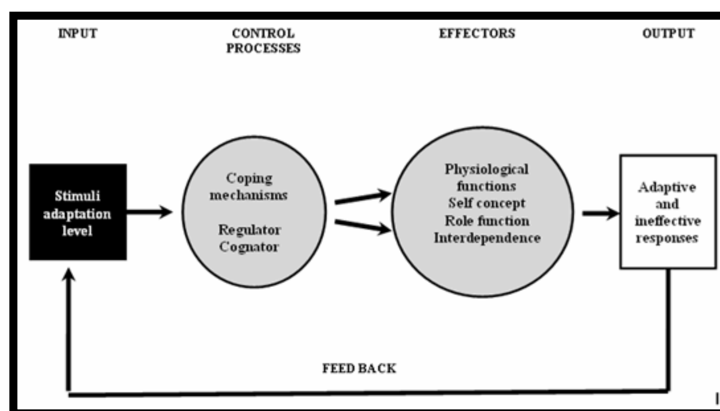
Responses to stimuli from the environment can be adaptive or ineffective. Adaptive responses are responses that are positive and effective coping strategies that individuals rely on to promote adaptation and can be physiological, psychological and social. Ineffective responses refer to responses that hinders the adaptation process for example, ineffective coping strategies or the lack of coping strategies such as ignoring or avoiding stressors, social isolation and a lack of social support.

In the context of the nursing profession regulating subsystems are also pertinent to the changes happening in the higher education academic work environment. Like nurses, academics assess their physiological and psychological responses to stimuli from their environment (i.e., workload, activities and rest). They also belonged to groups, for example, faculties or schools, where they found their group self-image, academic identity and integrity, and shared culture and responsibility. Their role function mode could be linked to their role in society as a lecturer and their role in the academic group with specific goals and functions to fulfil in the higher education environment. Finally, the interdependence mode could be linked to feelings of security, respect, and value (Alligood & Marriner-Tomey, 2010; George, 2011; Farid & Abdelrahman, 2015).

As discussed in previous chapters, lecturers in the higher education environment are constantly experiencing changes that may negatively impact their psychological well-being, health, and everyday functioning. According to the Roy Adaptation Model, a lecturer could be viewed as an adaptive system constantly interacting with the internal and external environment. The Roy Adaptation Model identified the essential concepts relevant to the human adaptive system and the environment. Lecturers play a key role in higher education, and it was important to understand how lecturers coped and adapted to the frequent changes in their professional environment. The Roy Adaptation Model was useful as a theoretical framework for the current investigation due to its generalisability and applicability.

Figure 2.

The Roy Adaptation Model



(Farid & Abdelrahman, 2015, p. 22)

Psychosocial Predictors of Adjustment

Because adjustment is dynamic, several variables (i.e., personality, self-esteem and support) can influence the adjustment process, varying from person to person.

Personality

Feist et al. (2017 p. 4) define personality as "… a pattern of relatively permanent traits and unique characteristics that give both consistency and individuality to a person's behavior.". Further to this, personality could impact how people approach life circumstances. Depending on how people perceive and react to change, for example, they could perceive it as favourably or unfavourably. Researchers have analysed the traits underlying personality characteristics and concluded that the different descriptive words could be grouped into five categories, referred to as *The Five-Factor Model* (McCrae & John, 1992). These five traits were considered key factors of behaviour: extraversion, neuroticism, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness to experience. This personality model is a widely accepted theoretical model and helps explore relationships between the construct of personality and other constructs like coping adjustment and psychological well-being (Robins et al., 2001; McCrae & John, 1992).

Research has found that high levels of neuroticism were significantly correlated with distress, particularly as a response to stressful life events (Bardi & Ryff, 2007; Diener et al., 1999). Neuroticism is a temperamental sensitivity to negative stimuli like stress (Zobel et al., 2004). Stress can be described as an external stimulus that causes an individual to feel overwhelmed and not have the psychological capacity to adapt to the changes caused by the external stimulus (McCrae,1990). The change could include a stressful life event, for example, a change in an individual's role at work or changing jobs. If the individual were open to the change, they would be more agreeable to the changes. High levels of openness to experience were associated with flexibility and were positively related to adjustment, as were conscientiousness and agreeableness. Thus, individuals with high agreeableness levels were less likely to react negatively when they felt mistreated (Carpenter et al., 2010). Overall, higher levels of extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness

were linked to better adaptation, whereas higher levels of neuroticism were linked to poor adaptation.

Although there was a gap in the literature regarding the relationship between personality and psychosocial adjustment to change in higher education, literature addressing personality and adjustment to new environments suggested that it was reasonable to expect that personality factors, especially neuroticism and extraversion, might play a role in predicting which individuals would adjust to change successfully.

Self-esteem and Self-efficacy

Self-esteem has historically been regarded as a crucial component of emotional and mental well-being. It has been closely linked to personality qualities like extroversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, openness, and neuroticism (John & Srivastava, 1999). Several studies have reported a correlation between self-esteem and *The Five-Factor Model* (Keller, 1999; Pullman & Allik, 1999; Robins et al., 2001).

Self-esteem is generally defined as the competence and capability of an individual to cope with life's challenges and be worthy of happiness. Most definitions included subjective beliefs about a person's self-worth (Hendricks et al., 2001). It has also been described as a "basic human characteristic which addressed the capacity of a human being to increase their sense of self-worth employing coping mechanisms" (Erozkan et al., 2016, p. 73). Erozkan et al., (2016, p. 73) further defined self-esteem as "the individual's global positive or negative attitude towards self.".

Self-confidence and self-depreciation play a key role when an individual forms their self-esteem. In turn, self-acceptance and self-respect assist the individual with the formation of self-esteem. Individuals place an intrinsic value on who they are, and if the external

environment confirms this intrinsic value, it enhances their self-esteem. Self-esteem is the evaluation of self-worth to the degree to which individuals see themselves as competent (Leary & Tangney, 2012). Literature supports a direct connection between self-esteem and well-being (Yap & Baharudin, 2015). Self-esteem plays a key role in mental health as mental health is related to overall well-being and the ability to cope with adverse events (Kernis, 2005; Carr & Browne, 2015). For example, when an individual has high self-esteem, they can draw on feelings of worth, and thus they can draw on an internalised self-worth when faced with adverse events (Steele & Aronson, 1995). When an individual is prevented from developing their self-esteem, it could influence their well-being. For example, if the environment made them question their self-worth or feel insecure, a combination of attributes like self-confidence and self-depreciation played a role in forming self-esteem (Erozkan et al., 2016).

The use of hierarchical models of self-concept has aided in understanding how people's perceptions of their surroundings can affect their sense of self-worth (Fox & Corbin, 1989). Many psychological theorists agree that when a person has a sense of control over their environment and behaviour, it enhances their sense of well-being because they feel better equipped to deal with challenges. According to Bandura (1997), individuals use self-efficacy to control their lives. Bandura suggested that self-efficacy included characteristics like the ability to understand and anticipate and understand others and the self. He also stated that self-efficacy relied on the belief that one could cope in stressful situations. Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2010) described self-efficacy as an agent related to individuals' perceptions about their capacity in carrying out the roles prescribed for them in order to achieve a set of goals and objectives". High levels of self-efficacy correlate with a positive approach to life and problem-solving. Individuals who fell within this category could set goals for themselves, were committed to their goals, and were confident because they believed in their capabilities (Luszczynska et al., 2005; Pajares & Urdan, 2006).

Low levels of self-efficacy were associated with dysfunctional behaviour. When individuals who lacked self-confidence perceived a threat, they could respond with avoidance behaviours or anxiety. These negative responses to stress could inhibit their ability to function optimally in stressful situations. Individuals with low self-efficacy often doubt their abilities and can easily be stressed, resulting in psychological disorders like depression (Maddux & Meier, 1995). Previous research has generally been more concerned with the positive factors that enabled an individual to adapt psychologically and was less concerned with understanding how an individual adjusted psychologically (Bandura, 1997).

Coping Styles

Much research has looked into how people deal with traumatic occurrences. Freud (1939) discussed the defence mechanisms and unconscious processes individuals resort to address the internal conflicts they experience (Long, 2012). Coping strategies served as a mediator between perceived threats and their anticipated consequences (Endler & Parker, 1990). When confronted with a threat, individuals resorted to specific behavioural responses to coping with these threats. More and more evidence acknowledges the important role of coping strategies in individuals' responses to stressful events.

Carver et al. (1989, p. 267) presented an analysis of stress and coping in which he argued that stress comprises of the following three processes: "Primary appraisal as a process of perceiving a threat to oneself. A secondary appraisal is a process of bringing a potential response to the threat to mind, coping as a process of executing that response".

According to Lazarus, these processes did not necessarily occur in a linear sequence but rather that "…the outcome of one process may reinvoke a preceding process (Carver et al., 1989, p. 267). For example, when a person encounters a threat for which they have an effective coping response, they could perceive it as a lesser threat. On the other hand, if they did not have an effective coping response, they could re-evaluate either their coping

response or the threat level. Lazarus and his co-researchers developed the Ways of Coping scale to study the coping processes of humans. This scale was designed to measure the coping responses that individuals resort to when they perceive a threat (Carver et al., 1989).

The Ways of Coping scale distinguishes between two general types of coping, namely (1) problem-focused coping, which focuses on problem-solving and (2) emotion-focused coping, which focuses on managing emotional stress associated with a perceived threat. Lazarus and his colleagues agreed that most threats call for both types of coping. However, they argued that individuals who employed problem-focused coping responses felt more in control of the perceived threat than individuals who employed emotion-focused coping responses, as this latter group often felt that they must endure the threat (Folkman & Lazarus, 1985). Critics argued that this explanation of coping with threats was too simple as several other factors should be considered, such as the diversity of individuals' responses (Scheier et al., 1986).

Carver et al. (1989, p. 268) proposed "dimensions of coping" based on "specific theoretical arguments about functional--and potentially less functional- properties of coping strategies". They referred to *active coping* as "the process of taking active steps to remove or circumvent the stressor or to ameliorate its effects". This type of coping could be compared to Lazarus's problem-focussed coping strategy but with "additional distinctions", including:

· Planning: The individual needs to consider what steps to take to handle the problem.

· Constrictions: The individual may choose to suppress involvement in competing activities, which could include avoiding distractions, focusing only on what needs to be done, or not giving attention to certain things.

· Restraint: The individual could use this response as an active strategy by waiting for the right moment to act or as a passive strategy by not acting at all.

· Seeking out social support: The person could seek advice or assistance. Seeking social support for emotional reasons, for example, sympathy or understanding, would be more of an emotion-focussed coping strategy (Carver et al.,1989, pp. 268–269)

The interest in how individuals coped with long-term health problems grew, and most studies focused mainly on coping with chronic illness or disability. More recent research on coping strategies included a third, avoidance-oriented coping dimension (Parker & Endler, 1992). The focus of research has shifted to a hierarchical nature of coping and includes three general levels, namely:

· Coping styles that reflect global, dispositional and macro-analytic tendencies …

· Summative scores on coping scales typically indicate coping strategies or modes that reflect an intermediate level in this hierarchy …

· Coping acts or behaviours that reflect specific, situation-determined, microanalytic responses often indicated by individual item endorsement on a coping scale. (Livneh, 2000, p. 40)

Internal versus external control was also often referred to when studying coping strategies. Research has found that feeling in control of the threat or stressor is associated with coping strategies that lead to positive psychosocial adaptation while feeling that external factors control the threat or stressor is associated with negative coping responses (e.g., shifting blame). Another coping style was optimism versus pessimism, where optimism was positively related to coping, enhancing adaptation to changed circumstances and overall psychological well-being (Miller et al., 1996). Individuals who resorted to repression used avoidance as a coping strategy to not deal with the threat (Holahan, 2005). When an individual exercises self-restraint or cognitive restraint as a coping mechanism, they place themselves in control of the threat. This coping strategy is also highly correlated with psychosocial adaptation (Livneh, 2000).

Social Support

Many studies have investigated the role of social support in the well-being of individuals. Social *support* refers to how social interactions with others affect an individual's well-being. By definition, social support can be linked to how individuals support each other within a particular social network (Lakey & Cohen, 2000). Gottlieb (2010) broadly defined social support as "the process of interaction in relationships which improves coping, esteem, belonging and competence through actual or perceived exchanges of physical and psychosocial resources". Social support as can reduce uncertainty about a situation and functions to enhance a perception of personal control in one's life experience. Social support has also been described as a buffer against perceived adversities and played an important role in managing psychological conflicts (Taylor, 2011).

Individuals could experience stress when changes are introduced into an individual's personal or work environment. Social support could reduce the effect of stressful events, as supportive actions can enhance coping. Drageset (2021) referred to five types of social support:

· Emotional support that addresses an individual's emotional needs (i.e., caring expressions or showing concern). It improved an individual's mood and was not focused on solving the problem.

· Esteem support was meant to enhance an individual's self-esteem or belief in their ability to overcome the problem and encourage individuals.

· Network support affirmed an individual's belonging to a social group and that they were not alone.

· Information support helps individuals to access needed information to make decisions. When a change was introduced, and individuals did not know what to expect, it could create uncertainty. Communicating with peers and receiving information could support individuals in this situation.

· Tangible support was when one individual physically helped another individual with a perceived difficulty (i.e., when a peer showed a lecturer who did not understand how to mark an assignment online how to do it).

Social support could serve as a buffer between an individual and a perceived threat, like change, especially when the individual does not agree with the change (Cohen & Wills, 1985). The buffering hypothesis argued that access to social support networks could reduce adverse life events impact on individuals. Thus, social support was viewed as a resource that served as a buffer between an individual and a perceived stressor. Research studies have shown that individuals with intact social support networks were less affected by perceived stressful life events and that these social support networks contributed to the overall well-being of individuals (Cohen & Wills, 1985).

Conclusion

The ongoing change in higher education remains to be challenging for all role players, including management, faculty, and academics. The lecturers' ability to adjust to their new environment is at the heart of these changes. A psychosocial adjustment was a process that was likely to be recurrent since life was about change. Adjusting in a healthy way to the stressors of the academic profession could positively affect a lecturer's performance, effectiveness and well-being. Therefore, it was important to explore academics perceptions of their lived experiences of the changes and how they respond to them and to consider which factors influence how they cope with the changes.

Chapter Five

Methodology

Theoretical Framework and Research Process

"Without theory, there is nothing to research" (Silverman, 1993, p. 1). Research methodology refers to the 'how' part of a research study and thus refers to the techniques that the researcher used to examine a particular problem, including the limitations of the outcome (Willig, 2021). Denzin and Lincoln (2008) state that the research question and phenomenon determine the research methodology a researcher follows under investigation. The research questions that guided this study were:

How did lecturers experience the changes in their work environments in higher education institutions in South Africa?

How did lecturers respond to the changes?

How did lecturers cope with the changes?

These questions called for an approach focusing on the participants lived experiences to uncover and interpret their subjective experiences and descriptions of the changes. Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA), which aim to understand the lecturers' lived experiences of the changes in higher education, was a suitable choice for this study. Secondly, IPA provided the researcher with "… a more overtly interpretative analysis, which positions the initial 'description' in relation to a wider social, cultural, and perhaps even theoretical, context." (Larkin et al., 2006, p. 104).

IPA, a relatively new research methodology, was first introduced in the 1990s to explore the psychology of experience, focusing on clinical and counselling psychology, especially health psychology (Smith et al., 2021).

The study was located within an interpretivist paradigm and relied on an individual's subjective interpretation of the experienced phenomenon epistemology. The first part of this chapter provided an overview of the theoretical framework that influenced the research approach to the current study. Secondly, the chosen methodological approach was unpacked. Followed by a discussion of interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) as a paradigm. The latter part of the chapter elaborated on how participants were identified, recruited and interviewed and introduced the participants. Finally, the data analysis process was discussed as well as the ethical considerations for this study and how the quality of the study was ensured. It is of importance to note that the notion that a theoretical framework is set up priori to capture the findings of a study implicates a logical positivist approach. In other words, when a study is confirmatory it works well, but when a study is exploratory new experiences could be discovered. Thus, new information could be revealed that needs to be explored and interpreted beyond what was initially considered in the theoretical chapters.

Qualitative Research Approach

A qualitative research approach is useful when exploring how individuals experience their social realities. While a quantitative research approach seeks to objectively measure and predict outcomes through deductive reasoning, the qualitative research approach is exploratory (De Vos et al., 2011). Qualitative research allows the researcher to explore and generate knowledge within a given context (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008).

Research concerned with social dilemmas (e.g., human behaviour and interactions) is an inductive process whereby the researcher develops subjective conclusions and theories from the data (Creswell & Poth, 2016). A qualitative research design assists the researcher in uncovering the meanings, perceptions, and assumptions people have regarding their worlds. It also allows the researcher to be involved in an intensive experience with their participants (Creswell & Poth, 2016). Qualitative research presents the opportunity

for researchers to study individuals or groups within their natural environments and allows for shared realities to surface through the discourse of language as individuals describe and explain their responses to 'what', 'why' and 'how' questions (De Vos et al., 2011; Savenye & Robinson, 2005).

For the current study, the researcher wanted to understand how lecturers experienced the changes in the higher education environment in South Africa, how they responded to the changes and how they coped with them. A qualitative research approach allowed the researcher to explore participants' experiences within the complexity of the constantly changing higher education environment in South Africa. According to Demuth and Mey (2015), there were three central principles to qualitative research, namely (1) openness, (2) the postulation of foreignness, and (3) communication. Openness implied that the researcher sought to generate knowledge using inductive logic to explore social realities of individuals. The postulation of foreignness discouraged the researcher from "confusing their own experience and concepts with those of the participants" (Demuth & Mey, 2015, p. 2).

The principle of communication refers to the co-reflection of experienced realities between the researcher and the participant. The researcher's influence becomes part of the analysis as the researcher and the participant together reflect on the data, thus it allows the researcher to tap into the thoughts and feelings of their participants to create meaning. It is important to understand research as a sequence of events between those involved (researchers and researched) (Demuth & Mey, 2015, p. 2).

Interpretivist paradigm

Paradigms are “sets of beliefs that guide action” (Guba, 1990, p. 17). According to Mukherji and Albon (2018, p. 24), it is a specific way of “seeing the world and making sense of it”. Interpretivism, on the other hand, is concerned with how individuals make sense of their lived experiences. It is unique in that it is appropriate to explore and uncover specific

contexts, hidden thoughts and social processes that are interrelated, for example, lived experiences in a work environment context. The interpretive paradigm is concerned with understanding the subjective lived experiences of individuals. The approach requires the researcher to observe and interpret information collected about events and the meaning individuals attach to their subjective experiences in an attempt to make sense of their realities (Smith & Nizza, 2021).

This study aimed to explore how participants made sense of the changes they experienced, responded to them, and coped with them. Thus, the study required a research approach that would help the researcher to understand the participants' experiences and the meanings they attached to them. "IPA is a method designed to understand people's lived experiences and how they make sense of it in the context of their personal and social worlds" (Smith & Nizza, 2021. p. 3). It constituted a philosophical framework and a research method.

IPA was identified as the methodological approach for this study as it offered greater alignment with the research questions and objectives that focused on the lived experiences of lecturers of the changes, they encountered in higher education institutions in a South African context.

Ontological and epistemological positioning

Ontology, a branch of philosophy, is the study of what exists and what is real (Crotty, 2020). Ontology is thus concerned with the nature of the existence of a phenomenon. Researchers seek to answer questions about assumptions of a phenomenon; they are thus concerned with the nature of reality and how it exits. Epistemology, on the other hand, is the theory of knowledge and refers to "how we know and the relationship between the knower and the known." (Maxwell, 2011, p. 10).

This study adopted an interpretative ontological stance. The researcher wanted to explore how academics made sense of the changes they experienced in their work environment. In other words, the researcher wanted to uncover the meaning and reality of the changes experienced by academics. Following an interpretative approach, IPA is not concerned with obtaining facts or the truth but seeks to understand the individuals lived experience in an attempt to explore, uncover and interpret the realities of individuals' thoughts and the meanings they attached to their realities. In other words, the ontological stance rests on subjective interpretations and making sense of the experiences of individuals. When adopting an interpretive perspective, the researcher becomes a part of the realities of their subjects. Therefore, unlike positivist research, where objectivity is required, within an interpretivist stance as knowledge is sensitive towards individuals lived experiences and the meanings they attached to their realities. It further assumes that these realities are subjective and unique. Through a process of interpreting and re-interpreting data, the researcher explores the realities of the lived experiences of participants to form their own understanding (Smith & Nizza, 2021; Finlay, 2014).

The epistemology stance for this study relied on the individual's subjective interpretation of the experienced phenomenon. IPA researchers refer to a dual process, also known as double hermeneutic (Eatough & Smith, 2017; Montague et al., 2020). Not only is IPA concerned with the lived experiences of individuals and making meaning of their experiences, but it also provides the researcher with access to the participants' cognitive world. From an initial perception, the researcher engages with the data, analysing and interpreting it to form an understanding and attach meaning to the participants' narratives. In other words, it contributes to making new knowledge (Gyollai, 2020; Eatough & Smith, 2017).

Theoretical underpinnings of IPA

IPA as phenomenological

Phenomenology as a philosophy can be described as an approach to research that focuses on the lived experiences of a particular phenomenon and exploring the aspects and meaning individuals attach to their experiences (Smith & Nizza, 2021). Phenomenology is a research method that explores processes and relationships of first-person experiences (Werzts, 2005). Edmund Husserl (1913; 1962; 1970), acknowledged as the founder of phenomenology, was particularly interested in the *"life of consciousness"* (Moran, 2005, p. 2), aiming to capture and highlight acts of preconscious and unconscious processes. Husserl regarded individual experiences as a source of knowledge and further recognised that individual experiences took place in a broader social context. He sought to describe phenomena as it appeared to minimise any form of interpretation and recommended that the researcher, when describing these lived experiences, do away with pre-conceptions revealing the phenomenon's essence revealing an insider perspective (Willig, 2021).

By following a transcendental process, the researcher can group meanings that individuals attached to their lived experiences while excluding their presuppositions, thus aiming to describe and understand the phenomenon without limitations (Smith & Nizza, 2021). Following this process, possibilities for new meanings emerge for us, or we witness at least an authentication and enhancement of former meaning (Crotty, 2020). Although Husserl's phenomenology influenced IPA in exploring a person's lived experiences, IPA does not always adhere to its core principle of bracketing out the researcher's presuppositions.

IPA as hermeneutic

Hermeneutics, also known as interpretive phenomenology, was influenced by hermeneutic theorist Heidegger. Hermeneutics intended to provide a deeper comprehension of the text's meaning. Hermeneutics was initially concerned with the interpretation of biblical scriptures that evolved into a broader application to the interpretation of other texts (Eatough & Smith, 2017). Dallmayr (2009, p. 23) described IPA as the "practice or the art of interpretation".

According to Heidegger, we perceive the universe through the lenses of the society in which we reside. As a result, our knowledge and understanding were "inherited" from the environment in which we live, making our experience "second-hand." From this inherited knowledge, we make sense of our lived experiences (Heidegger, 2010). He further referred to the fore-structure of understanding, which constituted pre-conceptions and knowledge (Heidegger, 2010; Watts, 2011). The interpretative process involved two stages 1) participants trying to make sense of their lived experiences, and 2) the researcher trying to make sense of the participants' meaning-making process. IPA as hermeneutic was further considered an iterative process whereby the researcher moved from parts of the text to the whole and back to the parts. Engaging with the text helped the researcher discover what lay dormant (Smith & Osborn, 2015). Smith (2010) meant the researcher and the participants were two points on a circle in which the researcher continuously moved around during the analysis process.

According to Gadamer, (1985/ 1965). The researcher's understanding of the text as a whole relied on their understanding of each part. Thus, by following an iterative approach (i.e., circular movement between part and whole), the researcher interprets the data from their own horison, which includes their existing pre-understandings and biases (Weinshamer, 1988) The researcher's prior knowledge should be considered as new interpretations are generated. Instead, based on firmly held beliefs, the emphasis was on the

cyclical process and the creation of new understanding by ongoing interpretive attention to identifying potential meanings (Smith et al., 2021).

IPA as idiographic

Idiographic, as a third theoretical underpinning of IPA, focuses on an individual's lived experience. It mainly aims to provide the individuals' perspective of a phenomenon (Smith et al., 2021). In other words, it focuses on exploring individuals' unique context through detailed, in-depth inquiry.

Shinebourne, (2011, p. 23) described idiographic knowledge as "… knowledge about unique events, entities, and trends.". Until recently, the idiographic research approach within psychology was frowned upon but did begin to draw attention, especially regarding "…single-case experimental designs, sample methods concerning and natural settings and real-time and multiple occasions…" (Eatough & Smith, 2017 p. 8). Smith (2010) postulated that a single case could shed light on shared experiences. IPA was invested in exploring the detail of particular instances as experienced by individuals. Exploring the differences and similarities across cases could produce patterns of meaning and shared experiences (Smith et al., 2021).

It is important to note that IPA does not aim to make generalised claims but rather aims to form an in-depth understanding of how the individual experiences the phenomena.

Experience

As a key feature of IPA, the experience is the subject matter that IPA aims to explore and understand. It does not aim to understand the private mind but instead wants to understand how individuals make sense and meaning of their social world (Yancher, 2015).

IPA is interested in the different parts of the experience that, in the more prominent social context, make the experience meaningful for the individual (Eatough & Smith, 2017, pp. 6-7).

Smith et al. (2021, p. 2) stated that there was a hierarchy of different experience levels. In the first level, known as the elemental level, the individual was unaware of their day-to-day experience of phenomena. In the second level, the individual becomes aware of what they experience. The third level was the most comprehensive level in which the individual was not only aware, but the experience had significance. The latter consisted of parts that combined and made up the comprehensive experience. IPA mainly focused on these parts. According to Eatough and Smith (2017, p. 7), experiences could be described as "…subjective as what we experience is phenomenal rather than a direct reality.". IPA was thus interested in all aspects of the individuals' experience that propels them to act or not. In other words, what they feel, their motivations, their belief systems and desires.

To "become aware of" the lived experiences, they were linked to the idea of reflection for IPA. During each hierarchical level, as stated by Dilthey (1976), the concept of reflection played a role. First, the individual became aware, then intuitive, and they reflected on their experience attentively during the third level. Following an IPA research analysis, the researcher entered the participant's reflective world, asking them to share their reflections on the phenomena that the researcher was exploring (Smith et al., 2021, p190). In other words, reflecting on the participants' transcripts will account for a new layer of reflection on the participants' lived experiences (Smith et al., 2021, p. 190).

Rationale for choosing IPA

The rationale for choosing IPA for this study was to allow the researcher to explore and understand in-depth how lecturers experienced, responded to, and coped with the changes they encountered in the higher education work environment in South Africa. As a

developing researcher, IPA provided structure to the researcher while allowing freedom of interpretation (Larkin et al., 2006). To answer the research question, IPA was considered the best choice through a convergence and divergence lens because it allowed for exploring participants' experiences (Smith et al., 2021). Guided by the three theoretical perspectives, namely: phenomenology, hermeneutics and ideography, IPA allowed the researcher to find the balance between the voice of the participants and making sense of their accounts, thus creating new knowledge (Smith & Nizza, 2021).

One of the guiding concepts of IPA was a naturalistic inquiry, which permitted subjects to be explored in their natural environment. IPA allowed the researcher to explore the participants' experiences which they have already reflected on, and how they thought about and attached meaning to their experiences. Secondly, situated within the hermeneutic framework, it promoted detail and subtleties across participants' accounts of their experiences. Lastly, it allowed the researcher to explore individuals' unique contexts, patterns of meaning and shared experiences.

Limitations of IPA

As a relatively new approach still being developed, it was mainly used in health psychology that focused on experiences of illnesses. Giorgi (2010), one of the originators who developed IPA as a method of inquiry, highlighted that the connection to philosophical phenomenology was unclear in theory and practice (Eatough & Smith, 2017). Giorgi (2010) further claimed that IPA as a research tool was not scientifically sound. The main concern he offered was the lack of a prescriptive approach and the freedom each researcher had to adapt the method as it suited them. In other words, replicating the study was problematic as the absence of a prescriptive process hindered other researchers from confirming the results (Giorgi, 2010). Smith et al. (2021) countered Giorgi's critique stating that though no rigorous prescriptive processes were in play, IPA did provide clear guidelines to the researcher that

were prescriptive but at the same time were flexible. The research quality was thus dependent on the researcher's skills. Further, Smith (2010) advocated that one must refrain from using quantitative terms to judge qualitative research as it is not an appropriate referent. IPA was a demanding approach to qualitative research and took time.

When a researcher decides to employ IPA, they should be cognisant of the time it takes to analyse the data. Because sample sizes are small, "…one needs to be careful in the degree of generalisation one infers." (Smith & Nizza, 2021. p. 76).

Research Process

The research process refers to the actions or steps the researcher uses to conduct the research. The following sections discuss this study's data collection and analysis method.

Data collection

For collecting the data, the method of choice was semi-structured interviews because it allowed for collecting in-depth, personal recollections of the lecturers lived experiences. According to the literature, semi-structured interviews were the most common type of data collection for research using IPA and were a suitable method for phenomenological studies (Smith et al., 2021).

Understanding the participants' social reality is important for IPA explorations. According to Smith and Osborn (2008, p. 54), understanding involves two aspects of interpretation: "understanding in the sense of connecting with or empathising with and understanding as trying to make sense of.". Both aspects were kept in mind when conducting the interviews. Due to the narrative nature of the participants and the need to

understand their experiences of changes at higher education institutions, semi-structured one-on-one interviews were the preferred interview method. Further, it facilitated an interview environment in which the researcher could identify similarities and differences between the experiences of various participants.

Research population

This study took place across six public and private higher education institutions in two provinces in South Africa and applied to academics employed by these higher education institutions. The researcher wanted to explore the individual lived experiences of lecturers independent of the higher education institutions which was central to the theme of this thesis. The researcher postulates that the prevalence of change is found at all higher education institutions in South Africa and wanted to explore lived experiences of the changes on lecturers regardless of the institutions they lecture at or their race and gender orientations. Consistent with IPA, the study sought to develop a deeper understanding of the phenomena and not to create a generalised theory (Smith et al., 2021). Thus, in deciding on this population, the researcher understands that the findings cannot, in general, be extended to a broader population. However, the study provided enough detail to evaluate the findings for transferability to other studies.

Selection of Participants

In alignment with Osborne (1990), two criteria were deemed important for the selection of participants for this study:

(1) they had to have experienced the phenomenon of interest (i.e., they had to be actively lecturing at a South African higher education institution for at least two years to increase the likelihood that they would have encountered some change) and

(2) they had to be verbally proficient in communicating their experiences to the researcher.

Sample Size

There needed to be more consensus in the literature on an appropriate sample size for IPA studies. Smith et al. (2021, p. 56) claimed, “there is no right answer to the question of...sample size”. Clarke (2010) postulated that three is the default sample size for an undergraduate or Masters-level IPA study, whereas four - ten is advised for professional doctorates”. Smith and Nizza (2021, p.15) stated that the sample size would depend on the “size of the project” and noted that, generally, between 10 and 12 participants were an acceptable number for doctoral students. Since Smith et al. (2021) claimed that in IPA studies there is no right number linked to the sample size, for this study a sample of 20 was considered. The reason for this was that the data collected needed to represent a perspective on the phenomenon of how lecturers experienced change, responded to change and cope with change. Including a sample of 20 ensured that the sample size was sufficient to allow for a significant and meaningful analysis across participants. Thus, the sample size reflected the commitment of the researcher to the methodological approach ensuring quality (Smith et al., 2021).

Purposive sampling

In qualitative research, the non-probability sampling method known as "purposive sampling" was frequently employed to identify potential participants who fit the study's aims (Palys, 2008). Participants with at least two years’ experience were included in the study. Because change in the higher education work environment is rapid and continuous a two-year orientation period was deemed sufficient for new lecturers to distinguished between their own processes of orientation to a new work environment and the constant changes of

the work environment. It should be noted that data collection occurred before the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, the experiences related by these participants concerned the rise of managerialism and were not contaminated by extraordinary experiences brought about by the pandemic.

This sampling method was convenient as the researcher had access to participants due to the nature of her position as a professional academic development consultant at a South African higher education institution. The researcher could choose which study participants would be included using the purposive sampling technique. It is useful for in-depth studies and seeking information-rich cases (Willig, 2021). Academics across two provinces from both public and private higher education institutions were included. This was to ensure that the sample adequately represented higher education institutions in South Africa.

Access to participants

The researcher approached potential participants by sending a personalised invitation via email to participate in the study (Appendix B). In the communication with potential participants (Appendix C), the researcher explained the nature of the study and addressed the relevant ethical considerations. All participants who indicated they would participate were asked to sign a consent form (Appendix D). By signing this form, they consented to complete a pre-interview questionnaire and avail themselves of a one-hour, audio-recorded interview.

Initial Participant Contact

After obtaining ethical clearance from the University of South Africa (UNISA; Appendix A), the researcher commenced with participant selection and data gathering. The

researcher identified potential respondents by obtaining their email contact information from colleagues from various higher education institutions in South Africa. An email invitation with details about the study was sent to each participant inviting them to take part (Appendix B and Appendix C). [Take note that the initial participant consent was completed before the POPI Act took effect on 1 April 2020.].

Biographical Information

The individuals who indicated they would participate in the current study were asked to complete a pre-interview biographical information online questionnaire (Appendix E). The questionnaire's objective was to gather details about the participants' age, gender, degree(s), and field of specialisation. Also, of importance was how long they had been teaching and an indication of whether they experienced changes and perceived these changes in higher education in South Africa to be continuous and substantial.

Introduction of participants

At the time of the interviews, all participants were actively lecturing at various public and private higher education institutions. Profile data for each participant was obtained through a biographical background questionnaire, as mentioned in the previous section (Appendix E). The participants were introduced in the following section, and the research interviews were contextualised. Participants were given numbers to conceal their identity and guarantee that the study complies with ethical norms.

Table 1:

Overview of Participants

Participant	Age	Gender	Race	Highest Qualification	Years/Months Lecturing	Do you think there is a lot of Change in Higher Education in South Africa	Is the change continuous
Participant 1	**31**	Female	White	MA Communication Science	4/4	Yes	Yes
Participant 2	**32**	Male	White	MA Tesol	7	Yes	Yes
Participant 3	**31**	Male	White	MA Political Science	5	Yes	Yes
Participant 4	**46**	Female	White	Mphil PPL	12	Yes	Yes
Participant 5	**67**	Female	White	PhD Science	25	Yes	Yes
Participant 6	**35**	Female	White	BTech Tourism	12/6	Yes	Yes
Participant 7	**45**	Male	Black	M Commerce	10/10	Yes	Yes
Participant 8	**30**	Female	White	B.Ed Honours	4	Yes	Yes
Participant 9	**56**	Female	White	MPhil	17	Yes	Yes
Participant 10	**33**	Female	White	BA Honours	12	Yes	Yes
Participant 11	**28**	Female	Black	M Commerce	5	Yes	Yes

Participant 12	**34**	Female	White	M Commerce	6	Yes	Yes
Participant 13	**29**	Male	Jewish	BA Honours	3	Yes	Yes
Participant 14	**34**	Female	White	MSc, Genetics	8/2	Yes	Yes
Participant 15	**33**	Female	Black	BCom Honours	3	Yes	Yes
Participant 16	**39**	Female	White	MA	13	Yes	Yes
Participant 17	**57**	Female	White	M Commerce	17	Yes	Yes
Participant 18	**27**	Female	Black	M Commerce	3	Yes	Yes
Participant 19	**30**	Female	White	PhD Religion & Theology	3/6	Yes	Yes
Participant 20	**37**	Female	Coloured	MA Psychology	6	Yes	Yes

Participant 1:

Participant 1 was a 31-year-old female lecturer who had four years and four months of lecturing experience at the time of the interview. The participant holds a Master's in communication qualification. She lectures first year to third year students. She is very passionate about engaging with her students. The interview took place after hours in her office and lasted more or less two hours. Before and during the interview participant 1 was very agitated and answered some of the questions with a very angry voice laced with frustration. She was visibly upset with her work environment. Her non-verbal behaviour was aligned with her anger as she pushed papers around on her desk and pounded the table with her fist a few times. During the interview she asked me to stop the recorder a few times and then apologised for her behaviour. At the end of the interview, she was calmer and again apologised for her behaviour. She explained that she was experiencing high frustration levels in her work environment due to recent changes. She believed these to be unnecessary and not well thought through.

Participant 2:

Participant 2 was a 32-year-old male lecturer who had, at the time of the interview seven years of lecturing experience. He holds a Master's in Tesol qualification. Before lecturing at the institution where he was employed, he taught English in Korea and Thailand for five years. He mainly lectured first-year students and was also involved in the language school. The interview took place during his lunch hour in his office and lasted one hour and ten minutes. During the interview he was very relaxed. At the end of the interview, he informed the researcher that he had found another position at another institution and would resign. He was hopeful that things would be more stable at the "new" workplace (also a higher education institution) than what he was experiencing.

Participant 3:

Participant 3 was a 31-year-old male lecturer who had, at the time of the interview five years of lecturing experience. He holds a Master's in Political Science qualification. He lectured the first year and honours students. The interview took place after hours at his residence and lasted more or less one hour and thirty-five minutes. Upon arrival, he offered the researcher coffee and needed to explain that he did not own a television as he was very conservative and religious and was not fond of using technology in any form. However, he does have a cell phone. He also expressed that he believed in the traditional and was set in how he was raised. He answered the interview questions to the point. Before the researcher left, the participant again remarked that he hoped she understood that he was bound by his traditional beliefs and did not accept change easily. Not in his personal life or work environment.

Participant 4:

Participant 4 was a 46-year-old female lecturer who had, at the time of the interview 12 years of lecturing experience. She holds an MPhil in Personal and Professional Leadership qualification. She lectured the first-year honours students. The interview took place before work in her office and lasted more or less one hour and ten minutes. Before the interview she told me that for extra income, she was also a life coach consultant. She also mentioned that she and her husband and two children had moved back in with her parents for three months as they sold their house, and the house they had bought needed some renovations. She expressed concern about this arrangement as she did not know how this would affect her work-life balance. Participant 4 was very outgoing and had a great sense of humour. There was much laughter before and during the interview.

Participant 5:

Participant 5 was a 67-year-old female lecturer who had, at the time of the interview 25 years of lecturing experience. She holds a PhD Science qualification. She lectures the

first-year honours students. The interview took place during her lunch hour in her office and lasted more or less two hours. Participant 5 was very nervous about the recording, and in the beginning, the researcher had to stop the recording several times as she requested to restart because she was nervous. We were also interrupted twice by students who did not read the notice on the door. Participant 5 was very conscious of her age and remarked that she struggles with technology because she did not grow up with it. She explained that she perceived herself to be a well-qualified and intelligent woman. She further remarked that she was diligent, felt that she was not valued for these attributes, and was also afraid that she was redundant because she struggled to incorporate technology in the classroom.

Participant 6:

Participant 6 was a 35-year-old female lecturer who had 12 years and six months of lecturing experience at the time of the interview. She holds a BTech in Tourism qualification. She lectured first year to third year students. The interview took place after hours in her office and lasted more or less one hour and ten minutes. Her office was very neat and organised. Before the interview she expressed being nervous about being recorded, and she provided that if she made a mistake, she would be able to correct herself. The researcher put her at ease and assured her she would stop the recording if she gave the sign. A sign was agreed upon. This seemed to put her at ease. Participant 6 only indicated once to stop the recording from thinking about the question. At the end of the interview, she remarked that the recording was not as invasive as she thought it would be and that, towards the end of the interview she had forgotten that there was a recorder.

Participant 7:

Participant 7 was a 46-year-old male lecturer who had ten years and ten months of lecturing experience at the time of the interview. He holds a Master’s in

Commerce qualification. He lectured the first-year honours students. The interview took place between his lectures and lasted more or less one hour and ten minutes. Before conducting the interview Participant 7 remarked that the semester was very long and that he was tired because the work never stopped. He also remarked that as professionals, lecturers were not being remunerated for the value they add to the field of education compared to other professions, and that all his friends who were not in the profession assumed that lecturers were paid above-average salaries. He continues to say that even if this was the case, being a lecturer was what he wanted to be and that he was committed to his profession.

Participant 8:

Participant 8 was a 30-year-old female lecturer who had, at the time of the interview four years of lecturing experience. She holds a B.Ed. Honours qualification. She lectured first year to third year students. The interview took place during her lunch hour and lasted more or less one hour and twenty minutes. Participant 8 was a teacher at a high school for three years teaching English to grade ten to twelve learners before she moved to the higher education environment. She was very self-conscious and kept moving around in her chair during the interview. After the interview was concluded participant 8 informed the researcher that she had registered for a Master's in English literature and did this to improve her academic prospects. She also remarked that she hoped this would help her to secure her position in very uncertain times at her place of employment, as there was much restructuring taking place at the time of the interview.

Participant 9:

Participant 9 was a 56-year-old female lecturer who had, at the time of the interview 17 years of lecturing experience. She holds a Master of Philosophy qualification. She lectured to honours-year students. The interview took place at her office before working hours and lasted more or less one hour and fifteen minutes. Participant 9 was the program

coordinator for the honour's students in the Faculty of Commerce, and at the time, she was also the acting Dean for the Faculty. Before the interview she explained that her time was limited and stressed out because of all the responsibilities. The researcher asked her if she wanted to reschedule the interview for another appointment, but she declined and informed the researcher that she was very much looking forward to the interview. There was the impression that she enjoyed engaging with the questions as she answered with much enthusiasm and ensured that the researcher understood the message she was trying to convey.

Participant 10:

Participant 10 was a 33-year-old female lecturer who had, at the time of the interview 12 years of lecturing experience. She holds a BA Honours qualification. She lectured first-year and second-year students. The interview took place at her office on the day she was on leave, but she indicated that her children were having a birthday party close to work, and she thought she would use the time to re-organise her office and do some marking. The interview lasted more or less one hour and ten minutes. Participant 10 remarked that she was very excited as she applied for a Master's in Commerce and was accepted for the following year. She stated that at the same time, she was concerned as she did not know how she was going to balance her work life and studying. She explained that she had no choice if she wanted to build her career in academia. She further remarked that she has a very supportive husband and family that she could rely on.

Participant 11:

Participant 11 was a 28-year-old female lecturer who had, at the time of the interview five years of lecturing experience. She holds a Master's in Commerce qualification. She lectured first-year to third-year students. The interview took place at her office after working hours and lasted more or less one hour and ten minutes.

Participant 11 was very reserved when the researcher met with her, but she became more talkative after engaging in an informal conversation. Participant 11 was recruited through another participant. The interview was pleasant, and at the end, the participant stated that the time went by too quickly as she enjoyed the topic and discussion.

Participant 12:

Participant 12 was a 34-year-old female lecturer who had, at the time of the interview six years of lecturing experience. She holds a Master's in Commerce qualification. She lectured first-year to third-year students. The interview took place at her office after working hours and lasted more or less two hours. Participant 12 greeted the researcher at the reception of the building where her office was situated. She was friendly, and since they had worked together before, they engaged in an informal catch-up conversation and discussion about the study before the interview commenced. The atmosphere was informal during the interview due to the informal discussion. However, more or less ten minutes into the interview the atmosphere changed to more serious, and Participant 12 was noticeably absorbed in the questions and her answers. She carefully formulated her answers and often indicated that she needed to think about the answer and asked if she could return to the question.

Participant 13:

Participant 13 was a 29-year-old male lecturer who had, at the time of the interview three years of lecturing experience. He holds a BA Honours qualification. He lectured first-year and second-year students. The interview took place at his office after working hours and lasted more or less one hour. Participant 13's office was very organised. Before the interview he remarked that he was looking forward to the interview. He also made small talk regarding his Jewish culture, referring to some of the artefacts in his office. During the interview Participant 13 took time to think about each question before formulating his

answers. At the end of the interview Participant 13 shared that he is looking forward to reading the final "product" as the topic was intriguing.

Participant 14:

Participant 14 was a 34-year-old female lecturer who had eight years and two months of lecturing experience at the time of the interview. She holds an MSc in Genetics qualification. She was married and valued her family and religion. She lectured first to third-year students and is interested in technology-enhanced learning. The interview took place at her office between lectures and lasted more or less one hour and thirty minutes. Participant 14 was very energetic and talkative before the interview. Before the interview the researcher and Participant 14 engaged in an informal conversation about blended learning approaches and her current PhD study focused on technology strategies in the classroom. During the interview Participant 14 answered the questions but often went off-topic, and the researcher had to refocus her with follow-up questions. The interview lasted longer than anticipated, and it was clear that Participant 14 enjoyed the opportunity to voice her perceptions and experience of the changes in higher education.

Participant 15:

Participant 15 was a 33-year-old female lecturer who had, at the time of the interview six years of lecturing experience. She holds a BCom Honours qualification. She lectured first-year and second-year students. The interview occurred at her office during working hours and between lectures. The interview lasted more or less one hour. Participant 15 appeared relaxed, and she had a good sense of humour. Before the interview she shared a moment that she had with her students and their expectations and remarked how they wanted her to provide them with her presentation slides and how she did not want to do this as she wanted them to take their notes. Once the interview had started, the focus shifted to the interview and the

questions, and there was no informal conversation. After the interview Participant 15 remarked that she thought the questions were going to be more personal and that she enjoyed the interview.

Participant 16:

Participant 16 was a 39-year-old female lecturer who had, at the time of the interview 13 years of lecturing experience. She holds a Master of Commerce qualification. She lectured first year to third year students. The interview took place at her office after working hours and lasted more or less one hour and ten minutes. Participant 16 discovered that she was expecting her fourth child the day before the interview and was very excited. She indicated that she and her husband had always wanted a big family. Before the interview the researcher congratulated her, and talk centred around being an expecting mom, having babies and if she would continue with her academic career after her baby was born. After this, the interview continued and had an easy flow.

Participant 17:

Participant 17 was a 57-year-old female lecturer who had, at the time of the interview 17 years of lecturing experience. She holds a Master's in Commerce qualification. She lectured first-year and second-year students. The interview took place at her office before working hours and lasted more or less one hour. The researcher's visit with her lasted one hour and fifteen minutes. Participant 17 presented as a self-confident person who knew what she wanted from life. Before the interview there was an informal conversation, and she stated that she was a no-nonsense person who questioned everything as she had been "around the block" a few times. She also stated that she was not intimidated easily and knew her boundaries. The interview flowed easily, and she engaged with each question very openly. How she answered the questions confirmed the researcher's observation in the beginning that she was a very self-assured person.

Participant 18:

Participant 18 was a 30-year-old female lecturer who had, at the time of the interview four years of lecturing experience. She holds a Master's in Commerce qualification. She lectured the first-year honours students. The interview took place at her office after working hours and lasted more or less one hour. Participant 18 was very friendly and eager to start the interview. She remarked that she was very excited to be part of the study. She stated that it did not bother her, but she wanted to make sure she could move or else keep very still. The researcher assured her that this was like a conversation and, if possible, she should not focus on the recording. The interview was pleasant, and Participant 18 relaxed more after ten minutes as she focused on the questions.

Participant 19:

Participant 19 was a 30-year-old female lecturer who had three years and six months of lecturing experience at the time of the interview. She holds a PhD in Religion and Theology. She mainly lectured first-year students. The interview took place at a coffee shop near the campus and lasted more or less two hours. During the interview the participant went off-topic a few times as she shared personal losses. At times she was very emotional and cried. The researcher would stop the recording by giving her time to recompose herself. Each time the researcher asked if she wanted to stop, she indicated that some of the questions triggered emotions as she went through personal challenges but wanted to continue. At the end of the interview the researcher reassured her that she would not disclose the personal challenges she disclosed during the interview. However, she agreed that the researcher could share the medical challenges she experienced as she believed this was related to the changes, she had experienced in her work environment.

Participant 20:

Participant 20 was a 37-year-old female lecturer who had, at the time of the interview six years of lecturing experience. She holds a Master's in Psychology qualification. She lectured first year to third year students. The interview took place at her office before working hours and lasted more or less one hour. Before the interview Participant 20 apologised for the chaos in her office and explained that she 104 7 105 She linked the chaos to her work life balance and explained that she had ended a long-term relationship of eight years. She remarked that though she was relieved, she found it challenging to be on her own again and sometimes felt lost. She was dressed in fitness clothing and mentioned being a fitness instructor at a local gymnasium.

Interview Process

An interview or a dialogue process, is one method for gathering data for IPA analysis (Smith & Nizza, 2021). IPA studies want to explore the experiences of participants. In other words, they form an understanding of their experiential world.

For this study, in-depth, semi-structured interviews were the data collection method. It allowed the participant as the expert to lead the interview under the empathetic and inquiring guidance of the researcher (Smith et al., 2021). Further, it allowed the researcher to employ the hermeneutic circle, one of the principles of interpretive inquiry. In other words, by exploring the participants' perceptions and interpretations of their lived experiences, the researcher could understand individual parts and how the individual parts formed part of a whole (Smith & Osborn, 2015). According to Polit and Beck (2012), response rates for semi-structured interviews were higher compared to other data collection techniques, such as questionnaires or surveys. This could be ascribed to the face-to-face contact between the researcher and participants during interviews. Furthermore, in the literature, semi-structured

interviews were considered an appropriate method for data collection for phenomenological studies (Smith et al., 2021).

For this study, the researcher scheduled one hour of face-to-face, semi-structured, individual interviews with each of the 20 participants. The interviews lasted between 45 to 120 minutes. All interviews were conducted in English as all participants were proficient in English. Furthermore, all interviews were conducted in privacy to ensure confidentiality and were audio recorded with the participants' permission.

Semi-structured interviews are the preferred data collection method when following an IPA approach. Brocki and Wearden (2006) reported that many published IPA studies used semi-structured interviews to collect data. According to Alexander and Clare (2004, p. 82), the semi-structured face-to-face interview process was collaborative and acknowledged the participants as the primary experts.

It was also true for this study as the face-to-face interviews created an opportunity for the researcher to naturally engage with the participants and gain a more meaningful insight into their lived experiences of the higher education environment in South Africa. The interviews mainly took place at the participants' offices before or after working hours or between lectures during their lunch breaks. Two interviews took place elsewhere, one at a coffee shop and one at the participant's residence. The interviews were guided by pre-formulated open-ended questions that aimed to keep the interviews focused but flexible (Patton, 2002). Aligned with the suggestion of Smith and Osborn (2014), minimal probe questions were used. It allowed for the positioning of the participant as the expert. This does not imply that no probing questions were asked; instead, the researcher kept an eye on how the interview impacted the participants and utilised probing questions as needed.

Interview Guide

Before the interviews took place, semi-structured open-ended questions were formalised. The interview guide was structured around how participants interpreted their experiences of the changes, responded to them, coped with them, and described the changes in higher education. Participants' responses to the open-ended questions from the interview guide that needed clarification were addressed by asking follow-up questions. This was to clarify certain aspects and deepen the researcher's understanding. The advantage of having semi-structured interviews was that the open-ended questions allowed the researcher to clarify certain aspects of the participants' responses (Appendix E). The freedom of the flexible approach of the open-ended questions also promoted an equal positioning of the participants, and the researcher and participants were able to influence the direction of the interviews (Qu & Dumay, 2011). A further advantage of having a preformulated semi-structured interview guide was that it made explicit any prior assumptions the researcher might have had about the research (Qu & Dumay, 2011). Additional notes were made throughout the interview including personal reflections and observations of body language and emotions.

Interview schedule

The interview guide included a small number of broad topic questions (Appendix F) to place participants' voices at the centre of the interviews and allow them to lead the interviews. It further allowed freedom and reflexivity and for participants to discuss issues of personal significance (Smith & Osborn, 2015). It also allowed the researcher to explore their experiences more deeply. Smith et al. (2021) referred to this as a conversation with purpose and flexibility. Thus, the researcher could explore the exclusivity of the individual voices. Due to the simplicity of the research questions, a pilot study was not deemed necessary, as, in phenomenological research, it was important to capture lived experiences.

Data Analysis

Data analysis is the process through which the researcher makes sense of the data. It can be described as bringing order and structure to collected data (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). As the aim of this study was to explore in detail participants lived experiences of the changes in their work environment, and the data analysis followed the principles of IPA (Smith & Nizza, 2021). The data was analysed by moving from the parts making sense of the text to the whole (i.e., what was shared meaning between participants). Further, a double hermeneutic formed part of the analysis as participants reflected on their experiences during the interview. Participants tried to make sense of their experiences by engaging in a reflective process. In turn, the researcher also engaged with the data reflecting on the participants' experiences trying to make sense of it and form an understanding (Smith & Nizza, 2021).

Process of Data Analysis

An idiographic approach to each interview transcript was adopted when analysing the data as this approach was concerned with the particular rather than the more general (Smith et al., 2021). It was important that the researcher first understood each participant's lived experience of the change.

Transcription and phases involved in the data analysis

The researcher transcribed each participant's interview verbatim into a Word document format. Each transcription included all the words; pauses; silences, false starts and laughter. The audio recording for each participant was listened to a second time following the transcription in part to ensure accuracy and in part to make first reflective thoughts. The transcripts were copied into a table format creating a column for initial and further descriptive

comments and a column for numbering each line (Appendix F). Participants were given numbers, and each transcript was kept as a separate Word document. Each participant's transcript was reread as the final reflection before the stages of the analysis procedure (i.e., see table below). [Take note that terms like *emergent themes* or *superordinate themes* have been revised to reflect as *experiential statements.* S*uperordinate themes* are now being referred to *personal experiential themes*, *and master themes* are now being referred to as *group experiential themes* (Smith and Nizza, 2021)].

In order to prevent the researchers' prior knowledge, assumptions, and prejudices from influencing and influencing the study's findings, reflexivity was present throughout all phases of the research.

Phases involved in the data analysis

Table 2

Phases of data analysis

Phases	Activity
Phase 1 Logical-rational pre-interpretative understanding of the participant’s text	The first step was to closely examine each transcript by reading it and re-reading it to become familiar with the participant's account. Initial explanatory notes and comments were made when re-reading the transcript to assess what was perceived as significant and interesting. Since there is no prescriptive method, the process allowed the researcher to make descriptive, linguistic and conceptual notes.
Phase 2 Formulating experiential statements	During this phase, each transcript was reread, taking the initial descriptive, linguistic and conceptual notes and comments into account. The

	reason for this was to examine the content of the transcripts on every exploratory level. This step required the researcher to analyse and identify important experiential statements, trying to capture the meaning of these. This phase aimed to focus on distinct portions of text in order to discover what was learned through the exploratory commenting.
Phase 3 Finding connections and clustering experiential statements	During this phase, the aim was to refine the experiential statements through the clustering process to refine the analysis. During this phase, the researcher looked for similarities and differences emerging from the data, continuously reflecting on the various experiential statements. To support the process, the researcher made use of an online collaborative board that supported the moving around of the experiential statements. (i.e., Lucid https://lucid.app/documents#/dashboard).
Phase 4 Compiling the table of personal experiential themes	During this phase, the analysis introduced the structure by identifying common links between the emerging clusters. These clusters were then named personal experiential themes. The names for the personal experiential themes were thus "…an expression of the conversion…." (Smith & Nizza, 2021, p.45) when combining the experiential statements.
Phase 5 Moving to the next case	The remaining transcripts were analysed using the phases mentioned above. An individual approach was taken to each transcript while keeping an open mind to encourage the emergence of fresh clusters and unique experiential themes.
Phase 6 Comparing across cases	This phase involved searching for connections across cases. Personal experiencing themes were reorganized and renamed during this process, and themes that did not appear in at least half of the transcripts were discarded. The remaining personal experiential themes were grouped into group

	experiential themes, each supported by several personal experiential themes.

(Smith & Nizza, 2021, p. 32 - 55).

Reflexivity

Willig (2013) points out that it is important in qualitative research for the researcher to acknowledge their influence and the role they play in shaping the research process. Smith et al. (2021) described IPA researchers as the analytical instrument in the research process that uncovers hidden meanings and make sense of participants lived experiences. IPA researchers were further required to be conscious of the double hermeneutic in IPA and the researcher's aim to strive for objectivity when analysing the data. Therefore, reflexivity is of particular importance in IPA studies. Through the reflective process, the researcher explored the data iteratively using continuous reflection. (Smith et al., 2021). Thus, reflexivity was not just an action but also involved the researcher being constantly aware of how their thinking can influence the data (i.e., past experience, foreknowledge and personal value and belief systems) (Finlay, 2008). Metacognition was perceived as an important aspect of the research process and ensured that the researcher acknowledged their perspectives (Kavousi et al., 2019). Throughout the analysis, the researcher was also required to be aware of their values, beliefs, and thoughts about the phenomena (Langdridge, 2007).

Working in the higher education academic environment the researchers' own assumptions and thought processes regarding the changes may have influenced how the researcher engaged with the literature, approached the data analysis and make sense of the findings. The researchers' interest in how lecturers experience the changes while working in the higher education in South Africa stemmed from corridor conversations she overheard and which she was also part off. Central to the conversations between lecturers was how

they felt there was a constant shift in the expectations of them as academics. Their narratives centred around what use to be and how they felt forced into a role that made them uncomfortable. They further talked about how the environment in general has changed. The chosen topic for the thesis was thus motivated by how academics talked about the changes. Part of the struggle throughout the study was not to allow the dual role of the researcher (i.e., insider role as both an academic and part of middle management) to blur the perceptions and interpretation of the data.

The researcher was aware of the advantage the role duality offered, such as access to recruiting participants and potentially providing authentic and richer accounts (Hayfield & Huxley, 2015). The researcher was also cognisant of the limitations of pre-understanding the topic. Experiential knowledge brought a deeper understanding and authenticity to the interpretations during the data collection and analysis (Hayfield & Huxley, 2015). Keeping true to Heidegger's (2010, p. 195) statement that "priority should be given to the new object rather than to one's preconceptions", the researcher constantly reflected on her own feelings and thoughts, making notes while analysing the data, especially during phase one of the analysis. Through the process of reflection, the researcher became very aware of the influence of her own beliefs and preconceptions. Being an academic, the researcher had to explore and acknowledge the impact of the subject matter on her. Reflective conversations with her supervisor and some of her peers ensured that her personal beliefs and values did not obscure her interpretation. Further, the researcher connected with an online IPA collaborative group that broadened her knowledge of IPA and her confidence. It also reassured her that her data interpretations were valid, relevant to the transcript, and not blurred by her preconceived perceptions.

Ensuring the Quality of the Study

For a study to be trustworthy, it needs to be reliable and valid. Reliability and validity are approached differently in qualitative research compared to quantitative research. In qualitative research, validity refers to the relevance or appropriateness of, for example, the choice of methodology, the study's design and the data analysis process followed for answering the research question (Waterman, 2013). The reliability of a study refers to the "repeated consistency, stability and uniformity" of results obtained using the same measurement instrument (De Vos et al., 2011, p. 162). With regard to the quality of the chosen analysis method (i.e., IPA), Yardley (2000) provides four broad principles, namely: a) sensitivity to context, b) commitment and rigour, c) transparency and coherence, and d) importance of the topic being researched.

Sensitivity to context

Sensitivity to the context was demonstrated through an awareness of relevant and existing literature regarding previous research on higher education institutions as work environments in South Africa and globally. Further to this, the data obtained from participants were considered with sensitivity. Including examples of direct quotations ensured that the participants' voices were heard and not overshadowed by the interpretation. This was achieved through practising reflexivity throughout the process and systematically presenting the relevant data (Smith et al., 2021). Lastly, the researcher adhered to and followed ethical principles throughout conducting the study, for example, protecting the anonymity and rights of participants and ensuring participants willingly gave consent to participate in the study.

Commitment and rigour

Yardley (2000) stated that the criteria of commitment and rigour were related to the extent to which researchers immerse themselves in the relevant data and develop a level of

competence in the research method they employ. An intensive engagement with the methodological guidelines and principles when conducting an IPA study addressed commitment and rigour. In addition, the researcher had discussions with her supervisor during the research's early stages and linked up with a global group of IPA researchers (i.e., novice and salted). She also attended several online presentations of others' studies, gaining insight into how IPA researchers approach their research studies differently across disciplines. The researcher intensively engaged empathetically with each transcript's data while continuously reflecting on the data. Lastly, moving on to a cross-case analysis ensured the process was documented and well-reflected.

Transparency and coherence

By thoroughly documenting each step in the thesis, an effort was made to enhance the study's transparency. Doing this established an audit trail to provide the reader insight into how the study developed and progressed. For example, it included an introduction and an overview of the participants. A thorough explanation of the participant selection procedure, interview procedure, and data processing phases was also presented.

Of importance to note is that IPA is inherently subjective and is committed to generating interpretative accounts of experience. IPA is not interested in the replication of findings as the nature of double hermeneutics suggests that two individual researchers coding the same transcripts are not likely to replicate an analysis conducted by each individual (Smith et al., 2021).

The researcher shared the processes followed by the quotes of participants and the themes with the supervisor, allowing for further reflection and insight, enhancing logical interpretation and transparency.

Importance of the topic

According to Yardley (2000), the relevance of a research topic was related to the decisive criterion, more specifically, the value and impact it had on the belief and behaviour of others. She further postulated that:

> "Some analyses were important not because they presented a complete and accurate explanation of a particular body of empirical data, but because they drew on empirical material to present a novel, challenging perspective, which opened up new ways of understanding a topic." (Yardley, 2000, p. 223)

Governing higher education institutions in a South African context after 1994 presented many complexities that could not be ignored, such as multiple social realities stemming from historical and cultural contexts. This study drew attention to the significant topic of the lived experiences of academics employed at higher education institutions in South Africa undergoing numerous changes. Not only were the changes pertaining to past inequalities, but they also included the global changes that higher education institutions experience. Several quantitative and qualitative studies have been conducted globally regarding neoliberalism's influence on higher education institutions.

However, more information was needed on how academics working in a South African higher education environment experienced these changes, responded to the changes and coped with the changes. The aim of this study was not to make generalisations about the impact of the changes on academics in higher education institutions. The researcher acknowledged that each institution was unique (i.e., from a historical and operational context). The importance of this study was that it created awareness around how academics were impacted with the possibility of supporting academics psychosocially with adapting to the changes. Being able to predict possible behavioural and psychosocial

outcomes could lead to the implementation of new interventions or the modification of existing interventions. It also offered the possibility for further research.

Ethical Considerations

The researcher conducted the current study within the parameters of the ethical guidelines for research. The basic principles that directed the study included

- Institutional approval for the study,
- Respect for the individual, which included respect for autonomy; and
- Obtaining informed consent to participate from each participant prior to the study.

The current study was relatively low in risk as it did not research sensitive issues or involve a vulnerable group. Data gathering processes were not harmful, and attention was given to beneficence.

Approval

A study proposal was submitted to the Research Ethics Committee, Department of Psychology, Unisa, in October 2015 to ensure the quality of the overall study and the chosen research design. Approval and ethical clearance were obtained from UNISA (Appendix A), and permission was granted to continue with the study.

Informed Consent

The researcher obtained informed consent to participate from the participants. All elements of the research were fully explained and disclosed to the participants. The study's objectives and the intended use of the data it gathered were explained to the participants.

Individuals who participated in the study did so in their personal capacity. The study was situated within the context of higher education institutions in South Africa, the institutions were not the focus of the study; the focus was on the participants in their personal capacity as lecturers and how they make meaning of and adapt to the changes they experience in their profession. The participants were assured confidentiality and anonymity should any information obtained be published. The information letter indicated that participants could withdraw from the study at any stage. Informed consent was assumed when the participant voluntarily signed the online or hard copy consent form.

Privacy

The confidentiality of the participant's personal information, and the information they provided during their interview was ensured using the following measures: Before each interview and in the consent form, participants were informed of confidentiality and anonymity.

- One way the researcher ensured this was to refer to participants using numbers.
- All participants were assured that the data would be stripped of all identifying features, such as their names or the names of the institutions where they are employed.
- The original data and transcripts were digitally stored by the researcher, who had exclusive access to the data that was password protected.
- All participants were informed that they would have access to the study's final findings.
- They were also informed that the study results could be published in peer-reviewed and accredited journals and used for poster or oral presentations at appropriate conferences.

Conclusion

The chapter stated the research question and presented the rationale for positioning the study within IPA as an appropriate research approach. An interpretive paradigm was considered, and a summary of the IPA-supporting theoretical stances in phenomenology, hermeneutics, and idiographic was offered. The participants were introduced, and details of the population, sample size and data collection process were provided. The chapter also indicated the phases of data analysis that were followed. The chapter concluded by considering the quality of the study, and references were made to the ethical considerations followed for the study. In the present study a large amount of information needed to be presented in an accessible manner. After careful consideration the researcher decided on presenting the findings and discussion of the findings in six chapters. The researcher further acknowledges that conventionally in qualitative studies, findings and discussions are integrated and that her decision to make the study reader accessible came at the price of repetition of information.

Chapter Six

Findings

The “Unheeded Voices of Academics”

This chapter considered how a sample of academics working at South African higher education institutions experienced the changes post-1994. The research question about the participants' personal experience under exploration was, "What changes have academics experienced, if any, in their work environments at higher education institutions in South Africa?". A total of 20 academics from different higher education institutions in South Africa were interviewed for the study. Their academic specialisations and the faculties or schools they worked in varied, as did their gender, age, race, qualifications, and years and months they lectured. The themes produced gave primacy to the participants' voices and provided an interpretive account demonstrating convergent and divergent viewpoints of participants' lived experiences (Smith et al., 2009). The 20 semi-structured interviews resulted in the emergence of four group experiential themes; and eleven personal experiential themes, as illustrated in table 1. Of importance to mention is that though participants' experiences varied across the group and personal experiential themes, there was, in some instances, a clear overlapping and interconnection of the personal experiential themes.

Table 3

Summary of group experiential themes and personal experiential themes with representative experiential statements of participants' interpretation of the changes in higher education.

Group Experiential themes			
Change as a shift in governance	**Change as intensification of workload**	**A change in the student profile**	**The integration of information and communication technologies (ICT) in higher education learning environments**
Personal experiential themes			
Being managed with a corporate lens *"A big change started with new management coming in."* [Participant 1] *"…it is all about numbers and money…you just have to produce."*. [Participant 3] "*There is an academic side and the business side, and the business side seems to take more and more precedence over the academic side…"* [Participant 4] *"I do respect the position they're in, so therefore I will accept what they say but it doesn't mean that I think they are right."* [Participant 5] *"The institution changed the way that we do things…"* [Participant 11]	**The ignorance of management** *"There is a big change that started with new management coming in, things they want us to do, sometime doubles the administrative work, it is not well thought out…they have absolutely no idea what is going on in our workplace, they are enforcing a lot of administration on us that was not thought out by someone that works in an academic environment."* [Participant 1] *"Administration doing this, doing that. Going to meetings that I don't feel are very relevant. I mean I work in academics. I would be thinking why I am here when I could be doing something else."* [Participant 8]	**Academic entitlement** *"I think in SA the biggest change has been the attitude of students…students who come across with a high sense of entitlement and expectations…"*. [Participant 2] *"Changes in students from year to year, students, the lack of enthusiasm for knowledge that kills me and also their attitude of it's my right, their attitude of saying it's my right for you to give me information."* [Participant 5] *"I also noticed that students feel very entitled not always willing to work very hard to achieve… not all of them but is predominant something that I have picked up. Yes, that entitlement…."* [Participant 6]	**Questioning capability and adeptness in the use of ICT** *"I am less confident in what I do because when I am using technology in the classroom, I am not confident, I question myself. I am less sure of myself..."* [Participant 5] *"…probably one of the changes that was harder for me to accept was when technology was introduced, when we incorporated the use of tablets and projectors not just talk and chalk anymore. I do not think it was properly introduced…"* [Participant 6] *"The systems, I had to get to understand the systems. It is difficult when you cannot cope. I am a slow learner. I know some of the things, but I just need to take time to learn…"* [Participant 15]

"The biggest shift now is that we have become a corporate company." [Participant 14]			
The erosion of collegiality by excluding the academic *"They are sitting in an office somewhere making decisions; this is absolutely frustrating. The moment you involve me and make me feel like I matter, I am going to say I am with you, and I will feel part…"* [Participant 1] *"Another thing is a decision gets made at top level, but the practicality is not necessarily possible. Workwise I would say it impacts on your performance, so you miss deadlines. Sometimes it does create a lot of extra work."* [Participant 12] *"It kind of marginalises the academic or the whole academic system. They think as a lecturer you know nothing about business so what you do is easy you stand in class… We are not asked for input ever. Another thing is a decision gets made at top level, but the practicality is not necessarily possible."* [Participant 4] *"Nobody is really listening to you, they don't really see you, so you become a bit despondent. I think you reach a stage where it is like you know I won't speak to*	**The infringement of workload on personal and family time** *"I just try and keep up. I try my best filing everything to ensure that everything is right for the administration."* [Participant 13] *"We experienced a lot more admin, everyone tries to do more and more. I am having to spend a lot more time here because I have more deadlines. I always feel like you have to be at the beck and call of the email system all the time, no matter whether you are teaching or you are on holiday."* [Participant 4] *"It is a lot of administrative work. Currently for me my day starts at 4h00 in the morning…, a lot of administration work. With the accreditation for the CHE, we have a lot of admin adding up making sure that our credits are aligned with planners for next year."* [Participant 9] *"Having to deal with admin… the working hours changed, all of a sudden have to work on a Saturday - it has a huge impact. You don't like it you disagree, but you have to*	**Abdication from academic responsibility** *"I sometimes find with the students the more information you give them the less they work… it feels as if your students pass rates are reflected on you which isn't the case because you can only do as much as you can."* [Participant 10] *"You are much more accountable for student learning…. It is not the students' responsibility anymore, but it is the lecturer's responsibility. If the students are not in class, then you are asked why are the students not in class? So, I think that has been a big move that I have felt over the years…"* [Participant 16]	**Embedded traditional teaching perceptions** *"Black board, we did not have black board when I was a student, I don't know, there is more focus on teaching with technology and lesser focus on the old blackboard and chalk method of teaching. So, I guess a shift from the older ways to using technology, the student is supposed to do the work and you are just there to facilitate and things like that. Something that has frustrated me is that the new way of teaching is not working, we are dumbing our students down and that is what Universities don't seem to get. We have all these changes and the day we are putting students into the workplace that do not have the skills and all in the name of money."* [Participant 3] *"What I am also seeing is that the more and more we are going towards technology the worst part of this, is the student's ability to write is impacted. They cannot string a set of words together and it worries me horribly because in this big wide world out there is a time you going to have to write a report and if you are writing reports you have to reference. Students cannot*

management because it is not going to make a difference." [Participant 6] *"It is just about what the top management says, it is not about the lecturer... Everything is about what the managers are saying. It is our reality; you just have to accept it and move on."* [Participant 15] *"There are decisions that high up top management make; for example, your direct line manager will agree to without consulting you…you don't like it, but there is nothing you can do."* [Participant 18]	*do it because it is part of your job. My body broke down, I ended up in hospital [tears in her eyes] umm stress was just too much which means ultimately my body told me it is enough."* [Participant 10]		*reference and this is something that is upsetting me horribly because I can see it deteriorating from year to year the more, we use technology, and the skill of writing is disappearing."* [Participant 5]
<u>Lack of communication and transparency</u> *"I feel that the communication about the change is not so transparent as it should be…"* [Participant 2] *"What changed was that there are a lot of decisions made which I feel has a direct impact on the lecturers, but the decisions are not communicated to them."* [Participant 14] *"It really does feel that it is a very big hierarchy and communication becomes difficult because it is a process of filtering through."* [Participant 19] *"There is no good communication, it is really a problem."* [Participant 9]		**<u>#feesmustfall linked to student expectation</u>** *"Definitely the student who started with me in 2008 were very passionate about studying and knew it was hard and difficult to get into, but these days specially with the # fees must fall it is as if they have that entitlement attitudes which was not there in 2008."* [Participant 10] *"More demanding students than they use to be. There are quite a few with the fees must fall demanding free education, it does affect the institution and then in turn the staff members because in terms of bonuses and that we don't know what is to come."* [Participant 11]	

"I am somebody that are very organised, I want to know what the strategy is how will it be implemented, you can't just do it haphazardly… so definitely communicate." [Participant 6] *"… I hate it when people play games with you… they know about all the changes that is going to take place and then one day you wake-up and then okay this is the changes that are going to take place. I feel it is unfair."* [Participant 17]			
		Responsibility linked to the lack of student academic skills *"The students themselves is a major change I have first and second years, but I found with the first years they lack a lot of basic skills especially with communication and presentation skills. So, there is a lot of extra work that you need to put in when it comes to for example getting students ready for presentations and assignments."* [Participant 6]	

		"I think we have to work harder to get students up to where we need to get them. I am very proud the fact that as a faculty we still get that going, it is tough, it is not always easy there is a lot of students that battle but I am proud of the fact that we do get there but that is definitely something that has changed." [Participant 14]	

Group Experiential Theme One: Change as a Shift in Governance

In South Africa, after 1994 (post-apartheid), the government required higher education institutions to transform and be more accountable while aligning themselves with the proposed government transformation processes (Stewart, 2007). This necessitated higher education institutions to adapt their management approaches to support the government's transformation plan and supervisory role (Shepherd, 2018).

When asked about the changes participants have experienced in their work environment at higher education institutions, some of their responses centred around a shift in how the institutions were being governed. Participants spoke about how the academic work environment was differently managed and how management themselves had changed. They specifically talked about how frustrated they were with the new corporate culture that seeped into the academic work environment. They further described how they were being increasingly excluded from decision-making processes. Their descriptions left the impression that they felt marginalised and excluded from the traditional academic work environment. Some participants raised concerns about how their voices were ignored in decision-making processes. They felt that they were being silenced as academics. Three personal experiential themes were identified that contributed to understanding how participants experienced change as a shift in governance: 1) being managed with a corporate lens, 2) the erosion of collegiality by excluding the academic, and 3) a lack of communication and transparency.

Personal Experiential Theme One: Being Managed with a Corporate Lens

Participants spoke about the changes they experienced in this personal experiential theme and referred to how management themselves had changed. They also talked about how the approaches governing higher education institutions have changed. Though

participants described this phenomenon slightly differently, they appeared to agree that corporate culture was seeping into the academic work environment and that this change forced them to adapt to the imposed corporate culture, which they experienced as becoming the dominant value and meaning system. This theme was formed around three concepts: (1) the corporatisation of higher education institutions, (2) the marginalisation of the academic and (3) the commodification of education.

> *"A big change started with new management coming in… They have absolutely no idea what is going on in our workplace... It is as if new management say we are going to colonise you, now please, I know colonised is a loaded word but in this context, it is like we going to take you over we are going to tell you exactly what we want you to do, we have no regard for existing institution culture… we absolutely have no regard for that, we are just going to tell you what to do and you need to do it…. we just sit here like little minions, and they treat us like little minions, it makes me hate them… maybe hate is a strong word, but it makes me severely dislike management. They just make my life more difficult; it disengages me immediately."*. [Participant 1 Line 2;3;5;10-18]

Participant 1 explained that one significant change she experienced was directly linked to a change in *management*, *"A big change started with 'new management coming in."* She referred to the 'colonisation' of academics and opposed the intrusion of managerial management approaches. Being aware of the political connotation of the concept 'colonisation' and what it represented under the apartheid's regime, she acknowledged this, "…*I know colonised is a loaded word…"*. It would appear that the participant deliberately chose the word "…*colonised…" because* she wanted to convey how strongly she felt about the change in how academics and the academic work environment were being governed. There is a sense that she needed to express her deep-seated resistance and resentment of the new managerial strategies of 'new management. To further accentuate her point, Participant 1 continued to describe *new management* as ignorant regarding managing an

academic environment, "*…they have absolutely no idea what is going on in our workplace.".* Making a clear distinction between management and the academic work environment, she presented the academic work environment as unique and different from other work environments. Her objection to the managerial management approaches was encapsulated in the metaphoric comparison of academics with minions who were treated as mere servile employees, *"…for me, the most frustrating process in the change is that we just sit here like little minions, and they treat us like little minions they, just make my life more difficult; it disengages me immediately.".* She experienced the intrusion of new management on traditional academic territory as a 'takeover,' and the metaphor she used evidenced how *"new management'* reconceptualised the academic work environment to a corporate environment with a demand for control. This finding aligned with literature that stated that, traditionally, it was not easy to manage academics as their behaviour was often conditioned and aligned with the professional academic role. Part of the academic identity was having freedom and autonomy, placing a high value on their individuality and time (Dearlove, 2002; Dill, 2012).

> *“Ag, then there is this focus on numbers, that you have to see the student through it doesn’t matter what, it doesn’t matter if academic quality suffers…. it doesn’t matter about the integrity of your discipline; it is all about numbers and money…you just have to produce.”*. [Participant 3 Line 15 - 21]

Participant 3 voiced his concern about the ethics of the performance-driven transformed academic work environment that was now more focused on “…*student numbers…”* and profit. He accentuated how academics were being caught up in functioning and delivering within a context that commodifies education. His explanation further alluded that those in management positions expected academics to focus on pursuing the targeted number of students and how this became more important than academic quality, “*Ag, then there is this focus on numbers, that you have to see the student through it does not matter*

what, it does not matter if academic quality suffers…. it does not matter about the integrity of your discipline; it is all about numbers and money.”. Participant 3 opposed this direction of chasing numbers for profit while the quality of teaching and learning was being compromised. This finding suggested that Participant 3 perceived the change in how higher education institutions were being governed, especially the focus on numbers and profit, as a liability and a threat to academic quality and standards and what this would mean for producing quality graduates.

> “*There is an academic side and the business side, and the business side seems to take more and more precedence over the academic side… they don’t understand … the business doesn’t understand the academic side and somehow, they are in charge of all the decisions, and they don’t ever ask.”*. [Participant 4 Line 1-3;12-14]

Participant 4 described the academic work environment as having two different sides. To her, one side was grounded in corporatism while the other was grounded in the traditions of academia, “*There is an academic side and the business side…”.* She continued to share her perception that those in management were working on academics to align themselves with corporate objectives, “…*and the business side seemed to take more and more precedence over the academic side...*”. She presented a similar rationale to Participant 1, that management was ignorant when it came to managing the academic environment, “…*they don’t understand … the business doesn’t understand the academic side…”*. What annoyed this participant was how management, whom she perceived as having no understanding of the complexities of the academic environment, could make decisions without consulting the academics, “…*and somehow, they are in charge of all the decisions, and they don’t ever ask.”*. This finding highlighted a sense of personal agency evident in how Participant 4 explained how decisions were made without consulting academics. Thus, in a sense, the institutional knowledge of academics was lost to the subtleties of corporatism.

“I do respect the position they’re in, so therefore I will accept what they say but it doesn’t mean that I think they are right.” [Participant 5 Line 10 - 12]

Participant 5 acknowledged management and expressed that she did respect their positions as managers, “*I do respect the position they’re in…”* . She explained that because of the designated position ‘manager’, she “*will accept what they say”* however it would seem from her explanation illustrated that this was only because of the hierarchal position of management. There was thus a strong sense that Participant 5 only tolerated the decisions that management made because they were in management positions and that she in fact were sceptic about the decisions they made. This scepticism was captured in her expression “…*but it doesn’t mean that I think they are right.”*. It would seem at the core of this expression was a passive resistance to the decision management made. This appeared to be closely linked to perception that at academic institutions respect is earned based on academic professional qualifications and not necessarily holding the title of ‘manager’.

“The institution changed the way that we do things (procedures) the credibility of the institution is changing…”. [Participant 11 Line 1 & 2]

Participant 11 explained that the institution had changed, "*The institution changed..."*. When probed, she explained that she was referring to those who managed the institution. She alluded to how the change in processes caused a gap in the institution, "...*the way that we do things (procedures) the institution's credibility is changing…"*. The participant presented a similar rationale as Participant 3, perceiving the changes in how higher education institutions were being governed as a threat to academic quality and standards.

“The biggest shift now is that we have become a corporate company. When I started here, we were like a family, it is all these rules and regulations and stuff, what I am feeling is that there is a huge disconnect. Where I felt people knew in the past what was going on now, I just feel that we are pawns and we are just shifted, but you are

also dispensable, and you simply could just be moved off the board if that is needed. We are simply being used as a means to an end and that to me is bad, I don't like that...". [Participant 14 Line 19-25 & 27-29]

Participant 14 described how the institution had become a corporation, *"The biggest shift now is that we have become a corporate company."*. She compared the current work environment to when she started working at the institution, which she explained was like being part of a family, *"When I started here, we were like a family…"*. She went on to explain how academics in the new changed work environment were subjected to change processes and regulations that were onerous, which led her to feel a disconnect to her work environment, *"…it is all these rules and regulations and stuff, what I am feeling is that there is a huge disconnect."*. Her description revealed how she felt caught between the conflicting norm and value systems of meaning. On the one hand, an inclusive system, while on the other hand, a work environment was imbricated by a system of intensified regulation. This seemed to exemplify feelings of a disconnect when she metaphorically referred to academics as *"pawns"* who had an exchange value and an expiry date, *"I just feel that we are pawns and we are just shifted, but you are also dispensable, and you simply could just be moved off the board if that is needed. …".* She expressed a sense of frustration and despondency with management in her account of how academics were being reduced to labourers whom she thought of as having a 'used and exchange value,' *"We are simply being used as a means to an end…"*. Participant 14 made it clear that she experienced the movement away from the traditional academic work environment to that of a corporate environment as alienating. In struggling with this, it created feelings of dislike and unacceptance, *"and that to me is bad, I don't like that."*

Personal Experiential Theme Two: The Erosion of Collegiality by Excluding the Academic

A recurrent challenge the participants experienced in the academic work environment was the exclusion and silencing of the academic voice. In this personal experiential theme, their descriptions centred around how academics as professionals were no longer regarded as constitutive members of the higher education work environment but as subordinates of 'new management'. They explained how they felt marginalised by management and excluded from the decision-making processes. Thus, the overarching personal experiential theme highlighted conceptualisations such as the exclusion of the academic voice, feelings of being devalued, discredited and being subjected to decisions made by new management who initiated a change that did not make rational sense.

> *"They are sitting in an office somewhere making decisions; this is absolutely frustrating because if there is actually participation in some of the decision making that takes place, we can tell them, hey guys, there is a much easier way to do this… Not being involved in the decisions... The moment you involve me and make me feel like I matter, I am going to say I am with you, and I will feel part…".* [Participant 1 Line 8-10 & 22-25]

Participant 1 described how she felt excluded from the decision-making processes, *"They are sitting in an office somewhere making decisions… not being involved in the decisions…".* It was clear that for Participant 1, as an academic, it was essential to participate in the decision-making processes. Not being included made her feel detached from her academic role and work environment. In her opinion, including academics in the decision-making processes could be beneficial to both parties. She believed that academics could be a valuable source of information and could make valuable contributions "…*because*

if there is actual participation in some of the decision-making processes that took place, we can tell them, hey guys, there is a much easier way to do this".

Further to this, she felt that by being excluded from the decision-making processes, she was being overlooked and devalued as an academic. Her explanation implied that new management could benefit from the input of academics and that their ignorance is costing them and thus the institution. Not being consulted and included could also be interpreted as disrespecting the academic as a professional. In other words, being included in the decision-making processes would signify that new management acknowledged the academic as a professional. Being excluded only made Participant 1 feel insignificant, frustrated, and disdain for corporate logic. She used self-appreciation language to describe how involving her in decision-making processes would make her feel valued, "…*make me feel like I matter*…". Validating her would mobilise her to support management and possibly earn her trust to comply with their decisions, "*The moment you involve me and make me feel like I matter, I am going to say I am with you, and I will feel part of…".* There was a sense that Participant 1 was anticipating 'new management to tap into the collegial academic culture and that this would be the key to winning her loyalty. It appeared that having a voice and contributing to decisions was important to participants 1's sense of belonging, while excluding her was interpreted as being devalued as an academic and ultimately an erosion of her professional academic voice and freedom.

> *"It kind of marginalises the academic or the whole academic system. They think as a lecturer you know nothing about business so what you do is easy you stand in class… Our voice is never heard… never… We are not asked for input ever. We are told how to do things by people who don't know how to do them because they have never done them. That is the worst. So now we are end user delivery…. Whatever the hell that means you know you are like an end function, and it feels sometimes that is how we are treated. I sit on the academic board meeting, and I sit on senate, but there I get a*

feeling the decisions have already been made. The biggest change for me as a lecturer is as if our status as professionals has gone lower and lower in rank as business decided to take up all the management positions. Does that even make sense?" [Participant 4 Line 10-12 &16;19-26]

Participant 4 also experienced how academics were excluded from the decision-making processes. For her, the exclusion extended beyond just the individual as she referred to the exclusion of the academics as the system in its entirety, *"It kind of marginalises the academic or the whole academic system."*. Being conscious of her identity as an academic reflected a value judgement on her part as she described how lecturers were being marginalised and reduced to skilled labourers who had an easy job, "*They think as a lecturer you know nothing about business so what you do is easy you stand in class...".* She continued to explain that the perception of new management that the academic environment could only be managed by individuals who understood the corporate environment was problematic for her, "*They think as a lecturer you know nothing about business…".* She sounded disillusioned and dismayed that the academic could be reduced to just fulfilling a task and taking on a subordinate role. To further accentuate the exclusion of the academic, she explained how they were never asked for an opinion or to contribute to the decisions, "*Our voice is never heard…never."*. The repetition of the phrase *"never"* emphasised her feelings of being excluded and not being allowed to provide input. Participant 4 captured the essence of her own traditional academic belief in collegiality and collaboration when she talked about not being asked for an opinion or for contributing to the discussions leading up to the making of the decisions, "*We are not asked for input ever*.". Thus, they (i.e., the academics) were "…submerged in a culture of silence…" (Raina, 2019, p.383). Her experience of how those in management were controlling academics represented not just a shift in the governance of higher education institutions but also a culture shift and aligned with what was found in the literature (Biggs. 2002; Meyer, 2006; Deem & Brehony, 2005; Kolsaker, 2008; Abramov, 2012; Shepherd, 2017 and Levin et al.,

2020). In other words, moving away from a traditional collaborative and collegial environment to one of managerial control (i.e., corporate logic). She explained how management would instruct academics to perform tasks that they (i.e., management) do not understand themselves, and for her, this was unacceptable, "*We are told how to do things by people who don't know how to do them because they have never done them. That is the worst."*. Referring to this experience as *"…the worst."* foregrounded a resistance to corporate logic and frustration with 'new management'.

Participant 4 sought validation of her professional academic status and mentioned that she was an academic board member and a member of senate, *"I sit on the academic board meeting, and I sit on senate…"*. In referring to this, she implied that being part of these forums was important as it was at these forums that she could represent the voice of the professional academic. However, the irony was that she discovered that decisions were already made before the meetings, "*but there I got a feeling that the decisions have already been made.* She experienced these meetings as a mockery and a perfect example of the erosion of collegiality and the professional academic voice. Her explanation implied that the meetings served as a window dressing rehearsal to create the illusion for the rest of the institution's staff members, particularly the academic staff, that the decisions were made inclusively. Participant 4 continued to explain that the most significant change for her was the undermining of the academic as professional and the reduction of their professional status "…*biggest change for me as a lecturer is as if our status as professionals has gone lower and lower in rank …"*. She highlighted how the shift in governance was to blame for this as all management positions were invaded by individuals governing with corporate logic "…*business decided to take up all the management positions."*. She questioned this corporate logic, "…*does that even make sense?"*. Questioning the logic of management further highlighted the inherent nature of academic logic grounded in an ethos of collaboration and collegiality.

> *"Another thing is a decision gets made at top level, but the practicality is not necessarily possible. Workwise I would say it impacts on your performance, so you miss deadlines. Sometimes it does create a lot of extra work." .* [Participant 12 Line 12-15]

Participant 12's description of how decisions were made by management overlapped with Participant 1's explanation of management's ignorance when it came to making decisions regarding academic matters, *"Another thing is a decision gets made at the top level, but the practicality is not necessarily possible."*. Participant 12's reference to *"…top level…"* highlighted a deliberate exclusion of the academic voice which she associated with a negative outcome as she questioned *"…the practicality…"* of the decisions. She explained how the unrealistic decisions directly impacted the work of academics and their performance. This she meant potentially created more work for the academic, "…w*orkwise I would say it impacts on your performance, so you miss deadlines. Sometimes it does create a lot of extra work."*. Participant 12's account confirmed her underestimation of the adeptness of management in making decisions regarding the academic work environment. There was a sense that in questioning the adeptness of management in making decisions, she revealed a distrust in the decisions that management made.

> *"Nobody is really listening to you, they don't really see you, so you become a bit despondent. I think you reach a stage where it is like you know I won't speak to management because it is not going to make a difference."* [Participant 6 line 45-48]

Participant 6 described how she experienced that management did not recognise her as a professional, *"Nobody is listening to you, they don't really see you…"*. There was a sense of disillusionment. She went on to describe how the feelings of being marginalised and excluded led to disengagement between her and management, "*I think you reach a*

stage where it is like you know I won't speak to management because it is not going to make a difference.". It was clear that she felt that no contribution she made would be taken seriously or into account when decisions were made.

> *"It is just about what the top management says, it is not about the lecturer... for example, they get opinions from us, but my opinion does not count… They are just telling me... and it felt like I didn't have a say. Everything is about what the managers are saying. It is our reality; you just have to accept it and move on."* [Participant 15 Line 10-11 & 14-15]

Participant 15 also described how she experienced a shift in how academics were managed. She talked about how management was making all the decisions, and though academics were asked for their opinions, it was just pretentious as, in the end, it was about what they (i.e., management) decided, *"It is just about what the top management says, it is not about the lecturer... ... for example, they get opinions from us, but my opinion does not count… They are just telling me... and it felt like I didn't have a say."*. Her account indicated that she felt deeply dismayed. She described how she experienced new management as functioning in a hierarchical structure and that she was at the bottom level of the structure. She seemed to struggle with the idea, "*They are just telling me... to me it felt like I don't have a say. Everything is about what the managers are saying."*. The findings indicated that Participant 15 was feeling disillusioned and that she had trouble reconciling corporate logic with academic rationale. However, there was a sense that she accepted the decisions made by new management as she explained how she had no choice but to accept the change, *"…it is our reality you just have to accept it and move on."* For Participant 15 it appeared that not being able to constructively share in and contribute to the decision-making processes thus, not being included, translated into a yielding experience and an acceptance of what she cannot control. One got the sense that accepting the change was a

bargaining chip to reduce her anxieties around the decisions. Her acceptance could also be linked to job security.

> *"There are decisions that high up top management make; for example, your direct line manager will agree to without consulting you…you don't like it, but there is nothing you can do."* [Participant 18 Line 13-15]

Participant 18's experience of the shift in how academics were being managed was similar to that of Participant 15. She also referred to a hierarchical structure and described how decisions were made following a top-down approach, *"There are decisions that high up top management make, for example, your direct line manager will agree to without consulting you...*". In referring to her line manager agreeing to decisions made on her behalf, she alluded that this top-down decision-making approach was a calculated strategy to exclude the academic voice. She experienced this exclusion as unfavourable and implied that the academic as a professional should have collective freedom to influence decisions made, "*…you don't like it…"*. As Participant 15, in the end, it appeared that Participant 18 also felt that she had no choice but to accept that she had to subject herself to the decisions made by 'new management, "…*but there is nothing you can do."*. There appeared to be a passive resistance in her voice but, at the same time, a sense of a focus on surviving the changing work environment and job security.

Personal Experiential Theme Three: Lack of Communication and Transparency

This personal experiential theme overlapped with the previous experiential theme as participants continued to describe how they felt marginalised and disenfranchised as stakeholders in higher education institutions. In this theme, they ascribed their experience of being excluded to a lack of communication and transparency in the decision-making

strategies of management. In other words, decisions that initiated change lacked transparency or were not communicated to them. In the description of their experiences, they questioned the logic behind the decisions made and highlighted the role that the shift in governance and the new hierarchical structure of a top-down approach to communication played. This overarching personal experiential theme was indicative of feelings of frustration, disillusionment, and scepticism.

> *"So, I try to be a positive person in my daily life and with all the changes I feel that the communication about the change is not so transparent as it should be – that affects my motivation level and how I would want to approach my work. I need to see the reasoning behind the decisions the work that I do. …"* [Participant 2 Line 10-14]

Participant 2 mentioned that he strived daily to have a positive outlook on life, *"So, I try to be a positive person in my daily life…"*. He commented how the changes were not communicated, and the decisions made were not transparent, *"…with all the changes, I feel that the communication about the change is not so transparent as it should be…"* He continued to explain how the lack in communication and ultimately the lack of transparency of decisions made, impacted his motivational level and attitude towards his work, "…*that affects my motivation level and how I would want to approach my work.* He appeared to be demotivated as a result of the lack of honest communication about the decisions and introduced changes. Drawing on academic logic, Participant 2 explained that he needed to understand why certain decisions were made, "*I need to see the reasoning behind the decisions of the work that I do. …"*. It would appear that participant 2's needs to understand the logic behind the decisions made played a key role in how he approached and considered the planning of his daily activities and his work overall. This finding suggested that not knowing why the changes were made was a constraint that directly impacted his feelings of value and attitude towards his work.

“What changed was that there are a lot of decisions made which I feel has a direct impact on the lecturers, but the decisions are not communicated to them, I think in the mind of management it is like Oh! it has been dealt with, but it has not been dealt with on ground level. I think the biggest challenge and it remains the biggest challenge is communication. It is a huge problem, and it frustrates me because, I am a person that do not operate if I am not communicated to appropriately. You made a decision, but have you properly communicated this to everybody? The fact that colleagues are not informed makes them not feel part of and not valued. It is very difficult to promote change in an environment if you yourself does not understand why the change...”
[Participant 14 34-42]

Participant 14 talked about how decisions that were made were not communicated and how this directly impacted them. *"What changed was that there are many decisions made which I feel has a direct impact on the lecturers, but the decisions are not communicated to them…"*. Participant 14 explained that management made decisions in isolation without acknowledging academics, *"I think in the mind of management it is like Oh! it has been dealt with, but it has not been dealt with on ground level."*. Participant 14's description of her experience implied that management intentionally withheld communication from academics about why the changes were needed. The lack of communication was problematic for Participant 14 and a source of frustration, *"I think the biggest challenge, and it remains the biggest challenge, is communication. It is a huge problem, and it frustrates me…"*. She asserted that not receiving communication regarding the changes made her resist the changes, *"I am a person that does not operate if not communicated to me appropriately."* She reinforced her need to feel included by stressing the point of the lack of communication and how this marginalised the academic. Participant 14 further explained that not being included and not receiving communication caused academics to feel rejected and overlooked, *"You made a decision, but have you properly communicated this to everybody? The fact that colleagues are not informed makes them not feel part of and not*

valued.". She said that if academics did not understand the logic behind the change, it would be difficult for them to accept the change, *"It is very difficult to promote change in an environment if you yourself does not understand why the change..."*. *..."*. There was a strong sense of unease around the lack of communication of the changes and the logic behind the decisions made. Further, Participant 14's narrative implied a resistance to the changes.

> *"It really does feel that it is a very big hierarchy and communication becomes difficult because it is a process of filtering through. You know by the time the change gets to you, it has filtered through a few levels, which means even if you ask a question regarding the change, they are not in a position to answer your questions and transparency lacks. I think middle management is not always in a place to give answers because top management do not always give clear guidance. Not having that transparency is hectic for me."* [Participant 19 Line 14-21]

Participant 19 described a top-down approach to how the changes were communicated to the academics and the rest of the staff. She explained a process whereby the communication was filtered down through more than one level in the hierarchal structure and experienced this filtering down of communication as problematic, *"It really does feel that it is a very big hierarchy and communication becomes difficult because it is a process of filtering through."*. She felt that by the time the information about the changes reached her (i.e., as an academic), the message was lost, and blamed the hierarchal structure of communication as she claimed that it was not possible to ask questions or get clarity, *"You know by the time the change gets to you, it has filtered through a few levels, which means even if you ask a question regarding the change, they are not in a position to answer your questions."*. She explained that this was because the individual who shared the information only knew part of the answer (i.e., knowledge) to questions one might have. Thus, they could not always answer questions or provide clarity around the changes. Her explanation suggested that the hierarchical structure was the vehicle for communication that operated in

levels of exclusivity. Her opinion was that not all information was shared with all levels in the hierarchy. In her opinion, this "*secrecy*" around who may know what created tension and uncertainty. It would appear that she defended middle management's position in the hierarchy and, at the same time, used this explanation to emphasise the control and power of top management. This was reflected in the extract, "…. *they are not in a position to answer your questions and transparency lacks. I think middle management is not always in a place to give answers because top management does not always give clear guidance*.". The inner tension Participant 19 experienced because of the lack of communication and not knowing was captured in her statement, "*Not having that transparency is hectic for me."*. It would seem that the tension stemmed from when asking questions, only partial answers were received, that in turn only led to confusion.

> *"There is no good communication. It is really a problem. It leaves room for grapevine talk because the moment that people are not sure there is a lot of what ifs, did you hear this and that… and that to me is the worst thing of change."* [Participant 9 Line 7-10]

The lack of good communication was central to Participant 9's experience of the change as a shift in governance. To her, the impact of a lack of communication was that others (i.e., staff) would fill in the gaps with their interpretations and perceptions. This was evident in the phrase, *"There is no good communication. It is really a problem. It leaves room for grapevine talk..."*. She explained that when individuals did not have the information they needed, they would start to feel unsure and would rely on their perceptions and interpretations, coming up with their conclusions (i.e., sometimes incorrect or skewed conclusions), "…*the moment that people are not sure there is a lot of what ifs, did you hear this and that…"*. What Participant 9, in essence, highlighted was that a lack of communication and transparency left the door open for own interpretations and the spread of incorrect information or rumours, causing uncertainty and confusion amongst staff.

"I am somebody that are very organised, I want to know what the strategy is, how will it be implemented, you can't just do it haphazardly… so definitely communicate*, how you will be affected by it so that you can just prepare yourself for it."* [Participant 6 Line 27-31]

Participant 6 described herself as an organised person. Like Participant 2, Participant 6 drew on rational thinking as she explained her need for understanding the strategy(s) of how the changes will be implemented, "*I want to know what the strategy is, how will it be implemented…"* and how it will affect her, "*how you will be affected by it."*. She commented that it was unacceptable to implement changes without communication, "…*you can't just do it haphazardly…"*. She used her description of being an organised, rational person to support her opinion of why changes should be communicated. She also explained how this would support putting her strategies in place to cope with the change. Like participant 19, participant 6 also perceived herself as an organised person, and it appeared that not knowing how the changes would be implemented or impact her was a source of tension for Participant 6. Being informed and prepared was thus important for Participant 6.

"… I hate it when people play games with you… they know about all the changes that is going to take place and then one day you wake-up and then okay this is the changes that are going to take place. I feel it is unfair." [Participant 17 Line 7-10]

A sense of frustration and being ambushed was apparent in Participant 17's account as she described how the changes were announced without any communication or forewarning that it would take place and what it entailed, *"… and then one day you wake-up and then okay this is the changes that are going to take place."*. She described how those in positions of management knew what changes they would want to implement but that they did not share their decisions with the academics (i.e., or other staff), "*… they know about all the changes that is going to take place and then one day you wake-up and then okay this is*

the changes…" . There was a sense that she perceived management was deliberately not communicating the decisions, forcing academics to just accept the changes. This seemed to annoy Participant 17 as she accused those in management that they exercised not communicating the changes as a strategy to exclude academics from the decision-making processes. She compared this to playing games, *"… I hate it when people play games with you…"*. Her feelings of annoyance with management spilled over as she described the lack of communication as an unfair practice, *"I feel it is unfair."*. Thus, the lack of transparency and communication caused Participant 17 to feel marginalised and devalued as an academic.

Group Experiential Theme Two: Change as Intensification Workload

Central to the second group's experiential theme of how participants experienced change was the experience of an increase in their workload. According to the participants, their workload changed because of the shift in how the institution was governed by new management. They described the increase in their workload in terms of the expectation of new management linked to a lack of knowledge and logic regarding how to govern higher education institutions. They directly linked the latter to increased administrative tasks and further highlighted how working longer hours split their time.

Personal Experiential Theme One: The Ignorance of Management

In this personal experiential theme, participants blamed the ignorance of new management for creating unnecessary administrative work because they did not understand how to manage the complexities of academic work. They meant this placed an extra burden on them that was disproportionate to their academic responsibilities, such as teaching and research.

"There is a big change that started with new management coming in, things they want us to do, sometime doubles the administrative work, it is not well thought out…they have absolutely no idea what is going on in our workplace, they are enforcing a lot of administration on us that was not thought out by someone that works in an academic environment. Daily…time…eating away at my time making me fill in weird forms sitting in meetings that do not concern me and has no bearing on what I actually do from day to day." [Participant 1 Line 2-4 & 20-21]

Participant 1 experienced an increase in administration under the governance of new management. She blamed this on the ignorance of new management and their unrealistic expectations "…*things they want us to do, it sometimes doubles the, it is not well thought out…they have absolutely no idea what is going on in our workplace"*. Thus, Participant 1 associated the intensification of her administrative workload directly with her perception that management did not understand the complexities of the academic environment. The word *"enforcing"* emphasised how she felt academics had no choice and could not say no to the increased administrative workload. In her opinion, if someone made decisions from a stance using academic logic, she would not have been caught up in this dilemma *"that was not thought out by someone that works in an academic environment."*. She continued to explain that because of the ignorance of management, it also became more challenging to manage her time, *'Daily…time…eating away at my time…"*. She perceived the activities and tasks they had to do as pointless, which further emphasised her irritation with management *"…making me fill in weird forms sitting in meetings that do not concern me and has no bearing on what I actually do from day to day."*. The recurrent reference to the ignorance of new management and how the decisions they made impacted her administrative workload captured the essence of Participant 1's experience that the intensification of academics' administrative workload was a reflection of new management's ineffectual management strategies of the academic environment.

" I feel there is all this expectation and there is this need you need to meet right now, but what do I as an employee get out of it? Definitely administration. Administration doing this, doing that. Going to meetings that I don't feel are very relevant. I mean I work in academics. I would be thinking why I am here when I could be doing something else." [Participant 8 Line 6-10]

Participant 8 experienced an increase in expectations from management. She explained how she felt there was an urgency in the expectation that they (i.e., academics) almost needed to meet instantaneously, *"I feel there is all this expectation, and there is this need you need to meet right now…"*. She questioned the increased expectation of management and how this would be balanced with incentivising employees, *"but what do I as an employee get out of it?"*. Her narrative here suggested that the intensification of workload was not balanced with some form of incentivising. Just mentioning this indicated that she felt that academics were being short-changed. Participant 8 also experienced a change in her administrative workload. How she explained it suggested that she constantly switched between tasks, "*Administration doing this, doing that…"*. She explained that as an academic, she was expected to attend meetings that she deemed as irrelevant to academics, in other words, her time was wasted, "*Going to meetings that I don't feel are very relevant. I mean, I work in academics. I would be thinking why I am here when I could be doing something else.".* She felt that as an academic, she should focus on academic output instead. This finding suggested that participant 8 believed that she had another role to play in the academic environment and that her time was wasted, for example, by attendings meetings when she should have been paying attention to her academic responsibilities such as teaching and research.

Personal Experiential Theme Two: The Infringement Workload on Personal and Family Time

Globally, long work hours and intensification have become common phenomena in higher education. Participants were especially receptive to the demands of their workload. Some participants described how they had to add hours to their typical workday to meet the needs of new management. There was a general perception among participants that they spend more time on administrative tasks at the expense of their personal lives, such as spending time with their families or having time for themselves. The following extracts were indicative of this:

> *"We experienced a lot more admin, everyone tries to do more and more. I am having to spend a lot more time here because I have more deadlines. I always feel like you have to be at the beck and call of the email system all the time, no matter whether you are teaching or you are on holiday."* [Participant 4 Line 27 - 30]

Like the previous participants, Participant 4 also experienced an increase in her administrative workload, *"We experienced a lot more admin…"*. She noted how there was a continuous intensification of the administrative workload that academics had to do, "…*everyone tries to do more and more.".* The phrase *"…more and more…"* alluded that more work was continuously added. She continued to explain how this influenced her schedule and how she spent more time at work to meet her "*deadlines"* that have increased. It also appeared that she felt pressured to consistently respond to her emails with a quick turnaround time, *"I always feel like you have to be at the beck and call of the email system all the time…"*. The manner in which she described this left the impression that this caused her to feel frustrated and also experience some anxiety. Her description was reminiscent of the role of a call centre agent. The feelings of frustration were evident as Participant 4

described that the assumed expectation impacted her teaching domain and her private domain, *"no matter whether you are teaching or you are on holiday."*

> *"It is a lot of administrative work. Currently for me my day starts at 4h00 in the morning…, a lot of administration work. With the accreditation for the CHE, we have a lot of admin adding up making sure that our credits are aligned with planners for next year."* [Participant 9 Line 1- 3]

Participant 9 experienced the change as an increase in her administrative workload. Her narrative made it evident that she struggled to manage her workload during regular workday hours. For Participant 9, starting her workday at 4h00 in the morning bought her some extra time. Thus, it was evident that she began her workday outside her regular hours to manage her administrative workload. She repeated the phrase, "*it is a lot of administrative work…"* which was indicative that she felt she had too much work. To exacerbate the intensification of her administrative workload, she explained that the institution was also going through an accreditation audit from the regulatory body, the Council of Higher Education (CHE). From her explanation, it would seem that the accreditation audit placed an additional burden on her administrative workload, "W*ith the accreditation for the CHE, we have a lot of admin adding up making sure that our credits are aligned with planners for next year."* The analysis suggested that she was concerned about the time frame for the audit because there was a sense of urgency, as she mentioned that all the alignment had to be completed for the following year

> *"Your administrative workload is increasing the whole time, so you have to constantly adapt to your workload increasing and maybe not having as much time for your family or yourself, you constantly have to work. It is making it more difficult because things are promised, for example more privileges, bonuses but it keeps changing, So, it*

> *makes you feel a little negative because especially when they keep asking you to do extra, you just keep getting extra work."* [Participant 10 Line 32-41]

Participant 10 agreed with the previous participant that there was an intensification of their administrative workload and that this increase was continuous, *"Your administrative workload is increasing the whole time."*. Participant 10 explained that she experienced how she constantly had to adapt to the workload, "*You have to constantly adapt to your workload increasing…".* From her explanation, it can be derived that she directly linked the constant increase in her workload to the changes she experienced in her work environment. She further described experiencing how the intensification of her workload infringed on her personal and family time, "…*not having as much time for your family or yourself, you constantly have to work."*. From her narrative, it became clear that Participant 10 was disillusioned with management. She explained how they were promised to be incentivised for the increase in work, but that there was no commitment from management to honour this as they kept changing the goalposts, "*It is making it more difficult because things are promised, for example, more privileges, bonuses but it keeps changing…",* the phrase "…*it makes you feel a little negative…"* reflected Participant 10's discontent and distrust of management. She confirmed the finding of an intensification of administrative workload when she noted how management kept shifting their expectations, "…*they keep asking you to do extra; you just keep getting extra work."*. In repeating the phrase *"extra"*, it would appear that Participant 10 was of the opinion that the expectation of management was beyond the scope of academic work.

Group Experiential Theme Three: A Change in the Student Profile

Group experiential theme three focused on participants' experience of the changes they observed, and their perceptions linked to the current student profile. This group experiential theme explored participants' descriptions of their students and how they generally talked about the students in their classes. Their descriptions were broken down into four personal experiential themes: 1) academic entitlement; 2) the abdication from academic responsibility; 3) fees must fall linked to student expectation, and 4) responsibility linked to feelings of achievement. Important to note that the four personal experiential themes were reciprocal; for example, the abdications from academic responsibility alluded to perceived academic entitlement. Discernment was applied in presenting the findings in this section based on the key focus of the participants when talking about their students.

Personal Experiential Theme One: Academic Entitlement

“We took this course because we knew it was a Mickey Mouse course and now this new guy is giving us assignments!” – Three students complaining to the department chair. (Trout, 1997).

Academic entitlement is a universal term found in literature about student behaviour. Previous research has shown that students have unrealistic expectations of their lecturers and believe it was okay to blame the lecturer if they did not receive a good grade. They also expected their timetables to be flexible to accommodate their social life (Schaefer et al., 2013) and that lecturers should further accommodate their needs (Greenberger et al., 2008). Participants in this study confirmed what was found in the literature and supported the notion that students had unrealistic expectations from their lecturers and the higher education learning environment. The following extracts were particularly relevant:

"I think in SA the biggest change has been the attitude of students…students who come across with a high sense of entitlement and expectations that we will let them do what they want. From a lecturing standpoint, I think… it comes back to the motivations of students and the reasons why they are in tertiary education. [Participant 2 Line 1 – 6]

Participant 2 explained that, for him, the most significant change in the South African higher education context had been the changed attitude of students. He spoke about characteristics like a "…*high sense of entitlement…"*. There was an implicit suggestion that students think it was their right to make demands of their lecturers and an expectation that lecturers would comply with these demands. Participant 2 seemed to struggle with the idea that lecturers must give in to the demands of students. To make sense of this, he linked the sense of academic entitlement to student motivation. Participant 2 believed that students displayed characteristics of academic entitlement because of the shift in the motivation behind why they wanted to obtain a tertiary qualification, "…*reasons why they are in tertiary education."*. His explanation implied that students were interested in obtaining a qualification but unwilling to put in the effort.

"Changes in students from year to year, students, the lack of enthusiasm for knowledge that kills me and also their attitude of it's my right, their attitude of saying it's my right for you to give me information. I don't know the process that they expect to be able to receive that information, but their actions say because I am in your class and write your test I expect to pass. This has become worse and worse and worse. I find the entitlement very difficult to swallow, I am going to reiterate, attitude of entitlement and students just thinking it is a means to an end, it's not because I want it, it's my right, it is all entitlement and I find that very heart breaking." [Participant 5 Line 2-16]

The change experienced by Participant 5 was captured by her explanation of students' attitudes towards their academic work. From her explanation, one sensed that her experience was strongly influenced by her value and belief system from when she was a student. Early in the interview Participant 5 referred to a "…*lack of enthusiasm for knowledge…"* and metaphorically described how this "…kills her", accentuating her disapproval of their (i.e., the student's) attitude towards their academic work. Her description alluded to the fact that students abused their rights by highlighting how they did not care about the learning process but expected the lecturer to reward them for minimal effort, for example, attending her classes. Her dismay at this behaviour was reflected in the repetition of the word "*worse"* and a belief that students did not always behave like this, but that this sense of academic entitlement has become more prominent and visible over time, "*This has become worse and worse and worse."*. Participant 5 then summarised her description metaphorically by stating that this behaviour of students was "…*very difficult to swallow…"*. This description made it clear that she felt affronted by students' behaviour. Participant 5 referred to the "…*attitude of entitlement…"* of students and unequivocally stated that this behaviour did not support her perception of what a student's attitude should be. She used the word "…*reiterate…"* to stress her dismay with students' behaviour. Her text suggested that she strongly rejected this behaviour and attitude of students and that there was a strong incongruence between her perception and belief system, leaving no room for any form of legitimate attitudes of entitlement.

> *"I also noticed that students feel very entitled not always willing to work very hard to achieve… not all of them but is predominant something that I have picked up. Yes, that entitlement. I found that students need much more encouragement. I find that they very much used to group work and I assume that is from secondary level so they a little bit hesitant to act independently in class, so you kind of have to develop those skills and help them as well." [Participant 6 Line 7-16]*

Participant 6 also described how she observed entitlement attitudes in students, especially a lack of effort. She noted how she did not want to generalise the point, "*…not all of them…*" and it seemed as if Participant 6 was picking her words selectively when she explained that students did not want to put in the effort to achieve success. She explained how she observed that students needed *"…more encouragement…"*. In her meaning-making process, she explained that she experienced how students were used to group work and not working independently. She attributed this to teaching and learning strategies used at high school. She continued to explain that students needed to be taught how to work independently. It would seem that she thought the lecturer had an active role to play in developing the skill of working independently in students. Her explanation implied that the lack of this skill could be why students displayed attitudes of academic entitlement. Though Participant 6 did not explicitly link attitudes of academic entitlement to self-esteem, her text suggested that if students were not used to working independently, it might partly explain their entitlement behaviour. Her account alluded to a dependence on other group members to help the individual to obtain good grades. In other words, working independently meant they would have to take responsibility and accountability for their learning which in personal experiential theme two was highlighted as something students were shifting.

Personal Experiential Theme Two: Abdication from Academic Responsibility

Another personal experiential theme highlighted by Participants 10 and 12 was a shift in academic responsibility. The reasons they provided for the shift in academic responsibility were one of how students abdicated from their academic responsibility. They linked this behaviour of academic entitlement and the culture shift to the changed higher education learning environment. They meant new management held academics (i.e., lecturers) accountable for student learning. The following extracts were indicative of this:

"I sometimes find with the students the more information you give them the less they work, for instance with every week's lecture I put the PowerPoint up on my LMS (learning management system) I give them keynotes, I give them quizzes in class and sometimes I feel it make them a little more lazy because they just sit back and wait for everything to happen. They are not proactive studying the chapter in advance or going through the case study if you know it and ask it. So, I think there is a very fine line between helping the students and actually spoon feeding them…it feels as if your students pass rates are reflected on you which isn't the case because you can only do as much as you can." [Participant 10 Line 9 -22]

Participant 10 described how she did more and more to support her students, but by doing more, they did less. Her explanation implied that they were disengaged from their academic work. She provided examples of what she did to support and motivate the students, only to observe how they became more reliant on her to do the work and slipping into a passive role. There seemed to be a close link between her taking on the responsibility for the students' learning and their expectation. What became evident was that Participant 10 was unaware that by providing all the extra support to students (i.e., uploading PowerPoints that served as notes to the Learning Management System LMS; providing "keynotes" and quizzes), she was reinforcing the behaviour of disengagement. When she explained how she expected students to come to class prepared, "…*they are not proactive studying the chapter in advance or going through the case study…"*, it was as if she discovered for the first time that in providing the extra support, it did not necessarily lead to students taking responsibility for their learning. This was evident from the phrase, "*I think there is a very fine line between helping the students and actually spoon-feeding them."*. It appeared that in response to this discovery, Participant 10 defended herself by emphasising that lecturers, too, work with limitations. Her explanation suggested that she felt it was unfair for lecturers to be held accountable for *"…students pass rates…"* as there were other variables to consider. Participant 10 noted how she experienced that lecturers were held

accountable for students' pass rates; however, she did not explicitly mention new management; her text did imply that lecturers were performance tracked on students' pass rates. Interestingly, she defended the lecturers' position by pointing out that they work within limitations. It was unclear if she referred to student limitations, such as being under-prepared, lecturer limitations, such as own abilities, or institutional limitations such as policies.

> *"I think a lot more responsibility in making sure that your students understand the work which it wasn't in the past. You are much more accountable for student learning. So that adds to a lot more stress because it feels as if your students pass rates are reflected on you. It is not the students' responsibility anymore, but it is the lecturer's responsibility. If the students are not in class, then you are asked why are the students not in class? So, I think that has been a big move that I have felt over the years… The students just expect us to give everything to them. They almost feel that they deserve it, it is owed to them. You need to be much more accountable for their knowledge that they (students) got."* [Participant 16 Line 1 -6 & 16-23]

Participant 16 described how she experienced that it became the lecturers' responsibility to ensure students were engaging with the learning material. She experienced how lecturers were being held accountable for student performance. The phrases "…*which it wasn't in the past*." and *"I think that has been a big move that I have felt over the years…"* highlighted that this was a key change in students. She described how the lecturer became the critical role player accountable for students attaining academic success, "*You are much more accountable for student learning."*. Like Participant 10, Participant 16 also expressed how she felt new management held academics (i.e., lecturers) accountable and responsible for students' pass rates, '…*it feels as if your students pass rates are reflected on you…"*. Though not explicitly stated, Participant 16 further expressed how she felt new management also held academics (i.e., lecturers) accountable and responsible for students'

class attendance, "*If the students are not in class, then you are asked why the students are not in class?",* her description implied that new management held lecturers more accountable for student attendance than the students themselves. The implication seemed to be that class attendance was believed to play a role in academic performance. Therefore, it was the lecturer's responsibility to ensure that students attended class. Such feelings seemed to reinforce her belief that there was a reorganisation of academic responsibility, which was reciprocal of the previous experiential theme of academic entitlement. This was evidenced in her description of how students expected their lecturers "…*to give everything to them…"* and that they believed that it was their right to be 'served' by their lecturers and that they deserved it, *"They almost feel that they deserve it, it is owed to them."*. The participant repeatedly mentioned how it became the lecturer's responsibility to ensure that learning took place. It was possible that Participant 16 felt disillusioned and overwhelmed by this expectation placed on academics, evidenced when she noted how this became a source of stress for her.

Personal Experiential Theme Three: #feesmustfall linked to Student Expectation

In 2015 and 2016, student-led protests known as "*fallism*" or the "#F*eesMustFall* "protests dominated the South African higher education landscape and emphasised that higher education was still not accessible and affordable to all South Africans. The drive of the protest was not just to highlight the affordability of higher education but also to advocate for a decolonised higher education system and to redress racial and gender inequalities (Langa, 2017; Butelli & Le Bruyns, 2017). When referring to the changes in this study that participants experienced, they also talked about the *"# FeesMustFall "*protests, which inexplicitly linked to the student profile. They particularly highlighted how the protests intensified student entitlement behaviour. The following extracts evidence of their accounts:

"Definitely the students who started with me in 2008 were very passionate about studying and knew it was hard and difficult to get into, but these days specially with the #feesmustfall it is as if they have that entitlement attitudes which was not there in 2008." [Participant 10 Line 4 – 8]

Participant 10 compared students in her class in 2008 with her current students (i.e., 2016). She contextualised how her 2008 students were "…*passionate about studying and knew it was hard and difficult to get into…"*. Comparing her current students with her 2008 students, she describes experiencing them as having "…*entitlement attitudes…"* which she believed was not there in 2008. She attributed the changes she observed in the students' attitudes to the *"# FeesMustFall "*protests. Her description suggested that although students' attitudes did change and they were displaying attitudes of entitlement, the *"# FeesMustFall "*protests escalated this behaviour of entitlement. It was unclear from her description if she had a comprehensive understanding of the underlying issues and challenges represented by the *"#FeesMustFall "*protests.

"More demanding students than they use to be. There are quite a few with the fees must fall demanding free education, it does affect the institution and then in turn the staff member because in terms of bonuses and that we don't know what is to come." [Participant 11 Line 6 – 9]

Participant 11 talked about how students were *"More demanding…"*. Participants 10 and 11 also conceptualised the *"# FeesMustFall "*protests as demanding "…*free education…"*. She raised how she was concerned about the implications this would have for institutions, but more so for staff members. Her explanation suggested she was particularly concerned about the impact on staff members' job security and monetary compensation. Though she referred to "…*the staff member…"* there was a sense that she was alluding to the impact it held for herself highlighting her fear. This seemed to reinforce feelings of uncertainty for participant

11 "…*we don't know what is to come…"*. Both participants seemed to refer to the *"#FeesMustFall "*protests as linked to economic and access narratives. It was unclear if they were also referring to the protest as a social movement wanting to redress issues, such as the decolonisation of education and addressing racial and gender inequalities.

Personal Experiential Theme Four: Responsibility linked to the Lack of Student Academic Skills

As the landscape of higher education institutions changed and became more complex, lecturers' approaches to their teaching practices were challenged. For one, the way knowledge was produced has shifted from lecturer-centred approaches, recognised as expert-led practices, to student-centred approaches with a greater emphasis on teaching and how learning takes place (Le Grange, 2010). This theme reciprocated the previous personal experiential theme: abdication from academic responsibility. However, in this personal experiential theme, participants explained how students' lack of academic skills became the lecturer's problem and responsibility. The following extracts were evidence of how participants talked about how, in the absence of students' academic skills, they were responsible for student success:

> *"The students themselves is a major change. I have first and second years, but I found with the first years they lack a lot of basic skills especially with communication and presentation skills. So, there is a lot of extra work that you need to put in when it comes to, for example, getting students ready for presentations and assignments."*
> [Participant 6 Line 1 – 7]

Participant 6 described how students changed, and she mainly referred to their academic skills. She made a distinction between first- and second-year students and explained how she found that first-year students especially lacked the basic

academic skills needed in higher education, more specifically, communication and presentation skills. She seemed to link the lack of student academic skills to lecturer responsibility, emphasising how it was the lecturer's responsibility to make every effort to develop the academic skills students needed. In highlighting this, it would seem that Participant 6 felt it was her responsibility to "fix" what was broken and pave the way for students to succeed. This was made explicit by the participant who noted, *"…there is a lot of extra work that you need to put in… getting students ready for presentations and assignments."*. This highlighted a sense of agency and emphasised Participant 6's perception of being the responsible entity for student success which, in a way, exempted the student from taking responsibility for their development.

> *"I think we have to work harder to get students up to where we need to get them. I am very proud the fact that as a faculty we still get that going, it is tough, it is not always easy there is a lot of students that battle but I am proud of the fact that we do get there but that is definitely something that has changed."* [Participant 14 Line 1 – 5]

Participant 14 also seemed to link lecturer responsibility to student lack of essential academic skills, emphasising how lecturers "…*have to work harder to get students up to where we need to get them.".* Like Participant 6, Participant 14 also seemed to take responsibility upon herself to develop and improve the student's academic skills in order for them to benefit from the learning process. She reflected how this was not an easy task as students struggle, but at the same time, the tone in which she spoke suggested she made a personal investment in her students. She seemed proud that she and other lecturers in the faculty had to work harder to get students to the point of competence to benefit from the learning experience. Her referral of being *"…proud…"* reinforced the idea that she felt a sense of achievement as a lecturer. What was interesting was how she transferred her

sense of being proud to other lecturers in the faculty as she used the word *"we"* as a collective.

Group Experiential Theme Four: The integration of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in Higher Education Learning Environments

Integrating information and communication technologies (ICT) in higher education learning environments required adjustment and adaptation from lecturers. This group experiential theme concerned participants' perception of their ability to integrate information and communication technologies (ICT) and use technological devices in the classroom. There was an overall sense that they felt they lacked proper training and development, which led them to feel unsure, vulnerable and self-doubt. Participants also voiced their concern about how integrating information and communication technologies (ICT) impacted the development of students' academic skills. It would seem that they exercised an 'ability bias as resistance to adapting to the use of ICT. This group experiential theme was divided into two personal experiential themes: questioning capability and adeptness in the use of ICT and embedded traditional teaching perceptions.

Personal Experiential Theme One: Questioning capability and adeptness in the use of ICT

This theme reflected participants' sense of feeling insecure regarding integrating technology as a teaching and learning tool in the classroom. Participants spoke about feelings of inadequacy and self-doubt when it came to the use of technology. It was not so much the use of the hardware (i.e., computers and other devices) but more about questioning their ability to use technology as a methodology to support their pedagogies. This personal experiential theme consisted of two concepts – insecurity in the application of

technology and a lack of sufficient training and development. The concept of insecurity concerned participants' anxiety around the unfamiliarity of integrating ICT to support teaching and learning in the classroom. This was highlighted in the below extracts from participants' text:

> *"I am less confident in what I do because when I am using technology in the classroom, I am not confident, I question myself. I am less sure of myself. I was brought up relying on myself and not being able to blame technology so therefore I had control. Now I look as if I am not capable which is partially true of using all these fancy technologies."* [Participant 5 Line 16 – 30]

Participant 5 voiced how she felt less confident when she used technology in the classroom, and the intensity of her self-doubt was reflected in phrases such as "…*I question myself…"; "…less sure of myself…"* and "…*I am not capable…"*. In acknowledging that she felt less confident when using technology, it became evident that Participant 5 also had some resistance to the use of technology as she talked about how she would rather rely on herself because then she felt in control of her classes. Technology was thus portrayed as unreliable and something that took away her control. Participant 5 insinuated that technology was sometimes used to shift blame for competence. She further stressed the point by blaming technology for making her look incompetent, "*…I look as if I am not capable…"* but she then admits that this was *"…partially true…"*. Of interest was how she used the phrase "…*these fancy technologies…"* in a demeaning manner while admitting that she was finding it challenging to use technology in the classroom. This articulation highlighted her feelings of insecurity and suggested that she was not receptive to using technology.

> *"…probably one of the changes that was harder for me to accept was when technology was introduced, when we incorporated the use of tablets and projectors not just talk and chalk anymore. I do not think it was properly introduced. Some of the academics*

did not necessarily have the background and training to properly use the tools and I think then when you stand in front of a class you know you don't feel as confident as you are supposed to, you maybe start feel more incompetent, but then they invest more in the training which has helped a lot and now we are more confident we can easily help students." [Participant 6 Line 16 – 25]

Participant 6 described how she found it difficult to accept the infiltration of technology as a methodology used in the classroom. She specifically mentioned the integration of *"…tablets and projectors…"* that replaced the traditional use of the blackboard. Participant 6 felt that the change to using tablets and projectors in the classroom was not introduced properly. In her explanation, she emphasised that lecturers lacked training and development on how to use these devices to support teaching and learning. She spoke in the third person when she highlighted how academics specifically lacked the knowledge to use the devices. Though not explicitly, Participant 6 compared the familiarity of teaching relying on themselves to teaching with technological devices. She explained how lecturers felt insecure and incompetent, not knowing how to use the devices. Participant 6 continued to explain how there was an intervention in the form of training and development that led to a substantive change in building confidence. She noted how, after the training and development, they could *"…easily help students…"* and her text suggested that being empowered in using these devices helped as they were more on par with students when it came to the use of the devices. Thus, Participant 6 seemed to think that lecturers can bridge the technological gap with proper training and development in using technological devices.

"The systems, I had to get to understand the systems. It is difficult when you cannot cope. I am a slow learner. I know some of the things, but I just need to take time to learn. You are just being given the files; you are just being given the laptop nothing… no communication. I would say that orientation or induction it lacked. Yes, we did

attend training, but I have never used the system so to me it is a challenge."

[Participant 15 Line 2 – 8]

Participant 15 referred to *"The systems…"* and explained how she had to learn to *"…understand the systems."*. She explained how she was thrown in the deep end "*You are just being given the files; you are just being given the laptop nothing… no communication…"* She referred to herself as a "…slow learner…" who needed time to learn new things. It would seem that Participant 15 felt overwhelmed, which was evidenced in her statement that she struggled to cope. Though she used the word "*communication*", it seemed that she was referring to training and development as she explained how there was a lack of orientation and induction to using the systems. She then contradicted herself by stating that she still found it challenging to grasp the systems when she did attend training. The reference to being a slow learner and the contradiction in highlighting the lack of orientation and induction followed by, "*we did attend training"* suggested that Participant 15 experienced contradictory emotions around her lack of knowledge, her perception of herself as a slow learner and her experience of a lack in communication and induction/orientation. There was a sense that she felt she was not supported in adapting to the use of new systems, and at the same time, there was a certain expectation of output. This appeared to be closely linked to feelings of uncertainty and self-doubt.

Personal Experiential Theme Two: Embedded traditional teaching perceptions

This personal experiential theme related to how participants articulated their concern about instructional technologies' impact on students' academic skills development.

"Black board, we did not have black board when I was a student, I don't know, there is more focus on teaching with technology and lesser focus on the old blackboard and chalk method of teaching. So, I guess a shift from the older ways to using technology,

the student is supposed to do the work and you are just there to facilitate but I think a student is still a student. Something that has frustrated me is that the new way of teaching is not working, we are dumbing our students down and that is what universities don't seem to get. We have all these changes and the day we are putting students into the workplace that do not have the skills and all in the name of money." [Participant 3 Line 1 – 6 and 19 - 23]

Participant 3 explained how blackboard (i.e., a learning management system) did not exist when he was a student. Interestingly, he used the phrase "*I don't know..."* this could imply that he disapproved of using information and communication technologies (ICT) as a teaching methodology, or it could imply that subjectively, he did know how to integrate information and communication technologies (ICT) as a teaching methodology. In describing his doubt about using information and communication technologies (ICT), it seemed that he was referring to the concept of using technology to transfer information. He described how the shift to the use of ICT in the classroom was meant to enhance self-directed student learning while the lecturer took on the role of facilitator. Evidently, he disagreed with this approach to teaching and learning. He used the word "*supposed"* to confirm that he did not believe this necessarily happened as he stated that "*a student is still a student…"* implying that the student still wanted to learn according to the *"…old blackboard and chalk method…"*. This comment suggested that Participant 3 still perceived students through a traditional lens where the lecturer was the critical role player in driving the learning process. Participant 3 also expressed frustration with using ICT as a teaching method, as he believed this was "…*dumbing…"* students down. This finding revealed a more profound resistance to using technology as a teaching methodology. To stress his point, Participant 3 highlighted how higher education institutions were making a mistake by abandoning traditional practices and noted how deploying "…*all these changes…"* only led to a de-skilling of students and placed them at risk for employability. By explicitly referring to the commodification of education (i.e., personal experiential theme one: being managed with a corporate lens), his description

alluded to the change of adopting ICT as a part of pedagogical practices as a corporate stunt that chose to make a profit over employable quality graduates.

> *"What I am seeing is that the more and more we are going towards technology the worse the student's ability to write is impacted. They cannot string a set of words together and it worries me horribly because in this big wide world out there is a time you going to have to write a report and if you are writing reports you have to reference. Students cannot reference and this is something that is upsetting me horribly because I can see it deteriorating from year to year the more, we use technology the skill of writing is disappearing. It makes me question management, it has changed my opinion of them, it has changed my personal respect for them. I do respect the position they're in, so therefore I will accept what they say but it doesn't mean that I think they are right."* [Participant 5 Line 16 – 30]

Participant 5 agreed with Participant 3 that using technology as a teaching methodology negatively impacted students' academic skill. She specifically emphasised the impact on academic writing and referencing skills. She used words like "*worries" and "horribly"* to voice her dismay and concern. The repetitive use of the word *"horribly"* reinforced the idea that not only did Participant 5 feel the use of technology as a teaching methodology was detrimental to the development of writing and referencing skills of students, but that she disagreed with the integration of ICT. This view was also asserted when she further highlighted how students "*…deteriorated from year to year…"* (i.e., their academic writing skills). She meant this would have implications for them in their workplace and implied that there would be gaps in their writing skills and that they would struggle to write correctly, for example, "…*having to write a report… to reference…"*. She blamed management for this reform and questioned the soundness of the decision. Her explanation further implied that ICT was forced onto lecturers. This was evidenced in the phrase, "*It makes me question management, it has changed my opinion of them, it has*

changed my personal respect for them.". It would appear that blaming management was a projection of a personal pedagogical dilemma she experienced and resistance to using ICT.

Both participants seemed to link the integration of ICT as a teaching methodology to having a negative impact on the development of students' academic skills. It appeared that their perceptions revolved around the changing role of the lecturer and a resistance to new constructivist approaches to teaching and learning compared to the traditional teacher-centred approaches. This was evidenced in Participant 3's text when he referred to "*I guess a shift from the older ways to using technology, the student is supposed to do the work, and you are just there to facilitate, but I think a student is still a student"* and in the text of Participant 5's referring to *"What I am seeing is that the more and more we are going towards technology the worse the student's ability to write is impacted."*.

Conclusion

This chapter provided an analysis that focused on how participants experienced and perceived the changes at the higher education institutions where they were employed. The findings highlighted four group experiential themes: 1) a shift in governance, 2) change as an intensification of workload, 3) a change in the student profile, and 4) the integration of information and communication technologies (ICT) in higher education learning environments. Within the analysis, similarities between participants lived experiences were brought to the fore, and the overlapping and interconnection of the personal experiential themes were highlighted. The next chapter discussed the findings and placed them within the existing literature.

Chapter Seven

Discussion

Overview of the Research Study

Globally there appeared to be a research interest in the transformation of higher education institutions and how they started to adopt corporate values and norms grounded in neoliberalism as an answer to the 21st-century challenges they experience, for example, globalisation, an increase in student numbers, a struggle for funding, and the infiltration of technology into the teaching and learning arena. On the other hand, research on how academics experienced and adapted to this corporatisation still needs to be clarified. A large portion of the literature talked about the corporatisation of higher education institutions grounded in neoliberalism and the impact this has on the academic work environment (Coady & Coady, 2000; Davies & Petersen, 2005; Deem & Brehony, 2005; Kolsaker, 2008; Abramov, 2012; Shepherd, 2018 and Levin et al., 2020). For example, the impact on the workload of academics and how their freedom and autonomy were compromised. However, there was a gap in the literature regarding the voice of the academic in the so-called "*academic trenches* " within a South African higher education context and their experiences of making sense of the changes.

This study aimed to explore how academics in a South African higher education context experienced the changes in the South African higher education work environment, how they responded to the changes, and how they coped with them.

When things are shifting and changing, a person could feel that certain demands are made of them with which they do not necessarily agree. This, in turn, can cause them to feel threatened and uncertain (Van den Heuvel et al., 2013). In general, globally, the academic

role was always closely tied to the central functions of higher education institutions and their traditional commitment to creating and disseminating knowledge. As discovered in the literature review, change in any work environment remains a challenge for these individuals who have to adapt to and embrace the changes (Coady & Coady, 2000; Davies & Petersen, 2005; Deem & Brehony, 2005; Kolsaker, 2008; Abramov, 2012; Shepherd, 2018 and Levin et al., 2020).

The study was grounded in a qualitative phenomenology approach, and 20 participant voices were explored using an Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis approach to the data. As an academic, the lived experiences of other academics in the data resonated with the researcher. When analysing the transcribed semi-structured interviews, the researcher was as objective as possible. However, due to the nature of the qualitative enquiry, inescapable feelings of concurrence were experienced and recognised during the interpretation of the data.

In the next section, a discussion of the findings of the insider voices was presented and placed within the earlier literature review and broader research context.

The following group experiential themes were identified when exploring the changes participants experienced in their work environments:

- A shift in governance.
- Change as the intensification of administrative workload.
- A change in the student profile.
- The integration of information and communication technologies (ICT) in higher education learning environments.

Discussion of the Changes Participants Experienced in Their Work Environments

Group Experiential Theme One: Change as a Shift in Governance

A key finding within this theme was how participants struggled to accept the managerial approaches to governance grounded in corporatism. Participants' experiences of change as a shift in governance aligned with existing literature (Coady & Coady, 2000; Davies & Petersen, 2005; Deem & Brehony, 2005; Kolsaker, 2008; Abramov, 2012; Shepherd, 2018 and Levin et al., 2020). Though there were distinctive ways in which participants experienced and articulated the shift in governance, what became clear was how they experienced the academic work environment as resembling the corporate environment *"The institution changed the way that we do things…"; "The biggest shift now is that we have become a corporate company."; "Ag, then there is this focus on numbers… it doesn't matter about the integrity of your discipline; it is all about numbers and money…you just have to produce."* Moreover, *"There is an academic side and the business side, and the business side seems to take more and more precedence over the academic side…".*

Levin et al. (2020, p.10) referred to the "*twin logic*" found in higher education institutions. On the one hand, academic logic embraced the ethos of scientific knowledge and commonality and functions as a norm system. While on the other, these institutions were increasingly being managed as corporate entities using corporate logic, also referred to as "neoliberal logic" (Levin et al., 2020, p.10). What was highlighted in the findings of this study was a conflict between the two. Participants described the governance strategy of management as a pervasive strategy to take over and get academia to adopt corporate values and norms, which underlined a compatibility challenge. There was a general perception that managerialists did not understand or value the traditions and logic of academia (Levin et al., 2020). These perceptions aligned with what was highlighted in the earlier literature review of how the rise of managerialism had shattered the traditional

systems that higher education institutions operated in and replaced them with bureaucratism (Olsen, 2004). Three personal experiential themes emerged from the data: 1) being managed with a corporate lens, 2) the erosion of collegiality by excluding the academic, and 3) a lack of communication and transparency.

Personal Experiential Theme One: Being Managed with a Corporate lens

Institutional rationality operated through legitimacy, which presupposed that the decisions and actions of the institution were aligned with the set of norms and values in the particular social environment (Suchman, 1995). Levin (et al., 2020. P.15) stated:

> We are concerned that a condition of colonisation by a neoliberal state of the university and academic actors has taken shape and threatens the autonomy of academics. We are concerned that these actors have internalised the rhetoric and values of a neoliberal regime (or state), rhetoric that appropriates the terms or tropes of academe (e.g., shared governance, the value of research to the nation, state, and internationally, and the public mission of the university) and rationalises economic and competitive behaviours as both necessities for and compatible with the academy.

Recent studies reporting on the status of the governance of higher education in South Africa were limited. The findings of this study wanted to extend and add to the literature. The findings revealed that the move to a more corporate governance model, thus deploying managerial strategies embedded in corporate logic, has made the higher education environment in South Africa demanding and restrictive for academics, with working conditions becoming increasingly less favourable. Traditionally individuals employed at higher education institutions, more specifically academia, relied on academic and institutional logic (Levin et al., 2020). Davis (2005, p. 4) stated that corporate logic "…undermines the very value and meaning of academic life…neoliberalism is turning us into people that we do not want to be.". Participants in this study confirmed this statement by

Davis. They talked about how they experienced the surveillance culture of managerialism, and increased control polarised them from their work environment. They felt disillusioned, which meant those in management were working on academics to align themselves with corporate objectives, *"…the business side seemed to take more and more precedence over the academic side...".* They further explained that they experienced how the traditional values and norms of academia were being rejected and how this directly impacted them. They described feelings of disconnect and alienation: *"…it is all these rules and regulations and stuff; what I am feeling is that there is a huge disconnect."*. Participant 1, in particular, used the word "*colonised*" when describing the behaviour of new management, *"It is as if new management say we are going to colonise you…."*.

Olsen (2002) argued that managerialism undermined the professional academic autonomy of lecturers, dumbing down their role to that of skilled labourers. Levin (et al., 2020) agreed with Olsen stating that there was a conflict between academic and neoliberal logic that was closely linked to corporate logic. The findings in this study extend the literature by showing how academia working in higher education institutions in South Africa experienced the descendants of managerialism as frustrating and demoralising (Dowling-Hetherington, 2013), *"…for me, the most frustrating process in the change is that we just sit here like little minions, and they treat us like little minions, they just make my life more difficult; it disengages me immediately."*. Thus, participants compared being managed with a corporate lens to an emergent dystopia.

A second finding linked to this theme, perhaps one of the more significant highlighted by participants, was the subjection to onerous regulations, policies, and activities. Participants explained how they perceived management to have no understanding of the complexities of the academic environment *"…they don't understand … the business doesn't understand the academic side, and somehow, they are in charge of all the decisions, and they don't ever ask."*. John Henry Newman gave a series of lectures outlining the goals of

the "University" and what knowledge should be about in 1852. To Newman, “University” was about expanding understanding and to be among individuals for whom learning and critical thinking mattered. It was about the pastoral journey between teacher and student (Anderson, 2010). The professionalisation of the scholarship created accepted value and norm systems that provided academics with the right to inquire and instil traditions of being accessible and independent thinkers. The historical and conventional desire of professional academics to pursue a scholarship of teaching and discovery independent of a constricting culture of intensified surveillance, regulation and performance paradigm was then understood (Coady & Coady, 2000; Davies & Petersen, 2005; Anderson, 2010). Further to this, the current study reaffirmed the findings of various other studies stating that the development of a more regulated managerial approach and a perverse audit culture was alienating and marginalising the academic from their work environment *"…it is all these rules and regulations and stuff, what I am feeling is that there is a huge disconnect…"* (Davies & Petersen, 2005; Dowling-Hetherington, 2013; Dill, 2015; Levin et al., 2020).

Academics who have been in the corridors of higher education institutions longer would be more prone to experiencing the shift in governance as a restriction of their freedom and a loss of their autonomy. Interestingly, this study's findings were that participants who have only lectured for four years also described how they experienced their work environment as an intrusion of traditional academic territory by 'new management’.

A third finding that participants linked to change as a shift in governance was how the emphasis on higher education institutions as enterprises impacted how they were being governed. Participants' descriptions emphasised how corporate norms and values, such as the ethos of enterprise, became the new parameters that defined the academic environment by which they were being managed (Deem & Brehony, 2005). Stilwell (2003) referred to the commodification of higher education. The need for transformation and available funding in South Africa opened the door for those in management to look to and embrace the

neoliberal inception as a solution to meet their goals of throughput and demand. This was echoed in Participant 3's concern around the shifted focus to student numbers and profit and forcing academics to embrace this *"Ag; then there is this focus on numbers… it doesn't matter about the integrity of your discipline; it is all about numbers and money…you just have to produce."*. He highlighted how management expected academics to produce graduates and make a profit while compromising academic ethos and integrity. Globally there seemed to be a drive for output statistics which placed higher education institutions under enormous pressure (Davies & Petersen, 2005). This propelled them to enrol any students that could afford the fees, including pursuing students with marketing campaigns making promises. (Coady & Coady 2000).

Professor Habib (2015, p.1), the vice-chancellor of Wits University, stated the following:

> We are at a strategic moment in our history. We have to confront issues of student fees and the underfunding of the sector at a time when we have unprecedented levels of student activism at all our universities. The only resolution for a decline in student fees is for it to be matched by increased subsidies from the state or through new partnerships with the banks.

The lived experiences as described by participants were consistent with what was found in the literature that being inducted into the new corporate organisational culture that enforced the tracking of performance using intensified systems of surveillance has de-professionalised and eroded the status of the academic (Mayo, 2009; McCarthy et al., 2016; Levin et al., 2020). This, in turn, has brought about feelings of being manipulated, disillusionment, and a disconnect from their work environment. Further to this, they felt as if they were being reduced to skilled labourers who could be replaced at any time *"I feel that we are pawns and we are just shifted, but you are also dispensable, and you simply could*

just be moved off the board if that is needed. We are being used as a means to an end, which is bad for me. I don't like that.".

Personal Experiential Theme Two: The Erosion of Collegiality by Excluding the Academic

In this personal experiential theme, participants experienced a sense of exclusion and marginalisation from the decision-making processes in their work environment. This silencing of their voices was further perceived as threatening their professional status, academic freedom, and autonomy. In the previous theme, participants described their de-professionalisation as linked to the intensified managerial systems of control and auditing that new management deployed. This theme intersected with the previous personal experiential theme. What was found different in this theme was how their experience of being excluded was linked to the academic ethos and the collegial culture found in academia. In describing their experience of exclusion, participants' talk centred around their traditional and collegial work environment that had changed. Participants explained that as academics, their voices regarding planning and the decision-making processes no longer mattered. They felt they could make valuable and constructive contributions if they were allowed to participate in decision-making. This, they meant, would benefit the institution in its entirety.

What was foregrounded was how the voices of new management as the decision-makers superseded the voices of the academic professionals. Participants' descriptions alluded to how they experienced a reduced influence over academic matters and a subjection to new management, *"I feel that we are not recognised as much as I honestly feel that we should be…"*. The growing tension between new management and academia was confirmed in the literature regarding the intrusion of management on academic autonomy and who makes the decisions (Martin, 2012; Abbott-Chapman, 2005; Crebert, 2000).

Traditionally in higher education institutions, when referring to management, the concept "*governance*" was used instead of management. This was because governance in the context of higher education institutions referred to an inclusive, collegial relationship (Abbott-Chapman, 2005; Crebert, 2000). Having a collegial relationship allowed the academic manager (i.e., deans or members of the senate) to represent the interests of the academics within the traditional self-governance structure found in the traditions of higher education institutions (Abbott-Chapman, 2005). A study by Davies et al. (2014, p.8) confirmed the finding of "a climate of limited collegiality". In this study, literature reported how academics experienced the neoliberal corporate higher education institution environment as being instructed rather than included when making decisions. From the findings, it would seem that more and more collegial forums were being replaced by hierarchical structures in which the academic was being instructed and informed regarding the decisions made rather than being included in the process, *"Another thing is a decision gets made at the top level, but the practicality is not necessarily possible."; " I sit on the academic board meeting, and I sit on the senate, but there I get a feeling the decisions have already been made…Does that even make sense? Our voice is never heard… never..."* and *"It is just about what the top management says, it is not about the lecturer... They are just telling me... and it felt like I didn't have a say."*. In Korten (2015), the corporate management structure was described as an autocratic, top-down approach to management that legitimised governance strategies such as auditing and tracking performance. This approach to management did not require those in management positions to include employees in decision-making processes, thus ignoring the academics' professional autonomy and collegial culture. Historically, faculty boards provided a collegial forum where important decisions regarding academic matters were made. It would seem from the findings in this study that these forums were becoming spaces where academics were being subjected to and informed about corporate plans and decisions. This, in turn, was creating a dissonance between new management and academia, potentially leading to a fragmentation of the relationship as the academic voice was losing its power to corporatism. Mayo (2009) argued that the goals of managerialists

(i.e., to measure outcomes and track processes) have disempowered academics and have shifted the power to those in management. According to Marini and Reale, (2015, p. 2) "The more a university is managerially led, the less it will be collegial because the increasingly top-down structure of decision-making and the strengthening of accountability will detract from the individuality and the bottom-up voice of the peers.".

A second key finding in this theme was the perception of participants that new management was ignorant regarding academic matters and was not informed enough to make sound decisions. They thus questioned the adeptness of management in making decisions concerning academic matters. From the findings, they implied that managerial logic was obstructing academic logic*, "We are not asked for input ever. We are told how to do things by people who don't know how to do them because they have never done them. That is the worst"; "There are decisions that high up top management make; for example, your direct line manager will agree to without consulting you…"* and *"…because if there is participation in some of the decision making that takes place, we can tell them, hey guys, there is a much easier way to do this…"*. Henkel (2005) described the need for academics to play an instrumental role in the decision-making processes aligned to academic autonomy (i.e., accepted that academics plan their own goals and set their schedules.). Participants' descriptions of their experiences strongly agreed with Henkel (2005). They raised concerns about the potential effects of their exclusion from decision-making processes on the higher education work environments where they were employed throughout this topic. Conscious of their academic autonomy, participants' talk further reflected a value judgment as they alluded to how the exclusion of academics was perceived as an erosion of them as constitutive members of higher education institutions. Participants suggested that they had an important role to play in decision-making as academics since they brought professional academic viewpoints to the table and could offer insightful information. Academic freedom was considered a core value in higher education institutions. This implied that academia was responsible for upholding and protecting their academic autonomy and freedom. Relying on

academic logic, they actively participated in decisions that influenced policy, curricula, and other higher education practices (Levin et al., 2020; Finkelstein et al., 2016; Crebert, 2000).

A third finding was the acceptance of what participants could not change*, "Everything is about what the managers are saying. It is our reality; you just have to accept it and move on." and "…you don't like it, but there is nothing you can do."*. Being excluded and unable to contribute to the decision-making processes seemed to be a yielding experience and an acceptance of some of what they could not control. One got the sense that accepting the change was a bargaining chip to reduce feelings of anxiety and focus on surviving the changing work environment. It further spoke to securing their jobs. In her study, Joan Abbott-Chapman (2015, p. 16) stated that "…academics are not leisured intellectuals as in the historical past but are workers like any others, who, being fearful of losing their jobs, and decreasingly protected by 'tenure', are constrained to conform."

Traditionally, collegiality has always been perceived as a seminal concept grounded in academic logic and essential to the academic profession. The findings in this theme suggested that the experience of not being included in the decision-making processes eroded collegiality and the trust of and respect for new management. Participants experienced exclusion as an obstruction of their academic freedom and altered their professional autonomy. This finding was consistent with one of the three traditional core values central to academic identity, identified by Finkelstein et al. (2016), namely shared governance.

Personal Experiential Theme Three: Lack of Communication and Transparency

The personal experiential theme of lack of communication and transparency coincided with the previous two personal experiential themes, namely being managed with a corporate lens and the erosion of collegiality by excluding the academic. A key finding

highlighted in this theme was the inaccessibility of information regarding the decisions made around the changes because of a lack of transparent communication.

Found in the literature was a gap in the role that the lack of communication played in the context of the changes in higher education as experienced by participants and explored in this study. Traditionally, academics were placed at the centre of higher education institutions, and they used to be consulted regarding decisions that impacted academia. They were viewed as experts in their field and rarely challenged by people outside their peers. Thus, the role of the academic was closely tied to the central functions of higher education institutions. They were free to share their ideas at faculty meetings, the senate, and other collaborative forums. It was a known practice to consult academics on changes regarding academic issues that impact their discipline and academic role (Kolsaker, 2008). Traditionally higher education institutions were viewed as cooperative and collegial environments that operated transparently (Olssen, 2002).

The lack of motivation, irritation, disappointment, scepticism, and feeling unfairly treated as professionals came to the fore when combining the experiences of a lack of communication and transparency among study participants. *"I feel that the communication about the change is not so transparent as it should be – that affects my motivation level"; "…the biggest challenge is communication. It is a huge problem, and it frustrates me…"* and *"…I feel it is unfair…"*. Not having access to information caused participants to feel excluded and marginalised, *"You made a decision, but have you properly communicated this to everybody? The fact that colleagues are not informed makes them not feel part of and not valued."*.

Furthermore, not having access to information made it increasingly difficult for participants to perform and feel they belonged. Being excluded from decision-making processes, they experienced a sense of alienation exacerbated by the lack of

communication and transparency, leading to confusion and vulnerability. A key issue that emerged was how communication and transparency were essential components of a cohesive work environment. Tight (2014, p. 294) referred to the "The idea that university decisions can be made collectively by the academics affected…" and touched on the core value of academic logic. Participants drew on academic logic when describing a need to understand the reasons behind the change. According to Levin et al. (2020), neoliberal logic invaded higher education institutions intending to adjust and replace academic logic. One participant stated that she was *"…a person that did not operate if she was not communicated to appropriately.".* This indicated that academics did not readily accept intrusions into their professional academic domain. Participants further referred to a hierarchal structure that operated in levels of exclusivity, which further influenced the free flow and transparency of information*, "It does feel that it is a very big hierarchy and communication becomes difficult because it is a process of filtering through. You know, by the time the change gets to you, it has filtered through a few levels… I also think middle management is not always in a place to give answers because top management does not always give clear guidance."* and *"… I hate it when people play games with you… they know about all the changes that are going to take place…"*. Their experiences highlighted a tension between an increase in institutional autonomy and control and a decrease in individual autonomy. This further highlighted a distrust of new management and suspicion of their intentions.

Group Experiential Theme Two: Change as Intensification and Extensification of Administrative Workload

Traditionally the academic workload comprised of mainly teaching-driven activities, for example, preparing for classes, marking and feedback to students, and research-driven activities that include publishing, supervision of post-grad students, and presenting at academic conferences. Bitzer (2007. p. 24) defines academic workload as "The full

spectrum of work commitment of an academic staff member in an academic unit at an institute of higher education.". Though studies reported on the significantly increased administrative demands made on academics (Kenny & Fluck, 2019; Kouritzin, 2019), a gap was found in the literature regarding qualitative studies reporting on how academics personally experienced the phenomenon. In other words, the academic voice was missing, as many studies were quantitative.

It is essential to note here that only four participants explicitly spoke about their increased workloads. However, it was deemed important to include their voices due to the gap found in qualitative literature studies reporting on this phenomenon. Boyd (2014) reported on the complexities found in the higher education work environment and, more specifically, the work activities of academics. Thus, this phenomenon might have become part of participants' daily activities. Some might not perceive this as not the norm for academics or have absorbed it as part of their activities.

Personal Experiential Theme One: The Ignorance of Management

Within this personal experiential theme, participants linked the increase in their administrative workload to the ignorance of management. They blamed the new managerial approaches to governance for the increase they experienced in their administrative workload.

Drawing on their academic and institutional logic, the participants explained that, in their opinion, management did not understand the working environment of the academic, *" the business doesn't understand the academic side…"*. Participants felt that because management did not understand the complexities of the higher education work environment, they created pointless administrative tasks to drive their bureaucratic surveillance agendas. They gave the numerous "trackers" (i.e., spreadsheets or online systems) that tracked their

performance concerning teaching and research activities as examples. They also cited student performance, the tracking of modules that did not meet institutional targets, the tracking of consultation hours, the development of teaching portfolios to "showcase" their work as a lecturer, and attending meetings that had no bearing on their academic role., *"…making me fill in weird forms…"; "…sitting in meetings that do not concern me and has no bearing on what I do from day to day."* and *"Administration doing this, doing that. Going to meetings that I don't feel are very relevant. I mean I work in academics. I would be thinking why I am here when I could be doing something else.".* It appeared that participants did not think that management knew how to manage and guide them (i.e., academics) within the complexities found in the higher education work environment, *"…they have no idea what is going on in our workplace."* and *"I will accept what they say, but it doesn't mean that I think they are right."* and were questioning their administrative logic. This was in line with a study by Winter et al. (2000) that implied managerialists lacked an understanding of the academic work environment. Macfarlane (2010) noted that academics perceived themselves as experts regarding the complexities of the higher education institution work environment. Thus, the dilemma that participants experienced was that the increase in their workload had to do with quantifying and measuring their output, which was mainly linked to a market-driven management agenda and not to their professional academic role. This finding was consistent with other research that showed how the commercialisation of higher education overrode academics' disciplinary and pedagogical objectives in the change in the governance of higher education institutions. (Blackmore and Sachs, 2000; Ulukan, 2005; Anderson, 2008; Broadbent et al., 2013; Teelken and Deem, 2013; Shepherd, 2018; Heller, 2022).

In successfully managing academics, it was essential to understand the diverse, complex academic activities that were intensive and individualistic. Also important was to recognise the autonomous and collegial culture in academic work environments (Boyd, 2014). Bellamy et al. (2003) agree with Boyd and added flexibility as a key factor. The

findings in this study highlighted the latter as participants strongly expressed their annoyance with the lack of the ability of management to manage them. Highlighting the ignorance of management also emphasised cynicism and distrust of management. What was foregrounded was how participants relied on their academic logic to influence their perceptions of what academics do. This finding was consistent with what was documented in the literature on academic workload and how it has increased due to management and corporatist legacy in higher education institutions. These practices included the involvement of academics in the marketisation of higher education institutions, performance measurement, and the surveillance of academics (Ntshoe et al., 2008; Tight, 2014; Kenny, 2017).

Personal Experiential Theme Two: The Infringement of their Administrative Workload on their Personal and Family Time

Working hours for academics were always blurred as it is a well-recognized fact that due to the individualistic nature of their work and the various academic cycles, their hours were not fixed. For example, amid an assessment cycle, they could be marking at night and on weekends, infringing on their personal and family time. However, the difference was that they were in control of their own time (i.e., autonomy and flexibility). What changed with the descendants of managerialism was how participants felt they were being regulated and performance tracked.

When exploring their text, it was important to understand the meaning that participants attached to their experiences of the intensification of workload, linked to the infringement of their administrative workload on their personal and family time. In this personal experiential theme, participants explained how the administrative workloads infringed on their personal and family time, leaving them frustrated and anxious. When additional demands, specifically administrative, were made on them, they noted how it

disrupted their personal life, for example, leaving them feeling frustrated and pressured as they felt they had to stay abreast of the activities and tasks expected of them. The reasons they provided for the intensification of their work hours included the expansion of their administrative workload, which forced them to spend more time on what they perceived as non-academic activities. Examples they provided were the short deadlines for marking assessments, the completion of reporting trackers, their availability to respond to student queries, and emails from management. They further explained how this had blurred their time management boundaries. This was evident in how they talked about extending their work hours to cope with the workload, *"Currently for me my day starts at 4h00 in the morning…, a lot of administration…."; "…I have more deadlines…"; working all the time and losing out on having the personal time or spending time with their family"; "…so you have to constantly adapt to your workload increasing and maybe not having as much time for your family or yourself, you constantly have to work.".* One participant explained how she felt trapped by her email system *"I always feel like you have to be at the beck and call of the email system all the time, no matter whether you are teaching or you are on holiday.".*

To them, the work-life interference directly resulted from the administrative expectation placed on them. Work-life interference was defined as "…an inter-role conflict where work demands make it such that one is unable to meet personal life demands or vice versa concurrently." (Boamah et al., 2022, p. 14). What surfaced from participants' talk was how they tried to stay abreast of the workload and how they struggled to meet the demands, "*…I try to just be more on top of things …I just try and keep up…"; "… everyone tries to do more and more…"* and *"… you have to constantly adapt to your workload…".*

This was consistent with research by Kenny (2017, p. 897–898), who explored performativity-related academic work and claimed that the neoliberal reforms of higher education institutions fuelled by corporate managerial practices prioritised performativity and accountability. This, in turn, impacted the academic workload and "blurred the boundaries

between work and home.". Boyd (2014) acknowledged that the workloads of academics in Australia were increasing because of managerialism and that this posed a threat to the overall well-being of academics. She further noted that workload models could be explored as a solution to mitigate this. However, Boyd reported that these workload models would have to be carefully considered to accommodate the complexities found in the higher education work environment and, more specifically, the work activities of academics. What was identified as two areas of complexity was the codification to quantify academic work, in other words, how to go about allocating hours to the various activities (Boyd, 2014, p.316).

Group Experiential Theme Three: A change in the Student Profile

One of the central stakeholders in higher education is the students. Based on previous literature, some significant changes in student populations include demographics, numbers, academic skills, and expectations (Kinnear et al., 2008). These changes have put pressure on higher education institutions and lecturers, which has resulted in both institutions and lecturers having to make significant adjustments.

Personal Experiential Theme One: Academic Entitlement

Academic entitlement is a relatively new concept linked to theoretical concepts such as narcissism and general entitlement. According to a study conducted by Greenberger et al. (2008), there was a moderate overlap and positive correlation between narcissism and psychological entitlement. *Academic entitlement* is a universal term in the literature about student behaviour (Schaefer et al., 2013). Though there is no single definition, according to Jackson et al. (2011), it refers to the belief of students that they should be rewarded for minimal effort. It further refers to the shift of responsibility and unrealistic expectations of students (Greenberger et al., 2008; Jackson et al., 2011; Schaefer et al., 2013;).

The findings of students' academic entitlement that emerged from the data in this study underlined and supported global literature (Ansburg, 2001; Benton, 2006; Lomas, 2007; Greenberger et al., 2008; Gill, 2009; Schaefer et al., 2013). Participants' descriptions of students confirmed students inflated attitudes of academic entitlement. They explained how, over the years, they have noticed and experienced how students seemed to display an increased behaviour of academic entitlement. Participants mainly linked the academic entitlement of students to variables such as high expectations for minimal effort and a lack of motivation.

Previous research showed that students had unrealistic expectations of their lecturers and believed it was okay to blame the lecturer if they did not receive a good grade. They also expected their timetables to be flexible to accommodate their social life (Schaefer et al., 2013) and for lecturers to accommodate their needs (Greenberger et al., 2008). Further, Trout (1997) reported that though students did not come to class prepared and were not interested in engaging in class discussions, they did expect high grades for average or below-average work. Participants in this study shared similar experiences, such as students' expectations that they should be allowed to do whatever they want while still receiving good grades, their belief that they have a right to the information given to them (i.e., spoon-fed), their lack of effort, their lack of interest in learning, and their unwillingness to work independently.

Reinhardt (2012) examined academic entitlement linked to various constructs, one of which was academic goal orientation. He found that students with a greater sense of entitlement "…may not choose to internalize motives for engaging in the academic process." (Reinhardt, 2012. P82). Thus, these students were possibly a-motivated, which translated to being less or not motivated either intrinsically or extrinsically. He noted that it was possible that these students would not be interested in learning but that they would have a high expectation of being rewarded for any "…forced..." effort (Reinhardt, 2012. P83). Findings in

this study aligned with the findings of Reinhardt (2012) as participants explained that students did not enter higher education for the right reasons (i.e., to learn and expand their knowledge thus as scholars) and were only interested in obtaining a qualification. In other words, students were perceived as a-motivated with a high, unrealistic expectation of obtaining a qualification for minimal to no effort.

It can be argued that the notion of the student as a "customer" did align with the perception of participants that students wanted to obtain a qualification without demonstrating an interest in engaging in the learning process. However, the role that a consumerist ethos played in the expectations of students was not evident in the findings of this personal experiential theme. Thus, on a broader social level, the infiltration of corporatism into higher education institutions might have influenced students' perceptions of getting value for their money. As “customers”, they could expect special treatment that would align with an academic entitlement belief system (Burke et al., 2019). In other words, they were paying for a service and product which contradicted the perception of the student as a scholar and the traditional student-academic model (Schaefer et al., 2013. p.81)

Personal Experiential Theme Two: Abdication from Academic Responsibility

In this personal experiential theme, two participants referenced how they experienced becoming the entity responsible for student academic success. This was evident when they spoke about the effort they had to put in to accommodate student learning. For example, they uploaded additional resources in the form of the PowerPoint presentations they used in class onto learning management systems, gave students extra revision and remedial support in the form of keynotes and quizzes in the classroom, and made sure students understood the work (i.e., constructing the content for students and spoon-feeding). They reported how they felt more accountable for student success than the students, *"You are much more accountable for student learning*.". What was highlighted was

how students deployed attitudes of academic entitlement and abdicated from their academic responsibility. This finding can be likened to a study by Chowning and Campbell (2009) that reported how students externalise responsibility for their academic success by attributing their academic performance to their lecturers or courses. Though they primarily conducted their four studies on first-year students, Chowning and Campbell (2009) did report that academics across curriculums also reported this phenomenon. The participants also talked about experiencing how they felt they were being held accountable for class attendance, student performance and pass rates. Their reported experience reflected a changing context found in higher education institutions in which these institutions adopted corporate strategies placing more emphasis on performance indicators, quality assurance and student experience, which are equal to customer orientations (Henkel, 2000; Ansburg, 2001; Benton, 2006; Lomas, 2007; Gill, 2009 and Martin et al., 2016).

The findings of this personal experiential theme suggested that participants were not comfortable with the feeling that they were responsible for student academic success, "*It is not the student's responsibility anymore, but it is the lecturer's responsibility. If the students are not in class, then you are asked why the students are not in class?"*. This finding also implied that they felt it was unfair as there were other variables which were overlooked, such as student under preparedness and other limitations, "*…it feels as if your students' pass rates are reflected on you, which isn't the case because you can only do as much as you can"*.

A key takeaway of the findings in this theme was a concern relating to how participants felt their performance were being tracked while students were allowed to abdicate from their responsibility by playing the consumerist ethos card. This personal experiential theme strongly linked to the personal experiential theme of being managed with a corporate lens that highlighted how management expected academics to produce

graduates by providing a service that would keep students engaged and satisfied as customers (Davies & Petersen, 2005).

Personal Experiential Theme Three: #Feesmustfall linked to Student Expectation

In this personal experiential theme, findings indicated that participants also linked the academic entitlement behaviour of students to the #feesmustfall protests and believed that these protests played a role in the intensification of the academic entitlement behaviour of students. Though only two participants referenced the #feesmustfall protests, the personal experiential theme was deemed important to include in this study as these protests were unique to the South African higher education context.

From the findings, the participants were trying to make sense of the changes they experienced in their students, especially the impact thereof on the higher education work environment in South Africa. While a key contributor to the #feesmustfall narrative was the increment in fees, this was not the only reason students protested. Students also protested to redress past inequalities and transform South Africa's colonised higher education systems.

One participant [Participant 8] talked about the changes she observed in students' attitudes since 2008 and went on to explicitly state how the entitlement attitudes of students were escalated by the *"# feesfustfall "*protests. Participant 11 also referenced how the *"#feesfustfall* protests linked to an economic narrative but focused on the implication this might hold for academics and higher education institutions. She particularly talked about job security and monetary compensation implications for staff members. Majozi (2016) compared free higher education with free public health services and concluded that since the quality of public health services deteriorated, the same could be valid for the future quality of education should higher education be free. Therefore, such a change could impact

institutions and staff members employed at the institutions. Even though the #feesfustfall protests did serve a crucial function in the history of higher education in South Africa, promoting a free higher education system for all eligible students is still difficult because it would put an enormous burden on an already slow-growing economy (Bitzer & de Jager, 2018).

Because of the complexity of the phenomenon *"#feesmustfall ",* no support for or against the narrative of Participants 8 and 11 could be found in the literature. This being stated, it could be argued that because of the disruptive impact and emotions connected to the *#feesmustfall* protests, it was possible that for some students, these protests also became a vehicle to exert academic entitlement behaviours.

Personal Experiential Theme Four: Responsibility linked to the Lack of Student Academic Skills

Many academics at higher education institutions globally have lamented the academic under-preparedness of students. This under-preparedness creates a gap between the basic academic skills of students entering higher education and the expectations of academics (Jones, 2011). In South Africa, the emergence of democracy resulted in higher education institutions revising their policies and processes to make higher education more accessible to previously disadvantaged students. Thus, many students entering higher education were the first in their families to do so. They were known as first-generation students and often lacked essential competencies and academic role models, making it difficult for them to deal with their studies (Monnapula-Mapesela, 2015).

The findings in personal experiential theme four reciprocated findings in personal experiential theme two that alluded to how academics became responsible for student success. This theme presented a different interpretation of how participants conceptualised their responsibility. In describing their experiences relating to taking on the responsibility for

students' success, participants talked about how it seemed to be their duty to develop students who struggled academically. They referred to working harder and how they have to improve the students' skills. In the manner in which participants highlighted a sense of agency, they exempt the student from taking responsibility for their academic development. There was a sense that the research highlighted a more fundamental problem with lecturers being held responsible for student achievement and pass rates and that the real reason for taking on the duty of skill development for students was actually to make up for their lack of academic skills. Trout (1997) highlighted that under-prepared students tend to disengage from their academic work and responsibility.

In summary, in the group experiential theme, a change in the student profile when considering the concept of responsibility linked to the four personal experiential themes, and participants had various descriptions and attached various perceptions to the concept. However, from their text, there was a common narrative, though not always explicit, describing how they felt they were being held responsible for students' academic performance due to the development of managerialism and the penetration of corporatism into higher education institutions.

Group Experiential Theme Four: The Integration of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in Higher Education Learning Environments

The use of information and communication technologies (ICT) in higher education learning environments is not a new phenomenon. In the 21st-century classroom, adopting ICT is a prerequisite for lecturers. Not only is it used as a support function, but it has increasingly been the driver behind automated academic processes, the enhancement of teaching and learning processes and student self-service applications such as learning management systems (LMS) (Ng'ambi et al., 2016; Upadhyaya et al., 2020).

Participants who formed part of this study came from diverse age groups and educational backgrounds and still needed to be exposed equally to the use of ICT. These diversities led to different frames of reference regarding the perspectives on the use of technology in education. In this group experiential theme, two personal experiential themes emerged from the data: capability and adeptness in using ICT and the perceived negative impact on students' academic skills development. The primary concerns participants shared were the lack of proper training and development in how to use ICT in the classroom and how this interpretation of the feelings participants experienced could be linked to an experience of stress due to their level of skill and aptitude to use ICT.

Wang et al. (2018) investigated stress linked to the use of technology through the lens of the person-environment fit theory. This theory was well known for its contribution to stress research. It postulated that stress did not arise from the individual or the environment but resulted from an incongruency between the two, in other words, if there was no fit between the two (Edwards, 2013). Stress experienced because of the induced use of technology has been labelled “*technostress*” (Setyarini & Wacana, 2015; Upadhyaya et al., 2020). Tarafdar et al. (2010) referred to "…a dark side of ICT…" that, according to Wang et al. (2018, p2), has been an understudied area in education environments. According to the person-environment fit theory, when the environment does not accommodate the individual's needs or the individual's abilities do not meet the demands of the environment, a phenomenon called person-environment misfit occurs (Edwards, 2013; Player et al., 2017).

Participants also perceived the integration of ICT into the classroom as detrimental to the development of students' academic skills. Through extensive literature supporting this finding, Moerschell (2009) and Marzilli et al. (2014) did point out in their studies that academia did display resistant behaviour towards adapting to the use of technology in the classroom and that this resistance was embedded in ideologies of traditional teaching practices. This aversion to technology was thus linked to a belief that traditional teaching

practices, namely talk and chalk, were better than new-fangled practices. Regarding changing traditional teaching strategies and adopting technology, lecturers were slow to change and often employed delaying tactics (Cohen et al., 2005). The rationalists argued that technology was a threat to the academy as it compromised the integrity of academic scholarship. This was linked to a fear that academics would lose their status and expertise as professionals because technology would replace them (Moerschell, 2009). Contradictory to the perceptions of participants in this study, other research studies did report a positive link between student performance and the integration of ICT in the classroom as a learning tool (Youssef and Dahmani, 2008; Mbugua et al., 2015). Also found was a study that reported how integrating technology into the classroom in developing countries negatively impacted student performance. One common denominator found in these studies was how the lecturers' adeptness in the use of ICT in the classroom and their attitudes, beliefs and values played a role in pedagogical transformation (Moerschell, 2009; Addam, 2014; Mbugua et al., 2015).

Personal Experiential Theme One: Questioning capability and adeptness in the use of ICT

Participants voiced their concerns regarding their insecurities about using ICT in the classroom in this personal experiential theme. One participant referred to feeling not capable, less sure and questioning themselves. At the same time, another talked about orientating herself to get used to the systems and how she was a slow learner. Participants also reported needing more training and development in using the devices and systems. It took time to determine whether the insecurities they experienced were linked to their adeptness in ICT or their resistance to integration.

Students of the present generation were born into an era in which the global world was connected. They were perceived as digital natives familiar with instant access to

information and technological fluency (Brooks & Davis, 2018). Academics (i.e., lecturers) often reported that they felt less sure of themselves when it came to the use of ICT, as many did not grow up with technology and were thus less familiar with the use of technology than their students (Hatlevik & Hatlevik, 2018). Not being too familiar with integrating information and communication technologies (ICT) in their classrooms, participants in this study confirmed what was reported in the literature and acknowledged that they felt less confident and vulnerable around using ICT. The data in this study revealed an overall sense that participants felt they lacked proper training and development, which also exacerbated their confidence, vulnerability and self-doubt. Previous literature highlighted the realness of feeling inadequate, which could further inhibit lecturers' motivation to learn a new skill set (Horn, 2002; Oreg, 2006). An example of this phenomenon in this study was how one participant spoke demeaningly about the integration of ICT while admitting that she found it challenging to use technology in the classroom. If lecturers believed they could not master ICT, it could propel them to resist the change. Jarrett (2004) compared this to a fear of technology and stated that this was the most challenging barrier to overcome that often caused lecturers or teachers to resist using ICT. Setyarini and Wacana (2015) identified the following causes of computer anxiety among lecturers:

- Social causes. For example, they felt inferior when they saw colleagues using technology successfully in their teaching practice, were afraid of the judgment of others and felt embarrassed because their students were more advanced in using technology.
- Psychological causes. For example, a fear of experimenting with technology and not feeling motivated.
- Lack of ability. For example, they struggled to adapt to teaching with technology because they lacked proficiency.
- Technical causes. For example, power failure or the loss of internet connection.

A key finding highlighted in this personal experiential theme was how the demands from higher education institutions to integrate ICT into the learning environments were high. At the same time, lecturers' reported, and perceived abilities and skill readiness were low. Further to this was the reported lack of sufficient training and development of lecturers provided by the institutions, and lecturers coming from diverse ages, educational backgrounds and disciplines would make a one size fits all training and development programme problematic. When the person-environment fit theory was applied to this finding, it became clear that there was a disconnect between the lecturer's work environment and himself or herself. This disconnect could make them feel inadequate and unable to deal with using ICT, which could lead to resistance.

Personal Experiential Theme Two: Embedded traditional teaching perceptions

In this personal experiential theme, participants deliberated how the integration of ICT in the classroom negatively impacted the development of students' academic skills. This finding suggested that their perceptions of the integration of ICT in the learning environment were embedded in their attitudes towards ICT, more specifically, how their frames of reference influenced their reasoning, thus, their interpretations of what the integration of ICT in the learning environment meant to them. Their perceptions were further influenced by their traditional academic logic. This finding confirmed what the extant literature reported that one of the key barriers to the integration of ICT was the attitudes of academia (i.e., lecturers and teachers). In this study, both participants who voiced this as a concern highlighted how the change to using ICT negatively impacted the learning environment and the development of student academic skills (i.e., writing and referencing skills). Support for the perception that the integration of ICT had a negative impact on student's academic skills could not be found in the extant literature. What was reported, however, was the barriers that students experienced and underperformed, for example, low proficiency skills and ability when it came to the use of technology as well as challenges students experienced in accessing

technology (i.e., resources like devices and the internet) (Frederick et al., 2006; Whelan, 2008; Bingimlas, 2009; Castro; 2011; Karamiti, 2016). It was thus important to consider that the role that technological infrastructure played in the successful integration of ICT in the classroom could not be ignored. South Africa, as a developing country, was still grappling with issues of the past, such as socio-economic inequalities, and educational institutions did not always have the infrastructure to support the integration of ICT. Under-resourced schools were primarily impacted, which meant many students entering higher education were not exposed to a learning environment where ICT was integrated (Wagner et al., 2004; Khan, 2012).

Furthermore, it was a well-documented fact that many students entering higher education were underprepared (Bettinger & Long, 2009; Mungal & Cloete, 2016; Gebauer, 2019). However, when discussing how they used ICT, the participants' responses did not emphasise technology's role in their experiences. Their explanations showed how, in their eyes, ICT turned into a tool that "dumbed down" students' academic abilities (i.e., writing and referencing abilities). There was a sense that participants' narrow viewpoints that integrating ICT was just another departure from conventional pedagogical methodologies were evident. Participants' explanations also implied that they were referring to the information transmission-focused (ITF) use of technology when they talked about the integration of ICT (i.e., the use of technology to transfer knowledge, such as PowerPoint presentations). Research exploring this phenomenon found that pedagogical beliefs and attitudes towards ICT did impact lecturers' readiness to adopt ICT as a pedagogical methodology (Khalid & Petersen, 2016; Taimalu & Luik, 2019; Wilson, 2020). Baguma (2018) reported that a lack of technological infrastructure was an obstruction to the integration of ICT. If combined with a lack of training and feelings of inadequacy and insecurity, it could lead to resistance to adopting ICT. A large proportion of the literature focused on the barriers to adopting ICT as a pedagogical methodology which made an attitude of resistance a high probability. Bingimlas (2009) argued that resistance to change was a barrier as there were always reasons behind

the resistance. Moerschell (2009) pointed to the following reasons why academics resisted the integration of ICT: a) a lack of awareness and interest in the benefits of ICT as a pedagogical methodology; b) a complacency with the current status (i.e., being in a comfort zone); c) feeling threatened by technology (i.e., job security) and d) technical proficiency.

The change resistance theory postulates that there are three dimensions attached to change resistance behaviour (i.e., rebellion against the change); resistance as emotions (i.e., feelings of frustration and fear) and resistance as thinking (i.e., belief systems). Found in this study was how participants exhibited all three dimensions when describing their perceptions and experiences. As the new constructivist student-centred approaches did not support participants' conventional frame of academic logic, it was clear how their belief systems—specifically, the importance of the lecturer and traditional teacher-centred approaches in the development of students' skills impacted their emotions and behaviour in a way that encouraged resistance. The result was a reluctance to adapt to the change and adopt ICT as a methodology. It is argued that participants in this study used 'ability bias 'to disguise their resistance to integrating ICT into higher education learning environments.

Furthermore, they negotiated the commodification and computerisation of higher education institutions as reasons for integrating ICT into higher education learning environments. They meant that the integration was profit-driven, *"We have all these changes and the day we are putting students into the workplace that do not have the skills… all in the name of money."*. A study by Hirachheim (2005) and Hamilton and Feenberg (2005) support the finding that the integration of ICT was linked to the commodification of education and that there was little concern for producing quality graduates as the primary goal was to make a profit.

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the group experiential themes in the context of existing research. Participants experienced how a shift in governance impacted their status, marginalised them, and excluded them from decision-making. They described how new management did not understand the complexities of the higher education work environment, which they meant was the reason for the perceived increase and intensification of their workload. Participants also talked about the changed student profile and how students have become more entitled and disengaged. They also reported on how they experienced being held more responsible for students' academic success than the students themselves, which they linked to the commodification of higher education. Lastly, they described experiencing feelings of inadequacy and adeptness when it came to the integration of ICT into the learning environment. The next chapter reported on the findings of how participants responded to the changes.

Chapter Eight

The “Unheeded Voices of Academics”

Findings

“Change is learning, loaded with uncertainty” (Fullan & Miles, 1992).

In his book, *Who Moved My Cheese?* Spencer Johnson (1998) introduced the topic of change through the experiences of four characters. The narrative showed that the characters were trying to cope with the changes in their lives. Two of the characters made the following statements: "have you noticed how we don't want to change when things change...?" (Johnson, 1998, p .4) and "I guess we resist changing because we're afraid of change." (Johnson, 1998, p. 4). One of the characters then told a story about four little characters and some cheese and, through this metaphor, described how they experienced, responded to, and coped with the construct of change in their lives. From the story, one can conclude that individuals respond to and cope with change uniquely. It is not easy for most individuals to accept the changes in their lives and social environments; change usually requires them to adapt in some way. Since the current study aimed to explore how lecturers experienced the changes in higher education institutions in South Africa, it was equally important to explore how they responded to and coped with the changes. The findings in this chapter presented how participants responded to the change, and the aim was to explore participants' unique responses to the change they experienced and to identify connections, similarities, and differences in their responses (Smith and Nizza, 2021). The predominant research question that guided this chapter was: How did you respond to changes you experienced in your work environment?

Table 4

Summary of group experiential themes and personal experiential themes with representative experiential statements of participants' interpretation of their responses to the changes in higher education.

Group experiential themes	
Response as resistance	**Response as acceptance**
Personal experiential themes	
Information inadequacy and exclusion	**Ideological constructions of acceptance**
"I am bad at change; my initial response is always negative but and that is also something that sit in my personality. If you can explain to me and help me understand why these changes needs to be made or explain the logic behind the decision you make, and I can buy into it and I can understand why then I am going to support it. So, there is always the initial resistance…" [Participant 1] *"Resisting the change. Resistant would probably be the most accurate. Because I think I am the type of person if you tell me things are going to change in this way because of this reason then I would be more accepting of it, but if people just say this is the change and I need to change this and this– that will make me question why the change is happening. Then if it is something that I really strongly disagree with, I will resist it."* [Participant 2] *"It really depends on how management communicates the change, we are not always going to agree with everything but if management explains it in a practical way why it is being done and you can't for some reason figure out why it is a positive thing, then it is a negative reaction. Apprehension. I become unproductive. More irritable and anxious.*" [Participant 12] *"I am not good with change; I am not very good with change. They have not met with me to discuss the change so that makes me resentful. I can admit that I became really resentful and very confrontational. I need a lot of support and a lot of recognition and a lot of motivation in order to understand what is happening."* [Participant 13] *"When change is introduced, I do not take it very well because I feel like they could've communicated with me, and we could have looked at it in various ways. I take it personally. Unfortunately, some of the things is not being introduced properly*	*"I am very old fashioned, and I accept authority and I am not a confrontational person. I will never go ahead and go against instruction from the top, I will verbalise what I feel, but I think it is in general… it is my generation."* [Participant 5] *"Normally I have to give my piece and from the way I see things this is how it is but if some managers did not think it is appropriate, I accept it, but I do point out the challenges. So, I make my point, but then I will comply."* [Participant 7]

by management so you have to get the information from colleagues. So, to me it is a little bit confusing and frustrating." [Participant 15]	
Ideological constructions of resistance	**Dispositional acceptance**
"…blended learning and all these things, but the old method allowed me [pause] and I still use it [pause] allowed me to have personal interaction with students I can walk to them and sit next to them ask them a question, go to the board, write something up go sit next to them ask them something again so it is that personal … interpersonal communication that is lost almost. I fight it. Yes resist, fight (little laugh) I resist it. [Participant 3] *"It is always that contraction inside and the first word is always noooo! So that would always be my initial response, but it's internally. It is an internal resistance immediately which I can recognise. If the change is announced in an email, my usual response is to get angry first of course and I guess the same as when my line manager introduces it to us as well, People get so very angry especially if they have no control over any of it you know not the little things, not anything. When my line manager introduces it, I get angry, and I speak my mind. I also go and think about the change because my head must always be logical so if I do take them on because I don't agree, in my head it needs to make sense to me and there must be a reason why I am talking to them about it.* [Participant 4] *"Negative, but I will speak up, I will speak up. I am not somebody that will keep quiet because, I just feel we have the right to say something as well, so I will speak up. I will fight it as far as I can and then if I just can't I will just leave it out. I will just leave it and just have to accept it."* [Participant 16] *"I will voice and say I do not agree with assertiveness, as I feel I also have a foot to stand on even if they do not agree. I will not discard what they say."* [Participant 19]	*"I think because I am a very organised person you know I like to know that there is a strategy to be implemented, I want to be in control and with change you know it is almost like you can't control it so you have to learn to kind of accept because you cannot always control things. So, I myself have to adapt, my own personality…"* [Participant 6] *I do not question things generally I am a perhaps the result of a realistic upbringing or a work ethic so not always a good thing, also I think I only internalise the changes later on so the moment that it is introduced it makes me feel uncomfortable, but I will do what I have to, I will not resist."* [Participant 9]

Personal valence	
"It would depend on what the change is, if it is a new thing obviously that would make me immensely resistant because how will it impact me? When that happens, I am going to be demotivated, and freak out because of all the uncertainty." [Participant 8] *"It corresponds with the resistance, I initially feel very frustrated, I won't lose sleepless nights on it. It very much depends on what it is. If they are introducing a new way of working, I will be excited. If it is changes of conditions of employment, then I am angry. I speak my mind. I think I am known to speak my mind. I make sure that the whole world knows that I do not agree. I do allow them to say why, and I do listen, it is not that I won't listen. They know when I don't agree. They also know that in the end, they will still have my support no matter what. I am a sucker for loyalty. You know you can resist the process I mean, as much as you like but it is not going to work at the end of the day. "* [Participant 17]	
"The silence of the lambs"	
"I'm quite a perfectionist when I get up in the morning, I plan my day and if anything happens like something changed, I get irritated. I don't like it at all I don't, So, it takes me a while to adapt to things changing at work or during the day. I usually avoid talking to management about change, I try to get use to the idea myself." [Participant 10] *"Usually when we have our board meetings, I don't say anything even if I disapprove of it. Silence. If it is decisions that affect me only, then like I said I might just feel quiet, but if it is decisions that affect everybody and there is nothing you can do about it then I am also quiet. I had an experience where I had to take on another portfolio that I was worried about and I felt like I might not be able to cope with it or I might not have the knowledge or expertise for it, but I did not say anything."* [Participant 11] *"I think kind of like an avoidance feeling. I avoid having conversations until I have worked everything out in my head. I will also usually have the conversation with my partner at home to figure it all out. I also experience more temper tantrums and tend to exaggerate small issues; I tend to be a lot more emotional."* [Participant 20]	

Responding to the Changes in Higher Education

"Academics are 'clever people', skilled in rebellion and innovation" (Trowler, 1998, p. 64)

How individuals will respond to change will depend on how they perceive and assess the impact of the change on them. Thus, it was suggested that their response would depend on their beliefs, perceptions, and feelings about the change. In this study, the analysis of the participants' accounts of how they responded to the changes revealed two group experiential themes centring around the resistance and the acceptance of the change. Responses of resistance were supported by the following personal experiential themes: information adequacy and exclusion, ideological constructions of resistance, personal valence, and "the silence of the lambs". Responses of acceptance were supported by the following personal experiential themes: ideological constructions of acceptance and dispositional acceptance.

Group Experiential Theme One: Responses as Resistance

A predominant response to change found in participants' texts was resistance. Traditionally, academics are positioned in key roles in higher education institutions and contribute to institutional decision-making processes while possessing a certain amount of freedom. They are usually driven by the nature of their academic work, which includes functions such as teaching and research. As professionals, academics share their knowledge and expertise daily and are primarily employed for their contribution to the knowledge economy in their various disciplines. Skilled in analytical thinking, academics are intrinsically inspired by academic work. Therefore, they are unlikely to accept any change without reflecting on the changes before deciding on acting.

Trowler (1998, p.16) noted that "probably more than any other social group, academics are likely to reflect on their situation, form a view, and then take action to change

it if they consider it necessary". When the nature of their profession and their positions of autonomy are threatened or compromised, academics experience alienation from their profession and a loss of power. Foucault (1990, p. 95) stated that "where there is power, there is resistance". In exploring participants' responses to change, various reasons were offered for resisting the change.

Personal Experiential Theme One: Information Inadequacy and Exclusion

This personal experiential theme reflected how participants experienced a sense of exclusion because of a lack of understanding of the reasons for the changes. One of the most shared articulations in the text was their need for information that would support their understanding and help them make sense of the changes. What was highlighted in their talk was how they experienced the decision-making processes as one-sided. This theme was formed around two concepts: the lack of communication and a feeling of exclusion.

"I am bad at change; my initial response is always negative but that is also something that sit in my personality. If you can explain to me and help me understand why these changes needs to be made or explain the logic behind the decision you make, and I can buy into it and I can understand why then I am going to support it. So, there is always the initial resistance, always and the problem is very often no one in any change circumstances even if it is just a change of, we were planning to have drinks at this restaurant, and now we are changing our minds we are going to that one… even small things like that is always a no. I hate it. I like structure planning, there is security in it. So, if you want to change something, it frightens me, it makes me anxious, but if you then take the time and sit with me to help me understand logically the reason for the change, why the decision has been made and I can logically understand why you are doing it then I will support it fully and then I will put my energy into supporting it. It is that concept of participation even if you don't ask my opinion, even if you just explain

to me logically, then I will put my energy behind it, I will be positive about it and I will go for it that's fine. Although you would not say it now, I think …I am usually a pretty optimistic person, I try to be optimistic because I can become very melancholic if I want to, so I work very hard at being optimistic." [Participant 1 Line 29 – 43]

Participant 1 described her response to the changes as negative and conflicting. She acknowledged that she did not manage well when experiencing change, and her response was to resist the change. The participant generalised her response using an example of how even the slightest change in any given circumstance would impel any individual first to resist the change. What was significant about her reflection on how she responded was how she embedded her answer in self-knowledge. She talked about her personality traits and how this seemed to play a role in her response. Drawing on logic and rationality, she voiced her annoyance with the lack of information she received that preceded the changes and highlighted her exclusion. From her text, if she was part of the conversation and the reasons for the changes were explained to her, she would be more open to supporting the change. What was interesting about her description was how she noted that it was not so much taking an active part in the discussions around the decisions but the importance of acknowledging her *"It is that concept of participation even if you don't ask my opinion…."* Participant 1 appeared to experience some tension when reflecting on her personality traits. She described herself as tending to be negative but also as an optimist. The tension seemed to stem from her need for a structured plan before a change was introduced versus the unexpected implementation of changes which caused her to feel insecure and anxious. It would seem that Participant 1 strived to be the optimist but that the implemented changes exacerbated feelings of insecurity and exclusion, steering her towards becoming negative and "*melancholic*" and ultimately resisting the change.

"Resisting the change. Resistant would probably be the most accurate. Because I think I am the type of person if you tell me things are going to change in this way because of

> *this reason then I would be more accepting of it, but if people just say this is the change and I need to change this and this– that will make me question why the change is happening. Then if it is something that I really strongly disagree with, I will resist it."* [Participant 2 Line 23 - 28]

Resistance was the first word that Participant 2 used to describe his response to change. In his reflection, he confirmed that resisting change was the most accurate description of his response. It was essential for Participant 2 to be informed about the changes ahead of time. Like Participant 1, Participant 2 also drew on logic and inclusion when he described how being told and understanding the reasons for changes would make him more open and accepting of the change. He sceptically questioned the logic behind the change. This revelation highlighted a distrust of the motives for the change and, indirectly, those who imposed the change. Participant 2 legitimised his resistance response by stating that if he disagreed with the change, it left him no other choice but to resist it.

> *"It really depends on how management communicates the change, we are not always going to agree with everything but if management explains it in a practical way why it is being done and you can't for some reason figure out why it is a positive thing, then it is a negative reaction. Apprehension. I become unproductive. More irritable and anxious.*" [Participant 12 Line 19 - 23]

Participant 12 raised existential concerns in her explanation of how she responded to change. She stated that if there were to be no clear communication regarding the change or a valid explanation from management for the change, her response to the change would be negative. Participant 12 seemed to rely on information adequacy to assess the value the change will add to her work environment. Her explanation implied that a lack of understanding of the rationale behind the change was the primary reason for her negative response. Having limited understanding annoyed Participant 12, as she described

experiencing feelings of irritability and anxiousness. Participant 12 also expressed how she became apprehensive and unproductive. A lack of understanding appeared to have a draining effect on this participant exacerbating her negative feelings.

> *"I am not good with change; I am not very good with change. They have not met with me to discuss the change so that makes me resentful. I can admit that I became really resentful and very confrontational. I need a lot of support and a lot of recognition and a lot of motivation to understand what is happening."* [Participant 13 Line 14 - 18]

Participant 13 shared that, in general, he was not comfortable with change; the repetition of the phrase *"…not good with change"* suggested feelings of insecurity. He accused management of not discussing the change with him. How he worded the phrase implied that he was annoyed with them for not including him in the decision-making processes. He revealed that he became confrontational with management. There was an implicit suggestion that being excluded from the decision-making processes triggered a feeling of resentment, which led to his confrontational behaviour. There was a shift in his text as he described himself as "needy". He explained how he strongly relied on the support, recognition, and motivation of others to help him digest and understand the change. This almost pathological revelation suggested that the participant needed the reassurance of his colleagues that his feelings of resentment were legitimate. Furthermore, feeling marginalised meant he had no say or control over the changes, which implied a certain vulnerability. This could be why he felt he needed more support, recognition, and motivation to cope with the changes. Consequently, it appeared that experiencing exclusion and marginalisation triggered his resentment, which in turn caused him to resist the change.

> *"When change is introduced, I do not take it very well because I feel like they could've communicated with me, and we could have looked at it in various ways. I take it personally. Unfortunately, some of the things are not being introduced properly by*

management so you have to get the information from colleagues. So, to me it is a little bit confusing and frustrating." [Participant 15 Line 20 - 23]

Like Participant 12, Participant 15 also raised existential concerns in explaining how she responded to change. She stated that she did not respond well to change. When probed, she assigned her negative experience of the change to a lack of communication. Her explanation implied that management did not discuss the change with her. Thus, they excluded her and did not allow her to voice her opinion. This made it personal for her. Participant 15 seemed disillusioned as she accused management of not introducing the change properly and revealed how she had to turn to colleagues to clarify the change. Participant 15 expressed feeling confused and marginalised, and it seemed that these feelings emerged due to the lack of communication and information.

Personal Experiential Theme Two: Ideological Constructions of Resistance

This personal experiential theme highlighted how participants experienced ideological inconsistencies, such as an impediment to their academic autonomy and freedom and a cancellation of traditional teaching and learning strategies. Their ideological commitment combined with feelings of being constrained and boxed in played out in behaviour resistance of rebellion and agitation.

"I feel I have lost my individuality and creativity because you have this mould, and you have to do your teaching according to this almost universal standard, and you just lose who you are a bit. My idea is if you have a certain way of doing …obviously you can be corrected and you must develop yourself, but it is almost like there is a standard mould you have to fit into, and it takes out the passion out of teaching because you have to do this now [looking sad and frustrated] and sooner or later you start losing … I think with blackboard and all these technologies, take out the personal of teaching. It's all

good and well to have all these nice platforms that we can do things from and blended learning, but the old method, and I still use it, allowed me to have a personal interaction with students. I can walk to them and sit next to them ask them a question, go to the board, write something up go sit next to them ask them something again so it is that personal … interpersonal communication that is lost almost. I fight it. Yes resist, fight, I resist it. [Participant 3 Line 24 - 39]

When reflecting on his response to change, Participant 3 described a sense of loss. He explained how he experienced the changes as restrictive of his *"…creativity and individuality…".* Drawing on an ideology of traditional teaching methodology, the participant explained that he preferred his teaching methods in the classroom. It was clear that Participant 3 experienced feelings of annoyance and being torn between his own academic belief and value system and the expectations placed on him to adapt and change his teaching practice in the classroom. It seemed that he perceived the change as an interference with his own ideological belief and value system of how teaching and learning in the classroom should take place. His tone when he repeated that he would resist and fight the change conveyed a message of a deep-seated tradition. His reflection further revealed that the change was an inconvenience and represented a constraint on his freedom and autonomy. This was emphasised with the repetition of the phrase, "…*you have this mould, and you have to do your teaching according to this almost universal standard…"* and then again, "…*but it is almost like there is a standard mould you have to fit into to do good teaching…"*. To support his explanation of how change interfered with his traditional teaching methodology, Participant 3 referred to the integration of information and communication technologies as an example. Though he acknowledged that there was a place for development and new improvements, he continued to express intolerance and resistance to the change when using the phrase "…*I still use it"…* [i.e., referring to traditional teaching methods]. There seemed to be no question in this participant's mind that the traditional teaching methodologies were still the best approach to delivering lectures.

"It is always that contraction inside and the first word is always noooo! So that would always be my initial response, but it's internal. It is an internal resistance immediately which I can recognise. If the change is announced in an email, my usual response is to get angry first of course and I guess the same as when my line manager introduces it to us as well. People get so very angry especially if they have no control over any of it you know, not the little things, not anything. When my line manager introduces it, I get angry, and I speak my mind. I also go and think about the change because my head must always be logical so if I do take them on because I don't agree, in my head, it needs to make sense to me and there must be a reason why I am talking to them about it." [Participant 4 Line 32 - 43]

Participant 4 described how she felt the resistance inside her body as a contraction. Using the word *"…noooo! …"* highlighted the intenseness of her resistance to the change. She described how the change would sometimes be *"…announced…"*. Choosing the word *"…announced…"* highlighted an internal experience of exclusion from the decision-making processes or prior discussions. This, she explained, triggered feelings of anger. Her text here implied that she experienced anger because there was no opportunity for her to participate, ask questions or raise her concerns. Participant 4 generalised these feelings of anger and explained that individuals tend to feel angry when they perceive they have lost control. Her explanation alluded to not being included in the decision-making processes or discussions before implementing the change took away the control from academics and, as such, reduced their autonomy. The need to be heard was evident in her explanation of how she took the opportunity to "speak her mind" when her line manager introduced the change. Drawing on rational thinking, Participant 4 also described how she would go home and reflect on the introduced changes as a response. Interestingly, she did not refer to this reflective process as getting to terms with the change but rather as a retaliation strategy. She explained how reflecting and making sense of the change prepared her to voice her resistance. This was evident in the phrase, "… *if I do take them on because I don't agree, in*

my head, it needs to make sense to me, and there must be a reason why I am talking to them about it.”. Thus, she provided a clear rationalisation of her action that being excluded justified the confrontational undertone in her explanation.

> *“Negative, but I will speak up, I will speak up. I am not somebody that will keep quiet because, I just feel we have the right to say something as well, so I will speak up. I will fight it as far as I can and then if I just can't I will just leave it out. I will just leave it and just have to accept it.”* [Participant 16 Line 20 - 23]

Like Participant 15, Participant 16 also described how she responded negatively to change. What was different in Participant 16’s response was how she sounded antagonistic towards those who introduced the change. Detected in her reflection was an underlying tone of aggression. She repeated the phrase “…*I will speak up…”* and it was evident that she felt she was not being heard, which reinforced the idea that she experienced exclusion from the decision-making process. Participant 16’s response of resistance seemed to be embedded in an ideology of collegiality as she described how she felt she had a right to speak up and voice her opinion. She used the phrase *“I will fight it as far as I can…”* which can be viewed as a forceful way to express her disagreement that bordered on feelings of aggression. From her reflection, it was clear that Participant 16 was not open to change, but at the same time, there was no clear rationalisation as to why she was opposed to the change other than a need to be included embedded in an ideological belief system of collegiality and collaboration.

> *“I will voice and say I do not agree with assertiveness, as I feel I also have a foot to stand on even if they do not agree. I will not discard what they say.”* [Participant 19 Line 36 - 38]

Participant 19 described her response to change as one of speaking out and getting her opinion across. She justified her speaking out by mentioning her right to be heard. She seemed to draw on her autonomy as an academic who wanted to be taken seriously. Participant 19 used the word *"assertiveness,"* which reflected her persistence in getting her message across. She also explained that she did not mind if *"…they…"* (i.e., management) disagreed with what she said. Though she stated that she would not reject what *"…they…"* said (i.e., their suggested changes), one did get the impression that she also would not readily accept what they said (i.e., their proposed changes). From her description, there was an overall sense that if she disagreed with the change, she would resist the change.

Personal Experiential Theme Three: Personal Valence

In this personal experiential theme, participants mostly talked about the impact of the change. The theme reflected how participants appeared to categorise the change's impact as personal and work-environment related. There was a sense that the impact was mostly related to their work environment; if there was value to the implemented changes, they would tolerate the change. However, if they perceived the impact negatively, their response would be resistant.

> *"Initially am pushing it away but it depends on the change. It would depend on what the change is. If it is a new thing obviously that would make me immensely resistant because how will it impact me? When that happens, I am going to be demotivated, and freak out because of all the uncertainty. Also, if it is complicating things in our faculty then that is a problem, but if it is other things related to the university, then no I do not care. So, if it is a silly thing that we have to do more of this or that, then I will accept it. No moaning or complaining about it."* [Participant 8 Line 10 - 17]

In her description of how she would respond to the changes participant 8 explained that she tended to resist the change, especially if it was *"a new thing"*. There was a shift in her explanation when she noted that her response would depend on the impact of the change. Participant 8 categorised the change's impact into personal and non-personal. She explained that when the change impacted her personally, she would resist the change, which implied that she considered this as severe. She used words like *"…demotivation…", "…freaking out…"* and *"…uncertainty…"*. Her choice of words indicated the significance of personal impact. It was clear that her response was linked to herself and that she was looking after her interest.

Interestingly, her explanation was that it would be a problem for her if the change had to complicate matters in their faculty. There was a sense that it was more about the indirect impact the change would have on her personally than on the faculty. In other words, if the faculty were to be impacted by the change, it inevitably would impact her. Participant 8 did not care much about change that did not impact her. She explained that if the change was insignificant, *"…if it is a silly thing that we have to do more of this or that …"* she would accept the change. The last sentence in the extract, *"No moaning or complaining about it"*, accentuated her explanation that if the change did not impact her personally, she would not resist it but accept change. This sentence seemed to imply that she would support change that did not impact her personally in a negative way. This was also accentuated in the sentence, *"…but if it is other things related to the university, then no, I do not care."*. When probed about what she meant by *"…she did not care."*, Participant 8 explained that if the change meant that she had to work a little more, she would accept the change.

> *"It corresponds with the resistance. I initially feel very frustrated, but I will not lose sleepless nights on it. It very much depends on what it is. If they are introducing a new way of working. I will be excited. If it is changing in conditions of employment, then I am angry. I speak my mind. I think I am known to speak my mind. I make sure that the*

whole world knows that I do not agree. I do allow them to say why, and I do listen, it is not that I will not listen. They know when I do not agree. They also know that in the end, they will still have my support no matter what. I am a sucker for loyalty. You know you can resist the process I mean, as much as you like but it is not going to work at the end of the day." [Participant 17 Line 20 - 23]

Participant 17 described her response to change as resistant. The participant explained that initially, she would experience frustration when a change was introduced but then continued to present herself as not becoming unravelled by the changes. Like Participant 8, Participant 17's concern was also more focused on how the change will impact her personally. Her explanation suggested that she would accept or resist the change based on whether the impact was personal or work-related. What was interesting about her citation was her explanation of a selective response. Using the word *"new"*, she described that if the changes impacted the *"…way of working…"*, she would welcome the changes *"…I will be excited…"* suggesting she would accept the change. However, if the change impacted her *"…conditions of employment…"*, she would be *"…angry…"* suggesting she would resist the change. To further support her description of selective response, she also performed a degree of self-reflection when explaining that she did communicate to management what she was thinking. The repetition of the phrase *"…speak my mind…"* illustrated a conflict between her not being included in the decision-making process and her need to be heard. Her text accentuated that as an academic, she perceived herself as autonomous and in control when she explained, "*I do allow them to say why, and I do listen…"*. Participant 17 further described how she would communicate her thoughts to management, and she seemed proud to exercise her autonomy as an academic. There was a determination in her voice when she explained, *"I make sure that the whole world knows that I do not agree."*, which evidenced that voicing her opinion was important to her. Her text also revealed a shift and highlighted that she struggled with setting aside her negative feelings as she realised, they were not constructive. She acknowledged that, ultimately, she would accept the

changes and described herself as a loyal staff member. She ended her explanation by rationalising that resisting change was not constructive. Her text, however, did not leave the impression that she was fully embracing the change. There seemed to be an inner struggle brought on by a sense of loyalty to management or the institution.

Personal Experiential Theme Four: The Silence of the Lambs

Participants articulated their response to change in this personal experiential theme as keeping quiet and not voicing their opinion. The theme was formed around the concept of not speaking out. It was suggested a disagreeableness and a dislike of the change thus, using silence as a tool of resistance. Participants' perception that their voice did not matter or had no impact was also highlighted, which left them feeling excluded.

> *"I am quite a perfectionist when I get up in the morning, I plan my day and if anything happens as something changes, I get irritated. I do not like it at all. So, it takes me a while to adapt to things changing at work or during the day. I usually avoid talking to management about change, I try to get used to the idea myself."* [Participant 10 Line 42 - 48]

Participant 10 described and viewed herself as a perfectionist. She explained how she planned her days. This provided her with organised and structured days that supported her disposition (i.e., perfectionism). She expressed how she felt irritated with the changes as they disrupted her planning and her (i.e., organised) world. This suggested an internal resistance to the change. Participant 10 avoided engaging with management talking about the change and explained how she tried to make sense of the change by herself. This was evidenced when she explained, "*I try to get used to the idea myself.*". Her response showed an attempt to disguise that she did not welcome sudden imposed change, but she also seemed to avoid confrontational conversations. Further to this, considering her perfectionist

personality disclosure, it was also possible that she did not want management to think she was not managing or embracing the change. Her text left the impression that, in the end, she does process the change and adapt to it "…*it takes me a while to adapt to things changing at work or during the day."*. However, it was doubtful if the adaptation was because she really accepted the change or if she just made peace with knowing that she could not do something to keep the status quo.

> *"Usually when we have our board meetings, I do not say anything even if I disapprove of it. Silence. If it is decisions that affect me only, then like I said I might just feel quiet, but if it is decisions that affect everybody and there is nothing you can do about it then I am also quiet. I had an experience where I had to take on another portfolio that I was worried about and I felt like I might not be able to cope with it or I might not have the knowledge or expertise for it, but I did not say anything."* [Participant 11 Line 27 - 33]

Participant 11 used silence as a tool to mask her resistance as a response to change. Interestingly, she explained that when the change seemed only to affect her, she would "*feel"* quiet (i.e., internal resistance). However, if it potentially affected others, she *"is quiet"* (i.e., experiencing powerlessness). It appeared that she did not always agree with the change imposed by those with authority. As a result, she experienced feelings of powerlessness, "…*there is nothing you can do about it…"* and she kept quiet because she felt she had no choice but to accommodate or tolerate the change. These feelings were further evident in the text when she referred to instances where she attended the board meetings and did not speak out, suggesting that she might have perceived herself as outnumbered and thus powerless. To further support her response of silence, Participant 11 explained how she had to take over and manage an additional portfolio and how she was worried that she would not cope due to a lack of knowledge, but that she kept quiet and did not speak up. Her talk made it clear that the added portfolio role was an unexpected change, and the participant was not consulted or comfortable taking on the role. However, she

explained that she did not question or object to the change. She was not open to taking on the role because she did not think she could manage the portfolio. Her explanation implied that she passively resisted the change, "…*but I did not say anything."*. The participant experienced a key challenge highlighted in her text as she did not think that voicing her concerns would make a difference in the decision that was made.

> *"I think kind of like an avoidance feeling. I avoid having conversations until I have worked everything out in my head. I will also usually have a conversation with my partner at home to figure it all out. I also experience more temper tantrums and tend to exaggerate small issues; I tend to be a lot more emotional"* [Participant 20 Line 20 - 23]

This participant reflected on how she avoided talking about the change and referred to *"…an avoidance feeling…"*. She further described how she took time to rationalise the changes for herself. Part of this rationalisation proses was to discuss her experience of the changes with her partner *"…to figure it all out."*. She also explained how she experienced *"…more temper tantrums…"*. Her explanation suggested that even though she took steps to process the changes rationally, she did not always manage to contain the frustration triggered by the introduced changes, which resulted in a build-up of emotions and *"…temper tantrums…"*. Participant 20 also talked about amplifying small issues and being more emotional. Clearly, the participant experienced challenging feelings linked to the changes, which impeded the process of making sense of and accepting the change. This acting-out behaviour suggested that it served as a channel for her internal resistance to the change.

Group Experiential Theme Two: Response as Acceptance

This theme was formed around three concepts: ideological beliefs about the work environment and respect for hierarchical structures, offering personality characteristics as reasons for accepting the change, and the cognitive dimension's role in accepting the change.

Personal Experiential Theme One: Ideological Constructions of Acceptance

In this personal experiential theme participants' talk implied that they will accept the change because of their ideological pre-disposition in the hierarchical structure of the institution. They explained that even when they disapproved of the changes, they were committed to complying with what was expected from them by their managers.

> *"I think a lot depends on where you are at. I am not wild about change, but I will always go with the change because I believe change is good, but change is not always good. It depends on the level of management. If I am told about change by for example my line manager, I often will argue with him about it and we have that understanding and then I am the kind of person who doesn't like rocking the boat, so once I have argued with him and I have given him my feelings and my input and we discuss, I accept and walk away. I am very old-fashioned; I accept authority and I am not a confrontational person. I will never go ahead and go against instruction from the top, I will verbalise what I feel, but I think in general… it is my generation. We were taught… well, I was taught in the dark ages, that you respect authority, but internally I will have my own opinions."* [Participant 5 Line 31 - 42]

In describing her response to change, Participant 5 wanted to present herself as someone who believed that change can be positive and that she accepted the change, but

then contradicted herself by explaining that change was not always good. She used the phrase *"I am not wild about change…"* to support her claim that she did not particularly like change. What was significant about her explanation of how she responded to change was how her response appeared to be linked to an ideological justification for how she was brought up not to oppose authority and to have respect for those in more authoritative positions. Thus, her acceptance of the change was brought on by her awareness of an inferior position in relation to the hierarchal structure of the institution. Reflecting on how she was brought up, she described herself as not being confrontational. She utilised euphemisms such as being "*old-fashioned*" and being "*taught in the dark ages*" to support an internalised ideology of hierarchical domination (i.e., where adults traditionally are the dominant class) of having respect for authority. She further generalised these attributes to all individuals of the same age, implying that individuals who fall within her generation would accept the changes because they were socialised to acknowledge and respect those in positions of domination. It appeared that to her that acceptance of the changes was equal to having respect.

Interestingly, the contradiction in her explanation suggested that she did not truly accept the changes as she noted how she internally reserved a space for her own opinion. Her inner struggle to accept the change was further evident in her explanation of how she argued her point with her line manager if she disagreed with the change. She justified this response and explained that they often "…*argued*" about the changes, but then she reverted to accepting the change out of respect. This finding was evidenced in the phrase, "…*so once I have argued with him, and I have given him my feelings and my input, and we discuss, I accept and walk away."*. Though there appeared to be an acceptance of the change because of feeling inferior in social status, there seemed to be a subtle element of resistance emerging from the participant's text.

"It depends on how the change is presented to me, but sometimes it creates excitement, sometimes insecurities, and sometimes a sense of you're not sure what is coming. But I comply. Normally I have to give my piece and from the way I see things this is how it is, but if some managers did not think it is appropriate, I accept it, but I do point out the challenges. So, I make my point, but then I will comply." [Participant 7 Line 35 - 40]

Participant 7 described his response to the changes as compliant. He explained how change unleashed different emotions for him, such as excitement, insecurities, and uncertainty. The text suggested that his compliance did not mean he agreed with the change. Like Participant 5, Participant 7 also drew on a belief system of respecting hierarchical structures. However, with assertiveness in his voice, he explained that it was important for him to share his viewpoint. He seemed less concerned with how managers would receive his perspectives and whether they agreed with him compared to Participant 5. His text suggested that he has already accepted that his suggestions or viewpoint might not be accepted and that, regardless, he will comply. There was a sense that what was implied was that he knew his place in the hierarchical structure.

Personal Experiential Theme Two: Dispositional Acceptance

In this personal experiential theme, participants discussed how their personality traits, values, and belief systems affected how they reacted to the changes. This theme was developed around the dispositional perceptions of the participants and how their perceptions affected how they reacted to the changes.

"Hesitant. I would say I am always hesitant, but I would say I am willing to listen to what's going to be implemented, how will I be affected and when you have that buy-in you know then I will support it, but as long as I know beforehand, it shouldn't come as

a surprise, you walk in one day and things have changed. I think because I am a very organised person you know, I like to know that there is a strategy to be implemented, I want to be in control, and with a change you know it is almost like you can't control it so you have to learn to kind of accept because you cannot always control things. So, I have to adapt, my personality I tend to get … this may sound bad, a little more aggressive, I am not as tolerant as I use to be, a little more agitated and then I have to say to myself, this is not how you normally act, just take a deep breath, just become a little collected. At the end of the day, I think sometimes you cannot really control certain types of changes it is going to happen; you need to adapt to it, make the best of it." [Participant 6 Line 44 - 60]

Participant 6's reflection on her response to change was centred around a conscientiousness of being organised and a need to feel in control. She indicated that she would need more information regarding the changes before deciding to accept or resist the change. Participant 6 self-analysed her response to change and explained that initially, she would be hesitant but open to change. She did not like being caught off guard but wanted to maintain feelings of security and control. This was highlighted in the phrase, *"…as long as I know beforehand, it shouldn't come as a surprise…"*. She also emphasised a need to know that management had a strategy for implementing the change. There was thus an implicit suggestion that she was concerned about the impact of the change on her work environment. Her motivation for being more informed seemed to stem from a place of self-centeredness as she explained that the information would help her to assess how the change would affect her personally. In her self-analysis, Participant 6 linked her need to feel in control and secure to her disposition of being an organised person. Her analysis was significant because she spoke in the third person when she explained that acceptance was not her choice response. Controlling her environment was not always possible. Therefore, she would need to change her personality, and accepting change was thus learned behaviour *"…, so you have to learn to kind of accept because you cannot always control*

things. So, I have to adapt, my personality…”. Her perception of having to adapt her *“…personality…”* seemed to present some inner tension to Participant 6 as she talked about experiencing feelings of aggression and intolerance. This highlighted a drive to adhere to the status quo in an attempt to conserve stability and order, restoring a sense of control and security. It was also possible that she wanted to maintain an obligational commitment to the higher education institution where she was employed.

> *“I am an optimist, but I am a realist, so I want to think the change is for the better. Take it step by step, day by day because if you think too far ahead you feel overwhelmed, and you are not going to get there. The important thing for me is that you don’t become negative and that you believe in the system. I do not question things generally. I am perhaps the result of a realistic upbringing or a work ethic so not always a good thing, also I think I only internalise the changes later on so the moment that it is introduced it makes me feel uncomfortable, but I will do what I have to, I will not resist.”* [Participant 9 Line 14 - 18]

Like Participant 6, Participant 9 also relied on a realistic, optimistic disposition in talking about her response to change. She did not seem to feel optimistic about the changes but indicated that because of her disposition (i.e., optimistic realist), she wanted to believe that the change would be positive. With reference to the previous personal experiential theme, Participant 9 revealed that she also relied on an ideological pre-disposition as she explained that she did not question decisions and referred to her *“…realistic upbringing…”* and *“…work ethic…”* which implied that not accepting the change was not an option for her. Her text did not leave the impression that she was fully embracing the change as she noted that change was *“…not always a good thing…”*. She seemed to experience an inner tension as she explained that change made her feel uncomfortable on the one hand but on the other hand, she noted that she would not resist it, “…*I will do what I have to, I will not resist.”*. It was thus possible that Participant 9 de-emphasised her personal values (i.e., values that were

important to her) and accepted the change that reflected a commitment to the higher education institution where she was employed. It further highlighted a need to conserve order and stability.

Conclusion

This chapter provided valuable data on how participants responded to the changes in their work environment. The findings showed that participants' responses to the changes were mainly linked to their perceptions of the shift in governance, ideological orientations, and dispositions. Two group experiential themes were identified when exploring the responses: that of resistance and that of acceptance. The next chapter will discuss and contextualize the findings within the broader literature and research from the previous chapter.

Chapter Nine

Discussion

Response to Change

Responses to organisational or work environment change can be complex. Literature provided several theoretical models, such as Lewin's (1951) 3-Step Model and Kotter's (1995) 8-Step Model, to explain systems and structural approaches to change, and they emphasise the different stages in the change process and the importance of individuals' participation (Egan & Fjermestad, 2005). These theoretical models mostly fail to explain why individuals would choose to accept or resist change. In other words, what motivates their choice of response?

Responses to change could be defined in many ways depending on the context of the change. Exploring how individuals talked about change provided a sense of how they perceived and processed the change for themselves. How individuals respond to change could be linked to their perceptions, beliefs, and feelings. Further, it is postulated that their understanding affects how they respond. Variables influencing their response could include how the change was introduced and their personalities (Oreg, 2006). Research has shown that individuals' perceptions of the change were critical drivers for successful implementation. Kiefer (2005) argued that change was generally experienced emotionally and therefore evoked different reactions and behaviours. Common responses reported in research studies were responses of resistance to change, cynicism about the change, and openness and acceptance of the change. Researchers have also reported that perceptions of change were multi-dimensional and that these perceptions had affective, cognitive, and behavioural components attached to them (Oreg, 2006; Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002). This being stated, Cloutier and Langley (2013) postulated that there needed to be more research

on how individuals respond to institutional pressures and contentions. It is important to note that though numerous seminal contributions have been made and that prior research reported on the personal experiential themes identified in this study, recent research was lacking. This chapter discussed the findings of participants' articulated responses to the change they experienced and linked the findings to literature and the broader research context.

The following group experiential themes were identified when the responses of participants to the change they experienced in their work environments were explored:

- Response as resistance and
- Response as acceptance.

Group Experiential Theme One: Response as Resistance

The change introduced without providing reasons for the changes to staff members was predestined for resistance. Academics who perceived that the change did not serve their best interest will find it difficult to accept the change, especially if their academic value systems rooted in their ideological beliefs were no longer acknowledged. The Roy adaptation model provides a framework for understanding human behaviour as a response to stress. When applying this lens to response as resistance, participants in this study did talk to how they perceived the change environment as negative (i.e., stimuli from environment entered the regulator subsystem). Referring to the adaptive modes of self-concept group identity mode that refers to identity integrity and the interdependence mode that refers to feelings of security and being respected and valued, an explanation of how the regulator subsystem assessed the stimuli that entered as negative that in turn triggered an adaptive response of resistance.

The word "resistance" originated from the mid-14th century French word *"resistance"*, which evolved from the Latin word *"resistere",* which means to oppose or contest something (Online Etymology Dictionary, n.d.). When individuals are confronted with change and uncertain developments, resistance is a likely and instinctive process (Bringselius, 2014). Resistance as a response could comprise affective, cognitive, and behavioural dimensions. The cognitive dimension refers to how an individual thinks about the change, while the affective dimension refers to how they feel about it. The behavioural dimension refers to how they react to the change (Oreg, 2006; Piderit, 2000). Traditionally research perceived resistance to change as a phenomenon seated within an individual driven by a fear of losing job security, status, familiarity, stability, and identity (Shimoni, 2017).

The Minnesota theory of work adjustment provides a psychological framework that explains and emphasises the importance of achieving a balance between the individual and their work environment. Thus, the interaction between individuals and their work environment can elicit behaviour such as resistance or acceptance (Dawis, 2004).

Personal Experiential Theme One: Information Inadequacy and Exclusion

Information adequacy refers to tangible information circulated to a given group of individuals, coupled with their perceptions of whether they feel adequately informed (Armenakis et al., 2007; Holt et al., 2007). When managers or those making the decisions assume that employees will understand the reasons for the change, they risk causing employees to experience feelings of uncertainty which could lead to confusion and insecurity. This could lead to employees resisting the change (Darmawan & Azizha, 2020; Rosenfeld et al., 2004). Thus, when change is associated with losing control, autonomy, traditions and security, engaging in resistance behaviour could be perceived as a calculated response to protect the individual. Extant literature has found that receiving adequate information correlated with an openness toward the change, while inadequate information

correlated with negative feelings and a higher possibility that individuals will resist the change (Oreg, 2006; Wanberg & Banas, 2000). Vakola (2014, p.199) postulated that inadequate information might cause "one's cognitive and affective processes to be negatively affected towards change.".

The findings in the personal experiential theme confirmed what extent literature reported and correlated with personal experiential theme three in chapter 6 of participants' experience of change as a lack of communication and transparency. In describing their response to resistance, participants' talk centred around a lack of sufficient information on why the change was necessary. This caused them to feel removed from the line of communication channels and confused. Furthermore, they talked about feelings of resentment, and it was clear that their experience of being uninformed resulted in precarity and exclusion. What was foregrounded was how the decision-makers superseded the voices of the academic professionals. Participants' descriptions alluded to how they experienced a reduced influence over academic matters and the subjection to new management.

When information needs to be clarified, or the message is not acceptable and contradictory, it can result in individuals misinterpreting the information, leading to misconceptions. When management seems to have myopia and cannot sufficiently explain the reasons for the changes, it will most likely lead to individuals resisting the change (del Val & Fuentes, 2003).

When analysing the data, it was essential to pay attention to the suggested shift in power as participants' talk alluded to a need to voice their opinions and feel part of the decision-making process. This alluded to an ethical norm of collegiality which referred to embracing the presence of the other. According to Ramsden (2002, p. 23) Collegiality was commonly associated with ideas of academic freedom and a sense of community and ownership' by academics over their affairs. Found in participants' talk in this study was how

they experienced the decision-making processes as one-sided *"It is that concept of participation…"* and *"They have not met with me to discuss the change, so that makes me resentful."*. What mattered to the participants amid the change was that they felt a sense of inclusion and that, as academics, they could make a contribution. It could therefore be argued that because participants felt discombobulated and marginalised, they responded with resistance. Referring to Kleinman's explanatory model just as a power imbalance can exist between health care providers and their patients influencing the patients' experience of their illness (Kleinman, 1981). The same can be applied to the academic who experience a power imbalance when they perceive they are being marginalised and excluded. This can elicit behaviour of resistance.

Personal Experiential Theme Two: Ideological Constructions of Resistance

Existing in many sectors of life was a division between traditional viewpoints supporting the status quo and open-minded viewpoints welcoming change. For decades, academics socialised and collaborated in the corridors of traditional academic institutions. As referred to in chapter two, academic systems were systems rich in culture and discipline, which provided the academic with an identity that embraced traditional beliefs, values, and norms, for example belonging to a community of scholars and having academic freedom (Akerlind & Kayrooz, 2003). Traditionally, academics generally functioned in three dimensions:

1. Their norms, beliefs, and values regarding their teaching and research practice.
2. Their academic identities linked to their traditional academic ideologies.
3. Their interpretation of introduced change and how the change will impact the first two dimensions.

Chandler et al. (2002) confirmed that it was not so much the change itself that seemed to be the challenge, but rather how it was implemented that academics would resist. Kleinman's explanatory model consider cultural and social factors that shape individuals'

behaviour to change. Though the model is a framework for understanding illness experiences, applying it as a lens to the resistance behaviour of academics can support understanding of how deep-seated beliefs and norms can influence behaviour (Lynch & Medin, 2006).

In this personal experiential theme, a key finding of participants' lived experiences reflected how participants were invested in their traditional academic culture of autonomy and collegiality. The findings further highlighted how they experienced a paradigm shift due to the changes, for example, not being included in decision-making processes. Key perceptions that were highlighted impeded their academic autonomy and freedom and how their traditional culture of collegiality and collaboration was being challenged. The talk of the participants strongly suggested that they dislike being undermined as professionals.

Research evidenced that individuals resisting organisational change stems from competing ideological beliefs and values and their commitment to these ideological frames of reference (Nel et al., 2011; Yılmaz & Kılıçoğlu, 2013; Robbins et al., 2018). Thus, it can be argued that norm and value systems were significant sources of debate regarding decision-making and implementing change in organisations because the underlying premise was that everyone involved in these processes would do so based on their norm and value systems (Kezar & Eckel, 2002). A key finding reported in the literature pointed to how higher education institutions were being managed and how the ideologies of the neo-liberal commercialisation and marketisation of higher education were inherently different from the traditional ideologies of academics. More precisely, it was thought to be insensitive to academic reasoning since it was oblivious to the conventional professional function of academics (i.e., the set of values, norms, and rules that are inherent to academics, for example, teaching, research, and having autonomy and academic freedom (Battilana, 2011). This new form of governance was known for excluding academics from collegial decision-

making processes and replacing academics' traditional autonomy and inclusivity with top-down management approaches (Marginson, 2000).

Academics have become increasingly disempowered due to higher education institutions' shift and adoption of a managerialist ideology. Historically, academics had a substantial role in the decision-making processes of these institutions (Teelken & Deem, 2013). Barnett (2000) stated that tenured lecturers would recognise it when they were subjected to imposed mechanisms of mindless tick-box processes in the name of accountability that questions their traditional ideologies. Following processes that made no sense to academics could lead to feelings of frustration. When participants in this study applied their existing ideological schemas regarding their work environment to the introduced change, they described how they felt frustrated and angry. They felt a sense of loss and experienced exclusion from their work environment. They also seemed to develop animosity towards management. Green (2003) stated that frustration was experienced when an individual's goals were blocked. Therefore, it was more the overly bureaucratic way in which the processes were operationalised than the fact that they were being put in place. Additionally, there was a lack of appropriate, open, and transparent communication.

For the participants in this study, not being included in the decision-making processes signified a loss of their voice and academic autonomy that directly impacted their culture of collegiality and collaboration to contribute to decisions made (Abramov, 2012). It was clear that participants valued their autonomy and collegial culture. This allowed them to participate and voice their opinions as academic professionals (Bennett, 1998). As a result, their responses, particularly the link between feelings of exclusion and a desire to reclaim their sense of autonomy and collegiality, provided a compelling explanation for why participants would choose to respond with resistance.

Personal Experiential Theme Three: Personal Valence

In this personal experiential theme, participants spoke about the impact of the change. They categorised the change into two categories, namely personal impact and work environment impact. This theme discovered how their response to resistance depended on their assessment of the impact and perceived risk the change may hold for them. Personal valences were thought to be synonymous with self-interest. Armenakis et al. (2007) postulated that when employees were confronted with a change in their work environment, they would evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of the change. They tend to resist the change if their evaluation shows no personal benefit. Madsen (2008) agreed with Armenakis et al. (2007) that when individuals perceived introduced change to work in their favour, they would be more willing to perceive the change positively. Anderson (2008) also agrees with Madsen (2008) and Armenakis et al. (2007), stating that employees will adapt to change if they perceive the change to benefit them. The application of the Roy adaptation model supports Anderson (2008); Madsen (2008) and Armenakis et al. (2007) as it acknowledges that individuals may exhibit both resistance and acceptance behaviours of adaption depending on how they perceive the stimuli from the environment.

The collective lived experiences of two participants in this study suggested that self-interest was a salient factor contributing to their response to resistance. They used words and phrases like *"…demotivation…", "…freaking out…"*, *"…uncertainty…"* and *"…angry…"* to describe and explain how the introduced change made them feel. What was foregrounded was an implicit concern about how the change will impact their working conditions, their status as academics, and their future at the institution. From the findings, it would seem that they perceived the change as a potential threat to their current role and familiar situation. Nel et al. (2011) pointed out that individuals, in general, would resist change if they perceived the change as a threat. In this study, participants might have perceived the personal impact of the change as a threat to the status quo, their professional

identity, and traditional territories (Chandler, 2013). Participants' talk further implied that they would prefer to remain in a predictable environment where familiar ways of doing things were followed instead of a changing environment that could not guarantee a positive and better outcome for them personally (Vakola, 2014). Nel et al. (2011) advocated that if individuals perceived they were being obstructed to continue doing things the way they used to, they could start to feel insecure, incompetent, and powerless, which could further lead them to resist the change. Greenwood and Hinings (1996) agreed that individuals were invested in their ideological beliefs, which supported a perception that individuals would protect their interests and the status quo of how things are being done.

In higher education institutions, the only opportunity for academics to experience autonomy and a sense of control over processes was when they were allowed to participate in decision-making. The study's findings confirmed what was found in the literature, that academics had an impetus to negotiate their roles, identity, and autonomy. If they perceived their interests were threatened, they would likely respond with resistance to the change. Differently interpreted when the change leaves an individual feeling vulnerable and that their rights and beliefs were not protected could trigger a response of resistance.

Personal Experiential Theme Four: "Silence of the Lambs"

Having a voice empowers individuals to express their opinions, feelings, and concerns (Weiss & Morrison, 2019). This personal experiential theme considered how participants in this study used silence to respond to change to indicate their uncertainty, dislike, and disapproval.

The successful management of academia lies in acknowledging their collegial culture, which in turn could be viewed as relational and acknowledging the presence of others. Found in literature during the Roman times, the concept *of …collegium…"* embraced

the "…*principle of association and shared leadership…"* (Weinberg & Smith, 2012, p. 8). When referring to collegial governance, Dix (2003) recognised a collective voice that engaged in rich dialogue respectfully. This did not mean that all individuals were constantly in agreement but instead emphasised the inclusiveness of each member (Tapper & Palfreyman, 2000). Effective communication and transparency play an important role in Kleinman's explanatory model of adjusting to change. This aligns with the Minnesota theory of work adjustment that provides a psychological framework explaining how individuals interact with their work environment and adjust. According to this theory, if individuals feel excluded and uncertain, they will experience a disruption and an imbalance between them and their work environment. Which could explain their behaviour of resistance.

First, the findings regarding participants' reactions to changes in this personal experiential theme echoed the personal experiential theme: the erosion of collegiality by excluding the academic describing participants' feelings of marginalisation and exclusion from workplace decision-making processes in chapter seven. The study of Sahlin and Eriksson-Zetterquist, (2016) confirmed this finding as they observed how the academic voice that played a fundamental part in the daily operations of the Swedish universities was being more and more excluded.

In this personal experiential theme, participants responded with silence because they did not perceive that voicing their opinions, concerns, and contributions mattered and that voicing their opinions would not make a difference to management's outcome and final decisions. Furthermore, their talk alluded that, because they did not share the same management ideologies, they needed time to process the change to try and make sense of it. What was implied in their talk was a perception that management had control and power. Existing studies argued that employees responded with silence mainly because of the hierarchical structure representing the distribution of power and a fear of a negative impact on their positions or careers (Bryant, 2003; Knoll et al., 2021). When probed about why silence seemed an appropriate response, it appeared that participants were struggling with

the introduced changes because they did not share the same management ideologies. For example, they stated: "…*if anything happens as something changed, I get irritated. I do not like it at all."* and *"Usually when we have our board meetings, I do not say anything even if I disapprove of it. Silence…"*.

Silence as a response can be associated with respect for others, a sense of caution, judgment, or calculated resistance and has been described as "…acts of distancing, denial, and avoidance." (Bryant, 2003, p. 3). It often starts when individuals, for various reasons, choose not to challenge decisions or differences, and it is difficult to discern between the various reasons why individuals would choose silence as a response. When an individual does not use their voice (i.e., speech does not occur), it is not easy to assess their thoughts and feelings. Pinder and Harlos (2001, p. 334) defined employee silence as

"…the withholding any form of genuine expression about the individual's behavioural, cognitive and affective evaluations of his or her organisational circumstances to persons who are perceived to be capable of effecting change or redress."

Pinder and Harlos (2001) further conceptualised silence as passive behaviour and categorised silence as acquiescent silence and quiescent silence. Acquiescent silence referred to withholding ideas and opinions; thus, the individual disengaged and made no effort to get involved to try and change the situation. Quiescent silence, on the other hand, referred to a deliberate omission to avoid any consequences of speaking up. Participants responded with silence due to an underlying fear that voicing their concerns might harm their careers. Thus, their response of silence could be interpreted as an acquiescent silence as they seemed to disengage and did not exert any effort to engage with management.

It can also be argued that participants intentionally disengaged as an act of passive resistance by withholding their voices. Bovey and Hede (2001) referred to passive covert responses, such as withdrawing or avoiding and passive overt responses, such as

observing, waiting, or refraining. The response of silence in this study could thus be perceived as a deliberate passive act of appearing to comply but with the intent to discreetly maintain a certain level or feeling of control (Prasad & Prasad, 2000). On the other hand, the response could be interpreted as delaying or waiting for behaviour to give them time to observe and assess the impact of the change.

Group Experiential Theme Two: Response as Acceptance

The most frequent behavioural response to change referred to in literature was resisting change (del Val & Fuentes, 2003). On the other hand, acceptance of change was depicted as "change readiness" or as part of the change management process. According to Armenakis et al. (2007) change readiness can be described as an individual's cognitive evaluation to assess to what extent they will support or resist the change. Thus, an individual's decision to accept or resist the change will depend on their positive or negative reactiveness. Individuals who were more open to change would be more susceptible to accepting the change than those who were not. Bovey and Hede (2001) found that employees' acceptance of change derives from four dimensions: "1) openly expressive support; 2) concealed support; 3) active support, and 4) passive support.". This study highlighted the aspect of the acceptance of change linked to the subjective ideological orientations of the participants, their commitment to the institution, and their dispositions.

While most reviewed literature referred to resistance as a response to change, a few studies reported a correlation between commitment and acceptance of the change (Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002). Some reported findings linked acceptance to being tolerant of ambiguity, self-esteem, optimism and resilience to acceptance (Avey et al., 2008). In contrast, other studies suggested that personality traits predispose individuals to accept change, such as extraversion and openness to experience (Vakola et al., 2004).

Personal Experiential Theme One: Ideological Constructions of Acceptance

In this personal experiential theme, participants relied on ideological predispositions. Even though they objected to the adjustments, they said they were dedicated to doing what was required and would do so. Just as opposition to change can have roots in an individual's ideological ideas, accepting the change is situated within the context of ideological convictions. Conversely, the compilation of individual perceptions and experiences of change depends on the institutional ideologies they uphold and the personal ideologies they have been culturally socialised in (Oreg, 2006; Oreg, 2003; Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002).

Participants in this study rooted their response in an ideological orientation of respect for those in positions of authority. In this personal experiential theme, they first explained how they found it difficult to accept the introduced changes but then continued to explain how they would accept the change. The reasons participants provided were "…*brought up to not oppose authority and having respect for those in more authoritative positions…"* and *"…if some managers did not think it is appropriate, I accept it…"*. This finding suggested that even though they felt justifiable reasons to disagree with the change, they chose to accept it using an ideological lens to rationalise their response. In Baek (2010), an individual can simultaneously hold a positive and negative attitude toward a phenomenon. As a result, specific ideologies may activate the perception, causing an individual to have contradictory feelings toward a construct, such as change. Participants explained how they were raised to respect society's hierarchical structures and accepted the change. According to the socialisation theory, an individual could be socialised into certain shared norms and values. These embedded values and norms then further serve as a framework for the individual to make decisions. Thus, it referred to a social psychological process whereby an individual accepted the value and norm systems of the group (Turner, 1991). Participants in this study explained that they were raised not to oppose authority but to respect them. Respect has been defined as honouring individuals in seniority positions or authority figures. Institutional

respect refers to respect for those in positions of authority representing the institution (Dillon, 2022).

Ideological hierarchies have a long history and continue to exist in especially corporate organisations. Georges and Romme (2021, p. 5) referred to four types of hierarchical structures: a ladder of authority; a ladder of responsibility; a ladder of ideology, and a ladder of status. The ladder of authority was described as *a "sequence of people (assigned to roles) with formal authority to make decisions"*. In contrast, the ladder of responsibility was described as *a "sequence of decision/task domains to which people have an intrinsic sense of obligation and commitment"*. The ladder of status was described as a *"sequence of levels constructed by people in terms of perceived differences in, e.g., seniority, age, experience or expertise"* and the ladder of ideology as a *"sequence of levels in which people establish themselves as leaders by invoking an ideology to justify the hierarchical relationships between higher and lower levels"*. The ladder of status can be conceptualised as how individuals in a social or work environment are ranked. Usually, they are socially constructed according to age, social standing, and professional position. Others traditionally perceived individuals with a higher ranking as having a higher status. The ladder of authority differentiates between the levels and the power individuals have. For example, individuals with a higher level of authority will have more power to make decisions. The ladder of ideology thus refers to prevailing values and belief systems through which individuals make sense of their social environment and sustain their values and belief systems.

Found in this study was how participants mostly drew on a ladder of status, authority, and ideology when responding to the change. Drawing on these constructs supported them in making sense of the change and accepting it even if they disagreed, possibly reducing feelings of uncertainty and supporting participants to maintain the status quo. This finding implied a univalent attitude in which participants' attitude of respect overrides their negative

feelings about the change. Thus, their ideological orientations provided standardised interpretations through which they could make sense of the changes in their work environment and, as such, reduced their feelings of uncertainty.

Personal Experiential Theme Two: Dispositional Acceptance

Individuals' perceptions regarding their disposition play a role in their experiences of organisational change and how they choose to respond and behave towards the change (Vakola et al., 2013). Dispositions refer to motivational orientations, personality traits, psychological states, and personal values (Judge et al., 1998). Judge et al. (1998) were the first to refer to how dispositions such as a positive self-concept and risk tolerance can be good predictors of an individual's ability to manage change and that it mostly had to do with how an individual perceives themselves in their social environment.

This personal experiential theme confirmed what was found in the literature and revealed how participants' acceptance of the changes were linked to their perceived dispositions. Participants first expressed how they experienced the change as undesirable, in other words, their expressions implied that they felt resistance to change. Evidence of this found in the text were words and phrases they used such as "*hesitant", "…how will I be affected …"*; "…*I tend to get a little more aggressive*…"; *"Taking it step by step, day by day because if you think too far ahead you feel overwhelmed…"* and *"…the moment that it is introduced it makes me feel uncomfortable…"*. However, the text also revealed how their dispositional perceptions, especially their personality traits and ideologies linked to their academic identities, supported their final chosen response as acceptance. This was evident in the text as they used phrases such as

"…you have to learn to accept because you cannot always control things. So, I have to adapt my personality…At the end of the day, I think sometimes you cannot control certain

types of changes it is going to happen; you need to adapt to it and make the best of it." and *"I am an optimist, but I am a realist, so I want to think the change is for the better. I do not question things generally; I am perhaps the result of a realistic upbringing or a work ethic…but I will do what I must; I will not resist."*

It is postulated here that an apprehensiveness to change does not necessarily mean that individuals will resist change. Therefore, the aforementioned should be considered in the context of how the participant's perceived dispositions and ideological values influenced their openness to the incursion of change. It can be argued that their openness to accept the changes stemmed from a need to maintain their control and autonomy. When individuals perceive their values to be threatened, they could prescribe to the status quo in an attempt to conserve stability. In other words, they could engage in compliance behaviour, such as accepting change even if they do not agree for the sake of tradition, security, and stability (Sverdijk & Oreg, 2009). Schwartz's theory of personal values referred to conservation values that emphasised the prescribed status quo and the preservation of social order, security, and the avoidance of threats. Conservation values embrace values such as conformity, compliance, and tradition in an attempt to maintain stability (Schwartz,1992, 2005). In this study, participants implied that they would accept the change and cooperate with those in management because this was what they needed to do to feel they were in control and to conserve order. Because imposed change implies deviating from the status quo by introducing different ideas and processes that the individual could experience as a threat to their autonomy and control will, according to Sverdijk and Oreg (2009), resist the change because of the perceived threat it holds. However, these individuals could also respond by accepting the change as they may feel predisposed to maintaining the social order and would thus comply with those in authoritative positions. Kwang et al. (2005) mean individuals whose values agree with conservation were more likely to engage in adaptive behaviour as they seek solutions and preserve the status quo.

Also found in this personal experiential theme was how participants seemed to experience internal conflict between their values and imposed change. This was evident in how they spoke about the uncomfortable feelings they experienced regarding the change. Experiencing internal conflicts is not a new phenomenon in psychology and is central to most theories. Examples are behaviourism, humanism, and psychodynamics, to name but a few. It is defined as a subjective experience of that which is incompatible. A study by Sverdlik (2012) found that when an individual emphasises a specific value, also referred to as value priorities; they would be more inclined to respond to their subjective interpretation of what they experience. Thus, they tend to "… show a clear preference for one value over the contrasting one." (Sverdlik, 2012, p. 41). Furthermore, their behaviour tends to correspond with the value they perceive as more important. In other words, they would emphasise the value they prefer while de-emphasising the opposing value.

In contrast to Sverdlik's study, this study suggested that participants chose to de-emphasise their personal values (i.e., values that were important to them) to conserve the stability in their work environment and preserve their feelings of control and autonomy (Sverdijk & Oreg, 2009). It was suggested that the relationship between openness to change and the conservation of values played a role in the participants' choice of responding to change as acceptance.

Conclusion

This chapter provided insight into the various responses of participants to the changes they encountered. Resistance was prominently featured as a default response to unjustified and unexplained change. Their opposition was motivated by the exclusion of their academic voices from decision-making processes and feelings of exclusion and marginalization. Secondly, they responded with acceptance of the changes, which was rooted in their ideological orientation of having respect for those in positions of authority and

whom they perceived as having higher status. The next chapter will discuss and contextualize the findings of how participants coped with the changes.

Chapter Ten

Findings

Coping with Change

From previous chapters, it can be derived that academics have been exposed to work-related pressure and ideological discomfort, causing them to experience uncertainty and stress. In this study, participants reported how they experienced a shift in how their work environments were governed and explained how they felt that they had been marginalised and alienated from their once flexible work environments. They further revealed how their workloads have increased and that the profiles of students have changed. They also talked about integrating information and communication technologies (ICT) in higher education learning environments and how this caused some anxiety and stress.

In the traditional higher education environment, academics could freely voice their opinions and concerns as they always had a certain degree of autonomy and freedom. In the new corporatised higher education work environments, academics were being exposed to environments of bureaucratic control. How academics coped with these changes was important to the current study. Found was a gap in the existing literature regarding the coping mechanisms of academics in higher education, specifically within the South African context. The following section will report on how participants coped with the changes in higher education in South Africa. The predominant research question that guided this chapter was: how did participants cope with the changes they experienced in their work environment? It is important to note that literature reported that most individuals have access to a repertoire of coping strategies and, depending on the situation, would select the strategy most applicable, and the findings reflected what was found in the literature (Pearlin & Schooler, 1978; Fleming et al., 1984; McLaughlin et al., 1988).

Table 5

Summary of group experiential themes and personal experiential themes with representative experiential statements of participants' interpretation of their coping strategies of the changes in higher education.

Group experiential themes				
Group experiential theme one: Social support	**Group experiential theme two: Active coping**	**Group experiential theme three: Distraction coping**	**Group experiential theme four: Intrapersonal communication**	**Group experiential theme five: Turning to religion**
Personal experiential themes				
Personal experiential theme one: Social support as facilitation	**Personal experiential theme one: Planning and pre-empting**	**Personal experiential theme one: Positive distraction**	**Personal experiential theme one: The inner voice**	**Personal experiential theme one: Religion as attachment belief**
"I think I've also got a good network of friends and family I think that obviously help talking to them…" [Participant 3] *"My family at home, my husband and my kids, talking to them about my day. At work it is my colleagues."* [Participant 4] *"…Also, colleagues, family talking to them about the day."* [Participant 7] *I think family obviously, motivates me, being there when you need them and then friends as well. They all*	"*I try to stay up to date with the changes that are ongoing and trying to stay on top of things that are expected of me and what new things are expected of me, so that I do not fall behind with the things that are expected of me. I think the fact that I try to do the best that I can always help me to cope with change and then to make the best of a bad situation."* [Participant 2] *"I try to plan everything in advance make sure that everything I can do today I fix so if something*	*"I exercise, physical exercise helps a lot because you get to build up endorphins….* "[Participant 2] *"I also have a boxing bag, well I don't do it for stress, but I do it for fun, but I think that also help to some extent you get out the frustration*." [Participant 3] *"I like doing yoga and walking. I think that helps me a lot and I like doing meditation that helps me a lot and I love to drink tea. So that is my time, like a time out."* [Participant 4] *"I normally cope with humour. Some people get aggressive,*	*I also have a very loud internal voice but very loud and that voice is a very … is a coach with a whip in the hand that drives everything, but it is a positive coach because it tells you good job, so that voice support me most because I have massive internal conversations."* [Participant 1] *I also think it is literally pep talking yourself, it like… helps you to accept the change. It is definitely your own mind set. [ummm] I think how you*	*"My relationship with the Lord that's the number one, I must be honest with you that if it was not for that a lot of the things in my life would not be possible. It will literally fall into pieces or crumble at work. Some of the nonsense you have to deal with there [umm] It is just something wonderful that you can come home to the Lord …. the Lord is in you and that you have that refuge. Whenever things get too much you have that refuge where you can just flee for rest again.* [Participant 3]

make it easier trying to figure stuff out…. [Participant 10] *"To talk about it, to colleagues, family, friends, just to talk about it"* [Participant 15] *"Family, having a few close friends to talk to, …the biggest part is my family, I can talk to them."* [Participant 19]	*happens tomorrow that I might not be able to come in or I get stuck in traffic, or something happens that it's not as bad as it would've been. So, I try to make sure that I don't rush to work to go for example through the chapter again which I may have to present in class later. I make sure I do it the day before, so that if something happens it is not as upsetting."* [Participant 10] *"I just try to keep to the deadlines. I think five steps ahead, not just one step ahead, I observe what goes on. That is my normal way of functioning, I am normally like that here, I'll look one or two steps ahead, I pre-empt everything."* [Participant 13]	*and some people will start arguments, not me, I cope with humour."* [Participant 8] *"Would put on the loudest rock music, hard core metal whatever you could find, because that person was screaming on my behalf, so I became calm. I don't know how to explain it but with that music I became calm. I would put it on so that I could be calm to do my work."* [Participant 19]	*kind of motivate yourself, being positive about it,* [Participant 6]	*"I prayed a lot and then at the end of the day you just realise you got through this day. I know it is not an academic answer, but prayer helped me a lot. I found inner strength..."* [Participant 9] *"I think my faith is the biggest internal factor that I have. If I did not have Jesus Christ as my Saviour, I can run to Him in every crisis because being hopeless that is not good, I think that's the reason why I always have hope.* [Participant 14] *"Being able to pray that is a big thing for me. I do not think without it I would survive."* [Participant 19]
Personal experiential theme two: Engaging in conversations	**Personal experiential theme two: Managing workloads**	**Personal experiential theme two: *Avoidance distraction***		
"… to actually speak to your colleagues and see how they have adapted to the change, how have they handled it, then you can actually learn from them. I would definitely say some colleagues, support me a lot and other academics	*"Work harder… work more… do different things to try and fit in this new system…."* [Participant 4] *"You work harder because there is a lot of processes that change so you need*	*"I just ignore it I know it's silly, but I just go my own way..."* [Participant 3] *"I put myself on auto pilot, just keep yourself busy, because you If you think about the change and the problems that*		

in the industry that have been through similar changes. They will also give advice they are very supporting." [Participant 6] *I ask for help from my colleagues so admitting I have a problem. I rely heavily on them for support and emotional support."* [Participant 5] *"Colleagues, the close colleagues that you have that are friends as well and your family, but I think more the colleagues, they know exactly what is going on and they know exactly what is happening. It is easier to talk to people from work than home."* [Participant 11] *"Definitely consulting peers and colleagues for help. Speaking to experts about what would the changes mean or reading up on it, articles and other people's opinions."* [Participant 12] *"Talking to my husband is a huge factor, he is my soundboard…"* [Participant 14] *"Talk. Discuss it. Whether it is with my colleagues whether it*	*to understand the processes, you need to put it in place. You must just make sure that you understand the process, you must understand what is going on otherwise the moment that you fall behind you kind of get lost and then you are stressed."* [Participant 9]	*come with it, it affects you. Avoiding and withdrawing. Trying to avoid anything that causes more stress."* [Participant 20]		

is at home, my husband is very much a soundboard…" [Participant 17] *"I've got a group of great colleagues. We talk about the changes. We are very supportive of each other, and I think that is a big factor being in academia you have that support."* [Participant 18]				
Personal experiential theme three: Emotional discharge	**Personal experiential theme three: Being organised**			
"The husband, there is a lot of crying on the kitchen floor, and he is good at going it's okay…comforting me. Then I rely heavily on family for support. they would know that I am not coping with the work situation" [Participant 1] *"Also, friends and family are extremely important in that sense where I can have a space where I can express my frustration, all my difficulties, having people just there to help and support me in that aspect."* [Participant 2] *"Definitely family and friends, colleagues and social events blowing off steam."* [Participant 12]	*"Going into super organising mode, I get a little bit obsessive about lists because I am so overwhelmed and over-worked that I usually create to-do lists [showing me an example of her lists]. Creating my little to-do list, usually it works very well for me because it helps me to prioritise …"* [Participant 1]			

“Talk.Talk to your colleagues. Talk to your peers, talk to your friends just as a matter of getting it out of your system or at least getting somebody else to see it from their perspective and communicate with them.” [Participant 16] *I will usually have the conversation with my partner at home to figure it all out and then if I want to lash out, I think I will lash out at him.* [Participant 20]				

Group Experiential Theme One: Social Support

When individuals experience feelings of insecurity and powerlessness in their social environment, it is not uncommon for them to turn to others to seek sympathy for their situation (Carver et al., 1989). Pearlin et al. (1981 p. 340) viewed social support as "the access to and use of individuals, groups or organisations in dealing with life's vicissitudes", while Cohen et al. (2000, p. 4) referred to social support as "any process through which social relationships might promote health and well-being". This group experiential theme revealed and contextualised how participants talked about relying on family, friends, and colleagues as a source of strength and comfort.

Personal Experiential Theme One: Social Support as Facilitation

In this personal experiential theme, participants talked about the presence and availability of their family, friends and colleagues and the role they played in supporting them in coping with the changes.

> *"I think I've also got a good network of friends and family. I think that obviously helps talking to them…"* [Participant 3 Line 47-48]

> *"My family at home, my husband, and my kids, talking to them about my day. At work it is my colleagues."* [Participant 4 Line 45-46]

> *"…Also, colleagues, family, talking to them about the day."* [Participant 7 Line 43]

> *"I think family obviously, motivates me, being there when you need them and then friends as well. They all make it easier trying to figure stuff out…"* [Participant 10 Line 66 -68]

“To talk about it, to colleagues, family, friends, just to talk about it” [Participant 15 Line 24]

“Family, having a few close friends to talk to, …the biggest part is my family, I can talk to them.” [Participant 19 Line 46-47]

Six participants expressed coping in relation to the availability of their family, friends, and colleagues. These participants mostly referred to having easy access to their family, friends, and colleagues as support structures regularly. Their talk centred around talking to their family, friends, and colleagues and them listening. Thus, their family, friends, and colleagues were a primary source of support and comfort to whom they could regularly speak about their work experiences. Furthermore, they were not actively seeking advice from these significant others but rather sharing their perceptions, feelings, and concerns with them, who in turn would mostly listen to them. The availability of these social structures and the social companionship they offered seemed to have a buffering effect that supported the participants in regulating and reframing the stress brought on by what they experienced at work. In other words, telling their family, friends, and colleagues about what they experienced at work served as a catharsis for any perceptions, thoughts, or feelings they have experienced.

“My mother. She might be retired but she is on the phone daily, she is always there, she prays a lot for me like today I would get a message first thing thinking about you what do you need. So, I have that support.” [Participant 14 Line 67-70]

Participant 14 talked about her mother and explained how her mother, who was retired, was there for her. She alluded to a dependence on her mother for emotional and instrumental support. As evidence, she shared that her mother would contact her daily to encourage her. She stressed the point by repeating that her mother *“…is always*

there…" and that her mother regularly prayed for her. Her talk drew a picture of their ritualistic everyday interaction. Being in daily contact with her mother seemed to motivate and strengthen her emotionally while it made her feel validated. There was a sense that Participant 14 was very dependent on her mother for emotional and motivational support, which may have resulted in her feeling more confident about herself because of the consistent support.

> *"I've got a group of great colleagues. We are very supportive of each other, and I think that is a big factor being in academia if you have that support."* [Participant 18 Line 37 - 39]

Participant 18 talked about how supportive her colleagues were. Her talk suggested that she felt she belonged. Because of their shared and mutual experience, her opinions and perceptions of what transpired at work were received with compassion and understanding. Using the phrase "…*a big factor being in academia…"* suggested she believed in the concept of collegiality and that sharing ideas and supporting colleagues was an important part of their identity as academics. It was clear she perceived that a sacred bond existed between members of academia and being able to share her experience with them made her feel that she was understood and supported.

Personal Experiential Theme Two: Engage in Conversations

In this personal experiential theme, participants highlighted how sharing their experiences, especially with colleagues, as a coping strategy helped them to reconstruct their lived reality as receiving feedback provided them with different perspectives, which allowed them to reframe their own perceptions.

"I have spoken to my colleague in the faculty, she is like the voice of reason. She's got a very calming effect, then she will sit you down and say look at it from this angle, I think that has helped to actually speak to your colleagues and see how they have adapted to the change, how have they handled it, then you can actually learn from them. I would definitely say some colleagues support me a lot and other academics in the industry that have been through similar changes. They will also give advice. They are very supporting." [Participant 6 Line 62-66]

In talking about how she coped with the change, Participant 6 referred to one specific colleague she seemed closer to and described this colleague metaphorically as her *"voice of reasoning"*. Her description suggested that reflecting on her experience of the changes with this colleague was helpful because it allowed her to perceive the change through a different lens. She also described how she would engage with colleagues and academics, discussing the implemented changes. She revealed that this interpersonal transaction helped her gain a different perspective because she could draw on her colleagues' perceptions, insights, and strategies to help her adjust her own. This reflective, interactive process with colleagues promoted a re-interpretation of the changes that helped her alter her feelings and perceptions.

"Colleagues and your family, but I think more the colleagues, they know exactly what is going on and they know exactly what is happening. It is easier to talk to people from here than at home." [Participant 11 Line 34 -52]

Family played an important role in supporting her to cope with the changes. However, she emphasised that her colleagues were more understanding of her experience and were easier to talk to about her feelings regarding what was happening in her work environment. Her text implied that they understood her work environment and the context better. Thus, talking to them provided her with instrumental support, such as information and

feedback regarding what she was experiencing and emotional support. They could either affirm her perceptions and feelings or provide suggestions to resolve them.

> *"Definitely consulting peers and colleagues for help. Speaking to experts about what would the changes mean or reading up on it, articles and other people's opinions."* [Participant 12 Line 28 – 29]

Like participant 6, participant 12 also referred to talking to colleagues, peers, and other experts to help her cope with the change. She explained that talking to them allowed her to apply a different perspective to the change. She felt this interpersonal transaction empowered her, which buffered her against the stressor (i.e., change).

> *"Talking to my husband is a huge factor, he is my soundboard*…" [Participant 14 Line 67]

> *"Talk. Discuss it. Whether it is with my colleagues whether it is at home, my husband is very much a soundboard…"* [Participant 17 Line 34 - 35]

Both participants, 14 and 15, strongly expressed that their spouses played an instrumental role in supporting them. Both used the word *"…soundboard…"* which suggested that they felt they had supportive communication interactions with their spouses. It is thus possible that knowing they could talk to their spouses had a buffering effect, making them feel they were emotionally supported. Participant 17 also explained that talking and discussing the changes with her colleagues was a source of support.

> *"I ask for help from my colleagues, so admitting I have a problem. I rely heavily on them for support and emotional support."* [Participant 5 Line 43 - 44]

Participant 5 expressed that she asked colleagues for help. She explicitly revealed that she did have a problem coping with the changes. She emphasised how she relied a lot on her colleagues. From her revelation, it was clear that she struggled emotionally, as she highlighted that she especially relied on her colleagues for emotional support. Her use of the phrase "*I rely heavily on them"* indicated that she might not be coping with the change.[1]

Personal Experiential Theme Three: Emotional Discharge

This personal experiential theme moved away from the theme of engaging in conversations. In this theme, participants talked about dispersing emotions to relieve them from the negative feelings they experienced regarding the change. Throughout this theme, participants highlighted feelings of frustration and the internal struggles they experienced while trying to make sense of the change.

> *"The husband, there is a lot of crying on the kitchen floor, and he is good at going it's okay…comforting me. Then I rely heavily on family for support. they would know that I am not coping with the work situation."* [Participant 1 Line 49 - 52]

Participant 1 described engaging in emotional outpouring behaviour. She unashamedly commented how there was *a "…a lot of crying on the kitchen floor…"* which implied that these emotional crying spells often happened. She explained that during these crying spells, her spouse would speak words of comfort to her. This suggested that her spouse was sympathetic towards her situation, which seemed to trigger an emotional release (i.e., crying spells). Participant 2 openly admitted that she was not coping with her "…*work situation…"* and relied extensively on her family for emotional support. In talking

[1] It is important to note that Participant 5 was 67 years old and in a previous experiential theme she explained how she struggled to adapt to the use of ICT and at the time of the interview there seemed to be a big drive for lecturers to adopt ICT as part of their teaching practice

about her family, she highlighted that her family knew she was not coping and that she regularly turned to them for emotional support. This also implied that relying on her family was not so much a support but an emotional crutch.

"Also, friends and family are extremely important in that sense where I can have a space where I can express my frustration, all my difficulties, having people just there to help and support me in that aspect." [Participant 2 Line 40 – 43]

Participant 1 concurred with Participant 2 and admitted that he turned to friends and family to vent his frustration and the negative feelings he experienced. He metaphorically referred to being in their presence as a "…*space…"* where he could disperse his emotional frustration. It was interesting how he described them as readily available, *"…having people just there…"* when he needed to vent. His text further implied that venting to his friends and family was an emotional coping strategy to reduce his negative feelings regarding the change.

"Definitely family and friends, colleagues and social events blowing off steam." [Participant 12 Line 31]

Participant 12 admitted that she would seek out friends and colleagues to disperse negative emotions. There was a sense that in *"…blowing off steam..."* she felt a release from negative feelings (i.e., the frustration) she was experiencing.

"Talk. Talk to your colleagues. Talk to your peers, talk to your friends just as a matter of getting it out of your system or at least talking to somebody else to see it from their perspective and communicate with them." [Participant 16 Line 29 - 32]

Participant 16 expressed that talking to significant others was a way to let someone know how she felt. She used the word *"talk"* several times, which indicated that the conversations with others about how she felt about and perceived the changes helped her to discharge her negative feelings "…*as a matter of getting it out of your system…"*. It would seem that venting to others offered Participant 16 new perspectives, as her talk implied that during these interpersonal transactions, they would share their perspectives with her. It was unclear if they also vented or just reacted to her emotional episodes. Her text did imply that she experienced some relief from having these conversations. Using the phrase "…*at least…"* confirmed that talking to others about her feelings was the one thing she could do to alleviate her perceived negative feelings.

I will usually have the conversation with my partner at home to figure it all out and then if I want to lash out, I think I will lash out at him. [Participant 20 Line 25 - 28]

Participant 20 revealed that she had conversations about the change with her partner at home. She used the phrase *"…if I want to lash out…"* which evidenced that she experienced feelings of anger and frustration. Interestingly, she repeated the phrase *"…lash out…"* but revealed that she lashed out at her partner, which signified that she struggled to control her negative emotions. Not coping with the changes could also have indicated that there was other stress in her life and that the changes at work exacerbated her negative feelings.

Group Experiential Theme Two: Active Coping

In managing and dealing with stressors adopting active coping strategies could support individuals in overcoming negative feelings such as stress. In other words, active coping strategies could help them to adapt to and accept the current situation (i.e.,

implemented change). *Active* coping strategies pertain to individuals increasing their efforts and taking active steps to mitigate the stressor (Carver et al., 1989). This group's experiential theme reflected the active steps participants took to help mediate the effects of the stress they experienced due to the change. This group experiential theme was formed around three active coping strategies grounded in problem focused coping: taking direct action, distraction coping, and self-encouragement.

Personal Experiential Theme One: Planning and Pre-empting

This personal experiential theme reflected how participants engaged in planning and pre-empting as direct active problem-solving coping strategies to alleviate the pressure and the negative effect they felt.

> *"Going into super organising mode. I get a little bit obsessive about lists because I am so overwhelmed and over-worked that I usually create to-do lists [showing me an example of her lists]. Creating my little to-do list, usually it works very well for me because it helps me to prioritise …"* [Participant 1 Line 44 - 46]

Participant 1 explained how overwhelmed she felt. She used the phrase *"…over-worked…"* to emphasise that she struggled to cope with her workload. She continued to describe how she would rely on being organised and used the word "*…super…"* to highlight that she was highly organised. She offered an example of list making as an organising structure she uses to support her claim of being organised. Participant 1 explained how she almost had a pathological obsession with creating lists. Creating the to-do lists seemed to support her in planning her work activities, and she explained that it helped her to prioritise what she needed to do. This implied that having the lists available was cognitive reassurance that she would not forget something and, thus, a coping strategy.

"I try to stay up to date with the changes that are ongoing and trying to stay on top of things that are expected of me and what new things are expected of me, so that I do not fall behind with the things that are expected of me. I think the fact that I try to do the best that I can always help me to cope with change and then to make the best of a bad situation." [Participant 2 Line 33 - 37]

Participant 2 revealed that he consciously developed a strategy to help him cope, ensuring that he stayed informed regarding the changes. Being informed meant he could stay abreast of what was expected of him. He talked about not falling behind with his work, which left the impression that the change increased his workload. His text further revealed that he experienced feelings of stress and a fear of losing control as he used the phrase, "…*I try to the make the best of a bad situation…"* which evidenced that he disagreed with the change. Thus, it would appear that Participant 2 set high standards for his work performance. Another deeper-seated fear could be that he could lose his job if his performance were not up to standard. Adopting an active coping strategy (i.e., pre-empting and planning) seemed to reduce the feelings of fear and stress that seemed to restore a feeling of being in control.

"I try to plan everything in advance make sure that everything I can do today I fix so if something happens tomorrow that I might not be able to come in or I get stuck in traffic, or something happens, that it's not as bad as it would've been. So, I try to make sure that I don't rush to work to go for example through the chapter again which I may have to present in class later. I make sure I do it the day before, so that if something happens it is not as upsetting." [Participant 10 Line 49 - 58]

Participant 10 described how she relied on planning ahead as an active coping strategy. Her explanation implied that she experienced stress which appeared to be related to her workload. She expressed how she was worried about falling behind. Like Participant

2, Participant 10 framed being proactive as an active coping strategy that served to alleviate the pressure she experienced. Participant 10 repeated the phrase "…*if something happens…"* three times to justify the importance of keeping up to date with her work and actually ahead. This was interpreted as her experiencing some anxiety around not being able to recover lost time linked to others' perception of her work performance. Like Participant 2, Participant 10's texts also suggested that she might have some anxiety around job security. To further highlight this finding was how she emphasised how she prepared her lesson the day before, "*So, I try to make sure that I don't rush to work to go, for example, through the chapter again that I may have to present in class later. I make sure I do it the day before…"*. She clearly felt she had to convince the interviewer that she was always prepared for class. Aiming to control the stressor (i.e., fear of not managing her workload in time and for job security), being proactive and planning gave her a sense of control.

> *"I just try to keep to the deadlines. I think five steps ahead, not just one step ahead, I observe what goes on. that is my normal way of functioning, I am normally like that here, I'll look one or two steps ahead, I pre-empt everything."* [Participant 13 Line 19 - 24]

Participant 13's description of how he coped with the change could be related to that of participants 2 and 10. In other words, using pre-empting and planning to stay ahead of what was expected of him. His explanation implied that he was struggling with his workload, as evidenced by the phrase, *"I just try to keep to the deadlines…"*. To manage this, he pre-empted the challenges that may occur and what could be expected of him. He thus relied on a pre-empting strategy and revealed that this was a *"…normal…"* strategy for him to regulate his stress. There was a shift in his talk as he accredited thinking ahead as self-concept and one of his personality qualities. This belief he repeated a second time, implying that he wanted to create the impression that he was mostly in control of the stress brought on by the change.

Personal Experiential Theme Two: Managing Workloads

This personal experiential theme reflected how participants engaged in increasing their work effort as direct active problem-solving coping strategy.

"Work harder… work more… do different things to try and fit in this new system…."
[Participant 4 Line 44 - 45]

Participant 4 explained that working "…*harder… work more…"* was how she coped with her workload. Referring to "…*this new system…."* implied that she felt uncomfortable with the changes and that this impacted her. Using the phrase "…*try and fit in…"* she further indicated experiencing feelings of exclusion and marginalisation. Working harder and trying "…*different things…"* was thus an active strategy she employed to restore feelings of control and belonging.

"You work harder because there is a lot of processes that change so you need to understand the processes, you need to put it in place. You must just make sure that you understand the process, you must understand what is going on otherwise the moment that you fall behind you kind of get lost and then you are stressed."
[Participant 9 Line 19 - 22]

Like Participant 4, Participant 9 also expressed how she increased her work effort. Unlike Participant 4, Participant 9 seemed overwhelmed by the new processes she must follow because of the change. She repeated the word *"…processes…"* a few times, which signified that she was concerned about mastering the newly changed processes. She emphasised the need *"…to understand the processes…"*. She continued to explain that if one did not familiarise oneself with the processes, it could lead to "…*one falling behind…"*. Participant 9 explained that falling behind with her work will cause her stress.

Group Experiential Theme Three: Distraction Coping

Distraction is defined as a "process of interrupting attention" or "a stimulus or task that draws attention away from the task of primary interest." (American Psychological Association, 2019). Distractive coping refers to coping strategies where the individual diverts attention away from the stressor (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Compas et al. (2001) described it as redirection of attention, while Skinner et al. (2003, p. 242) refer to distractive coping as "alternative pleasurable activities". This group experiential theme revealed and contextualised how participants talked about using distraction coping strategies to cope with the changes.

Personal Experiential Theme One: Positive Distraction

This personal experiential theme reflected how participants engaged in positive distraction coping strategies.

> *"I also have a very loud internal voice but very loud and that voice is a coach with a whip in the hand that drives everything, but it is a positive coach because it tells you good job, so that voice support me most because I have massive internal conversations."* [Participant 1 Line 47 – 49]

Participant 1 described how she had a "*very loud internal voice"*. She used the metaphor "…*a coach with a whip in the hand that drives everything…"* and "…*it is a positive coach because it tells you good job…"* presenting an image of a coach or slave driver that steered her towards positive feelings and thoughts. This revelation implied that she experienced negative feelings and needed positive encouragement. She explained how conversations with herself helped her process her feelings and thoughts. Highlighting the

usefulness of this self-encouragement strategy appeared to be beneficial, providing Participant 1 with the opportunity to reframe her emotions.

"I exercise. Physical exercise helps a lot because you get to build up endorphins…" [Participant 2 Line 41 - 42]

Participant 2 explained that he engaged in exercise, which he meant helped to increase endorphins, implying that he found this to be a positive coping strategy.

"I also have a boxing bag, well I don't do it for stress, but I do it for fun, but I think that also helps. T to some extent you get out the frustration." [Participant 3 Line 40 & 49 - 51]

Participant 3 revealed that he had a *"…boxing bag…"*. Interestingly, he explained that he did not use it to dispose of stress but for *"… fun…"* which implied that he felt he was managing the stress. He continued to deny that the introduced change was a stressor "*…well I don't do it for stress…"*. His talk shifted as he contradicted himself by freely admitting that he did use the boxing bag to help him to disperse his frustration.

"I like doing yoga and walking. I think that helps me a lot and I like doing meditation that helps me a lot and I love to drink tea. So that is my time, like a time out." [Participant 4 Line 44 - 49]

Like Participant 2, Participant 4 explained that she also engaged in physical activities to reduce her stress and framed *"…doing yoga and walking…"* as a coping strategy. She also talked about engaging in meditation which she means helps her, and *"…drinking tea…"*. Participant 4 referred to engaging in these strategies as her time out. The way that she

talked about engaging in these coping strategies appears to work for her, as she highlighted that having time for herself seemed to serve as cathartic moments.

> *"I normally cope with humour. Some people get aggressive, and some people will start arguments, not me, I cope with humour"* [Participant 8 Line 18 - 19]

Participant 8 expressed that she "*copes with humour"*. In her description, she compared herself to how others coped with stressors and used words like aggression and arguments to highlight her perception of how individuals usually cope with stressors (i.e., change). Interestingly, she emphasised her differentness using the phrase *"…not me…"*. It appeared that she tends to avoid confrontational arguments or venting.

> *"I would put on the loudest rock music, hard core metal, whatever you could find because that person was screaming on my behalf, so I became calm. I don't know how to explain it but with that music I became calm. I would put it on so that I could be calm to do my work."* [Participant 19 Line 39 - 42]

Participant 19 described how she would listen to loud music and specified the music genre was "…*hardcore metal…"*. Not only did she seem to use the music as a distraction, but she also discharged negative emotions. Her description implied that she would emotionally immerse herself in the metal music, transferring her emotions onto the performers, who would then "s*cream on [her] behalf"*. Thus, listening to hardcore metal gave her an outlet for her bottled-up negative emotions. She continued to explain how this calmed her down and the repetition of the phrase *"…become calm…"* implied that she struggled emotionally with the changes.

Personal Experiential Theme Two: Avoidance Distraction

This personal experiential theme reflected how participants engaged in avoidance distraction coping strategies.

> *"I just ignore it. I know it's silly, but I just go my own way...*" [Participant 3 Line 40 & 49 - 51]

Participant 3 revealed that he ignored the change. He explained that he just went his *"…own way..*." which implied that he did not care for the change and wanted to avoid the change's reality and impact. He used the word *"…silly…"* to acknowledge that this strategy was pointless, which could be interpreted as maladaptive.

> *"I put myself on auto pilot, just keep yourself busy, because if you think about the change and the problems that come with it, it affects you. Avoiding and withdrawing. Trying to avoid anything that causes more stress."* [Participant 20 Line 20 - 24]

Participant 20 explained how she coped by "…*putting [herself] on autopilot…"* and *"…keep [herself] busy…"*. Talking about keeping herself busy seemed a distraction coping strategy as she acknowledged that she did not want to think about the change or have to deal with the reality of the change. Thus, she intentionally engaged in distraction coping to avoid the stress she was experiencing because of the changes. A disposition of autopilot mode and keeping herself busy seemed to keep her from having to deal with the reality of the change and the negative feelings she experienced. In the statement "…*avoid anything that causes more stress..."* Participant 20 could also have implied that she wanted to completely avoid having to deal with stressors as she already struggled to cope with the existing stress she was experiencing.

Group experiential theme four: Intrapersonal Communication

Talking to oneself aloud or internally has been defined as an internal dialogue in which the individuals interpret feelings and perceptions, regulate and change evaluations and cognitions and give themselves instructions and reinforcement (Theodorakis et al., 2008). Researchers also referred to intrapersonal communication, which encapsulated two types of intrapersonal communication: self-talk and internal dialogue (Oles et al., 2020). Intrapersonal communication refers to a communication process where the sender and receiver are the same person (Fernyhough, 2016). Inner dialogues refer to conversations an individual has with themselves. In these conversations, they can pose problems, ask questions, and answer them as if they were talking to an imaginary person. Most individuals engage in inner dialogues at some point in their lives and may differ in how they engage. Self-talk is “self-directed speech that serves various regulatory and self-regulatory functions.” (Brinthaupt, 2019). Self-talk could be just one word an individual speaks to themself.

In this group, experiential theme participants relied on internal dialogue and self-talk to regulate and negate their negative feelings and cognitions (i.e., negative thought patterns).

Personal Experiential Theme One: The Inner Voice

This personal experiential theme reflected how participants used talking to themselves as a coping strategy. Internal monologues

> *“I also have a very loud internal voice but that very loud and that voice is a coach with a whip in the hand that drives everything, but it is a positive coach because it tells you good job, so that voice support me most because I have massive internal conversations*.” [Participant 1 Line 47 – 49]

Participant 1 described how she had a "*very loud internal voice"*. She used the metaphor "…*a coach with a whip in the hand that drives everything…"* and "…*it is a positive coach because it tells you good job…"* personifying her inner voice, she presented a simulation of a coach with whom she had conversations and who steered her towards positive feelings and thoughts. This revelation implied that she felt negative, and this could stem from a place of discouragement. She explained how engaging with this voice (i.e., inner voice) made her feel encouraged and supported. This inner dialogue appeared to function as a regulator of the emotions and thoughts she was experiencing.

> *"I also think it is literally pep talking yourself, it like… helps you to accept the change. It is definitely your own mind set. I think how you kind of motivate yourself, being positive about it."* [Participant 6 Line 66 - 69]

Participant 6 also engaged in self-encouragement as a coping strategy. What was interesting about her explanation of "…*pep talking to [her]self…"* was how she claimed it helped her to accept the change. She compared *"…pep talking…"* with self-motivation. She linked this strategy to a cognitive behaviour strategy, and her explanation alluded that engaging in self-talk helped her to reframe her thinking.

Group Experiential Theme Five: Religious Coping

For many individuals, practising their religion is important and plays an important role when they have to cope with difficult times. Religion usually emphasises commitment, loyalty, forgiveness, and trust. Religion as a coping strategy is very much debated amongst coping researchers. The Brief COPE questionnaire of Carver (1997) included religious coping as two of the 14 sub-scales that assess religious coping and therefore is considered a separate factor. Turning to religion has also been categorised as a high-order factor, such

as denial coping (Hastings et al., 2005). Some coping researchers have categorised religion as a self-directed, a deferring, and a collaborative strategy (Belavich & Pargament, 2002; Nooney & Woodrum, 2002; Winter et al., 2009). Furthermore, turning to religion was also categorised as religious social support (Pargament et al., 1998). When looking at turning to religion through the lens of religion, social support usually occurs vertically; in other words, a spiritual leader or fellow believers usually provide the support.

In this group, the experiential theme emerging from the data was how participants' attachment to and belief in God gave them a sense of security and strength. Turning to religion was thus categorised as a separate group experiential theme and participants' descriptions and explanations of how they turned to religion did not entirely fit in the social support category because the support occurred on a horizontal plane in this theme.

Personal Experiential Theme One: Religion as Attachment Belief

This personal experiential theme reflected participants attachment to God and how they explained that turning to religion supported them to cope with the negative experiences in their work environment.

> *"My relationship with the Lord, that's the number one. I must be honest with you that if it was not for that a lot of the things in my life would not be possible. It will literally fall into pieces or crumble at work. Some of the nonsense you have to deal with there [umm] It is just something wonderful that you can come home to the Lord …. the Lord is in you and that you have that refuge. Whenever things get too much you have that refuge where you can just flee for rest again.* [Participant 3 Line 41- 47]

Participant 3 positioned God at the centre of his existence and explained how his life would not make sense without God. In doing so, he revealed how he firmly believed in God

and described how his world at work *"…will literally fall into pieces or crumble…"*. His revelation reminded me of a declaration that he was completely reliant on God and that without God, he would not be able to cope with his everyday life and stressors. In other words, he did not seem to believe that he would survive without God. His text revealed frustration with his work environment and using the word *"…nonsense…"* he emphasised his disillusionment and disgruntled feelings towards his experiences at work and possibly management. His talk shifted, and he sketched how going home was good because that was where he found God. However, what was interesting was how his text shifted again as he explained that *"…the Lord is in you…"* and then again how he found refuge and security in God. The contradiction here was that Participant 3 also expressed how it was "…*wonderful that you can come home to the Lord…"*. It did not seem that he was aware of the contradiction *"…the Lord…"* at home and *"…the Lord is in you…"*. Further, his text implied that his attachment to God was a power that sustained and protected him as he perceived God as the ultimate buffer and security between him and his perceived unpleasant work environment.

> *"I prayed a lot and then at the end of the day you just realise you got through this day. I know it is not an academic answer, but prayer helped me a lot. I found inner strength..."* [Participant 9 Line 22 -24]

Participant 9 revealed how she engaged in prayer *"…a lot…"*. She described how she was less aware of the daily stressors, which implied that prayer was an intervention that buffered her against the everyday stressors. Drawing on her academic identity, she acknowledged that her explanation might not make logical sense. Like Participant 3, Participant 9 also revealed that by engaging in prayer, she found her inner strength. Further, there was also a sense that Participant 9 was caught up in a conflicting experience. This was evidenced in her explanation of how her reported coping strategy may not make logical sense, but that was repeated.

“I think my faith is the biggest internal factor that I have. If I did not have Jesus Christ as my Saviour, I can run to Him in every crisis because being hopeless that is not good, I think that's the reason why I always have hope.” [Participant 14 Line 62 -66]

Like Participant 3, Participant 14 also positioned her faith at the centre of her life. She described Jesus as her *"…Saviour…"* and someone she could trust. Her text further implied that knowing He was there giving her a sense of security as she was confident that He would respond when she needed His intervention. What was interesting was a shift in her talk as she drew a sharp distinction between Jesus as a rescuer in times of crisis and feelings of hopelessness. The difference highlighted was that believing in Jesus was to have a safe and secure place, while not believing in Jesus and that He can save you from adversities was a place of destitution. She further justified her attachment to Jesus by revealing that her reason for being hopeful was that she believed in Jesus. This indirectly freed her from dealing with negative feelings and other insecurities linked to her work environment because in Jesus, she will always be secure, and He will rescue her.

“Being able to pray that is a big thing for me. I do not think without it I would survive.” [Participant 19 Line 43 - 44]

Like Participant 9, Participant 19 explained that she also connected with God through prayer. To her, connecting with God was important and sustained her. Her explanation implied that if she did not have God to turn to, she would not have been able to cope. She used the word “…survive…” to stress the importance of her attachment to God.

Conclusion

The findings in this chapter revealed that participants experienced stress which they linked to the changes in their work environment. The findings further suggested that they

adopted a repertoire of coping strategies and mostly adopted adaptive strategies such as social support. They further relied on active coping strategies (i.e., planning and pre-empting; being organised), positive distraction coping (i.e., engaging in exercise), inner dialogue (i.e., self-talk) and turning to religion (i.e., faith in God and praying) to reframe and adapt their perceptions of the stressor (i.e., change). The next chapter will discuss and contextualise the findings within the broader literature and previous research studies.

Chapter Eleven

Discussion

Coping with the Change

Introducing change into the workplace could be a significant stress factor for employees, especially if it has a disruptive effect on the employee. The continuous change in higher education requires lecturers to adjust to new working situations on an ongoing basis. One key focus of the current study was to collect qualitative data about how lecturers coped with the changes they faced in higher education. Research by Dawis and Lofquist (1984) suggested that individuals constantly try to balance their needs, interests, and expectations from their role and function to experience job satisfaction. When the change was introduced, it could have a disrupting effect on individuals leading to experiencing negative feelings (Yeatts et al., 2000). For individuals to continue to perform effectively, they need to adapt to the consequences of the change. The ways lecturers coped with the changes in higher education were essential to the current study.

Coping is a critical process in relieving and managing stress and involves cognitive and behavioural efforts (Penley & Tomaka, 2002; Skinner & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2007). Folkman et al. (1986, p. 993) defined coping as "the person's constantly changing cognitive and behavioural efforts to manage specific external and internal demands (i.e., such as changes in their work environment) that were appraised as taxing or exceeding the person's resources.". Coping serves as a mediator between the social environment and what individuals perceive as stressful by mediating emotional outcomes that can be either positive or negative. There is little consensus in the literature regarding conceptualising frameworks individuals utilise as coping strategies (Skinner et al., 2003, p. 216). It was thus quite confusing to analyse and discuss the findings regarding the coping strategies of the

participants in this study because 1) there was a gap in qualitative studies exploring coping strategies as most studies were quantitative, measuring coping behaviour. Little qualitative research could be found on how academia coped with the stressors linked to their work environment.

Folkman and Lazarus (1980) classified coping strategies as problem-focused or emotion-focused. Cognitive and behavioural coping were mentioned by Latack and Havlovic (1992). According to Zeitlin (1980), coping strategies should be classified as adaptive or maladaptive. For example, problem-focused coping strategies include active coping, passive coping, active reframing, and informational support, while emotion-focused coping strategies include venting, acceptance, self-blame, and religion. Each category has been further divided into primary sub-categories, such as adaptive and maladaptive coping. To dichotomise one strategy over another would mean that one values some strategies over others. According to Lazarus (2000, p. 669), separating the significance of problem-focused coping from emotional-focused coping would be a strategic oversight and suggested that both should be considered, more specifically, the balance between the two. What was found in the literature (i.e., quantitative and qualitative studies) was how individuals have access to a repertoire of coping strategies and, depending on the situation, would select the strategy most applicable (Duhachek & Kelting, 2009).

One of the key interests of the current study was to explore how participants coped with and adapted to the changes they experienced, more specifically, on which strategies they relied. In this study, the construction change was considered a stressor in their work environment. Chapter four of this thesis used three theories and models of adaptation as a theoretical lens to explain the abilities of individuals to deal with change in their social environments. This included 1) The Minnesota Theory of Work Adjustment which suggested that there were four states of experience for individuals and environments. The first state was called the satisfied and satisfactory state; behaviour would be maintained as there is

correspondence. The other three states, namely the satisfactory and unsatisfactory, dissatisfied and satisfied, and dissatisfied and unsatisfactory, will produce work adjustment behaviour to get to a correspondence stage. When an individual no longer experienced a feeling of satisfaction, they were confronted with the need to adjust. This theory's premise was that individuals must resolve the imbalance they experience (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984). 2) Kleinman's explanatory model postulated that individuals use their cognitive abilities, such as schemas, to process and interpret their experiences (Beck, 2019). If the individual experienced a sudden shift in their environment or circumstances, their existing schemas would be challenged, and they could experience negative feelings such as stress, anxiety, depression, or anger. To adapt, they would have to develop new schemas and thus apply various coping strategies to restore the imbalance they experience (Padesky, 1994). 3) The Roy Adaptation Model provided a framework that looked at the abilities of individuals and groups to deal with change in their environments (Roy, 1970).

This model refers to innate coping mechanisms determined by an individual's genetics. It further suggested that individuals use innate and acquired coping mechanisms to control the processes between the stimulus input and the adaptation level output. This model proposed that acquired coping mechanisms referred to learned responsive behaviours to stimuli through the cognitive and emotional channels. In contrast, innate coping mechanisms would be driven by the participant's genetic makeup and a regulator subsystem that responds automatically to environmental stimuli as it enters through the senses linked to the nervous system. Research studies reporting on coping and coping strategies also linked personal perspectives to social environments. Therefore, how an individual coped with and responded to stress (i.e., change) could be perceived as an extension of our understanding of psychosocial adaptation theories and models to change.

Participants in this study talked about various coping strategies. The findings reflected what was found in the literature of how most individuals have access to a repertoire

of coping strategies and, depending on the situation, would select the strategy most applicable (Duhachek & Kelting, 2009).

In exploring the coping strategies of participants of how they coped with the changes, the following group experiential themes were identified:

- Social support
- Active coping
- Distraction coping
- Intrapersonal coping
- Turning to religion

Group Experiential Theme One: Social support

In the group experiential theme participants talked about social support as a coping strategy. They highlighted the value of having access to a social support structure and, more particularly, the availability of others. According to House (1987, p. 137), there is "…no consensus on the conceptualisation and measurement of social support.". The concept of social support is often used interchangeably to refer to a formal structure, social relationships, or their functional content, for example, as a palpable support system. Social support can be described as the access to and use of individuals, groups or organisations in dealing with life's vicissitudes (Ozbay et al., 2008). For the purpose of this study, social support is described as individuals interacting with others and exchanging emotional and recreational resources (Rausa, 2008). Alternatively, interacting with others creates the impression that an individual is cared for, receives assistance, and is part of a supportive social network.

Social support allows individuals to freely express themselves by voicing their concerns, discontent, and anxiety regarding the changes. It could reduce a pathological

outcome's onset and stress reactions (Cohen & Wills, 1985). Several studies have confirmed that when an individual has exhausted their capacity to cope with undesirable life events like change, they could supplement it by drawing on the capacities of others, such as family, relatives, friends, and colleagues, as social support structures (Berkman et al., 2000; Cohen et al., 2000). Access to social support can buffer the individual against perceived stress and alleviate the stress's effect and impact on them. Thus, protective factors of social support structures could protect an individual from a stressful situation's physiological or psychological impact (Ozbay, 2008). At the same time, social support can regulate the effect of life stresses (Song et al., 2011). Social support can be divided into five key areas of social support namely "…emotional support (e.g., empathy, concern), esteem support (e.g., positive regard, encouraging person), tangible support (e.g., financial or direct assistance), informational support (e.g., advice, feedback), and network support (e.g., welcoming, shared experience) …" (Krok, 2014, p. 66). In this study, when considering social support as a coping strategy, it was important to acknowledge that it is a multidimensional construct that has been measured in various ways. Of importance was its reciprocal value and, more specifically, the emotional and instrumental support that participants seemed to have gained from their interactions with others.

The following personal experiential themes were identified when exploring social support as a coping strategy:

Personal Experiential Theme One: Social Support as Facilitation

Various studies have made significant progress in exploring the value and aspects of social support as a social concept (Song et al., 2011). Having access to others and spending time with them could reduce stress levels. The protective factors of social support thus serve as a buffer that protects the individual from the physiological or psychological impact of stressful situations (Ozbay, 2008; Rausa, 2008). The underlying assumption was that social

support was interpersonal in nature and communal interactions. Being in the presence of significant others and experiencing feelings of belonging could help an individual activate the psychological resources that could help them cope with stressors (Song et al., 2011). Social support can further be classified into three support functions (1) emotional support, (2) esteem support and (3) an informative function (Cobb, 1976). He argued that the significance of social support could be linked to the moderating and protective effect it held for individuals. The findings in this personal experiential theme confirmed to what extent the literature reported that having access to a supportive environment appeared to have buffered the participants and played a role in supporting them to cope with stressful events such as the change they experienced. What was interesting was how participants reported that just being able to engage in conversations with significant others in an environment where they felt safe and emotionally supported was a positive, supported experience. It would seem that participants mainly found value in the moral support they received from significant others. In other words, it was not so much about participants seeking advice but more the social companionship and the availability of significant others to listen to them that seemed to help them to regulate the stress brought on by what they experienced in their day at work. Thus, the availability of family, friends, and colleagues seemed to offer a buffering effect that supported the participants emotionally. Plickert et al. (2007) argued that when individuals interact socially, a mutual exchange of emotional support occurs between them. Winstead et al. (1992) suggested that talking to others could reduce anxiety and may help discover new perspectives.

Personal Experiential Theme Two: Engage in Conversations

In this personal experiential theme, participants described how sharing their experiences, especially with colleagues, helped them to gain different perspectives because they could draw on the insights and strategies for coping with and adapting to the changes from their colleagues. Cohen and Wills (1985) argue that social support systems serve as an

intervention point. At the moment of intervention, the perceptions of significant others can reinforce the individual's ability to cope with the changes. In this theme, participants revealed how they had reflective conversations with significant others and how this process promoted a re-interpretation of the changes that helped them alter their feelings and perceptions. From an ideological stance, the findings were not a surprise as collegial reflective practice forms part of the characteristics of academics who like to critically analyse and reason in an attempt to find answers to problems. In having conversations with colleagues, individuals could reconstruct their lived reality and receive feedback that could help them to socially verify their reactions and attitudes to, for example, the change. According to Festinger's (1954) social comparison theory, individuals need to reduce their subjective uncertainty (Klümper & Sürth, 2021). They would want to compare their reactions to, for example, the change they experience to how others react. The theory suggested that social comparison was likely to occur in events where there was no objective standard for a situation. Haines and Hurlbert (1992) measured three indicators of perceived support: socialising with others, accessing others for help and support, and having more than one individual to talk to. When two or more individuals share a situation, they perceive as negative or threatening, talking about what they experience can help them lower their stress levels, thus helping them to cope (Townsend et al., 2014).

The social structures (i.e., family, friends, and colleagues) provided participants with instrumental support such as information, feedback, and an augmentation of personal strengths that promoted adaptation. Thus, the feedback participants received from significant others, especially their colleagues, could be incongruent with their perceptions, feelings, and experience. This left them with the choice to adjust their perceptions and feelings or uphold their interpretation (Hardin & Higgins, 1996). Either choice could serve as a regulating experience supporting them.

Personal Experiential Theme Three: Emotional Discharge

This study discovered how participants used venting as an emotion-focused coping strategy. Brown et al. (2005) suggested that one strategy individuals use to cope with stress was by a discharge of negative feelings. Horobin (1980, p121) referred to "emotional discharge" as a process of dispersing negative emotions in a safe setting that usually entails physical involvement such as crying, shouting and shivering. Parlamis (2012) referred to intrapsychic coping strategies representing *"venting"*. When someone engages in this behaviour (i.e., venting, emotional discharge), it usually is to disperse negative emotions, including the expression of emotions in the presence of others. It is considered an emotional strategy to reduce or manage negative feelings and emotional distress. In this study, participants described how they turned to others (i.e., family, friends, and colleagues) to vent their frustration and negative feelings regarding the change. Venturing to significant sympathetic others helped participants to disperse bottled-up negative emotions that supported the regulation of emotions. Extent literature supported this finding that venting to others could be an adaptational activity that can assist an individual in coping better psychologically (Behfar et al., 2020; Parlamis, 2012; Brown et al., 2005; Bushman, 2002).

According to the literature, venting as an emotionally oriented strategy does not always support adaptiveness (Stanislawski, 2019). Evidence found in this study confirmed this revelation. One participant explained that she regularly uses her family as an emotional crutch. In other words, it is argued that her venting to her family became a habit that left the impression that she instead experienced an increase in rumination and having them as a listening audience caused her to rationalise her negative emotions (Behfar et al., 2020; Brown et al., 2005; Bushman, 2002). Another key finding in this personal experiential theme was how one participant described that part of venting to her partner was to *"…lash out…."* out at him, which suggested that she lost self-control over her negative emotions. Brown et al. (2005, p. 797) found in their study that "…venting would amplify the adverse

effects of the negative." While having self-control had a "…buffering effect on negative emotions…". It can thus be argued that venting without self-control was perceived as a maladaptive emotional-focused coping strategy. Further, D'Zurilla and Chang (1995) stated that having a negative pre-disposition towards a perceived challenge could propel someone to lose their temper and experience feelings of aggravation.

Though the findings in this personal experiential theme did not explicitly evidence that emotional discharge was an effective coping strategy, it did have functional value for the participants as they mainly used it to empty themselves of negative emotions.

Group Experiential Theme Two: Active Coping

In their model, Folkman and Lazarus (1980) divided coping strategies into problem-focused and emotional-focused. It is argued that when individuals experience a stressor, they will engage with both strategies. In other words, if they believe something constructive can be done, they will use a problem-focused coping strategy; however, if they believe they must endure the stressor, they will use an emotional coping strategy. Direct active coping strategies are problem-focused and involve taking direct action to alter the situation to reduce the amount of stress. In other words, active coping strategies are self-driven, and the individual takes control, looking to action alternatives or a variety of strategies to manage the outcome and thus reduce the stress they experience. Research studies that supported the action coping strategies confirmed a positive link between excessive work demands and positive outcomes (Koeske et al., 1993; Rick & Guppy, 1994; Burke, 1998).

This group experiential theme revealed and provided insight into the type of active coping strategies participants chose to deal with the stress linked to the change they experienced. Three personal experiential themes emerged: 1) planning and pre-empting, 2) increasing work effort, and 3) being organised.

Personal Experiential Theme One: Planning and Pre-empting

Most traditional coping strategies are reactive and aim to address stressful events that have already happened. Proactive coping strategies involved approaches aimed at neutralizing future stressors. It has a self-regulatory function built into it as the individual integrates processes to manage their life and environment. Greenglass and Fiksenbaum (2009) identified three key features of proactive coping strategies: planning and prevention coupled with self-regulatory goal attainment, integration of goal attainment through identifying resources and utilizing self-regulatory goal attainment.

In this personal experiential theme, participants revealed that one objective to cope with the change was to ensure they were informed and stayed abreast of their workload. They highlighted coping strategies such as pre-empting and planning to ensure they were prepared for the impact of the changes. A key finding in this personal experiential theme revealed that participants relied on planning and pre-empting as proactive coping strategies. They talked about creating *"…to-do lists…"*, *"…staying on top of things…"*, and *"…look one or two steps ahead…"*.

Sniehotta et al. (2005, p. 566) described planning as "…a prospective self-regulatory strategy, a mental simulation of linking concrete responses to future situations.". In engaging in this strategy, individuals relied on pre-planning and anticipating future challenges as a coping strategy. This spoke to a proactive coping strategy as it included an element of prevention. To have insight and understanding of a 'problem' requires a cognitive effort from an individual. Part of this cognitive effort was to use the knowledge and information gained to plan how the problem, in this case, the impact of change, would be dealt with (Schwarzer, 2014). This coping strategy allowed the individuals to adapt their behaviour and attitude towards the introduced change. It prepared them to deal with the unknown, restoring their

power and control and, thus, their autonomy over the situation. There are two types of planning: action planning and coping planning.

When an individual deploys action planning as a coping strategy, it usually involves pre-empting and is goal-directed. Thus, they would engage in preventative behaviour such as planning and pre-empting (Gollwitzer, 1999). Individuals engage in coping planning to reduce personal risk or overcome difficulties (Sniehotta et al.,2005; Hagger & Luszczynska, 2013). Studies focused on well-being, health, and health behaviour, have reported on the benefits of action planning and how it relies on environmental cues to direct behaviour (Verplanken & Faes, 1999; Sheeran & Orbell, 2000; Luszczynska & Schwarzer, 2003). In this theme, participants talked about making *"…to-do lists…"* and *"…plan everything in advance…"* as taking proactive action. Coping planning was considered a self-regulation coping strategy focused on overcoming obstacles. One participant tried to pre-empt how the change would impact him and explained that he used this to stay one step ahead. Thus, relying on existing knowledge to predict what to do next. Gollwitzer (1999) stated that individuals could use pre-empting situations to control the outcome. The findings in this personal experiential theme resonated with what was found in literature as participants used planning and pre-empting both as an action planning and coping planning strategy to regulate the impact of the changes as well as attempting to reduce the impact of the changes (i.e., job security). Thus, it could be argued that relying on action planning and coping planning restored feelings of control and reduced anxiety and fear.

Personal Experiential Theme Two: Managing Workloads

In this theme, participants explained how they struggled to cope with the increased workload and the demands of the newly implemented processes. One of the consequences of the increase in workload was that the demands usually exceeded the capacity of the

individuals. When an individual reaches their capacity limit, an intervention is required. This intervention may include changes to how they manage their workload, the reallocation of resources, or an increase in work effort (Kelliher & Anderson, 2009). Globally, long work hours and intensification have become common in the changed higher education environment. Participants described how they work harder and more to try and keep up with the increased workload. They also revealed that the changes introduced more and different processes that increased expectations. The findings revealed feelings of being overwhelmed by the new processes and losing control. Furthermore, being faced with new processes made them feel excluded and insecure.

Coping linked to managing workloads was complex, and there appeared to be very little qualitative research and literature available on the coping strategies individuals rely on to cope with and manage their workloads. What was found in the literature was quantitative studies that reference common categories of coping linked to work stress, such as avoidance coping, emotional coping, avoidance coping, and social support. However, this study found that participants talked about how they increased their work effort to cope with their workload. Thus, the findings suggested that participants engaged in a maladaptive coping strategy because they reappraised the stressor by increasing their work effort. In other words, by altering their work effort, they placed themselves at risk for burnout and other possible risks to their health and well-being. Though this finding was not addressed in the study by du Plessis (2020, p. 9), the study confirmed that academics who engage in "…maladaptive coping strategies will continue to reappraise the stressor until they can adopt adaptive coping strategies.".

Group Experiential Theme Three: Distraction Coping

"Distraction is an emotion regulation strategy that has an ambiguous status within cognitive-behaviour therapy." (Wolgast & Lundh, 2016, p. 117) and is a relatively new concept found in coping literature (Skinner et al., 2003). Skinner et al. (2003) postulated that distraction coping is an accommodative coping strategy where the individual adjusts their behaviour and thinking to reduce stress. There were several definitions of distractive coping in the literature, making it difficult to refer to a single definition. For this reason, a general definition is offered to capture the essence of distraction coping: distraction coping refers to strategies an individual employs to disengage from a stressor and redirect their attention to something else or something more pleasurable (Skinner et al., 2003; Compas et al., 2001; Traeger, 2020). Of importance is that traditionally it has been perceived as a strategy where an individual disengages from the stressor by engaging in maladaptive behaviours such as drinking alcohol or sleeping to avoid the stressor (Friedman & Silver, 2006; Zimmer-Gembeck & Skinner, 2016). More recent studies reported that distraction coping could be a positive adaptive strategy with a positive connotation to psychological adjustment (Bushman, 2002; Kohl et al., 2013). Thus, when an individual employs a coping strategy by disengaging from the stressor and diverting their attention to something more pleasurable, it is perceived as a positive adaptive coping strategy. However, when an individual disengages from coping and the stressor, it is perceived as an avoidance coping strategy that is maladaptive (Connor-Smith et al., 2000).

Found in this group's experiential theme was how participants employed positive distraction coping strategies as well as avoidant distraction coping strategies.

Personal Experiential Theme One: Positive Distraction

Positive distraction has been described as when an individual engages in activities to distract themselves from the stressor and can be perceived as an adaptive coping strategy (Waugh et al., 2020). Sheppes and Gross (2011) have found that individuals engaged in positive distraction coping strategies as it allowed them to temporarily take a break from the stressor, supporting emotion regulation. Participants presented a repertoire of positive distraction coping strategies in this personal experiential theme. Their descriptions implied they engaged in exercise, boxing, yoga, meditation, and listening to loud music. All of them explained that they engaged in these activities as it helped release feelings of frustration, they experienced in their work environment. This finding was consistent with what was reported in the literature: engaging in positive distraction coping strategies was positively linked to reducing negative emotions such as frustration and anxiety. Liu (2015) reported that exercise could improve negative emotions such as depression, anxiety, and frustration. Leisure coping literature reported that positive distraction could increase positive emotional outcomes and improve coping self-efficacy (Iwasaki et al., 2005; Tsaur & Tang, 2012; Zawadzki et al., 2015; Kim & McKenzie, 2014). In comparison, Iwasaki et al. (2005) stated that when an individual engaged in leisure activities (i.e., also called leisure coping, such as exercise or listening to music), it did promote positive outcomes.

One participant described how she managed her negative feelings through humour coping. Though humour is not acknowledged as a distinguished coping strategy, it is widely used by individuals in stressful situations to take the edge off stressful situations (Samson & Gross, 2014). Expressions such as “a good laugh heals a lot of hurts” (Madeleine L’Engle) and “as soap is to the body, so laughter is to the soul.” (A Jewish Proverb) reflect that individuals and society do believe in using humour to relieve stress. A study by Martin and Lefcourt (1983) was the first reported experimental study of humour acknowledged by the sciences. They conducted three separate trials and found that humour did have a buffering

effect on the impact of stress on life events. Samson and Gross (2014) confirmed the study of Martin and Lefcourt (1983). They postulated that humour should be perceived as an adaptive response to life's challenges as it functioned as a buffer against the negative effect of stress. As a coping strategy, humour distracts, or interrupts thought patterns that lead to stress and shift the focus away from the stressful situation. Engaging in laughter leads to a physical release of tension. Thus, it functions as an emotion regulator (Samson and Gross, 2014). Strick et al. (2009) confirmed Martin and Lefcourt's study that the impact of humour as a distraction coping strategy can reduce negative emotions. The findings in this theme contributed to the holistic coping repertoire that academics engaged in to cope with work-related stress and also seemed to counteract traditional perceptions that distraction was a maladaptive strategy like avoidance.

Personal Experiential Theme Two: Avoidance Distraction

Coping research frequently focuses on avoidance and distraction (Gonzales et al., 2001). Individuals employ avoidance coping strategies to disengage from the stressor and from the intention to cope with the stressor (Compas et al., 2017). A review of the literature revealed that strategies to avoid having to engage with the stressor were categorised as maladaptive and included strategies such as ignoring, denying, or distancing oneself from the stressor (Pickens et al., 2019; Compas et al., 2017; Anshel et al., 2014). In other words, while distraction coping involves disengagement from the stressor, the quality of the distraction strategy differs between positive distraction coping and avoidance distraction coping.

In this theme, the participants described engaging in avoidance coping strategies such as ignoring the stressor and going into autopilot mode to avoid the stressor actively. These findings reflected that they engaged in avoidance coping strategies to reduce the negative feelings they experienced. Their explanations included items that refer to walking

away from the stressor and denying the reality of the change by diverting their attention to anything else to avoid dealing with the frustration and negative emotions they experienced because of the change. In other words, individuals usually engaged in avoidance coping when they experienced a feeling of limited control. In their study, Shoss et al. (2016) positively linked avoidance-orientated coping strategies to feelings of powerlessness. In chapters 6 and 8, some participants revealed feeling powerless and marginalised. Though the participants did not talk about feeling powerless in this theme, considering the findings in the previous chapters, the findings in this theme corroborate what was found in the studies mentioned above. However, avoidance distraction coping attempts to manage the consequences of the stressor through disengagement from problems that result from stressful experiences and can be adaptive in the short term. It has been suggested that in the long term, it is maladaptive as it leads to disengagement (Deci et al., 2016; Mackay et al., 2010; Holahan et al., 2005). Additionally, despite a lack of studies examining the coping mechanisms used by academics in higher education settings, the few studies that were evaluated did find that academics use both avoidance distraction and positive distraction as coping mechanisms—for example, exercise and leisure time (i.e., ignoring and disengagement). Thus, the current study confirmed these findings.

Group Experiential Theme Four: Intrapersonal Communication

A growing body of empirical research corroborated the assertion that internal monologues (dialogue) supported the psychological well-being of individuals (Oleś et al., 2020; Latiniak et al., 2019; Kross et al., 2014). Internal monologues refer to various intrapersonal communication whereby an individual can take on different roles, for example, talking to an imaginary friend or listening to a mentor's voice (Hermans, 2003). Further, it is a recognised coping strategy many individuals deploy to reflect on their challenges, allowing them to move between positive and negative coping thoughts (Schwartz & Garamoni, 1989).

In this group experiential theme participants relied on inner monologues (i.e., self-talk) to regulate and negate their negative feelings and cognitions (i.e., negative thought patterns).

Personal Experiential Theme One: The Inner Voice

"In my disappointment, let me comfort myself; in my stress, let me listen to myself; in my confusion, let me organise myself..." Tahlia Hunter

Self-talk is contextualised as the uncontrolled use of language to manage emotions and enhance performance (Callicott & Park, 2003; Latiniak et al., 2019). According to Kross et al. (2014, p. 321), "Self-talk is a ubiquitous human phenomenon. We all have an internal monologue that we engage in from time to time". Cognitive theorists have suggested over the years that a link exists between self-talk and behaviour (Ellis, 1994) and that it is a recognised cognitive coping strategy that individuals use to deal with experiences that have a negative impact on them (e.g., change, anxiety, stress, and uncertainty). Hardy et al. (2001, p. 27) defined self-talk as "the internal dialogue in which the individual interprets his lived perceptions, changes his evaluations and beliefs and gives himself instructions and reinforcements." The purpose of self-talk includes giving guidance when addressing problems, using it as self-affirmation, or using it to control emotions and behaviour (Callicott & Park, 2003; Latiniak et al., 2019). The key finding in this theme highlighted how participants engaged in self-talk to regulate their emotions and thought patterns and motivate themselves as an adaptive coping strategy. Inner monologues seemed to provide participants with a space in which they could distance themselves using their voices to guide and motivate them while reflecting on their experiences.

Researchers categorised self-talk as positive self-talk linked to statements an individual made to themselves and negative self-talk linked to self-criticism (Theodorakis et

al., 2008). Reviewed research further divided self-talk into instructional self-talk, which guides individuals (i.e., giving oneself instructions verbally) and motivational self-talk, where individuals engage in an appraisal that enhances their self-confidence or motivates them when facing challenges (Hatzigeorgia et al., 2011; Zinsser, 2001). Many self-talk studies investigated the relationship between sport and motivation and have reported that self-talk can be an effective cognitive strategy for enhancing performance and concentration (Kim et al., 2021; Latiniak et al., 2019; Hatzigeorgia et al., 2011). One participant claimed that talking to herself was a reflective process that helped her cognitively reframe her negative thinking. This finding was aligned with White et al. (2015), that reported how self-talk could promote adaptive self-reflection. In his analyses of Fyodor Dostoevsky's literary works, Bakhtin (1973) illustrated how by engaging in self-talk, an individual can split the self into different voices that can communicate back, pose questions, as well as answers (Hermans, 2003). One participant personified her inner voice referring to "…*a coach with a whip in the hand that drives everything…"*. Kimblin (2009) identified two main types of coping strategies linked to the inner voice (i.e., self-talk) as "reactive" and "proactive". According to the reactive coping strategy, the inner voice serves to help the individual to react to the stressor, regaining control.

In contrast, the proactive strategy supports the individual in building resilience. This participant employed a reactive coping strategy using her inner voice as an internal compass to guide her through the challenges she was experiencing. Hermans (2012, p. 8) referred to the "…dialogical self…" as "… the society of the mind…" in which the inner voice of the individual takes on various character roles and interacts with one another, allowing the individual to position and reposition themselves. As the "different characters" interact, agreements are made, negotiation takes place, and information is shared. To sum up, the results of this personal experiential theme confirmed the results of previous research studies and the literature. They also provided a valuable understanding of the value of self-talk as a

coping mechanism that could aid in regulating emotions and actively direct the person to reframe thought patterns when faced with a stressful situation.

Group Experiential Theme Four: Turning to Religion

Personal faith and religion have been well-documented as coping strategies. Koenig et al. (1998, p. 513) defined religious coping as "the use of religious beliefs or behaviours to facilitate problem-solving and to prevent or alleviate the negative emotional consequences of stressful life circumstances". Religious coping has been described and categorised as a multidimensional construct such as religious social support, a self-directed coping strategy, a deferring strategy, a collaborative strategy and high-order factors such as denial coping (Pargament et al., 1990; Belavich & Pargament, 2002; Nooney & Woodrum, 2002; Hastings et al., 2005; Winter et al., 2009). A key finding in this theme was how participants' attachment to and belief in God gave them a sense of security and strength.

Personal Experiential Theme One: Religion as Attachment Belief

Reviewed studies have reported on and have identified a link between attachment beliefs and religion (Granqvist & Hagekull, 2000; Belavich & Pargament, 2002; Schottenbauer et al., 2006). What was highlighted in these studies was how adverse life events activated attachment behaviour, such as praying to God and the conceptualisation of religion as a shield.

In this theme, the attachment theory was used as a lens to explore participants' attachment to their religion to form an understanding of turning to religion as a coping strategy. However, Kirkpatrick (1999) warned that there was a danger in applying the attachment construct to another context as its original intent (i.e., parent/child relationships). He and other researchers tapped into the attachment theory to explain religious functioning.

Formulated against the theoretical framework of the attachment theory, In Granqvist (2002, p. 36) identify four criteria linked to attachment relationship 1) proximity maintenance, 2) a haven, 3) secure base, and 4) separation distress. The first criterion, proximity maintenance, referred to how an individual (i.e., infants) engaged in proximity-seeking behaviour such as vocalising or crying to form an attachment with their carer and maintain the attachment. In this theme, proximity maintenance was highlighted in the texts of all the participants who relied on religion as a coping strategy. They talked about praying (i.e., contact-seeking behaviour, seeking to be closer to God) and experiences of God living in them. Religion as an attachment belief demonstrated how participants attached themselves to a figure, they perceived they could trust and care for, especially when experiencing uncertainty and insecurity (Granqvist, 2020).

The second and third criteria, haven and secure base, referred to a place of security from where the individual (i.e., infant) can explore knowing that the carer was close by to protect them, comfort them and reassure them (Granqvist, 2020). Ainsworth et al. (1978) also postulated that individuals would turn to attachment figures for safety and security. Participants described how God was omnipresent and a refuge to them in this theme. One participant said, "*…it is just something wonderful that you can come home to the Lord…*". In other words, the relationship between the participants and God as the attachment figure created a feeling of trust, being secure and safe; thus, God or the presence of God shielded and protected them from adversities. This finding aligned with a reviewed study by Kirkpatrick and Shaver (1990), who postulated that individuals who believed in God perceived God as a powerful source of support. It is also possible that if an individual experiences feeling threatened or insecure, it will reinforce them to seek access to a secure base (Granqvist et al., 2012). The fourth criterion, separation distress, referred to negative emotions similar to the separation anxiety young children experience when separated from their attachment figure (Granqvist, 2020).

In this theme, participants described how God was the centre of their existence and how their lives would fall apart if they did not have Him in their lives "…*my life would not be possible. It will literally fall into pieces or crumble at work…"*. They believed that without God they would be without hope. These descriptions implied that if God were not available, the participants would not be able to cope. This theme contributed to the research focus on religion as an attachment belief as it demonstrated how it corresponded with the fourth criterion of separation anxiety. Though research exploring religion as an attachment has been explored, especially linking it to the second and third criterion, there are still unanswered questions about how separation anxiety unfolds the fourth criterion.

It can be argued that participants' belief in God (i.e., turning to religion) supported the regulation of their emotions which seemed to have had a buffering effect on their reported negative experiences of the change. In other words, the comfort of knowing God was omnipresent and that they had open access through prayer seemed to have contributed to them experiencing feelings of being secure, supported, and comforted. Emotional regulation can be described as a process through which an individual can maintain or adapt the power or intensity of the emotion they experience (Bookhout et al., 2018). According to Emmons (2005), emotions play an important role in religion. However, religion also has the potential to influence emotions. This implied that emotions were flexible and were associated with adaptive emotional regulation (Vishkin et al., 2020). The findings in this theme suggested that participants primarily relied on their attachment to God as an emotionally adaptive coping strategy. Knowing they could turn to God positively influenced their emotions, and they reported how they felt comforted and found their inner strength and hope. One participant revealed that she would not survive without knowing she could turn to God.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the present study aimed to explore the lived experiences of lecturers in higher education work environments in South Africa. One of the research questions asked was how they coped with these changes. This chapter provided insight into the coping strategies participants relied on to cope with the stress they experienced because of the changes. The study confirmed to what extent the literature reported that having access to social support moderates and mediates the impact of change-related stress in the workplace. This study also revealed how participants relied on proactive coping strategies by engaging in intentional effortful responses, distraction coping, self-talk and religion as coping strategies. Turning to religion as a coping strategy significantly contributed as most studies reviewed reporting on religion as a coping strategy were quantitative. The next chapter will summarise this research study's overall findings and discuss the study's contributions, recommendations, and limitations.

Chapter Twelve

Summary of Research Findings,

Limitations, Contributions, Recommendations, and Concluding Comments

This study aimed to explore how lecturers experienced the changes in the South African higher education environment, how they responded to the changes, and how they coped with them. The study is significant because it explored lecturer experiences in the South African higher education context. Although there were studies on the workloads of academics, the changing functions of academics (Kogan & Teichler, 2007) and the rise of managerialism in the South African higher education work environment (Johnson, 2006; Ntshoe et al., 2008), these studies maintained a broader perspective rather than a narrow focus on the experiences of individual lecturers. Global research studies also focused on the rise of managerialism and the corporatisation of higher education institutions with limited qualitative exploration of how lecturers experienced, responded to or coped with the change.

This chapter summarises the key findings of the study, followed by a discussion of the study's limitations, contributions and recommendations following from the study.

Summary of how academics experienced changes in higher education institutions in South Africa

The changes experienced by academics were captured in four themes: a shift in governance, intensification and extensification of administrative workload, a change in student profile and the integration of information and communication technologies (ICT) in higher education learning environments.

Change as a shift in governance

A shift in governance impacted lecturers' professional academic work environment and workload. They struggled to adapt to and subject themselves to corporate logic. The rise of managerialism was experienced as a threat to the ideologies of the traditional academic culture. Lecturers were subjected to what they experienced as onerous regulations, policies, and activities. It was no longer about the professionalisation of scholarship and inquiring embedded in traditions of free and independent thinking. Managerialists did not understand or value the traditions and logic of academia. Corporate norms and values, such as enterprise ethos, became the new parameters that defined the academic environment. Academics became concerned that the emphasis on commodifying higher education institutions threatened academic quality and the standards of quality graduates.

Academics were marginalised and excluded from decision-making processes. As the decision-makers, the 'voices' of new management superseded the 'voices' of the academic professionals, drowning the traditional collegiality that has always been a seminal concept grounded in academic logic and essential to the academic profession. Academics' exclusion from the decision-making processes was an erosion of collegiality and an obstruction of academic freedom, altering their professional autonomy and status. They questioned the adeptness of management in making decisions, which highlighted the conflict between and incompatibility of corporate and academic logic.

Information regarding decisions became inaccessible to academics due to a lack of transparent communication. Hierarchal structures that operated in levels of exclusivity prohibited the free flow and transparency of information. Steeped in academic logic, lecturers needed to understand the reasons behind changes. Being excluded from decision-making intensified their feelings of exclusion and marginalisation, exacerbated by the lack of

communication and transparency. For lecturers, a top-down decision-making approach was a calculated strategy to exclude the academic voice.

Change as Intensification Workload

From a lecturer's perspective (i.e., as experts) management did not understand the academic working environment. Participants contend that it was because of the ignorance of management and their managerial approaches to governance that caused the intensification of their administrative workload. They felt management did not understand the complexities of the higher education work environment and driven by their own bureaucratic surveillance agendas created pointless administrative tasks. For example, management:

- Set short unrealistic deadlines for marking assessments
- Required completion of numerous reporting trackers for audit purposes in short time frames
- Demanded lecturer availability to respond to student queries in short time frames (i.e., the student is the customer narrative)
- Bombarded lecturers with emails, also expecting immediate responses

They further meant that continuously measuring their output, was mainly linked to a market-driven management agenda and not to their professional academic role. Highlighting the ignorance of management also emphasised a cynicism towards and distrust of management. The intensification of their workload further blurred their working hours. They agree that working hours was always individualistic in nature and that due to the academic cycle there were always times when they worked after hours. The difference was that they had autonomy and flexibility but with the descendance of managerialism they felt were being regulated. What ultimately surfaced from the narratives of the participants' was how they tried to stay abreast of their workload but struggled to meet the demands. This infringed on their work life balance and negatively impacted their personal and family time.

Changes in Students

Lecturers described students as having unrealistic expectations of them and that they were being held more responsible for students' academic success, which was intensified by the auditing and tracking culture of managerialism. Noticeable changes in students were their attitudes and behaviour of academic entitlement. They demanded flexible educational environments that catered to their individualised needs (i.e., expect high grades for average or below-average work). They also showed the tendency not to take responsibility and accountability for their own learning.

 # FeesMustFall

Though the #feesmustfall protests were about various challenges students wanted to highlight (i.e., accessibility, inequalities), lecturers argued that because of the disruptive impact and emotions connected to the #feesmustfall protests, it was possible that for some students that these protests became a vehicle to exert academic entitlement behaviours. The concept of responsibility was a golden thread running through the four personal experiential themes.

The integration of information and communication technologies (ICT) in higher education learning environments

Integrating ICT bias

Lecturers justified their resistance to using ICT, relying predominantly on their ideologies of traditional academic logic. They further negotiated the commodification of higher education institutions as reasons for integrating ICT into higher education learning

environments and how this was a corporate goal that was more focused on making a profit than producing employable quality graduates. They exercised an traditional ideology bias to emphasise their perceptions of how ICT's negatively impact on the development of students' academic skills, specifically students' writing ability and referencing skills.

Feelings of inadequacy and adeptness

Lecturers experienced inadequacy and adeptness when integrating ICT into the learning environment. When applying the person-environment fit theory to this finding, what was highlighted was an incongruency between the work environment and the lecturer that, in turn, could lead to feelings of inadequacy and incapability to cope with using ICT and ultimately resisting it.

Summary of how academics responded to the changes in higher education institutions in South Africa

Academics’ responses were captured in two themes, namely response as resistance and response as acceptance.

Response as resistance

Information inadequacy and exclusion

Lecturers described resistance as a default response to unjustified and unexplained change. What they wanted to see was for management to explain why the changes were necessary. The lack of sufficient information led to a lack of understanding of the change's reasons, making it increasingly more challenging for participants to perform and feel they belonged.

Lecturers felt their influence over academic matters was reduced and that the decision-makers voices superseded their voices. They perceived the lack of communication as a strategy from management to marginalise academics from their traditional work environment, reducing their power. Academics are used to being consulted regarding decisions that affect academia. It is a known practice to consult academics on changes regarding academic issues that impact their discipline and academic role (Olssen, 2002).

An important finding was the emphasis on a shift in power participants experienced. Participants referred to hierarchal structures that operated in levels of exclusivity that influenced the free flow and transparency of information. It was clear that their experience of being uninformed resulted in feelings of precarity and exclusion. Thus, not being included in the decision-making processes affected participants' feelings of inclusivity, and they experienced a loss of their power to influence their work environment as professional academics. It is argued that replacing traditional collegiality and autonomy with contrived collegiality made participants feel they had to adhere to and agree with managerial-driven initiatives. Thus, they felt disillusioned and marginalised.

Ideological resistance

Participants also drew on ideologies linked to the traditional academic culture, such as having professional autonomy and collegiality. Their talk centred around how they experienced a paradigm shift due to the changes. What guided their talk was an internalised experience of ideological inconsistencies, such as an impediment to their academic autonomy and freedom. The explanations and descriptions of participants strongly suggested that they did not like it to be undermined as professionals. They felt constrained ideologically since they were not involved in decision-making processes, which was a restraint. In other words, for the participants, not being included in the decision-making

processes signified a loss of their voice and academic autonomy that directly impacted their culture of collegiality and collaboration to contribute to decisions made (Abramov, 2012).

Personal valence

Participants' responses to resistance also depended on their evaluation of the impact and perceived risk the change may hold for them. They categorised change as having a personal and work environment impact. The collective, lived experiences of the participants suggested that self-interest was a salient factor contributing to their response to resistance. Participants' talk further implied that they would prefer to remain in a predictable environment where things were familiar instead of a changing environment that could not guarantee a positive and better outcome for them personally (Vakola, 2014). Personal valence is a good indicator of the individual's readiness for change, usually driven by perceptions of the beneficial value the change holds for them (Siddiqui, 2011).

“The silence of the lambs”

Participants used silence as a response to indicate their uncertainty, dislike, and disapproval of the change. They explained that voicing their opinions, concerns, and contributions did not matter and would not make a difference to the outcome and final decisions of management, which implied that they felt they were being devalued. Essentially participants talk revealed a perception that management had control and power. Thus, responding with silence as resistance could be interpreted as a deliberate passive act of appearing to comply but with the intent to discreetly maintain a certain level or feeling of control (Prasad & Prasad, 2000). However, it could also be perceived as delaying or "waiting it out" behaviour to allow for time to observe and assess the impact of the change for them.

Participants experienced tension between an increase in institutional autonomy and control and a decrease in individual autonomy. In other words, they perceived that their culture of collegiality, autonomy and freedom was being undermined by management. Embedded in an ideological orientation of traditional academia, they framed their response of resistance from a perspective that implied they would prefer things to remain as they were (i.e., a collegial culture of decision-making, having autonomy and freedom). The response of resistance underpinned by a shift in governance corresponded with what was found in the existing literature. In an attempt to further conserve the status quo, participants also relied on constructs such as self-interest (i.e., personal valence) and silence to discreetly maintain a certain level or feeling of control.

Response as acceptance

Ideological constructions of acceptance

Participants rooted their response of accepting the change in an ideological orientation of having respect for those in positions of authority and whom they perceived as having status. They mainly described and explained how they were raised to have respect for those in positions of authority and status. This perception spoke directly to ideological hierarchies that continued to exist, especially in corporate organisations. A fundamental principle regarding hierarchical structures is that the individuals at the top have the authority and power to make critical decisions and execute these as they see fit. In this study, some participants explained that they would not oppose authority because of their upbringing. Thus, although participants felt there were justifiable reasons to disagree with the change, they chose to accept it. This acceptance response should not be confused with a submissive nature but rather an ideological orientation. Romme (2021, p. 9) stated that "…ladders of authority, status, responsibility and ideology were archetypes of hierarchy that can be used as idea templates for coding and interpreting data.". In summary, their ideological

orientations provided standardised interpretations to participants through which they could make sense of the changes in their work environment and, as such, reduce feelings of uncertainty.

Dispositional acceptance

Participants also relied on their perceived dispositions when they described their responses as accepting the changes. They highlighted elements of the value systems into which they were socialised and described how they relied on these dispositions and value systems to accept the change they experienced. Although participants disagreed with the changes, their acceptance of it was linked to a need to conserve order and restore feelings of being in control. The relationship between participants' perceived dispositions led to an openness to change, and the conservation of their values played an important role in participants' choice of responding to change by accepting the change even if they disagreed with the change. It is further argued that when change is imposed, the individual could experience that their role or identity, for example, a sense of autonomy, is threatened. When this happens, they could prescribe to the change to conserve stability and preserve the status quo. According to Sverdijk and Oreg (2009), individuals who emphasise openness to change to conserve the status quo and stability may comply with the imposed change. Though research studies have explored the role dispositions played in organisational change, the relation between responses to change and dispositions needs more attention, for example, to what extent organisational change activates certain dispositions.

Summary of how academics coped with the changes in higher education institutions in South Africa

Academics’ responses were captured in five themes: social support, active coping, distraction coping, interpersonal communication, and turning to religion.

Social support

Social support as facilitation

Participants' talk centred around how access to a supportive environment served as a buffer. In other words, being able to talk to significant others played a role in the processing of the change that participants experienced. This confirmed what extent literature reported that having access to social support served to moderate and mediate the impact of change-related stress in the workplace (Lawrence & Callan, 2010).

Engaging in conversations

According to Demaray et al. (2012) social support systems could serve as an intervention point. Participants confirmed this and explained that having reflective conversations with significant others provided them with instrumental support such as information, feedback, and an augmentation of personal strengths that, in turn, promoted a re-interpretation of the changes.

Emotional discharge

Participants described how they turned to others to vent their frustration and negative feelings regarding the change. Venting to significant sympathetic others helped participants disperse bottled-up negative emotions that further supported the regulation of emotions. Extent literature supported this finding that venting to others could be an adaptational activity that can assist an individual in coping better psychologically (Behfar et al., 2020; Brown et al., 2005; Bushman, 2002). One participant described venting as a loss of self-control over negative emotions. D'Zurilla and Chang (1995) stated that having a negative pre-disposition towards a perceived challenge could propel someone to lose their temper and experience

feelings of aggravation. Brown et al., (1989, p. 797) found in their study that "…venting would amplify the adverse effects of negative.". It is thus argued that venting without self-control is perceived as a maladaptive emotional-focused coping strategy.

Active coping

Planning and pre-empting

Participants relied on proactive coping strategies such as pre-empting and planning to prevent or modify anticipated challenges because of the change. In other words, engaging in intentional effortful responses revealed that they chose a goal-directed and constructive response. Tapping into proactive coping strategies, also considered self-regulation coping, allowed participants to adapt their behaviour and attitude towards the introduced change.

Managing workloads

In their study, Sang et al. (2015) linked the increase in academic workload to the extent of academic working hours, while Corbyn (2009) suggested that it was 50 hours a week. In this study, participants described how they increased their work effort (i.e., working harder and longer hours) to try and keep up with the increased workload. It is argued that by increasing their work effort, they reappraise the stressor and, thus, engage in a maladaptive coping strategy.

Distraction coping

Positive distraction

Participants described how they engaged in positive distraction coping strategies. These strategies included exercising, boxing, yoga, meditation, listening to loud music, and humour to help them release feelings of frustration they experienced in their work environment. Thus, participants engaged in a holistic coping repertoire to cope with work-related stress and counteract traditional perceptions that distraction was a maladaptive strategy like avoidance.

Avoidance distraction

Participants also used avoidance coping strategies to reduce the negative feelings they experienced. These strategies included ignoring the stressor, going into autopilot mode, walking away from the stressor and denying the reality of the change by diverting their attention. Carver et al. (1989) postulated that individuals usually engage in avoidance coping when they experience a feeling of limited control. In their study, Shoss et al. (2016) positively linked avoidance-orientated coping strategies to feelings of powerlessness. There was a gap in studies reporting on how academics in higher education environments cope with work stress. A few reviewed studies reported that academics adopt both positive distraction (i.e., exercise and leisure coping) and avoidance distraction (i.e., ignoring and disengagement) as coping strategies. Thus, the current study confirmed these findings.

Intrapersonal communication

Participants engaged in self-talk to regulate their emotions and thought patterns and motivate themselves as an adaptive coping strategy. Inner monologues provided participants with a space in which they could distance themselves using their voices to guide and motivate them while reflecting on their experiences. White et al. (2015) reported how self-talk could promote adaptive self-reflection. In his analyses of Fyodor Dostoevsky’s literary works, Bakhtin (1973) illustrated how by engaging in self-talk, an individual can split the self into

different voices that can communicate back, pose questions, as well as answers (Hermans, 2003). One participant employed a reactive coping strategy using her inner voice as an internal compass to guide her through the challenges she was experiencing. Hermans (2012, p. 8) referred to the "…dialogical self…" as "… the society of the mind…" in which the inner voice of the individual takes on various character roles and interacts with one another, allowing the individual to position and reposition themselves.

Turning to Religion

This attachment theory was used as a lens to understand and explore why participants turned to their religion as a coping strategy. Participants described the omnipresence of God and referred to God as a refuge that shielded and protected them from adversities. They further placed God at the centre of their existence. Participants' faith in God (i.e., turning to religion) seemed to support the regulation of their emotions which had a buffering effect on their reported negative experiences of the change. In other words, the comfort of knowing God was omnipresent and that they had open access through prayer seemed to have contributed to them experiencing feelings of being secure, supported, and comforted.

Limitations of the Study

The current study's objective was to understand how lecturers experienced the changes in higher education in a South African context, how they responded to the changes, and what coping strategies they employed. As such, the study was limited to academics' perspectives of change. This was only part of a much broader context of change in higher education in South Africa. For example, the complementary context of managerial perspectives complements the academic context, and the joint context contains both academic and managerial perspectives. In addition, South African institutions of higher

learning exist in the South African socio-political context and international contexts of higher learning. The present study was limited to an in-depth understanding of academic experiences. It did not attempt to consider these understandings in relation to the experiences and perceptions of role players from these broader contexts.

Considering the continuous reconfiguration and dynamics of the higher education landscape, another limitation of this study was the complexity of the ongoing changes in higher education in a South African context. The historical context in which this study was socially situated yielded rich textual data for analysis, but at the same time, increased the complexity as multiple social realities made the exploration and interpretation of the experiences of participants challenging. Responses gathered from participants were limited to a single observation of academics' lived experiences framed in a particular moment, excluding the broader context. As a result, the study's representativeness cannot be assured. Additional follow-up interviews with participants may have been useful in unpacking some of their constructions more extensively.

The participants represented a segment of actively teaching lecturers in traditional teaching and research positions at both public and private South African higher education institutions across two provinces. The study's objective was to gain a shared detailed account of the changes lecturers experienced across public and private higher education institutions and across different subject fields. This phenomenological study involved one-on-one interviews and employed a purposive sampling method that limited the sample size. Unfortunately, using this sampling method resulted in more females and white participants participating in the study, which resulted in the underrepresentation of male and black voices. Having more female and white voices could have possibly biased the results. Although the aim of the study was not to differentiate the academic (i.e., especially regarding academic knowledge and practice) in terms of gender and race, it is not clear to what extent such differentiation would have been irrelevant. Therefore, the generalisability of this study is

limited. It would be advisable that this study be replicated with an equal inclusion of a gender and race-representative group.

Contributions

With the focus on the changes imposed on existing higher education work environments, a key contribution of this study, which set it aside from other studies, was the qualitative and interpretive approach it employed to explore and gain insight into the lived experiences of lecturers working in higher education institutions. Though other existing studies did explore the changes in higher education institutions globally, this appeared to be the first qualitative study to explore lecturers' experiences in a South African higher education context which investigated the perceived changes, lecturers' responses to the changes and the coping strategies they employed.

A key aspect highlighted by the lecturers throughout this study was the shift towards a more corporate and managerialist approach to the governance of higher education institutions and how this shift directly impacted their professional academic role and function. What stood out was the lecturers' perception that their professional identity, collegiality and autonomy were in crisis. The strong forms of managerial control dominating the decision-making processes through hierarchical structures were reducing the influence lecturers had in the decisions made that impacted their role and function. A lack of communication and transparency further exacerbated these perceptions.

The study provided a deeper understanding of the aspects that impacted the identity of the academic professional, their role and their function in their academic work environment. The study illustrated how the emergence of managerialism, the lack of transparency and communication elicited feelings of frustration, a perception that

management was incompetent in managing higher education institutions and ultimately alluded to a loss of trust.

This study further provided valuable insights into lecturers' lived experiences of the change and revealed how they responded to the change. A significant finding was how they made resistance their default response even when some lecturers stated that they accepted the change. Their acceptance was linked to an ideological orientation of having respect for those in positions of authority and a need to conserve order and restore feelings of being in control. What was highlighted was an interpersonal gap between lecturers and management.

Much of the research studies on coping strategies employed a quantitative approach. Limited studies, quantitative or qualitative, were found in the extent of literature investigating the coping strategies of lecturers working in South African higher education institutions. Thus, the current study addressed the existing gap and provided a unique insight contributing to the body of literature regarding how academics coped with the changes in their work environments in higher education in South Africa.

Recommendations

A suggested resolution to bridge the challenges linked to the shift in governance would be to develop a work environment where there was mutual understanding and acceptance of the dynamics of the changes (i.e., corporatisation of higher education institutions). This could be achieved by creating a shared ethos.

As a suggested departure point, three principles come to mind, communication, transparency, and embracing a culture of collegiality. This would mean that new management and academia should collaborate and make an effort to, through a process of collegiality and collaboration, talk about the differences concerning decisions and ethical

issues that concern both parties. It was clear from the study that academia would have to acknowledge and embrace business principles that could promote economic growth, as this speaks to the survival of higher education institutions.

On the other hand, those appointed in management positions need to allow academic voices to inform policies, especially those underpinning the professional academic role. It would be beneficial to revisit the criteria for appointing managers, especially those in the top and middle tiers. Looking into inclusive management strategies, as the discordance between corporate-driven management and traditional academia can easily lead to unproductive impasses.

Secondly, understanding how the layering of the changes impacted the professional role and functions of academics may translate into practices that can help alleviate expected negative responses. These practices include increasing the inclusion and involvement of academics in the planning and participation of business and academic decisions. Tapping into the collegial, inclusive culture in academia could elicit an openness to change. Further, the constructive contributions academic professionals could make to the governance of their work environment should not be ignored.

Higher education institutions experience enormous pressure to transform. For example, institutions need to explore initiatives that will support their economic survival as the increase in student numbers and lack of available funding places a considerable burden on the resources of higher education institutions in South Africa. Gaining the trust and "buy-in" of academics, 'new management' at higher education institutions should invest in platforms and practices where the values and norms of traditional academia are integrated into the change process, which promotes inclusivity.

One strategy that could be followed is a mastery approach to redressing student academic entitlement attitudes and behaviour. Following a mastery approach would promote content mastery and personal growth rather than academic achievement (Reinhardt, 2012; Estes, 2014; Frey, 2015). For example, changing the assessment strategies (i.e., replacing assessment approaches focusing on quantifying academic success with approaches that measure mastery and competency). Furthermore, academics should be made aware of their role in managing academic entitlement behaviour and should be developed and equipped to do so (Frey, 2015).

Addressing ICT integration in South Africa's educational environments remains challenging due to inequality issues and affordable access to the internet and other technological resources. This requires redress from multiple platforms, such as the government and institutions. A counter to lecturers' resistance to ICT and feelings of inadequacy is acknowledging the diversity in the levels of technology proficiency of academics and students. This would mean moving away from one size fits all training and development programmes. It is needed to develop lecturers, enhance their understanding of ICT as embedded in teaching and learning, and move away from the idea that ICT should replicate existing teaching practices.

Concluding Comments

> “If you always do what you always did, you will always get what you always got.” (Albert Einstein)

A central finding of the current study was how the changes in higher education institutions in South Africa were being managed and how managing these changes played a crucial role in how academics perceived the changes in their work environment and how this impacted them. Previous literature has tended to focus on how higher education institutions

in South Africa should transform without giving enough attention to how academics were keeping up with and adapting to the changes. However, the reality is that change always initiates new contexts, and individuals are usually required to accept and adapt to the changes. This is coupled with feelings of uncertainty and fear of the unknown.

This study has revealed that introducing change into the higher education work environment was not just about imposing change and assuming that academics would accept the change. However, much remains to be discovered and understood within the topic of the psychosocial experiences of lecturers regarding the changes in higher education in South Africa.

What is needed is to rethink the concept of change linked to higher education institutions. Change can influence and alter organisational cultures, which in turn affect the response and behaviour of employees. Thus, engagement between academics and new management needs to be authentic to embrace and sustain the changes. The researcher agrees with John Tagg (2012, p.15), who stated, “We need to not only design change for our institutions but redesign our institutions for change.”.

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Appendix A: Ethical Clearance

Ethical Clearance for M/D students: Research on human participants

The Ethics Committee of the Department of Psychology at Unisa has evaluated this research proposal for a Higher Degree in Psychology in light of appropriate ethical requirements, with special reference to the requirements of the Code of Conduct for Psychologists of the HPCSA and the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics.

Student Name: N van Vuuren **Student no.** 33145946

Supervisor: Prof S H van Deventer **Affiliation:** Dept. of Psychology, Unisa

Title of project:

The Psychosocial Adjustment to Change of Lecturers in a Higher Education Environment: A South African Context.

The proposal was evaluated for adherence to appropriate ethical standards as required by the Psychology Department of Unisa. The application was approved by the Ethics Committee of the Department of Psychology on the understanding that –

- All ethical requirements regarding informed consent, the right to withdraw from the study, the protection of participant's privacy and confidentiality of the information will be met to the satisfaction of the supervisor;

Signed:

Prof. M Papaikonomou *Date: 2015/10/27*
[For the Ethics Committee]
[Department of Psychology, Unisa]

Appendix B: Invitation to Participate

Dear Colleague,

I am currently enrolled for my PhD research study, and I am examining **lecturers' psycho-social experience of the changes taking place in higher education in South Africa.** I am inviting you to participate in this research study.

For an overview of the study and more information please see attached document and consent form.

Should you agree to participate, please complete the consent form and email it back to me as indication of you agreeing to participate. You could also email me, and I could collect the consent form from you. Thank you in advance for your precious time.

Kind Regards

Nicolene van Vuuren

Appendix C: Information about the Study

Information Sheet about the research study for Participants

Dear Colleague,

Thank you for your time to read and familiarise yourself with this PhD research study which will address **Lecturers' psychosocial experience of change in higher education in South Africa.**

Background Information:

Why did I choose this topic?

Without a doubt, for the past decade, the global landscape of higher education has changed. As societies became more complex, it impacted how individuals were educated and prepared to contribute meaningfully to the societies they exist in. The researcher wants to explore how lecturers experience any changes, in their work environment and how they respond to and cope with the changes.

The study is beneficial as it could be shedding light on how lecturers can be supported and assisted to adapt to the changes resulting in a healthier academic community and academic work environment.

Who can participate?

I invite all lecturers who are currently lecturing at any registered and recognised higher education institution in South Africa to participate.

What will be required of participants?

You will be asked to complete a pre-biographical interview questionnaire and commit to a one-hour face to face semi-structured interview that will be scheduled with you in advance and according to your availability.

Your participation in this study will be as an individual and not as a representative of the institution where you are employed. Should you agree to take part in this study, you will be asked to give consent for the above requirements. (See attached Consent form)

The interviews will be conducted in English and all correspondence and all documentation regarding this research study will be in English.

Participation is voluntary:

You are free to withdraw from the research study at any time without any negative consequences for you.

Confidentiality:

The information obtained during the interviews and from the questionnaire will be seen as confidential, it however will be discussed with my supervisor Prof. Vasi van Deventer. The information collected during the study will be securely stored.

Results of the study:

Results of this study may be published. Details (names and places) will be altered to ensure your anonymity. You will have the choice of using your own name or a pseudonym of your own choice.

You are also most welcome to request a copy of the results of the study, should you wish.
Should you have any questions or concerns regarding the project, either now or in future, please feel free to contact me:

Contact details of the researcher:

Nicolene van Vuuren
Cell: 0723409221
Email: nvanvuuren7@gmailcom

Appendix D: Consent Form for Participation

Lecturers' psychosocial experience of change in higher education in South Africa.

I have read the Information Sheet concerning the study and I understand what the study is about. I understand that I am free to request further information at any stage.

<u>I understand and accept that:</u>

1. My participation in the study is entirely voluntary in an individual and personal capacity.
2. I am free to withdraw from the project at any time without any disadvantage.
3. I am aware of what will happen to my personal information at the conclusion of the study.
4. I will receive no payment or compensation for participation in the study.
5. All personal information supplied by me will remain confidential throughout the study.

I ____ hereby give prior consent to voluntary partake in this study.

____________________ ______________

Signature of participant Signature of witness

____

Date

____

Nicolene van Vuuren
(Researcher)

Appendix E: Participant Profile Form

Participant Profile

Title:	
Name:	
Pseudonym: (Optional)	

1. **My Position is:**

Permanent		**Part Time**	

2. **Age:**

3. **Gender:**

Male		**Female**	

4. **My Highest Qualification:**

5. **I am a lecturer in the Faculty/School of:**

6. **I have been lecturing for__ in Higher Education:**

Years		**Months**	

7. **Do you think higher education in South Africa changed a lot in the past 10 years?**

Yes		**No**	

8. **In your opinion, do you think the changes in higher education are once-off or is it continuous?**

Once-Off		Continuous	

Date: ________________ **Signature:** ____________________________

Appendix F: Interview schedule

Interview schedule
<u>Change(s) in higher education:</u> *You indicated in the participant profile form that you think higher education has changed significantly in the past 10 years and that you perceive these changes to be continuous. Is this correct?* What changes have you experience in your work environment?
<u>Respondence to change:</u> In your opinion how have you responded to change?
<u>Coping with change:</u> How have you coped with change? • Of the things that you have done, what worked for you? • Of the things that you have done, what did not work for you?

Appendix G: Editors confirmation

Robyn Jansen van Vuuren
Master of Arts, Psychological Research (UCT)
Associate Member: Professional Editors' Guild
Cell: 082 860 4062
Email: robynjvanvuuren@gmail.com

Declaration of Doctoral Thesis Text Editing

I, Robyn Jansen van Vuuren, hereby confirm that the dissertation entitled

PSYCHO-SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT TO CHANGE OF LECTURERS IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

by **Nicolene van Vuuren**

was edited by me in preparation for submission for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy in Psychology

at **University of South Africa (UNISA).**

The focus of this edit was on primarily on text editing, including language usage and grammar, and cohesion and coherence.

I am qualified to have done such editing, being in possession of a Bachelor's degree with a major in English Language and Literature, having worked for two years at the University of Cape Town's Writing Centre, and having been involved in postgraduate research supervision between 2013 and 2019.

Note: The edited work described here may not be identical to that submitted. The author, at his/her sole discretion, has the prerogative to accept, delete, or change amendments made by the editor before submission. The final responsibility for the quality of the document lies with the author.

You are welcome to contact me should you have any queries.

11 October 2021

Dr Lisa Weideman

59 Disraeli Road
London
SW15 2DR
United Kingdom
21 November 2022

This serves to confirm that I have carried out editing work on Chapters 6 to 11 of Ms Nicolené van Vuuren's thesis: **Lecturers' psychosocial experience of change in higher education in South Africa.**

She has duly paid me for services rendered.

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

Dr Lisa Weideman

Mobile: +44 78 955 50662
Email: lisaweideman1@gmail.com

Appendix H: Example transcript

Transcript

Name: Participant 1
Time: 12h45 – 13h40

Date: 10/11/2016

(**60 minutes**)

<u>You indicated in the participant profile form that you think higher education has changed significantly in the past 10 years and that you perceive these changes to be continuous. Is that correct?</u>

A: So, I think there is a lot of changes in terms of the administration requirements that's super frustrating because it is silly [hissing and annoyed look on her face]. There is a big change that started with new management coming in, things *they want us to do* and …and it sometime doubles the administrative work, it is *not well thought out*. It is clear that they have NO! idea what it means to lecture 230 students, mark on time, mentor [umm] especially with your third years. *They have absolutely no idea what is going on in our workplace*, they are enforcing a lot of administration on us that was *not thought out by someone that works in an academic environment daily*, they are sitting in an office somewhere and make decisions. This is absolutely frustrating because if there is *actually participation in some of the decision making that takes place we can tell them* " Hey guys, there is a much easier way to do this". It is as if new management say we are going to colonise you now *please, I know colonised is a loaded word* but in this context it is like *we going to take you over we are going to tell you exactly what we want you to do*, we have no regard for existing institution culture… we absolutely have no regard for that we are just going to tell you what to do and you need to do it. And I think that for me is the most frustrating process in the change we just *sit here like little minions, and they treat us like little minions*, and it makes me hate them [hitting the table looking angry] … maybe hate is a strong word, but it makes me severely dislike management [emphasising loudly]. They, just make my life more difficult; it disengages me immediately [uhhhhhhh sigh a lot of frustration and anger].

N: So, you are frustrated and angry at them?

A: Daily time…eating away at my time making me fill in weird forms sitting in meetings that do not concern me and has no bearing on what I do actually from day to day. So, they try to communicate with all these meetings that only takes up my time and then it is irrelevant. Not being involved in the decisions in the change process. The moment you involve me and make me feel like I matter… if there is true participation in the stuff that affects me on my work level then I am going to say I am with you and I will feel part. Yes, I used to love what I do, I used to be one of those people that said… very few people in this world can say they really truly were born to be this and I used to think that I found that thing in the world that I was born to be, I was born to be a lecturer this is my calling and now I am just now I need to get another job.

In your opinion how have you responded to change?

A: I am bad at change, my initial response is always negative BUT and that is also something that sits in my personality, if you can explain to me and help me understand why these changes needs to be made or [ummm] or explain the logic behind the decision you make, and I can buy into it and I can understand why then I am going to support it. So, there is always the initial resistance, always. And the problem is very often no one in any change circumstances even if it is just a change of, we were planning to have drinks at this restaurant, and now we are changing our minds we are going to that one… even small things like that is always a no. I hate it. I like structure, planning, there is security in it. So, if you want to change something, it frightens me, it makes me anxious, BUT if you then take the time and sit with me to help me understand logically the reason for the change, why the decision has been made and I can logically understand why you are doing it, then I will support it fully and then I will put my energy into supporting it. It is that concept of participation even if you don't ask my opinion, even if you just explain to me logically, then *I will put my energy behind it, I will be positive about it and I will go for it that's fine. Although you would not say it now, I think …*I am usually a pretty optimistic person I try to be optimistic because I can become very melancholic if I want to, so I work very hard at being optimistic.

How have you coped with change?

Going into super organising mode, I get a little bit obsessive about lists because I am so overwhelmed and over-worked that I usually create to-do lists [showing me an example of her lists] creating my to-do list, usually it works very well for me because I can prioritise. I also have a very loud internal voice but very loud and that voice is a very … is a coach with a whip in the hand that drives everything, but it is a positive coach because it tells you good job, so that voice support me most because I have massive internal conversations. The husband, there is a lot of crying on the kitchen floor, and he is good at going it's okay…[comforting me]. Then I rely heavily on family for support, They would know that I am not coping with the work situation they would see it physically, so I rely heavily on them for support and emotional support.

Name: Participant 3
Time: 10h00 – 11h00

Date: 09/12/2016

(60 minutes)

You indicated in the participant profile form that you think higher education has changed significantly in the past 10 years and that you perceive these changes to be continuous. Is that correct?

"Black board, we did not have black board when I was a student, I don't know, there is more focus on teaching with technology and lesser focus on the old blackboard and chalk method of teaching. So, I guess a shift from the older ways to using technology, the student is supposed to do the work and you are just there to facilitate and things like that, but I think a student is still a student. Those who lead us – the Deans, the colleagues in the centre for teaching and learning. Ag, then there is this focus on numbers, that you have to see the student through it doesn't matter what, it doesn't matter if academic quality suffers you just have to see the student through and I do not like that at all it's, ja, it's an emphasis on get the student through it doesn't matter how you get them through, it doesn't matter about the

integrity of your discipline, it is all about numbers and money. It is getting big… you just have to produce. So that is actually what I hate about today's University system. I am conservative, so if something works, I mean why change it? I think a lot of things did work in the past and we did change it …change is not bad but sometimes things do work, and you should just let it be. Something that has frustrated me is that the new way of teaching is not working, we are dumbing our students down and that is what Universities don't seem to get. We have all these changes and the day we are putting students into the workplace that do not have the skills and all in the name of money.

In your opinion how have you responded to change?

I feel I have lost my individuality or creativity, because you have this mould, and you have to do your teaching according to this almost universal standard and [sigh x2] you just lose who you are a bit. My idea is if you have a certain way of doing …obviously you can be corrected and you must develop yourself and all these things, but it is almost like there is a standard mould you have to fit into to do good teaching and it takes out the passion out of it, because you have to do this now [looking sad and frustrated] and sooner or later you start losing … I think with black board and all these technology, takes out the personal out of teaching as well and it's all good and well to have all these nice platforms that we can do things from and blended learning and all these things, but the old method allowed me… and I still use it…allowed me to have personal interaction with students. I can walk to them and sit next to them ask them a question, go to the board, write something up, go sit next to them ask them something again so it is that personal … interpersonal communication that is lost almost. I fight it. Yes resist, fight (little laugh) I resist it.

How have you coped with change?

I just ignore it I know it's silly, but I just go my own way. My relationship with the Lord that's the number one, I must be honest with you that if it was not for that a lot of the things in my life would not be possible. It will literally fall into pieces or crumble at work. Some of the nonsense you have to deal with there [umm]. It is just something wonderful that you can come home to … obviously the Lord is in you but that you have that refuge. Whenever things

get too much you have that refuge where you can just flee for rest again. I think I've also got a good network of friends and family. I think that obviously helps. And I also have a boxing bag, well I don't do it for stress, but I do it for fun, but I think that also help to some extent, you get out of the house and for a moment you just let go.

Appendix I: Example analysis process

Taking a Closer Look

Name: Participant 1

- How did lecturers experience the changes in their work environments in higher education institutions in South Africa?
- How did lecturers respond to the changes?
- How did lecturers cope with the changes?

Line	Transcript	Descriptive Comments/Exploratory Notes
1	A: So, I think there is **a lot of changes in terms of the administration requirements**	Change responsible for increase in
2	that's super frustrating because it is silly [hissing and annoyed look on her face].	administration
3	There is a **big change that started with new management coming in**, things *they*	A significant change is when
4	*want us to do* and …and it sometime **doubles the administrative work**, it is *not*	management changed *(talking about*
5	*well thought out*. It is clear that they have NO! idea what it means to lecture 230	*new management)*

6	students, mark on time, mentor [umm] especially with your third years. *They have*	Expectations of new management
7	*absolutely no idea what is going on in our workplace*, they are **enforcing a lot of**	*(they want us to do)*
8	**administration on us** that was *not thought out by someone that works in an*	Unnecessary admin
9	*academic environment daily*, **they are sitting in an office somewhere and make**	The unnecessary admin is a sign that
10	**decisions this is absolutely frustrating** because if there is *actually participation in*	management have no understanding
11	*some of the decision making that takes place we can tell them* " Hey guys, there is	of the academic work environment
12	a much easier way to do this". It is **as if new management say we are going to**	Because they do not know how to
13	**colonise** you now *please, I know colonised is a loaded word* but in this context it is	manage in an academic
14	like *we going to take you over we are going to tell you exactly what we want you to*	environment, they force unnecessary
15	*do*, we have **no regard for existing institution culture**… we **absolutely have no**	admin
16	**regard** for that we are just going to tell you what to do and you need to do it. And I	New management wants to control
17	think that for me is **the most frustrating process in the change** we just *sit here like*	us, they want to change our
18	*little minions, and they treat us like little minions*, and **it makes me hate them**	academic culture
19	[hitting the table looking angry] … maybe hate is a strong word, but it makes me	Deep seated aversion of
20	**severely dislike management** [emphasising loudly]. They, **just make my life more**	management

21	**difficult**; it **disengages me immediately** [uhhhhhhh sigh a lot of frustration and	Academics who know best are
22	anger].	excluded from decision making
23	**N: So, you are frustrated and angry at them?**	processes
24	A: Daily time…eating away at my time making me fill in weird forms sitting in	
25	meetings that do not concern me and has no bearing on what I do actually from	Academics are excluded from their
26	day to day. So, they try to communicate with all these meetings that only takes up	work environment
27	my time and then it is irrelevant. Not being involved in the decisions in the change	
28	process. The moment you involve me and make me feel like I matter… if there is	Not being included affects me
	true participation in the stuff that affects me on my work level then I am going to	directly
	say I am with you and I will feel part. yes, I use to love what I do, I use to be one of	Lost interest in working in academia?
	those people that said… very few people in this world can say they really truly	
	were born to be this and I use to think that I found that thing in the world that I	
	was born to be, I was born to be a lecturer this is my calling and now I am just now	
	I need to get another job.	

29	A: I am **bad at change**, my initial response is always **negative** BUT and that is also	1. Response is **negative** BUT
30	something that sit in my personality, if you can **explain to me** and help me	she also recognises this as
31	understand why these changes needs to be made or [ummm] or explain the **logic**	a personality trait
32	**behind the decision** you make, and I can buy into it and I can understand why then	2. Wants to understand **the**
33	I am going to support it. So, there is **always the initial resistance**, **always** and the	**logic behind the change** –
34	problem is very often no one in any change circumstances even if it is just a change	it must make sense to her
35	of, we were planning to have drinks at this restaurant, and now we are changing	3. **Generalises** - Any
36	our minds we are going to that one… even small things like that is always a no. **I**	unplanned
37	**hate it**. **I like structure planning, there is security in it**. So, if you want to change	events/changes etc.
38	something, **it frightens me it makes me anxious**, **BUT** if you then take the time and	creates a feeling of
39	sit with **me to help me understand logically the reason for the change**, why the	insecurity – **Therefore**
40	decision has been made and I can **logically understand** why you are doing it then I	**negative response to**
41	will support it fully and then I will put my energy into supporting it. **It is that**	**change because she likes**
42	**concept of participation** even if you don't ask my opinion, **even if you just explain**	**structure/ logic**
43	**to me logically**, then ***I will put my energy behind it, I will be positive about it*** *and I*	**explanations/ boundaries**

44 45 46	*will go for it that's fine. Although* ***you would not say it now,*** *I think…***I am usually a pretty optimistic person.** I try to be optimistic because I can become very melancholic if I want to, so I work very hard at being optimistic.	as this creates a **feeling of security**. Personality type 4. Unplanned change/impromptu change causes her to feel anxious – insecure? 5. Understanding creates a feeling of being in control. ➢ P repeats Logic/Logical understanding ➢ P makes a contradicting statement as earlier in the interview she describes herself as negative – personality trait but here she

		mentioned that she is optimistic (negative optimist?)
47 48 49 50 51 52 55 56 57 58 59	Going into **super organising mode**, **I get a little bit obsessive about lists** because **I am so overwhelmed and over worked that I usually create to-do lists** [showing me an example of her lists] **creating my to-do list, usually it works very well for me** because **I can prioritise.** I also have a **very loud internal voice but very loud and that voice is a very** … is a coach with a whip in the hand that drives everything, but it is a positive coach because it tells you good job, so that voice support me most because I have massive internal conversations, **The husband**, there is a lot of crying on the kitchen floor and he is good at going it's okay…[comforting me] Then I **rely heavily on family for support**,. they would know that **I am not coping with the work situation** they would see it physically, so I rely heavily on them for support and emotional support.	➢ Lists her various coping strategies (For me this is an indication that she is trying various strategies because she is not coping) Interesting repeats being organised. (Feeling of security?) (Feeling a loss of control?) ➢ She feels overwhelmed (an indication that she is not coping?)

		She admits this in the end of the interview ➢ Reference to being over-worked reminds of previous point – increased workload in the form of administration and also that a lot of the work/administration is unnecessary ➢ She defends her "not coping" referring to and explaining how organised she is – she prioritises/manages her time well, so not coping is not her – not internal

		➢ Making lists – is functional organising/categorising things helps restore a feeling of control. Linking back to previous point where she noted that she **likes structure planning, there is security in it** ➢ Usually, list making helps her to cope with her workload, but here the workload and feelings of being overwhelmed has resulted in escalating her OCD behaviour

		Thus she started to make lists to cope with the lists? ➢ She rewards herself – nice to-do-list ➢ Seeking support (husband & family) to cope emotionally

Name: Participant 3

- How did lecturers experience the changes in their work environments in higher education institutions in South Africa?
- How did lecturers respond to the changes?
- How did lecturers cope with the changes?

Line	Transcript	Descriptive Comments/Exploratory Notes
1 2	"Black board, we did not have black board when I was a student, I don't know, there is more focus on teaching with technology and	➢ The infiltration of technology as increased administration and changed the way teacher/lecturers teach. Not in a good way

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<td>lesser focus on the old blackboard and chalk method of teaching.
So, I guess a shift from the older ways to using technology, the
student is supposed to do the work and you are just there to
facilitate and things like that, <u>but I think a student is still a student.</u>
Those who lead us – the Deans, the colleagues in the centre for
teaching and learning. Ag, then there is this focus on numbers, that
you <u>have to see the student through it doesn't matter what, it</u>
<u>doesn't matter if academic quality suffers you just have to see the</u>
<u>student through and I do not like that at all</u> its ja it's an <u>emphasis on</u>
<u>get the student through it doesn't matter how you get them</u>
<u>through</u>, it doesn't matter about the integrity of your discipline, it
is all about numbers and money. It is getting big… you just have to
produce. So that is actually what I hate about today's University
system. I am conservative, so <u>if something works</u>, <u>I mean why</u>
<u>change it I think a lot of things did work in the past</u> and we did</td>
<td>➢ Students did not change - lecturers are told they changed, but this is not the case they are still students

They = Those who lead us – the Deans, the colleagues in the centre for teaching and learning

➢ The institutional culture changed – away from the traditional scholarship focused to a more corporate focus – student numbers and money

This shift in focus compromises academic integrity

➢ He perceives himself as a traditional academic
Tyranny of custom: which refers to the tendency to be caught up in the web of tradition?</td></tr>
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18	change it …*change is not bad but sometimes things do work, and*	
19	*you should just let it let be*. Something that has **frustrated me is that**	
20	**the new way of teaching is not working**, we *are dumbing our*	
21	*students down* and **that is what Universities don't seem to get.** We	
22	have all these changes and the day we are putting students into the	
23	workplace that do not have the skills and all in the name of money.	
		Descriptive Comments
24	I feel I **have lost my individuality or creativity,** because you have this	**1. Lost autonomy and control over**
25	mould, and you have to do your teaching according to this almost	**environment**
26	universal standard and [sigh x2] you just loose who you are a bit. **My**	**2. Resistance**
27	**idea is if you have a certain way of doing** …obviously you can be	- if you have a certain way of doing *do not*
28	corrected and you must develop yourself and all these things, but it	*change it when it is working?*
29	is almost like there is a standard mould you have to fit into to do good	- Resist the mould – speaks to autonomy
30	teaching and it takes out the passion out of it, because you have to	of the academic – refers to my idea/ *I get*
31	do this now [looking sad and frustrated] and sooner or later you start	*the impression that this participant does*

32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40	losing … I think with black board and all these technology, takes out the personal out of teaching as well and it's all good and well to have all these nice platforms that we can do things from and blended learning and all these things, but the **old method allowed me… and I still use it** *allowed me to have personal interaction with students I can walk to them and sit next to them ask them a question, go to the board, write something up go sit next to them ask them something again so it is that personal … interpersonal communication that is lost almost*. **I fight it. Yes resist, fight (little laugh) I resist it.**	*not want to adapt his teaching methodology which is traditional as he refers to technology and blackboard LMS system as invasive*
		Descriptive Comments
41 42 43 44	I **just ignore it** I know <u>it's silly, but I just go my own way</u>. My relationship with the Lord that's the number one, I must be honest with you that if it was not for that a lot of the things in my life would not be possible. It will literally fall into pieces or crumble at	• He ignores the change – knowing that the change has happened – Pretend it hasn't happened? / Act as if it hasn't happened?

45	work. Some of the nonsense you have to deal with there [umm] It is	• Turning to Religion - Seek God's help/
46	just something wonderful that you can come home to … obviously	Find comfort in religion/ Put trust in God
47	the Lord is in you but that you have that refuge. Whenever things get	The emergence of Turning to Religion seems to
48	too much you have that refuge where you can just flee for rest again.	be an important coping strategy for him
49	I think I've also got a good network of friends and family I think that	• Social Support –
50	obviously help and I also have a boxing bag, well I don't do it for	Get emotional support from friend /family
51	stress, but I do it for fun, but I think that also help to some extend you	• Boxing bag - Let out emotions
52	get out of the house and for a moment you just let go.	

Appendix K: Example cross-analysis

Grouping the Emergent Themes for change experienced

Changes in higher education

Shift in governance

managed with a corporate lens

excluding the academic

communication and transparency

Workload

infringement of workload on personal and family

ignorance of management

Information and communication technologies (ICT

Doubting my ability

students' academic skill

Student profile

Academic entitlement

academic responsibility

#Fees must fall

Grouping the Emergent Themes for Response

Grouping the Emergent Themes of coping with the changes

I used the online application https://www.lucidchart.com/pages/ as tool to do my cross analysis. This allowed me the freedom to visually arrange and re-arrange my first impressions, later perceptions and interpretation of the data.