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Abstract

This chapter explores how Cypriot lecturers perceive and experience fear while being at work. Drawing on the lens of interpretive inquiry, data were collected through interviews with nineteen lecturers. Analysis focused on experiences of workplace fear offering rich insights into characteristics of fear, eliciting events, and coping ways. Findings help to unveil the specific events that lead to fear in the Cypriot universities, and the ways lecturers manage their fearful experiences. The study contributes to the study of discrete emotions, by empirically examining fear's own storyline through the workers' own perspectives, within a specific context.

Key words: workplace fear; discrete emotions; Higher Education; interpretive study; Cyprus.

Introduction

The view that organisations are emotional arenas in which different emotions are elicited, displayed, suppressed, and managed did not develop seriously in the literature until the 1980s. Studies of workplace events (eg. Basch & Fisher, 2000; Boudens, 2005; Fineman, 1993; Weiss, Cropanzano, Webster, & Watson, 1996) reveal a wide range of emotional states generated in organisations. However, scholars tend to treat most emotions in a relatively undifferentiated manner, grouping them into positive or negative, primary or secondary states, rather than as individually identifiable constructs (eg. anger, envy etc), despite numerous calls for the study of discrete emotions rather than emotions in general (Gooty, Gavin, & Ashkanasy, 2009; Oatley, Dacher, & Jenkins, 1996; Tiedens & Linton, 2001). Such broad conceptualisations seem to be inadequate indicators of workers' emotional experiences, in that they diminish the extent to which an emotion is considered distinctive in relation to its subjective experience, antecedents and consequences. However, despite this overemphasis on general conceptualisations (eg. Game, 2008; Watson, 2000), there have been some recent and notable exceptions investigating discrete emotions, namely anger (eg. Domagalski & Steelman, 2005; Fitness, 2000; Geddes & Callister, 2007; Glomb, 2002), jealousy and envy (Vecchio, 2000), shame and guilt (eg. Barclay, Skarlicki, & Pugh, 2005). Certainly, it is necessary to focus more on investigating the discrete nature of emotions if we are interested in the different processes that drive them and the different outcomes that may result from them (Gooty et al., 2009). Each emotion has its own storyline, hence excluding discrete antecedents and effects results in fragmented research that can confuse the field of study. One way to avoid this would be to explore emotional events in organisations, based on workers' narratives about the emotions they experience at work. This study responds to the call to research discrete emotions at work by adopting an interpretive approach to explore workers' narratives of fear in the workplace. Using stories to explicate events and trace processes of emotion

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experience and expression helps unravel some of the complex meanings that embrace emotional lives at work (Lazarus & Lazarus, 1994).

Literature review

Defining and distinguishing fear

From a psychological perspective, fear is an intense emotion experienced in the presence of a perceived, immediate threat contrasting with anxiety in that fear has an object (Ahmed, 2003), while anxiety is somewhat more vague in focus, representing a longer-term state of uneasiness, often without a clear and specific object. Thus, although, fear is described as an emotional reaction to an identifiable threat, anxiety is described more as a feeling of uneasy suspense (Rachman, 1974). Similarly, Heidegger discusses anxiety arguing that it does not have an easily identifiable cause as it is characterised by the fact that 'what threatens is nowhere' (1962, p. 231). An anxious person may feel flushed, uncomfortable, and an urge to flee, but if the person has no sense of a fearful object, or if there is nothing obviously objectionable or fearful to the person, then that feeling will not count as feeling afraid (Lazarus & Lazarus, 1994). Therefore, an appraisal, belief, or judgment that there is a clear or upcoming source of danger is essential to the experience of fear.

A number of early and contemporary researchers and theorists (Aristotle, 1984; Darwin, 1872; Ekman, 1992; Fischer, Shaver, & Carnochan, 1990; James, 1950; Plutchik, 1980; Shaver, Schwartz, Kirson, & O'Connor, 1987) position fear within the basic human emotions. Social constructivists also generally admit that fear is a primary emotion, as it is hard-wired in the human neuroanatomy, although they would also emphasise that the expression of fear is socially constructed (Kemper, 1987; Turner, 2000). Fear is broadly defined as an unpleasant emotion triggered by perceived risk or danger, accompanied by a feeling of dislike of particular conditions and objects (Gray, 1988). Current

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conceptualisations of fear have also characterised it as being a variable social emotion, often contagious that may affect group behaviour and social policy; for example, terrorist attacks, wars and national threats have relied on the emotion of fear, with different cultures, groups and genders reacting differently to it (Stearns, 2006). Indeed, emotions may be distributed differently across segments of a society, typically corresponding to each segment's social or economic status (eg. individual shares of money, power, and prestige) (Barbalet, 1998). Accordingly, fear is an emotion that is differentially distributed across a society, resulting from a lack of power and confidence that individuals may attribute to their own shortcomings (Barbalet, 1998). Moreover, its experience may be affected by the context in which fear occurs, since a dangerous or threatening stimulus, for instance a natural catastrophe, may pose little threat, if it is seen as part of watching a movie, rather than experienced in reality. It appears, then, that evolution, social interactions, cultural prescriptions, and context, penetrate every emotion, its occasions for appearing and its duration (Frijda, 2007).

Fear's eliciting events in the workplace

Early research suggested that fear is elicited when workers face threatening judgments about their role in the organisation, especially when they are faced with uncertainty about that role and when organisational changes are anticipated (Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek, & Rosenthal, 1964). Accordingly, organisational fear may revolve around felt threats and loss of control (Gibson, 2006). Although fear has long been seen as one of the basic emotions, its presence in organisational theorising is still limited (Kish-Gephart, Detert, Treviño, & Edmondson, 2009). Workplace fear appears as not simply a worker's trait, rather as an emotion stemming from several emotional interactions and conditions in the working environment. A broad view of fear is that it is a generalised experience of apprehension in the workplace (Rachman, 1974). Early research suggested that fear is elicited when workers face threatening judgments about their role in the organisation, especially when

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they are faced with uncertainty about that role and when organisational changes are anticipated (Kahn et al., 1964). Accordingly, organisational fear may revolve around felt threats and loss of control (Gibson, 2006).

Contemporary organisational research does draw out some of fear's eliciting objects and events in the workplace. For example, conflict in hierarchical relationships, as well as status differences and interactions with disrespectful supervisors may generate fear to the worker (Tiedens, 2001); when a high-performing employee is made redundant and/or humiliated by supervisors, fear affects other employees (Lara, 2006). As a result, fear-driven workplaces with poor morale undermine employee commitment and productivity (Namie, 2003). It was also found that new employment is a challenge for workers who may experience fear when entering a new environment and tend to seek job-related and emotional information from supervisors and colleagues (Miller & Jablin, 1991; Morrison, 1993).

Research into fear at work often refers to job insecurity and worry about the possible loss of employment (Burchell, Ladipo, & Wilkinson, 2002; De Witte, 2005; Dickerson & Green, 2012). Such research has shown that job insecurity and fear of redundancy may adversely impact on psychological well-being and job satisfaction, potentially leading to increased psychosomatic complaints and physical strains (De Witte, 2005; Jordan, Ashkanasy, Hartel, & Hooper, 2002; Wichert, 2005). Moreover, fear can also be inspired by feelings of insecurity with respect to changes in the nature of the job or work role. Significant organisational change, such as mergers or acquisitions, is a highly salient emotion-eliciting antecedent, during which workers may experience a range of emotions and feelings such as fear, anxiety, agony, sadness, powerlessness and depression (Kirk, 1999; Torkelson & Muhonen, 2003; Vince, 2006). Evidently, the majority of research on fear is dominated by manifestations that fear is an emotion that is negatively experienced. However, an

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increasing number of researchers have started to view emotions, like fear, as adaptively useful. For example, fear may encourage avoidance of perceived threats and pessimistic judgments, which protects the individual from risks and future unpleasant outcomes (Izard, 1993; Lerner & Keltner, 2001; Maner & Gerend, 2007). Fear can also influence a wide array of positive organizational phenomena; for example, its expression may facilitate collective learning in organisations (Funlop & Rifin, 1997), influence team member/leader interaction, communication, and improvement activity (Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006) and can influence decisions to reveal sexual orientation at work (Ragins, Singh, & Cornwell, 2007).

Coping with emotional difficulties

Despite the positive outcomes that fear may be associated with, workers tend to suppress expressions of fear more than emotions such as anger, which are more likely to be overtly expressed and directed, at the person who provoked the emotion (Gibson, 2006; Kish-Gephart et al., 2009). The literature describes a number of behaviours that workers use to cope with emotional difficulties and demands. Coping has been conceptualised as the cognitive and behavioural effort and response of the person to events that are perceived as negative (Weiten & Lloyd, 2003). Variations in the individual's coping responses to each emotion result from an appraisal process that simultaneously takes into account personal factors along with environmental demands, constraints and opportunities (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

Coping responses can be classified within three basic mechanisms: appraisal, problem and emotion-focused coping (Weiten & Lloyd, 2003). These three dimensions differ in the way coping behaviour is targeted: appraisal-focused coping aims to change one's interpretations of difficult experienced events (eg. rationalisation, re-interpretation); problem-focused coping aims to alter the problem itself (eg. seek social support, improve

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time-management); and emotion-focused coping focuses on managing the emotions of the person (eg. meditating, exercising, distraction). Emotion-focused coping has been particularly linked with emotional labour as an attempt to regulate the expression of organisationally desired emotions and fulfil the emotional display requirement of organisations (Grandey, 2003). Workers are indeed selective in the degree to which they authentically express and display their fear, which was conceptualised as emotion work performance (Hochschild, 1983). Emotion work leaves a discrepancy between felt and displayed emotions and is seen as part of everyday social exchanges that ensures social stability and the well-being of social actors (Hochschild, 1983). Emotion work can be beneficial for the individual (eg. Wouters, 1989), even though studies have mainly emphasised the negative effects on the individual and organisation (Grandey, 2003; Hochschild, 1983). In order to perform emotion work and to regulate their emotions, workers, including university lecturers, use surface and deep acting (Constanti & Gibbs, 2004). Surface acting is performed when an individual hides spontaneous expression and purposely puts on an *appropriate* emotion without actually feeling it, while deep acting involves the reappraisal of a situation and an attempt to modify the actual feeling by changing the determinants that gave rise to it. Workers' individual characteristics (personality) is a significant moderator of their engagement with different types of emotional management and expression (Fisher & Ashkanasy, 2000), apparently contributing to the increasingly popular concept of emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1995). This is based on the idea that personal skills and cognitive abilities contribute to greater emotional sensitivity and ability to cope with emotive demands at work, with more emotionally intelligent individuals being better able to manage (and cope with) their fear, which suggests that they might be more socially and emotionally capable than others in other aspects of life.

Fear in the educational context

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In education, fear has long been identified in teachers' emotional lives, especially as being associated with losing control over their classes or losing their job (Waller, 1932). Increased use of Information and Communications technology in lessons was also found to be another determinant of teachers' fear, often referred to as *cyberphobia*, which includes the fear of using computers and lack of confidence with computer jargon (Bradley & Russell, 1997). More modern changes in the educational sector, such as the privatisation of education, has also contributed to teachers' fear of change to their livelihood and professional accountability and ultimately to fear of job loss (Conley & Glasman, 2008). Conversely, the emotion of confidence can be generated from focused unit completion and preparedness (O'Neill & Stephenson, 2012). Research suggests that professional development can help eliminate, or at least minimise, teachers' fear of teaching and helps them to experiment with new learning activities (Buczynski & Hansen, 2010). Confidence building activities have also been identified as a central element in the ability to learn about and master new teaching practices and fulfil assessment responsibilities (Goos & Hughes, 2010).

In the context of Higher Education (HE), the emotional aspects of academic work remain under-researched (Pekrun, Goetz, Titz, & Perry, 2002), although academics are also emotional and passionate beings (Hargreaves, 1998). HE institutions are often conceptualised as service providers with customers, means of production, and service deliverers (Constanti & Gibbs, 2004), although the nature of their customers and their relationships with such service deliverers is rarely straightforward (Hoffman & Kretovics, 2004). Academics interact with different stakeholders, such as students, colleagues, administrators, and at times the media, which requires producing an emotional state for other people. University work involves emotional labour performance to achieve student satisfaction and attain management goals (Bellas, 1999). It is not enough for academics to be knowledgeable; they also need to communicate their knowledge in an entertaining

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way, as it is challenging to maintain the students' interest and motivation. Showing confidence in and enthusiasm for a subject is seen as a key indicator of good teaching (Ramsden, 1992) and academics need to put on a show and make use of paralanguage, nonverbal behaviours, humour and varied vocabulary (McKinney, 1988). Fear in HE, however, is seldom highlighted in the mainstream emotion literature. Relevant studies in the academic context have greatly dealt with organisational stress and emotional labour as outcomes of certain events (eg. Constanti & Gibbs, 2004; Ogbonna & Harris, 2004), but not with the discrete emotions that these stressors generate. Fear in academia was raised as a subsidiary outcome to research projects rather than being central to them. For example, the academic context is characterised by fear of having their work stolen or plagiarised and fear of negative student evaluation (Zwagerman, 2008). Also, decreased input and influence in policy generation and constant evaluation and micromanagement of their work by managers and bureaucratic quality assessment can create fear of loss of academic freedom in university teachers (Conley & Glasman, 2008).

Framing the study

This study focuses on the emotion of fear, as a significant component of organisational life which requires more attention (Ashkanasy & Nickolson, 2003), especially given its historical importance to psychology, sociology, and psychiatry, together with its evolutionary nature (Plutchik, 1980). From a psychological perspective, when attempting to explore people's behaviours, it is necessary to have a good understanding of the target person's perceptions of, and attitudes towards, the examined phenomenon. Likewise, in therapeutic situations it is regarded as essential to obtain the individual's perception of the issue or problem before commencing therapy; this understanding is likely to influence the individual's responsiveness to different therapeutic approaches (Cochran & Cochran, 2005; Egan, 2007). Similarly, when exploring attitudes and beliefs towards a discrete emotion,

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we can gain a better understanding of workers' perceptions, and then develop appropriate coping strategies with an increased probability of effectiveness.

We argue that having a deep understanding of the workers' perspective of fear is important for positive change to occur, and damaging outcomes to be eliminated. Therefore, there is merit in understanding workers' perspectives regarding fear in order to develop successful strategies to promote organisational well-being. In the light of this, the aim of this research was to examine academics' understandings of, and attitudes towards, workplace fear, with the intention of informing Universities about approaches that might promote a greater awareness of fear and, therefore, mitigate any potentially unpleasant or damaging consequences.

Higher education in Cyprus

The context of each study plays a significant role in the participants' perceptions of fear and the overall findings, since what people think, how they feel and what they do is shaped strongly by the social contexts in which they live (Zembylas & Papanastasiou, 2006). Our research focused on HE in Cyprus; exploring fearful experiences in Cypriot academia offers an opportunity for a cultural perspective on discrete emotion research. Uncovering culturally specific characteristics of emotional phenomena is an important reason of conducting research in Cyprus, as these can be compared to more universal findings on existing research in the field.

Insecurity and uncertainty have characterised the working environment of academics in the UK and the USA for the past few years, leading to the intensification of academic work accompanied by escalating workloads, long hours, and increased surveillance and control (Willmott, 1995). Notably, changes to the nature of academic work (student teaching quality assessments, research assessment exercises and teaching quality reviews), together

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with increasing demands from other stakeholders (students who demand greater levels of service, employers, society) have provided tangible and comparable measures of lecturer performance through which managers have tightened their control over the academic labour process (Willmott, 1995).

Cyprus is experiencing what the UK and the USA experienced during the past decades, with the introduction of fees for students in HE. Although the HE sector in Cyprus is relatively young, it has come a long way since independence. The increase in demand for HE was growing (Ministry of Finance, 2013) and in 2005, the House of Representatives approved the establishment and operation of private universities (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2005). The demand for HE exceeded public supply, so private markets took advantage of this change, with three private colleges upgrading to private university status. Cypriot universities are largely teaching-focused after the accreditation of their programmes with a few now investing in research (Varnava-Marouchou, 2007). In this regard, little is known about how these changes and the profession's nature affect the emotions of academics. Moreover, cultural meanings of the profession have not been raised in the organisational literature in any depth. There appears to be a lack of research about the role of emotions in HE teaching, how lecturers' emotional experiences relate to their teaching practices, how they cope with their emotions and how the socio-cultural context of teaching interacts with their emotions (Bellás, 1999).

An interpretive methodology

The research objective of the methodology used was to map the qualitatively different conceptualisations of fear, held by lecturers' working experiences. Consistent with Heideggerian phenomenology, the authors assumed that lecturers' experiences would include expressions about what concerned them most (Heidegger, 1962). Thus, the study took an interpretive stand, aiming to capture the voice of the lecturers in order to make

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sense of the nature of their fearful experiences. An interpretive approach adopts a position that knowledge of reality is a social construction by human actors, therefore to understand a phenomenon requires studying it within its natural environment from the participants' meanings, without any attempts to control or generalise (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993). The interpretive researcher assumes that interpreting the meanings of the lecturers' fearful experiences would uncover new understandings of how fear is generated and managed within the workplace. This approach suggests that people in organisations make retrospective sense of unexpected and disruptive events through an on-going process of action, selection, and interpretation (Weick, 1995). The concept of making sense of a phenomenon encourages the active agents to construct sensible events and requires placing a stimuli into a framework that enables its comprehension, construction of meaning, interacting in pursuit of mutual understanding and patterning (Weick, 1995). An interpretive approach can be more effective at capturing the richness associated with emotional experiences, as it is primarily descriptive and focuses on the perspective participants attach to everyday life (Sandberg, 2005).

The strength of applying an interpretive approach to the experience of fear lies on the fact that value-free data cannot be obtained, since the interpretive researchers use their preconceptions to guide the process of enquiry, while closely working and interacting with the human subjects of the enquiry, changing the preconceptions of both parties (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Sandberg, 2005). This contrasts the positivistic perspective, which assumes that specific stimuli elicit the same specific emotions in a more or less same biologically determined way, whereas the interpretive approaches support that a given stimulus may elicit various emotional states and consequences depending on how it is interpreted (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993). The choice of an interpretive approach is primarily geared around addressing the specific aims of the study, without explicitly entering into a discussion about the relative merits of the positivist and constructivist

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approaches to the study of emotion. In particular, the purpose of this approach is to elicit and make sense of the data to show how fear and fearful events appear from the perspective of the lecturers' in their working environment. The authors believe that within the context of workplace fear the interpretive approach is appropriate, in order to capture the socially constructed contextual richness and complexity of the emotion as experienced by lecturers.

Sample

A sample of nineteen lecturers from three universities and from various disciplines and were invited to participate in the study. All replied and were further informed of the study and given the opportunity to ask questions about participation. Following this second contact, all agreed to participate to the research and signed consent forms. The sample consisted of ten women and nine men, lecturers and senior lecturers, having academic experience ranging from 3 to 30 years, and ranged in age from early thirties to late fifties. The sample size was determined following the notion of theory sampling (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) in which the recruitment of participants stopped when no new conceptions of the phenomenon under study emerged. In this study, the variation in fear descriptions began to repeat itself after about 15 participants. All participants had been born and brought up in Cyprus and were PhD holders or candidates. The interviews were conducted from 2011 until 2013. Participants were informed that participation was voluntary and that they had the right to withdraw from the study. Anonymity was promised to the interviewees. In the findings' section, the participants were referred to by number and length of service in years in parenthesis (eg. P1, 3 refers to participant one, with 3 years of service), in order to help identify potential differences in fear experiences and reactions between the younger and senior academics.

Data collection

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Data were collected using semi-structured interviews conducted by the first author and lasted between one to three and a half hours. The interviewees were informed of the study's objectives and approach, and were offered the chance to see the interview transcript to check for correctness. All of the interviews were face-to-face and were conducted in a private location at the participants' workplace. The aim of the interviews was to capture the possible variation in conceptions of fear in a rich and comprehensive way. The interviews began with the following open-ended question: Can you bring in mind a particular time when you felt fear at work and what that experience meant to you? Tell it in as much detail as you can, as if you were reliving it again. They were also asked to describe the emotion in order to identify fear's characteristics. Additional questions were asked to explore in more detail the emotion, such as (a) the situational context of the experience, (b) descriptions of the people with whom the experience was shared, (c) the source of the event that stimulated fear, (d) the bodily symptoms experienced and expressive reactions shown, and (e) how they attempted to deal with it.

Qualitative Analysis

Interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed word for word. Data were analysed using phenomenological analysis using Moustakas' (1994) approach to data analysis. The analysis consisted of the following phases: first, familiarising with the data with repeated readings of the transcripts as it was important to understand the data and generate any descriptions related to fearful aspects of the lecturers' profession. Second, the descriptions of the participants' experiences of fear were coded and grouped into coded categories by excerpting exemplars. Third, different categories were sorted into potential themes, such as the characteristics of fear, its eliciting events, and collated all the relevant coded data extracts within the identified themes. The next step involved rereading exemplars from each category, and identifying problematic themes or generating new ones (such as, expressive ways of fear) while later the themes were defined and labeled based on what

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each theme was about. Then, interpretations of exemplars that disclosed the meanings of participants' fearful experiences were reflected in a concise, coherent, logical account. Finally, to augment understandings of the collected data, findings were further explored in relation to the literature.

Findings

From the interviews, three primary themes were identified. Each theme is discussed in turn and presents a distinct but important understanding of participants' experiences of fear.

Theme 1: A social emotion with physical and emotional disruption

A dominant theme in participant accounts was that fear is an emotion of physical and psychological disruption, which represented the anxiety and worry expressed regarding certain social events and situations of unwanted consequences. Lecturers described fear as an uncomfortable emotion, unpleasantly experienced, and emphasised the impact of their actions on others and how the display of their fear may have had harmful consequences for their reputation. Their fear was experienced with physical changes, such as shivering, palpitations, trembling voice, sweating, continuous swallowing and body temperature decrease. Psychological changes were also mentioned such as sense of insecurity and self-doubt, agony, nervousness, and feeling of uncertainty of the unknown. Fear was experienced as feeling weak and needing relief, accompanied with feelings of vulnerability, powerlessness, outpourings of crying and agony of what will follow. Participants remembered experiencing fear when lecturing, making them think that they were not good enough to be lecturers, or that they were not in the right job. Other participants described feeling frozen, exposed, having butterflies in their stomach and sweating when they are on stage.

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For the lecturers, being fearful means having thoughts of self-doubt. Academia entails many fearful moments and according to the interviews, fear emphasises weakness and a pressure of being unmistakable and perfect. Participants referred to the social aspects of the emotion as, according to them, experiencing fear creates thoughts about being professionally and socially right. Descriptions about a loss of personal dignity and status, a lack of confidence, a sense of failure to perform professionally and nervousness were common. Central to the experience of fear is the insecurity and agony that their reputation may be damaged. A male lecturer explained what fear meant to him in relation to keeping his good reputation with his students, because as he said students tend to see academics as people they respect and not as people they make fun of:

I kept thinking that this is not where I want to be. The insecurity of the unknown is fearful. I had to be there for two hours. I kept wondering, "What will I say for two whole hours? How many slides is two hours? Will I remember everything? How will I speak if I have 200 people looking at me? What will they think of me? (P10, 4)

Fearing he would not complete an adequate and satisfying lecture, the participant was filled with self-doubt, insecurity and self-questioning on whether he would respond to the professions' duties. Opening an inner-dialogue appeared as part of the experience of fear, with other lecturers mentioning self-talking whilst being in the fearful situation of reputation damage. Fear, then, appears to be an emotion that values the importance of other people involved in the situation.

Theme 2: Determinants of fear

The insecurity of losing their job as an outcome of the financial crisis, lack of experience and confidence in lecturing, possible failure to deal with the job's expectations, and the authoritative behaviour of managers were the main determinants of the participants' fear.

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They recognised the recent financial recession as a key factor affecting lecturers' psychological well-being. Fear was linked with the potential loss of employment and with uncertainty regarding career progression and promotional opportunities. From the stories, it was clear that the HE industry had been subjected to many difficulties over the past years, including the economic recession and the privatisation of a number of institutions. This generated descriptions of fear about job security. A 35-year old female lecturer who recently started her career in academia, having only two years working experience in her current institution described how her fear was caused when her manager informed her about a salary reduction:

It's this damned recession. They cut and cut and cut salaries. But when she informed me about a reduction of 300Euros I got scared. I couldn't say anything... I was a wreck. I mean, I do realise it wasn't just me, but I got scared that this is just the beginning and the next step would be to lose my job. (P13, 2)

The recession contributed to feelings of insecurity concerning the nature and future existence of the academics' jobs. For the participants, job insecurity was perceived as a significantly damaging experience, which impacted their physical health, mental well-being, and generated job-induced stress symptoms. Recurrent job insecurity can result in widespread fear in organisational settings (Astrachan, 1995), with detrimental consequences for the individual's well-being. In contrast to actual job loss, job insecurity refers to the anticipation of this stressful for the academics situation in such a way that the nature and continued existence of one's job are perceived to be at risk (Sverke & Hellgren, 2002). This implies that the feeling of and reaction to job insecurity can be different among workers even if they are exposed to the same objective situation.

Comments of failing to respond to others' expectations and consequently losing their job status and reputation were mentioned. When participants were asked to recall events from

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fearful experiences, a number of them remembered their first lecturing experience. Fear was specifically generated during the first lecturing sessions when they feared of failing to respond to their job and losing their credibility to the students. Both young and senior academics suffered agonies of fear before every big lecture and reflected on how 'terrifying' and 'frightening' it was to deal with students and their questions. Participants remembered feeling uncertain of the unknown, feeling unprepared to face the students' questions during their lectures. Some participants attributed their fear not only to their limited working experience, but also to their limited skills to deal with students whose age was similar to theirs. A young and relatively inexperienced female participant commented how she sees fear as a problem in her job:

Self-confidence has been a major problem in my job. I have many problems with fear of not being able to do all the things I need to do to perform the job. I found myself struggling with classroom management, I have problems being organised and have bouts of fear and depression at work. Whenever these hit me, I do not have the confidence I need to control my classroom. I am now three years into this job, which means eight months for each academic year, and I feel like I am not doing any better. (P13, 2)

For some participants the small age difference with their students regularly generates fear for failure, which was attributed to their limited experience. This limited work experience was discussed as a factor that may generate fear, especially to the young participants who recognised their fear as a result of their lack of experience to deal with large audiences. The participants' fear results from a threat of being confronted in the 'students' eyes' as being unable to manage difficult situations, and which in turn generates feelings of depression and anxiety. The initial stages in an educator's life do involve fear because of the unpredictability and unknown nature of the job (Erb, 2002). New teachers may

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experience anxiety because of the complexity of learning to teach and the uncertainty of achieving goals.

Another reason for the workers' fear was related to the unwanted social consequences for saying something that might disappoint other people or that would not meet their demands, such as, complaining or disagreeing to imposition of rules. Fear was described as being elicited by a fear of speaking up and of being unprepared to deal with student and managers' queries, which brought fearful feelings of how other people may react. This fear was, therefore, an adaptive reaction to hierarchy issues (manager-lecturer, student-lecturer) which made them feel powerless (Kemper, 1978; Plutchik, 1980). Participants described events during which they felt afraid to express to their managers their thoughts and concerns, consciously recognizing the negative consequences on their image and professionalism. This is something that comes in alignment with other studies, which reported fear as an important driver of silence in organizations (Kish-Gephart et al., 2009; Milliken, Morrison, & Hewlin, 2003). Moreover, managers' insulting behaviour generated stories of fear of speaking up and defending the self. A 33-year old male senior lecturer explained that fear of upsetting managers and of speaking-up was partly caused by his managers' behaviour and explained how he felt when his manager allocated him for a demanding administrative position against his will:

She (manager) treats you as if you are nobody. She believes that because she is the Head you need to say "Yes" to everything, otherwise you have a problem. This dictatorial attitude makes me want to smash her into pieces and then step on them to make sure she is vanished. But I cannot do any of these, so I keep these thoughts to myself. (P10, 4)

Some lecturers clearly showed their desire to defend themselves from their managers, but after considering the estimated costs of doing so they often decided not to argue with

them. Similarly, other participants told stories of how they concealed any fear generated by their managers, because their fear extended to repercussions resulting from the expression of real emotions combined with the fear of seeming unprofessional. Fear of speaking up to one's boss is described primarily as a function of the boss's behaviour or style (Ashford, Rothbard, & Dutton, 1998; Milliken et al., 2003), which is confirmed by the above descriptions of the above manager's dictatorial attitude.

Fear of speaking up to one's superior seems to have much broader and more distal roots. Participants described a centralised educational system, which they saw as reducing professional autonomy and promotion prospects. Events were mostly centred on the managers' leadership style, the support, or lack of support, provided by a centralised, bureaucratic educational system, and the imposition of rules with minimal input from the academics. This bureaucratic liability stands in direct conflict with the academics' professional accountability as participants were disappointed with their senior management and experienced feelings of insecurity of not receiving acknowledgment and not being included in decision-making processes.

Theme 3: Coping with fear using appraisal, problem and emotion-focused mechanisms

Participants discussed coping tactics, based on all the three basic mechanisms discussed by Weiten and Lloyd (2003), namely appraisal, problem and emotion-focused coping. Appraisal-focused coping occurred when the lecturers attempted to modify the way they feel, by avoidance, withdrawal and distancing themselves from the fearful event. Specifically, participants mentioned withdrawal as a common mechanism when they experience fear. Withdrawal took the form of either psychologically withdrawing from a fearful event or physically leaving the fearful event. In terms of physical withdrawal, academics found it useful to immediately leave the University to avert attention from the fear-related event. Participants also reported staying away from the workplace for a period

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of time or working from home in order to cope with fear and tension and to engage in amusing activities outside work. Their justification for this was that they find it impossible to relax in a 'poisonous' and 'intense' atmosphere, like their workplace.

Attempts to emotionally distance from the event included reflection and engaging in non-work activities such as listening to music, reading, fishing, and cycling. A number of participants reported seeking moments of solitude, slowing down work pace and taking time to reflect and reappraise the fearful situations that occurred at work. This reflection time, which can be done while driving home, seemed helpful to emotionally distance from fearful events, to recognise the pros as well as cons of events and to get the work feelings out of their system and calm down. This eventually helped lecturers to relax and to create a positive and self-supportive mind set.

Problem-focused coping attempted to deal with the cause of the fear with lecturers trying to resolve the problem by adopting new methods that would help manage their fear. This category of coping appeared in the form of improving time-management and of prioritising. Most of the participants indicated that they act proactively as a coping strategy to deal with fear in teaching as they think it is an important component of job performance (Crant, 2000). Planning and preparing, both practically and emotionally, to prevent falling into pitfalls contributed to developing a sense of control over managing the demands of the job, leading to reduced fear, especially during lecturing. Length of professional experience appeared to impact on the academics' emotional maturity, which in turn affected the way they coped with fear. Proactive coping, such as good time-management and prioritising, has been shown to prevent or lessen the impact of stress in university lecturers (Devonport, Biscomb, & Lane, 2008) and also to facilitate the achievement of personal goals and personal growth in the general occupational context (Greenglass, 2002).

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Emotion-focused coping involved the participants' attempt to display more socially appropriate emotions or changing one's own emotional reaction. Emotion work was associated with fear, when events involved controlling the experienced emotion and displaying a more socially acceptable one, such as confidence. The participants revealed efforts to fake, suppress and change their authentic emotions to display a more professional image to others. With this emotion regulation, they showed a conscious awareness that commoditising their emotions is part of their job.

Controlling their emotions was stressful and emotionally demanding which derived from emotional encounters with students and managers. Participants recognised that their job role is very different from their private self and that their emotions and emotional skills are used to keep other people satisfied as part of their paid work. They discussed a perceived need to leave aside their private self while at work and agreed that codes of emotional display are essential. In many cases, participants felt the need to show appropriate self-confidence and enthusiasm during the delivery of their lectures in order to meet the students' expectations. There were many examples of participants describing how they felt when they needed to display certain emotions in reaction to their students' questions, with all of them pointing out the damaging effects that faking and the inability to answer had on them.

Suppression of fear and showing appropriate understanding and acceptance of an event were recognised as necessary. Surface acting was evident with the participants feeling the need to portray the image of a professional and confident person in an attempt to control their fear during teaching. Based on the participants' stories, surface acting served an important purpose in being professional at work. P11 (3) focused on the idea of professionalism by rationalising his behaviour:

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I had to be confident. I had to feel it and I had to show it. If the students see the slightest fear, they will take advantage of it. We have to show courage, we have to display the appropriate professionalism and expertise to remain a respectful person in class.

The use of surface acting was a way to change, instead of 'hiding' fear. The participants reported using personal self-talking and deep breathing as ways to alter their fear in order to fit the culturally appropriate emotion. For example, internal dialogue works as a tactic to change the state of fear when students become demanding and continuously ask challenging questions. As P16 (13) commented, 'I re-assure myself that everything will be okay and must show confidence rather than express fear because it is part of the job'. In the participants' descriptions, there was a feeling that surface and deep acting techniques were important when dealing with the challenges of the profession. This was evidenced by stories, in which they described their strategy in moments of fear during lecturing:

I started talking to myself, saying "Relax, it's ok to be scared but let it go." I was talking to myself and it's something I still do. When I am nervous or scared, before going to teaching, I think, "You are fine. Take some deep breaths, it's normal to feel this way, but you can handle this". And for some magic reason, it works! (P5, 6)

Discussion

This research investigated workplace experiences of fear within the Cypriot HE, the situations that give rise to fear and the ways in which lecturers cope with their fear. The study contributes to the literature on organisational emotions, responding to calls for more research into the nature of discrete emotions (eg. Gooty et al., 2009) by offering insights into fear's own storyline. The study also offered a new way of studying emotions by shifting the existing focus on Western spaces and conducting research in other European

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workplaces, the Cypriot academia. Learning from the Cypriot workplace offered opportunities for understanding fearful experiences across national and organisational boundaries.

The findings provide evidence of what fear means to Cypriot lecturers and how they experience it in the workplace. Fear can manifest itself in relation to potential loss of employment, personal failure, loss of status and reputation, and discouraging speaking up when dealing with powerful stakeholders. Fear was confirmed by the participants as an existential emotion (Lazarus & Lazarus, 1994) because the threats it is based on are concerned with meanings about who they were and the quality of their existence in their workplace. It is an emotion that involves the subject's reputation, together with the recognition placed on others' judgments. Fear was described as a psychological *and* physiological state of disturbance, which has numerous personal impacts, such as lack of sleep, depression, feelings of vulnerability, self-doubt, insecurity and worry. Several pressures and challenges of the nature of the job, which were the personal meaning that aroused their fear, undermined the participants' security, reputation and autonomy. Lecturers constructed these meanings out of their experience and the values of the culture in which they live in and are committed to preserving them (Gendlin, 1962). In the stories, key areas of perceived threat were the academics' job security, academic status and respected reputation, and autonomy in speaking up, which led to perceptions of failure and serious doubts about their own adequacy. This personal meaning made the participants experience fear as a silent inner struggle, which even though their fear was sometimes suppressed it still made them feel threatened (Lazarus & Lazarus, 1994).

The situations most likely to cause fear at work involved feelings of exposure during lectures, job loss, fear of failure and of reputation loss, and of speaking up. Interestingly, these situations were linked only to teaching and to the general nature of the profession

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and not related to any research outcomes, something that confirms the Cypriot tertiary institutions as largely teaching-oriented (Varnava-Marouchou, 2007). Participants viewed their fear a primary emotion of their job. A common form of fear was worry about loss of employment with the institution, which was influenced by the financial crisis in 2008, confirming the large impact of employment insecurity on well-being (eg. Dickerson & Green, 2012; Wichert, 2005). The emotion of fear in teaching was previously mentioned as related with job insecurity (Waller, 1932).

Fear was mainly generated during their first lecturing sessions and at the beginning of an academic year when the audience is still unknown. Both young and senior academics reflected on how fearful their lecturing experiences can be and the majority of them shared how frightening it was to face the students and to deal with their questions. They attributed their fear not only to their limited experience as lecturers, but also to their limited communication skills to deal with students whose age was similar to theirs. They admitted that the small age difference they have with some students regularly generated fear for failure as they found themselves unable to respond to their challenging questions. The study lends support to research that the initial stages in an educator's life involve fear and anxiety because of the unpredictability and unknown nature of the job; hence, the emotional world of beginning teachers was regarded as a 'whirlpool', because it is never still (Erb, 2002, p. 1). What is also interesting, is that participants mentioned that training was often not provided for lecturers, since PhDs provide research training, but teaching qualifications were rarely compulsory and even when offered were taken during rather than before starting to teach.

Senior management affected the participants' psychological well-being. It was evident from the stories that the participants were disappointed with the way in which management treated them; this disappointment gave rise to feelings of feeling

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unappreciated, which in turn resulted to fear of speaking up. Empirical studies found that workers frequently remain silent in situations that call for voice, like employee treatment and managerial behaviour (Bowen & Blackmon, 2003; Milliken et al., 2003). Workers often hesitate to speak up or raise an issue of concern to their managers because of fear of repercussion and of experiencing unwanted social consequences for saying something that might disappoint others (Milliken et al., 2003; Ryan & Oestreich, 1991). Likewise, the potential benefits of employee participation in various organisational processes support that organisational participation plays a major role in reducing fear generated by organisational change.

The interviews indicated that lecturers controlled their fear with all three broad types of coping strategies, namely appraisal, problem and emotion focused (Weiten & Lloyd, 2003). An important factor offsetting fear at work was the degree of preparation that allowed lecturers to respond to the challenges of teaching. Participants referred to proactive strategies to emotionally and practically prepare themselves for the demands of the job and to act in a professional, non-fearful manner. As a powerful, evolutionary based emotion, fear also encouraged distancing, withdrawal and avoidance behaviour, which entailed a cognitive focus on perceived threats, and pessimistic judgments about risks and future outcomes (eg. Izard, 1993). Participants highlighted their need to seek different spheres to 'escape' from their fears at work and to get involved in more relaxing activities. Participants also showed a conscious awareness that commoditising their emotions was part of their job, and claimed to suppress emotional displays that would be considered inappropriate; this, in turn, affected their emotional experiences of fear. Evidently, the lecturers' priority was to perform *emotion work* to ensure that their authentic emotion was suppressed or presented in a socially acceptable way (Hochschild, 1983). They all discussed the impact of having to regulate their fear and exhibit false emotions to other people in their attempt to manage the emotion and its consequences and to meet social

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norms. However, controlling their fear to show a professional image to others was stressful and emotionally demanding. Most lecturers made use of surface and deep acting (Hochschild, 1983) as a means of regulating their emotional experiences. A number of participants felt that there are unwritten guidelines directing their emotional expressions and experiences, and therefore they made extraordinary efforts to portray socially, occupationally and organisationally expected images, thus illustrating their emotional labouring (Ogbonna & Harris, 2004).

Participants seemed to rely on their personal emotional skills to carry out their job well. Confidence was an emotion that academics deliberately choose to show in order to gain control during teaching or to diminish their fear and shame. Emotion regulation, as the hiding of unacceptable emotional impulses from public view, was evident in the stories, as participants demonstrated their own social beliefs about their role in the University and the expectations the students have of them in that role (Averill, 1980). Also, surface acting, meaning the compliance with accepted display rules by displaying emotions that are not actually felt. (Hochschild, 1983) was described by most of the lecturers in an effort to control their fear and display their confidence during teaching or responding to difficult questions. In addition, in an emotionally intelligent way, participants referred to fearful events they experienced with students and tried to remember successful ways that helped them in the past. This led them to think of and adopt scripts that they used in similar situations in their attempt to have a positive impact on their students, something that was related to high emotional intelligence (Lindebaum & Jordan, 2012).

Implications

Evidence from the study showed that fear at work is an increasing concern in today's Cypriot HE sector. Closer attention is needed to the climate of employee fear and its impact on workers' well-being, as the participants clearly perceive this to be deteriorating

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significantly. Fear of employment loss, fear of failure, job status and reputation damage, and fear of speaking up were all implicated as etiological factors for workplace fear, leading to mostly damaging psychological and physiological consequences. However, when participants adopted mechanisms that gave them a sense of confidence and autonomy at work, their fear was less prevalent. This suggests that developing strategies that enhance employee security, confidence and participation, especially at times of economic recession, could be the key for beneficial outcomes and satisfaction at work. The management's practical contribution is important, because refined understanding of the sources, nature, and expressions of fear of speaking up is essential to guide those in power who seek to improve their organisations via routine upward input from employees at all levels. In addition, the role of management in helping lecturers limit the experience of fear and develop the skills needed, by providing opportunities for teaching courses, or by providing ongoing mentoring seems essential considering the fearful nature that this aspect of the job generated.

Implications for research suggest that utilising an interpretive approach, as a new way of studying the emotion of fear, gave the opportunity to identify important areas of the emotion's nature in the Cypriot academia. It is argued that a more in-depth insight of workplace specific emotions would help to create a 'portrait' of other emotions in more professions.

Limitations to research

Some limitations of the research must also be recognised. An obvious limitation is that the study's findings are context-related, since the study was conducted amongst one professional group in one country, so one should be cautious when generalising to other contexts. The small sample size also limits the ability to generalise the findings from this study, as there is an evident risk that the findings and participants' personal stories are not

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necessarily transferable to other occupations and contexts. However, the purpose of this study was not to obtain knowledge that can be generalised. Indeed, phenomenologists would argue that such an aim would be problematic given the subjective nature of emotion. Thus, this chapter works towards developing understanding about a single emotion in a specific context; it provides a voice to a group of people with limited attention in the published emotion literature. The interpretive approach encouraged the participants to reflect on and construct personal stories influenced by their workplace interactions; however, this type of inquiry is retrospective and dependent on the participants' recollection. Therefore, we recognise that this reflection and meaning-making approach produced findings that would perhaps be different from a longitudinal approach, for example, and which may provide an even deeper understanding of fear. It is nevertheless noteworthy to recognise that in any form of research, some choices leave out the possibility of other meanings or angles that could have been uncovered. Although objectivity and generalisability are neither attainable, nor particularly desirable in interpretive investigations, it is important for the reader(s) to be able to ground this work in the context of the researcher's influences and views of the world.

The fact that the interviews were conducted in Greek and not English should also be recognised, as translation from one language to another can distort the meaning of the participant's original expression and this could be culturally related and difficult to translate. The authors recognise that the way the data were presented reflect their own understanding of the texts and their understanding of the context in which events took place in the world of academics. It is important, therefore, to recognise that the three main themes identified in the study represent only one interpretation of the data. In interpretive research, a single text is indeed open to many different interpretations because the meaning of a text is usually the outcome of the fusion of the horizons of the text and interpreter (Moustakas, 1994). Space did not allow for a discussion of all the data, and

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although a large amount of the interview quotes were presented, it was not possible to use all the text that was produced. However, the quotes were not extracted from their context, in the hope that the reader would get a flavour of the original text and have the opportunity to judge the authors' interpretation.

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