Men are good for university reputation; women are good for emotional labour:

Student-Led Teaching Awards and the role of gender

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Cohort 25

Sophie Rosina Banks

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Abstract

Student-Led Teaching Awards are recognition schemes which allow students to nominate their lecturers for supporting their university experiences in various ways, such as teaching and supervision. This research study contributes to the growing literature in this area by analysing how students perceive their lecturers and lecturers' teaching practice. Additionally, as Student-Led Teaching Awards are an informal form of student evaluation of teaching, which research finds to be commonly gender biased, this study aims to investigate potential gender bias within the nominations. The data of this study consisted of Best Lecturer Award nominations for 750 lecturers during the years 2016-2020 at a UK teaching-oriented university. The nominations were analysed using thematic network analysis to decipher how students perceived their lectures in their nominations. Examining the frequency of mentions of each theme found in the dataset determined how students perceived their female and male lecturers differently. The findings of the study showed four distinct areas in which students nominated their lecturers: students as consumers, students as learners, lecturers as academics, and lecturers as educators. Female lecturers' nominations contained more references to being motherly, caring, offering personal help, and organisational skills were often compared to other lecturers. Male lecturers' nominations contained more references to giving engaging lectures, being knowledgeable, having a sense of humour, being professional, and being good for the university's reputation. These findings are depicted in six personas using creative nonfiction: The Professional Man, The Confident Expert, The Penalised Woman and The Performing Woman, The Perfect Woman, The Mother and the Friend, and The Quiet Woman. This study contributes to knowledge in the field of students evaluation of teaching as it demonstrates that gender bias is also found in Student-Led Teaching Awards. This research study also makes an original contribution by using creative nonfiction in the form of short stories to analyse and communicate the findings of this study. It demonstrates an innovative approach of bringing creative writing into educational research.

Contents

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Author's Declaration

This thesis results entirely from my own work and has not been offered previously for any other degree or diploma.

Signature

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List of Abbreviations

CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CETL	Centre of Enhanced Teaching and Learning
HE	Higher Education
HEA	Higher Education Academy
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
HESA	Higher Education Statistics Agency
NUS	National Union of Students
OfS	Office for Students
PGCLTHE	Postgraduate Certificate of Learning and Teaching in Higher Education
REF	Research Excellence Framework
SETs	Student Evaluations of Teaching
SLTAs	Student-Led Teaching Awards
TEF	Teaching Excellence Framework
UK	United Kingdom
UKPSF	UK Professional Standards Framework

Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter will begin with an introduction to the research study in section 1.1, including an overview of student-led teaching awards and what the research study sought to answer. In section 1.2, the research questions will be detailed. There will be a short introduction to the context of the dataset used in this research study in section 1.3. In section 1.4, the researcher's positionality will be explored. Finally, in section 1.5, the structure of the thesis will be detailed.

1.1 Introduction to the Research Study

Teaching excellence may not have one singular definition within the United Kingdom Higher Education (HE) landscape, but it signifies the gold standard of teaching (Skelton, 2004; Palmer & Collins, 2006; Warnes, 2021; Dransfield, Wood & Su, 2022). Quality assurance in HE determines whether institutions, their courses and lecturers provide this gold standard. Indeed, these institutions are now held even more accountable for their teaching and learning in the 21st Century; research links this accountability to the rise in tuition fees (Cheng, 2017).

Despite the ever-changing HE landscape, one fact remains the same: students continue to be the users of the service. Therefore, students should be involved in the quality assurance processes (Palmer & Collins, 2006; Hamshire & U, 2017). One method that is employed is student evaluations of teaching (SETs). SETs are a well-researched area within HE. Academics aim to discover what affects SETs scores and to prove that there are biases within them, from grade expectations (Hoefer, Yurkievicz & Byrne, 2012; Boring, 2016), gender bias (MacNell, Driscoll & Hunt, 2015; Adams, et al., 2021; Lakeman, et al., 2023a), to revenge (Boysen, 2008).

Student-Led Teaching Awards (SLTAs) are a method of capturing student evaluations of teaching. SLTAs are schemes in which students can nominate a range of HE staff to recognise how they have influenced and supported their university journeys. The National Union of Students (NUS) and the Higher Education Academy (HEA), now called Advance HE, implemented a pilot scheme for SLTAs in 2009/10

(National Union of Students & Higher Education Academy, n.d.). Now, many institutions across the United Kingdom (UK) are running SLTAs in varying formats. What unifies them is that they are student-led. Student-led means that students play a part in organising the awards, usually through or in partnership with the institution's Students' Union (or Association or Guild), and the students nominate, judge and select the winners for each award. No staff, whether based in the university or students' union, are allowed to nominate or choose winners for staff awards within SLTAs.

From the small pool of literature that currently exists on SLTAs, there are two emerging schools of thought. The first is that SLTAs are not valid forms of SETs because they are popularity contests, are not run fairly, and students do not understand what best practice is in academia (Bradley, Kirby & Madriaga, 2015; Madriaga & Morley, 2016). The second school of thought seeks to highlight the validity of SLTAs in terms of the organisation of the schemes and in terms of students having an important viewpoint on best practice (Lubicz-Nawrocka & Bunting, 2019; Matheson, 2019). There is little research on the biases found within SLTAs.

This research study sought to discover the teaching practices that students nominate their lecturers for in SLTAs. Students are given an open text box to write their nominations. Therefore, the students can write as much or as little as they want. Overall, these nominations give a wealth of data that can be used to analyse what lecturers do, and how lecturers act, which students value. It is crucial to analyse how students nominate lecturers of different genders to ascertain if gender bias also exists in SLTAs like they have been found to in SETs (Miller & Chamberlin, 2000; Sprague & Massoni, 2005; MacNell, Driscoll & Hunt, 2015; Mitchell & Martin, 2018; Adams et al., 2021). This research study could highlight the disadvantages of women in academia.

A thematic network analysis determined how students perceive their lecturers and their teaching practice when nominating for the Best Lecturer award in SLTAs. A thematic network analysis is similar to a thematic analysis, which is used to explore themes that are found within a dataset. A thematic network analysis allowed for links to be made across themes, which is important as teaching practice is made up of small

actions and intentions that interrelate. The thematic network analysis drew out the student voice found in the SLTAs nominations, discerned the teaching practices described within them and 'illustrate[d] the relationships between' the practices found (Attride-Stirling, 2001). A thematic network analysis finds three levels of themes, Basic, Organising and Global, which are depicted in thematic network maps. By examining the frequency of mentions of each theme in the female and male nominations, the researcher could analyse the differences between how students perceive their female and male lecturers.

As the researcher has a background in creative writing, they aim to bring together their expertise in this area to their Educational Research study. Therefore, once the analysis had taken place, it was used to discover if students perceive their lecturers of different genders differently and to create different personas summarising these perceptions. For every persona, the researcher created creative nonfiction in the form of short stories to show, not tell, the reader the students' perceptions of their lecturers and their lecturers' teaching practice in this dataset. These short stories will help readers interpret this study's findings and hopefully allow a broader range of readers to engage with this study. Creative nonfiction is 'deeply committed to the truth' (Caulley, 2008, p. 426). The researcher based their creative nonfiction on the truths found in this study's dataset. The plot and characters of the short stories are amalgamations of the various lived experiences found in the nominations. Creating characters and plot lines that are mixtures of several lecturers' and students' experiences protects the anonymity of those found in the dataset whilst demonstrating the truths of the dataset.

1.2 Research Questions

This research study will aim to answer these questions:

1. How do students perceive their lecturers and lecturers' teaching practice when nominating their lecturer for the award of Best Lecturer in Student-Led Teaching Awards?

2. Do students perceive their lecturers differently in relation to the lecturers' gender when nominating their lecturer for the award of Best Lecturer in Student-Led Teaching Awards?

    a) If so, how does it differ?

1.3 Context of the Dataset

The dataset for this study is from SLTAs nominations of a UK teaching-oriented university, which has approximately 25,000 students. The dataset contains four years (2016-2020) of nominations for the award of Best Lecturer. There are several awards within this particular SLTAs, including:

- Best Lecturer
- Best Supervisor
- Best Course Leader
- Student Partnership Award
- Student Support Award (for non-teaching staff)
- Best Course Representative
- Best Faculty Representative
- Best Student Council Member
- Best Student of the Year

Please note that these are generalised names of the awards to protect the participating institution's anonymity.

The award of Best Lecturer was selected for this study as it relates to teaching practice, whilst others focus on research supervision, managing courses, and specifically for instances where lecturers have worked in partnership with their

students. The SLTAs at this institution have been running for over ten years and are fully implemented into the institution. The awards usually attract 1500 nominations annually, with the Best Lecturer award regularly attracting nominations for approximately 200 individual lecturers annually. The dataset for this study, over a four-year period, contains nominations for 750 lecturers.

The gender of lecturers was not captured during the SLTAs nomination processes. During the process of SLTAs after nominations, which is the organising the list of lecturers nominated so they can be notified by the SLTAs team, the gender of lecturers was sought to ensure documents such as 'you've been nominated/shortlisted' letters used the correct pronouns. The gender of lecturers was confirmed either by the lecturers' staff profiles, pronouns listed on email signatures, or the knowledge of the staff members who organised the SLTAs, who knew a large proportion of those nominated. Lecturers can choose to show their pronouns on their staff profiles and email signatures to demonstrate the gender identity they wish to show in academia.

1.4 Researcher Positionality

When the researcher started their HE journey (in terms of work, not study) in 2016, they were responsible for SLTAs. After the first two years of running SLTAs, the researcher realised the importance of the data gathered through the nominations and how underused they were within the institution. After this, the researcher started using the nominations to inform a session they ran for teaching staff within the institution. These sessions were for Course Leader Development Programmes and the Postgraduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching in HE course (PGCLTHE). Although the researcher could contribute to the institution in this manner, they wished to have time to undertake research using SLTAs nominations. This wish led the researcher to apply to the Doctoral Programme in Educational Research at Lancaster University. The environment provided by Lancaster University allows the researcher to bring their differing expertise to their research: education and creative writing. By bringing

creative writing into the thesis, the researcher aims to bring their research outputs to a broader audience within the HE landscape.

This research study has been undertaken with the researcher's ontological position, of idealism, and their epistemological position of subjectivism. Idealism is the concept that the 'world exists, but different people construe it in very different ways (Cohen, et al., 2017, p. 10). Subjectivism is the concept that people make their own sense of the world and the behaviour within it (Cohen, et al., 2017, p. 10). An idealist, subjectivist position allowed the researcher to select appropriate theories for this research study that aligned with this position.

The researcher is a feminist and undertakes all their research through a feminist lens. The researcher follows one of the principles of feminist research of committing to 'revealing core processes and recurring features of women's oppression' (Cohen, et al., 2017, p. 36). Indeed, the researcher aims to unearth the gender bias and inequalities in this research study's dataset and what they could mean for SLTAs across the UK and women in HE in general. Most feminist researchers reject the positivist epistemological stance as it is oppressive (Gillies & Allred, 2002) and male-dominated (Jayaratne, 1993). Therefore, a feminist theory is appropriate for this research study. However, it is important to note that not all feminist researchers discount the positivist epistemological stance (Hesse-Biber, 2012).

As researcher aimed to discover if gender bias was evident in the dataset, designing a rigorous research study was important. Therefore, the researcher ensured that the gender of the lecturers in the dataset were not visible when analysing the data. Only once the data was analysed were the gender of the lecturers reunited with the nominations. This ensured the data was analysed with rigour and gender bias was not found just because the researcher was a feminist.

Feminist theories are used as a lens through which to view research data to ascertain how oppression occurs in society and how we may be able to confront these oppressive structures and systems (Arinder, 2020). There is no *one* feminist theory. Instead, there are a multitude that 'wake us up' to various 'points of view' (Hesse-

Biber, 2012, p. 5). There are many different feminist theories, such as feminist social theory, feminist political theory, lesbian theory, psychoanalytic feminist theory, feminist linguistic theory, critical feminist theory and feminist literary theory.

Undertaking feminist research comes with a risk. Feminist research, when seeking publication, is up against male gatekeepers of academic publishing (Spender, 1981). Confirming the difficulties of publishing feminist research, Ropers-Huilman & Winters (2011, p. 684) state that:

> 'Yet, it is troubling that the multiple perspectives and frameworks offered by feminist scholars have not often been taken up within mainstream higher education outlets. Given its potential, why is it that feminist research has not been strongly adopted in our mainstream academic journals?'

The researcher of this research study acknowledges the importance of undertaking feminist research and the endeavour of dissemination of the research. The researcher must pursue academic publishing routes in order to share the research and contribute knowledge but must also consider other creative ways of sharing the research if faced with gatekeeping.

1.5 Thesis Structure

The thesis contains of seven chapters and begins with this introductory chapter (Chapter One), which explores the concept of the SLTAs, this research study's question and aims, how the problem will be addressed in this study and the significance of this study.

The researcher presents the literature review in Chapter Two, where the study is situated within the existing literature of these four areas:

- Teaching Excellence

This section will explore the contentious definition of the term teaching excellence, the perception of teaching excellence awards, and the Teaching Excellence Framework.

- Student Evaluations of Teaching

  This section will explore a short overview of quality assurance in HE to demonstrate how SETs fit into the quality landscape. It will also examine the literature on the perceptions of SETs.

- Gender Bias in Student Perceptions of Teaching

  This section will first explore gender bias in SETs before exploring the cost of the gender bias in SETs has upon female academics.

The methodology is outlined in Chapter Three. This chapter contains the context of the data, institution, and SLTAs in question. It discusses the data collection, e data collection, preparation, and analysis. It delves into the data analysis methodology: thematic network analysis, frequency of mentions and creative nonfiction. It explores the theory used within this study, feminist critical theory and why it was selected. Additionally, this chapter includes a short discussion on sex, gender, and gender identity and what the terms 'female' and 'male' mean when the researcher uses them in this research study.

In Chapter Four, the researcher outlines the themes found in the thematic network analysis by showing the thematic network maps produced and direct student quotes that help build and create each theme. This chapter examines the four Global Themes, and their accompanying Organising and Basic Themes, of Students as Consumers, Students as Learners, Lecturers as Academics, and Lecturers as Educators.

In Chapter Five, the researcher sets out the results of the study for the frequency of mentions for all of the Global, Organising and Basic Themes for the entire dataset before looking at the frequency of mentions for female and male lecturers. The chapter delves into the key findings of male lecturers being more likely to be

nominated for teaching and female lecturers being more likely to be nominated for caring for their students, giving personal support, and going above and beyond.

Chapter Six is a discussion of these results. Its structure relates to the six personas found within the dataset. Each persona has a short introduction, a short story and then a more extended section for discussion. Overall, this chapter depicts how female lecturers appear to undertake more emotional labour than their male counterparts and must perform to avoid being penalised in student evaluations.

In Chapter Seven, the researcher concludes this research study by summarising the findings of the study and stepping back to analyse how these findings are significant to the HE landscape. There is also a discussion on the limitations of the study and the implications this study has on future practice and study in this area.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter reviews the literature in which this research study is situated. The aim of this chapter is to explore the various themes within this research study and to show how this research will make an original contribution to this field of study.

This chapter will begin with an exploration of the term 'teaching excellence' and how there appears to be no clear definition of the term within HE in section 2.1. The following section, 2.2, will outline how students define teaching excellence by being involved in the quality assurance and enhancement process of SETs. Moving on from the formal processes of SETs, the informal process of SLTAs will be explored in section 2.3 regarding their validity and importance. In section 2.4, there will be an exploration of gender bias within these two different methods of evaluations of teaching – SETs and SLTAs – to discuss how students' perceptions of 'teaching excellence' and gender have such a significant impact on women in academia. In section 2.5, there is a discussion of the implications of the literature on this research study. This chapter will conclude with a roadmap to the Methodology chapter.

2.1 Teaching Excellence in HE

This section begins with a discussion of the literature that claims the term teaching excellence has no one definition in 2.1.1. Moving on from the use of the term, two ways in which HEIs can claim they have teaching excellence are explored: teaching excellence awards in 2.1.2, and the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) in 2.1.3.

2.1.1 Defining Teaching Excellence

Teaching Excellence, as stated by Su & Wood (2019, p. 81), 'appears to be embedded within the policy rhetoric of higher education today'. Even if one looks back fifty years into the HE sector, one will find lecturers were expected to attain excellence both in their knowledge and expertise, teaching, and a 'wider range of activities' that do not relate to their teaching practice (Percy & Salter, 1976, p. 457), such as being caring, working outside of work hours, and taking an interest in students as individuals.

However, today, the term 'teaching excellence' is widely used within rewards and recognitions, quality assurance and enhancement activities, which students are usually involved with, and external measures of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). The term, used in a myriad of contexts, does not appear to have one singular definition and is understood differently by different staff groups - academic, academic-related and support, and in different settings (Skelton, 2004; Palmer & Collins, 2006; Warnes, 2021; Dransfield, Wood & Su, 2022).

The term 'teaching excellence' is used so frequently and applied to various contexts that it has lost its way (Moore, et al., 2017). As Moore et al. states, 'excellence' is now the 'good' standard of the university world (2017, p. 2). This means that it can be difficult to discern when the term teaching excellence really means excellence. After all, someone's excellent is someone's good (Wood & Su, 2017). Contrary to these views, Saunders & Ramírez (2017, p. 389) state, 'because all aspects of postsecondary aim to be excellent, excellence appears natural and universal', leading to the view that *all* teaching is excellent and is expected of all, no matter the subject, the student body, nor the institution.

The expectation that all teaching should be excellent fits into the students as consumer movement. Students as consumers is a phenomenon that denounces students as consumers, rather than learners, at their universities. The students as a consumer is, as Raaper (2021, p. 133) states:

> 'someone who, as a result of rational financial exchange, considers themselves to have purchased a particular product (a degree) and therefore expects access to certain quality services.'

The move towards this term stems from a change by the government to hold universities to account (Gosling & D'Andrea, 2001; Hénard & Roseveare, 2015), due to the rise in tuition fees (Cheng, 2017). Students as learners is a concept that places the student as someone who wishes to gain a degree to learn, to improve their skills and knowledge, and change the trajectory of their career journeys (Ashwin, et al., 2023). A student in Brooks et al. (2021, p. 1384) study confirmed that their idea of studying is 'about forming and educating yourself', and did not wish to be placed in the box by

the government that they are there to 'serve a commercial purpose and nothing more', and that students are 'studying to achieve something for […] the economy'.

Studies have found that students in the UK align themselves to the students as consumers phenomenon (Nixon, Scullion & Hearn, 2018), do not align themselves to this, and see themselves as learners rather than consumers (Tomlinson, 2017), or hold views that relate to both sides of this argument (Gupta, Brooks & Abrahams, 2023). Despite this, UK policymakers keep forcing students into this consumer role (Sabri, 2010; Tight, 2013).

Whether one aligns to the viewpoint that teaching excellence denotes teaching as excellence (Saunders & Ramírez, 2017) or that it is now simply means good (Moore et al., 2017; Wood & Su, 2017), it is clear that the term is important to the UK HE landscape. Indeed, there are many activities that focus on the term in the UK, such as teaching excellence awards for lecturers and the TEF. Looking beyond the UK, a study by Johnson (2021, p. 19) found that HE stakeholders across the UK, Australia and Canada appeared to have a shared understanding 'of what teaching excellence entails'. In the United States of America, there is a similarity in the 'what' of teaching excellence, where studies have found that it entails lecturers' passion and enthusiasm (Keeley, et al., 2016) and a caring and organised approach (Caudill & Slater, 2024). In the Netherlands, the Dutch Ministry of Education 'initiated the Quality Agenda for Excellent Teaching' to unearth pedagogical and knowledge excellence (Witte & Jansen, 2015, p. 567). The term teaching excellence appears to have a myriad of definitions across the globe. However, there is a shared element: teaching excellence remains at the forefront of HEIs' visions in practice, policy and metrics.

2.1.2 Teaching Excellence Awards

Teaching Awards, particularly those that are named teaching excellence awards, are one way in which HEIs can demonstrate that the teaching they provide is excellent. National recognition schemes for teaching and learning began in the UK in 2000. The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) created the National Teaching Fellowship Scheme following similar schemes in Australia, the USA and

Canada (Skelton, 2004, p. 453). Skelton (2004, p. 455) described the National Teaching Fellowship Scheme as a 'significant contributor to an emerging and official discourse of 'teaching excellence' in Higher Education'. Although the scheme signals a nationwide approach to teaching excellence in the UK, Skelton is keen to share that the panel which defined teaching excellence as the awards would be evaluated against was 'white and grey' and had 'limited student representation' (2004, p. 456), and therefore may not have defined teaching excellence in the most inclusive manner.

It is with the HEFCE's launch of its Centre of Enhanced Teaching and Learning (CETL) scheme in 2005, where the CETLs would 'reward excellent teaching practice; and to further invest in that practice' (Skelton, 2004, p. 442), that the UK HE sector saw the introduction of more localised teaching awards. These awards schemes run under varying names, where the process allowed staff to nominate their colleagues for awards and in some cases, with staff members being allowed to nominate themselves. Although we cannot know how every institution's internal teaching awards were devised and judged, it is a fair assumption that not all were devised and judged by diverse staff and student representatives (Skelton, 2004).

Both teaching awards on a national and local level are viewed differently by staff within HE. Some staff think them valuable for promotion opportunities, improving self-esteem, and increasing scholarship opportunities such as publishing articles or presenting at conferences (Turner, et al., 2008). Other staff comment that they divide staff who receive awards and those who do not (Turner, et al., 2008).

2.1.3 Teaching Excellence Framework

Institutions can signify their teaching excellence by displaying a TEF Gold, Silver or Bronze logo on their website. The TEF was introduced by the Conservative UK Government after the 2015 General Election as a method of, as the Office for Students (OfS) puts it, '[encouraging] universities and colleges to deliver excellent teaching and learning for all their students and, if they do not, this will affect their ability to achieve the highest ratings.' (Office for Students, n.d.). The TEF was one 'part of a basket of market HE measures introduced' by the Conservatives (Deem & Baird, 2020, p. 217).

The Conservatives also introduced the 2017 Higher Education Act, which broke a 25-year spell of no new English legislation in HE (Deem & Baird, 2020). The 2017 Higher Education Act introduced the OfS to replace HEFCE. The OfS were not only just responsible for the TEF but, since April 2023, took over as the designated quality body for English Higher Education from the Quality Assurance Agency. In replacing the English HE funding body, the OfS has brought in a new era for regulating English HEIs (Neary, 2016; Forstenzer, 2018). Hayes (2017, p. 485) confirms that a major reform such as the introduction of the TEF 'can greatly influence the ways in which universities work'. The OfS' new era of regulation is through 'fining' universities (Deem & Baird, 2020, p. 222).

Currently, the TEF rates the HEIs who participate in the process with an overall rating – of Gold, Silver, Bronze or Requires Improvement, alongside two additional ratings for student experience and student outcomes (Office for Students, n.d.). Those HEIs who wish to participate in the TEF must submit provider and student submissions. The TEF panel reviews these submissions alongside metrics the OfS devises for the exercise. The TEF panel decides if the submission put forward by the institution demonstrates a level of outstanding quality, very high quality or not very high quality (Office for Students, 2022).

The TEF has faced criticism concerning its definition of teaching excellence (Cui, French & O'Leary, 2019; Deem & Baird, 2020; Brew et al., 2022). Deem & Baird make the argument that the TEF uses the term 'teaching excellence' when defining what 'HEIs should be achieving', and that using the term is not practical because 'academics cannot agree on how teaching excellence should be measured', or defined (Deem & Baird, 2020, p. 227). This will lead to staff being forced to focus on attaining the TEF's definition of teaching excellence, and not on providing excellent teaching for students (Barkas, et al., 2019). Canning adds to this criticism; they state that by 'regarding [teaching excellence] as something which can be objectively measured, we deprive ourselves of the language which can lead to genuine improvements in education' (2019, p. 328). Deem & Baird claim that the TEF is 'yet another mechanism for constructing a market in higher education in the UK (2020, p. 235). Indeed,

Komljenovic & Robertson (2016, p. 633) argue that 'market-making processes are […] recalibrating and remaking the structures, social relations and subjectivities, within and beyond the university', and it appears that the TEF is recalibrating and remaking the definition of teaching excellence.

Comparisons have been made between the Research Excellence Framework (REF) and the TEF with Matthews & Koztee arguing that 'there is one crucial difference between the REF and the TEF: the REF evaluates actual research, but the TEF does not evaluate actual teaching, it only evaluates what people […] say about teaching (2021, p. 540). The TEF process does not involve observation of teaching or feedback on teaching practice (Forstenzer, 2018). Matthews & Kotzee confirm this by stating that the TEF is more concerned with 'a university's representation of or interpretation of their teaching' rather 'than their actual teaching' (2021, p. 540). Criticisms of the TEF have not 'stalled the TEF but rather led it to be pursued with sustained vigour' (Tomlinson, Enders & Naidoo, 2020, p. 639).

Despite the criticism of the TEF, beyond the UK, other countries are reviewing the TEF as part of their own work on teaching excellence. Australia has a similar approach and understanding of teaching excellence to the UK as the Australian Government has been monitoring the UK's TEF (Bartram, et al., 2018). Azerbaijan also notes the UK's TEF in their journey toward a national understanding of teaching excellence (Isaeva & Aliyev, 2023, p. 61).

2.2 Students Evaluations of Teaching

This section follows on from the discussion on teaching excellence and explores how quality assurance practices demonstrate if HEIs teaching is excellent. This section begins with an introduction to quality assurance and the quality assurance process of SETs are discussed in 2.2.1. In 2.2.2, the perceptions of this quality assurance process are explored.

2.2.1 Quality Assurance and Students Evaluations of Teaching

Quality assurance within HE has grown and developed dramatically since the turn of the century (Gosling & D'Andrea, 2001). This growth has mainly been pushed forward by 'governments who argue that the public education justifies closer scrutiny of the outcomes achieved by [higher education institutions] and from students who expect to receive good quality teaching and sufficient learning resources to meet their needs' (Gosling & D'Andrea, 2001, p. 8). Accountability is the word that Hénard & Roseveare use when arguing that HE is under greater pressure from 'students, parents, employers and taxpayers (Hénard & Roseveare, 2015, p. 7). Now, quality is very much linked to value for money and the students as consumers movement, where researchers theorise that students now act as consumers as they have been forced into this category by policymakers (Sabri, 2010; Tight, 2013). Cheng theorised that 'tuition fees have shifted student expectation of, and attitudes towards, higher education; (2017, p. 155), particularly with the jump in fees to £9,000 per annum in 2012/13. Singh made the 'assumption' in 2010 that the next decade of quality assurance will see 'variations on the same theme, with the balance between accountability and improvement (2010, p. 193), which is, of course, not the case for English HE in the 2020's, with the OfS' move from quality assurance and enhancement to just quality assurance.

Quality is defined as 'perfection, fitness for purpose, value for money and transformation' (Cheng, 2017, p. 153). However, just as the term teaching excellence has no agreed definition, the definition of 'quality in higher education is unclear' (Dicker, et al., 2019, p. 1425). In a research study by Hoecht, they noted that the staff they interviewed 'accepted the need for some degree of formalisation and standardisation that they saw as an inevitable consequence of quality assurance' (2006, p. 555). In contrast to this, the staff who were interviewed also commented that internal quality assurance activities only addressed quality at a 'rather superficial level' (Hoecht, 2006, p. 555).

Hamshire & U state that ‘only the users of a service can honestly give an insight into its ongoing impact on their experiences’ (Hamshire & U, 2017, p. 61). As Palmer & Collins argue, ‘if excellent teaching is encouraging high-quality learning, student views are relevant. (2006, p. 201). They later comment that an inclusive recognition of excellent teaching should encompass many aspects, including student feedback (Palmer & Collins, 2006). Student feedback should be a vital part of evaluating and recognising teaching excellence as they are experts in receiving teaching, and if looking through the students as consumers lens because students are the consumers.

As the receivers of teaching, students are best placed to evaluate teaching from their perspective and add to a holistic approach to the evaluation of teaching, via the process called SETs. Gosling & D’Andrea confirm that ‘since teaching is primarily undertaken to benefit students, they are best placed to judge its effectiveness (2001, p. 14). However, Gosling & D’Andrea argue that SETs should focus on the overall course experience rather than the individual performance of the lecturers to ensure they are a tool for quality assurance and enhancement. They discuss their worry that SETs have become ‘primarily used by managers to evaluate the performance of teaching staff’ in order to remedy any poor performance (2001, p. 14). However, by giving students a place to give feedback without ‘fear of reprisal’, their feedback can be used to bring about positive changes both within their courses, modules and/or qualifications and to the quality of teaching they receive (Kogan, Schoenfeld-Tacher & Hellyer, 2010, p. 631).

2.2.2 Perceptions of Student Evaluations of Teaching

There is an argument that students do not understand teaching excellence, so they cannot report on it in their feedback (Bradley et al., 2015; Madriago & Morley, 2016; Lakeman et al., 2023b; Arroyo-Barriguete, 2023). Moreover, there is an argument that SETs can only measure student satisfaction, with Uttl (2023) arguing that it depends on whether students get what they want. Academics are also keen to point out that SETs are not enough to rely solely on to understand the quality of teaching practice and observation (Hornstein, 2017) or peer review (Arroyo-Barriguete, et al., 2023) should

also be used. Despite this viewpoint, Arroyo-Barriguete (2023) is keen to state that there are issues with other quality assurance activities. Additionally, they double back to argue that despite SETs not 'capturing teaching quality', other quality assurance activities 'presents serious problems because their perspective does not necessarily coincide with that of the students, who ultimately receive the teaching (Arroyo-Barriguete, et al., 2023, pp. 10-11).

One medical school study even planted a phantom staff member to see if students would fill out a SETs for them. Even though this did occur, the researchers, Uijtedgaage & O'Neal (2015), argued that filling out SETs for students is not always a mindless activity. They state that 'evaluating teachers is a cognitively demanding task when it is done conscientiously weeks after the fact' and mindless evaluation may stem from the 'perceived lack of impact of their evaluations' (Uijtdehaage & O'Neal, 2015, p. 931), showing that even if you have a negative perception of SETs, it may not be wholly unfair to put the blame on the students.

Contrary to this, other academics are keen to discover what affects SETs scores to demonstrate why scores may be low. Research studies have aimed to find ways to reduce barriers for students responding to the SETs to provide a fuller representation of teaching practice. Some of these studies have focused on the relationship between the timing of the SETs and the responses received (Estelami, 2015; McClain, Gulbis & Hays, 2018). Estelami's (2015) study found a relationship between the timing of the SETs and the responses received, calling for University administrators to plan the timing of SETs surveys carefully. McClain, Gulbis & Hays agree; they state that the timing of SETs matters greatly. The timing of the SETs could 'increase the probability that students will fill out SETs as honestly as possible' (McClain, Gulbis & Hays, 2018, p. 382). Interestingly, they make the point that 'evaluation can be costly' and that a good timing of SETs can ensure that they get value for money, 'in this case, valid data about teaching' (McClain, Gulbis & Hays, 2018, p. 382). They also argue that setting the purpose of SETs and ensuring students understand SETs has the same desired effect. Students who value the opportunity to give feedback in SETs tend to respond more positively (Spooren & Christiaens, 2017). Moreover, if students feel that their feedback

is listened to and acted upon, they are more likely to fill out SETs in the first place (Hoel & Dahl, 2019).

In studies discussing the relationship between grades and SETs responses, it has been argued that it is 'expected grades' that affect SETs responses, and not actual grades (Boring, et al., 2016). Hoefer, Yurkievicz & Byrne (2012) confirm this in their study, as they found a slight correlation between expected grades and SETs scores. In Berezvai, Lukats & Molontay's study, they found that lecturers can 'buy better evaluations with lenient grading' (2021, p. 806). Although they make it clear that lecturers should not purposely and nor do they necessarily, 'apply grading leniency to increase their SETs scores, it only estimates how easy it would be to do so if they chose to attempt it (Berezvai, Lukats & Molontay, 2021, p. 806). Academics have also considered how SETs can be used as a revenge mechanism for students when they receive low grades. Boysen (2008) found that on some small occasions, students take revenge for low grades in SETs. Nevertheless, and more importantly, they argue that 'using unsatisfactory instructional practices and being disrespectful to students is probably a more certain path to low evaluations' (Boysen, 2008, p. 221). Allred, King & Amos (2021) add to this argument by claiming that using students' names will improve SET scores.

More recent studies on SETs focus on the well-being of staff. Hefferman & Haarpur passionately argue that 'SET policies are exposing academics to discriminatory, unhealthy and unsafe data and comments' (2023, p. 1290). They state that 'for a sector which seeks to promote inclusive, health and safe work practices', it is failing its staff who face bias and harmful comments that directly affect their career progression (Heffernan & Harpur, 2023, p. 1290). They make the call for the 'higher education sector [to] revisit how they collect and use SET data' (Heffernan & Harpur, 2023). This idea is shared by Kayas, Assimakopoulos & Hines, who argued that there is a 'need for clarity regarding what is being measured and how it is being measured to ensure that staff do not feel under surveillance (2020, p. 11). Additionally, some academics call for SETs to be used carefully, or not used at all, in 'career decisions'

because of how easily manipulated they are (Kogan, Schoenfeld-Tacher & Hellyer, 2010, p. 631).

In the current climate of trolling and anonymous harassment on social media, SETs are being used in a similar way (Herffernan & Harpur, 2023; Lakeman et al., 2023a). Lakeman et al. (2023a) confirm that staff are struggling with the comments they are receiving, which do not always remain focused on their teaching practice. Despite the need for students to remain anonymous not to face retribution for negative comments (Kogan, Schoenfeld-Tacher & Hellyer, 2010), anonymity allows students to write abusive comments that meet 'the criteria for cyber-bullying' (Lakeman, et al., 2023a, p. 1498). However, it is important to point out that there is a difference between negative comments and abusive comments (Cunningham, et al., 2023). Students should be allowed to comment on the negatives they find in their experience, but it can be difficult to distinguish between negative and abusive. Cunningham (2023) confirms that this 'requires human intervention', especially as AI has been found to not be helpful in this area (Rybinski & Kopciuszewska, 2021).

The 'distress' that lecturers face relating to SETs occurs year-round, waiting for abusive comments in their SETs or working to the point of burnout to avoid abusive comments (Lakeman, et al., 2023a, p. 1497). It also relates to the effect of abusive comments on their career progression (Heffernan & Harpur, 2023; Lakeman et al., 2023a). Heffernan & Harpur (2023) also argue that this affects marginalised groups even more. In Lakeman et al. (2023a), they even found that staff meet the criteria for trauma or stress-related disorder (p. 1497), which is a very worrying find. Staff are being abused in SETs, and if the sector does not address this, the sector will find staff 'playing the SET game' in order to survive (Lakeman, et al., 2023b, p. 757).

2.3 Student-Led Teaching Awards

This section begins with an introduction to SLTAs, as an informal version of SETs, in 2.3.1. In 2.3.2, both the positive and negative perceptions by staff of SLTAs are explored through the two emerging schools of thought in the SLTA literature area.

2.3.1 The Implementation of Student-Led Teaching Awards

SLTAs are an opportunity for students to nominate their lecturer, university staff member, or fellow student for a recognition award. SLTAs appear in literature to have begun in Medical Schools within the UK HE sector. In Wheeler & Gill's paper, they confirmed that it was students that brought them into being as they 'felt that they wrote positive feedback in SETs but staff did not necessarily hear about it, nor were they praised for it'. Overall, students wanted to thank their lecturers (2010, p. 152). As they give students an opportunity to provide feedback on teaching, they can be seen as an informal version of SETs.

In the academic year 2009/10, the NUS, in partnership with Advance HE, launched a pilot scheme of SLTAs in Scotland's HEIs (Advance HEa, n.d.). Now, many students' unions/associations run SLTAs. Although each union/association may choose and design its award categories, most have something akin to Best Lecturer, that students can nominate an inspirational lecturer.

2.3.2 Perceptions of Student-Led Teaching Awards

Since the implementation of STLAs across the UK, research on them has increased. Emerging are two schools of thought on SLTAs; one has a negative view, and the other has an opposing positive view.

Madriaga & Morley, well-known researchers within the negative school of thought on SLTAs, were concerned with the 'relative lack of critique of such awards schemes' (2016, p. 167). Their viewpoint on SLTAs is similar to some views on SETs, which is that students do not understand teaching excellence (Madriaga & Morley, 2016). They comment that there are 'questions of student ability and awareness to discern teaching excellence' (Madriaga & Morley, 2016, p. 171). There is a group of academics who 'trust students as appropriate feedback givers' (Karm, Sarv & Groccia, 2022, p. 211) and others who do not. Therefore, there will always be a faction of academics who will not see the validity of student feedback on their teaching practice.

Some staff also believe that STLAs are popularity contests where it is the quantity of nominations that makes a winner, rather than the quality of the nominations. These staff believe that if they have a smaller class size or low contact time, they are less likely to be nominated for, and win, an award (Madriaga & Morley, 2016). If a student has an inspirational lecturer, the class size and contact time will not affect their wish to thank them through a SLTAs nomination. As leaders of their own SLTAs scheme, Lubicz-Nawrocka & Bunting (2019) are keen to dispel the idea that SLTAs are popularity contests. Their research argues against Madriaga and Morley's (2016) negative perceptions. Lubicz-Nawrocka & Bunting (2019, p. 65) confirm that they are 'not popularity contests since they are evidence-led and give awards based on the quality of teaching as indicated in students' nomination comments (not the quantity of nominations)'.

Additionally, staff also feel that it does not matter if you win such an award. Warnes claims that in their study, 'the fact that a lecturer receives a teaching excellence award has no impact on students' (2021, p. 173). One of their participants stated that it makes no difference if students know they have been given an award, as teaching excellence is something that has to be maintained and has to be proved year after year (Warnes, 2021).

The positive school of thought believe that students genuinely wish to thank their lecturers (Wheeler & Gill, 2010; Bradley, Kirby & Madriaga, 2015; Lubicz-Nawrocka & Bunting, 2019). They believe that SLTAs are a beacon of positive feedback in a world of negativity. Their informality and removal from University administration's monitoring truly gives students a safe space to provide comments about their lecturers. Lecturers can receive thanks from their students, knowing their seniors will not use the comments in career progression decisions (Bradley, Kirby & Madriaga, 2015).

An interesting argument by Bradley, Kirby & Madriaga (2015) sits in both the negative and positive schools of thought, depending on how the reader interprets it. They state that SLTAs are not 'a measure of teaching effectiveness or scholarship of

teaching. The awards are about student perceptions of inspirational teaching' (Bradley, Kirby & Madriaga, 2015, p. 238). Of course, the opposing argument follows others' negative perceptions of students' ability to understand and describe teaching excellence (Madriaga & Morley, 2016; Lakeman et al., 2023b; Arroyo-Barriguete, 2023). In contrast, the positive argument of this statement is that it succinctly encompasses the aim of SLTAs that nominations are purely a student's own understanding of inspirational teaching, which are not beholden to the institution and sector's standard of quality teaching. Students are the experts in students' understanding of inspirational teaching; they should not have to have any additional expertise in teaching excellence for them to stand out as experts in their own right when they perceive the quality of the teaching they receive in the SLTAs nominations they produce (Lubicz-Nawrocka & Bunting, 2019; Matheson, 2019).

A gap in the literature has been called out various times (Thompson & Zaitseva, 2012; Seng & Geertsena, 2018; Lubicz-Nawrocka & Bunting, 2019). The SLTAs across the UK gather a wealth of data on teaching practice that is underutilised (Thompson & Zaitseva, 2012; Seng & Geertsena, 2018; Lubicz-Nawrocka & Bunting, 2019). Thompson & Zaitseva's (2012) thematic analysis of SLTAs nominations used the wealth of data collected to explore what students believed was teaching excellence across the sector. They called for others to use this wealth of data to improve the sector. This work has begun with further work on the themes found in teaching excellence (Lubicz-Nawrocka & Bunting, 2019) and discovering best practice at a particular institution on feedback and assessment (Lowe & Shaw, 2019). There is a need for more academics to use the wealth of SLTAs data in their research.

2.4 Gender Bias in Student Perceptions of Teaching

This section follows on from the previous two sections, which discussed two methods of students evaluating teaching. In 2.4.1, the gender bias found within student perceptions of teaching is explored. In 2.4.2, the cost of this gender bias to staff in HE is discussed.

2.4.1 Gender Bias in Student Evaluations of Teaching

Gender bias is a well-researched area within SETs literature. Compared to research on gender bias in SETs, there is little research into gender bias in SLTAs, leaving a significant gap in the literature.

Feldman's two-part study was one of the first prominent studies on gender bias in SETs (1992; 1993). They claimed no difference existed between student perceptions of female and male lecturers. However, their study did find that no female lecturers had a 'higher overall evaluation' than their male counterparts (Feldman, 1993, p. 343). However, more recent studies demonstrate how students' gender stereotypes play a part in how they evaluate teaching (Boring, 2017; Clayson, 2021; Kwok & Potter, 2021).

Gender stereotypes play a part in SETs in various ways. Students in their SETs responses ‘sometimes reward (or at least do not penalise) women on stereotypically female criteria, while systematically rewarding men on stereotypically male criteria’ (Boring, 2017, p. 35). MacNell, Discroll & Hunt confirm this finding; in their study, they found that students expect their lecturers to behave in a masculine (professional) or feminine (interpersonal) manner (2015, p. 294). They argue that those who ‘[violate] students' gendered expectations' are left open to receive negative SET responses (MacNell, Driscoll & Hunt, 2015, p. 294). Female lecturers are under more pressure to remain ‘feminine’ in the students' eyes while maintaining the level of professionalism that their male counterparts are easily rewarded for (MacNell, Driscoll & Hunt, 2015). Lecturers can be punished in their SETs for 'failing to do their gender right' (Adams, et al., 2021, p. 804).

Female lectures can even be viewed negatively just by the subject they teach, such as the ‘masculine’ subject of Business (Clayson, 2020). On top of this, female lecturers can be viewed negatively for just existing in the same academic space as men for, as of course, academia was constructed as a masculine space (Leathwood & Read, 2008). Interestingly, male students are more likely to rate their male lecturers better than their female lecturers, and female students are more likely to do the opposite

(Bachen, McLaughlin & Garcia, 1999; Centra & Gaubatz, 2000; Sprauge & Massoni, 2015; Boring, 2017; Gupta, Garg & Jumar, 2018). This could be seen as male students perpetuating the masculine academic space, as better SETs responses usually lead to career progression and give male lecturers an unfair advantage of leadership at the top of the masculine academic space (Mitchell & Martin, 2018).

Female lecturers are regularly seen as less senior in this 'male dominated profession' (Mitchell & Martin, 2018, p. 649). Female lecturers are even seen as teachers rather than lecturers, separating them even further from their male counterparts. The term 'teacher' in the UK primarily relates to pre-16/18 compulsory education, and 'lecturer' relates to post-compulsory education. This is an important distinction as teachers usually provide more support and care in pre-16/18 compulsory education than is expected in post-compulsory education (Miller & Chamberlin, 2000; Mitchell & Martin, 2018; Clayson, 2020).

Students can punish female lecturers in their SETs for all these reasons. Hoorens, Dekkers & Deschrijver's (2020) study even found that male students are more likely to punish a female lecturer for a low grade compared to a male lecturer. All this adds to the need for female lecturers to 'play the SET game' more than their male colleagues (Lakeman, et al., 2023a, p. 757).

2.4.2 The Cost of Gender Bias in Student Evaluations of Teaching for Female Lecturers

Gender bias in SETs has a cost for female lecturers. Female lecturers must 'spend more effort in time-consuming dimensions of teachings' to try and match male colleagues' SETs responses' (Boring, 2017, p. 35). They also need to 'meet gendered standards' of their students, which requires a level of effort that their male colleagues do not need to expend (Sprague & Massoni, 2005, p. 791). Therefore, female lecturers have to be both the 'masculine' professional lecturer and the 'feminine' caring teacher to try and be seen as the same as their male colleagues (Mitchell & Martin, 2018). Male lecturers just need to hit the 'masculine' professional lecturer criteria, which is 'likely to fall within the remit of their regular professional duties (Gelber, et al., 2022, p. 214), to receive a positive SETs response.

This is proven in MacNell, Discroll & Hunt's (2015) study, where they ran an online module and swapped the gender of two tutors, leaving the students to believe that one of their male lecturers was female and vice versa. They found that the female lecturer and the perceived female lecturer were given significantly more negative SETs responses than the male lecturer and the perceived male lecturer (MacNell, Driscoll & Hunt, 2015). They concluded their study with the argument that 'regardless of actual gender or performance', female lecturers were rated lower, meaning female lecturers 'would have to work harder than a male to receive comparable ratings' (MacNell, Driscoll & Hunt, 2015, p. 301). This work, which is usually emotional labour (Sprague & Massoni, 2005), makes them time-poor. This leaves female lecturers with less time to participate in other activities which may help their chances for career progression, such as research activities, attending conferences, sitting on committees and networking (Gelber, et al., 2022).

The term emotional labour, when predominately used in this study, refers to the unseen and unrecognised additional work an individual, usually a woman, undertakes and is expected to undertake to keep up with a societal standard. In Sprague & Massoni's words, emotional labour is 'frequently invisible and uncounted' for (2005, p. 791). The term emotional labour does have another meaning within HE literature. It can also mean hiding and suppressing feelings that are not expected to be shown in particular contexts and performing to fit into that context (Berry & Cassidy, 2013; Aitchison & Mowbry, 2013). When this definition of emotional labour is used within this study, it is clearly highlighted by the researcher.

The emotional labour of female academics can be in their HE and work sphere and/or their home life and personal sphere. Female lecturers are expected to maintain a successful career whilst being the 'foreman' at home (Connell 2005; Hjálmsdóttir and Bjarnadóttir 2021). In their personal spheres, female lecturers are undertaking emotional labour, from remembering birthdays, cleaning, cooking and planning meals to reminding others that the emotional labour falls upon their shoulders (Connell 2005; Taillie 2018; Ciciolla and Luthar 2019; Hjálmsdóttir and Bjarnadóttir 2021; Wolfson et al. 2021). In their work spheres, female lecturers are expected to

undertake emotional labour relating to their students, including providing personal support and stereotypical 'feminine' office tasks, from remembering birthdays, planning parties, organising meetings, and administration tasks (Sprague and Massoni 2005; Barrett and Barrett, 2011; Broido et al., 2015).

Personal life emotional labour can also destroy female lecturers' academic careers as female lecturers are more likely to be unable to continue in their chosen careers or need to take career breaks because of caring responsibilities and childcare commitments (Harrison & Smith, 2011). Female lecturers are more likely to take career breaks for these reasons or to move from full-time to part-time work (Barrett & Barrett, 2011), which can also slow down career progression. Cooper (2019) uses the leaky pipeline model to examine this phenomenon; they discuss how many opportunities there are for female lecturers to fall out of the pipeline (out of academia) throughout their careers compared to their male colleagues.

If universities, individually and as a sector, were 'sensitive to the ways in which unconscious bias influences the perception of the value of women's contributions, female lecturers would be more likely to succeed in their academic careers, both in terms of progression and overall satisfaction of their jobs (Kandiko Howson, Coate & de St Croix, 2018, p. 546). Their workload must be assessed appropriately to ensure female lecturers are not undertaking emotional labour or stereotypically 'feminine' tasks, especially when these are a barrier to their career progression (Kandiko Howson, Coate & de St Croix, 2018, p. 546). This also applies to female lecturers on part-time contracts (Barrett & Barrett, 2011; Cooper, 2019).

As Chavez & Mitchell state, 'it is high time academia brings its ingenuity […] to develop better measures of teaching effectiveness', instead of leaving their female lecturers to play the SETs game (2020, p. 273). It is down to the sector itself to protect its female lecturers' careers, mental health, and employment status and to stop failing them like it has been doing for quite some time (Barrett & Barrett, 2011; Smele, Quinlan & Lacroix, 2021).

2.5 Summary of Chapter

This chapter has explored the literature relating to this research study: teaching excellence, SETs, SLTAs and gender bias in SETs. It has also demonstrated that there is a gap in the literature relating to gender bias in SLTAs.

There is significant literature on teaching excellence, particularly on how the term itself is undefinable and has contested definitions across the HE sector. As many academics argue, there is a difference between the term teaching excellence and teaching actually being excellent (Moore et al., 2017; Wood & Su, 2017; Barkas et al., 2019). Teaching excellence must be witnessed in the classroom, either through peer review, observation, or SETs (Palmer & Collins, 20016; Hornstein, 2017; Matthews & Kotzee, 2021; Arroyo-Barriguete et al., 2023).

This chapter has delved into the many things that affect SETs, from grade expectations (Boring et al., 2016; Hoefer, Yurkievicz & Byrne, 2012; Berezvai, Lukats & Molontay, 2021) to the timing of SETs (Estelami, 2015; McClain, Gulbis & Hays, 2018) to revenge (Boysen, 2008). The literature does not argue that one clear thing profoundly affects SETs. Academics are still searching for a SET process that eliminates all these minor things that affect SETs, and this is not to say that they should not do so.

This chapter has explored how gender bias has an effect on SETs and, as discussed, has a cost. Female lecturers are forced to act and behave according to student expectations to receive positive SETs scores (Adams et al., 2021). They are also expected to act as caregivers *and* professional lecturers (MacNell, Driscoll & Hunt, 2015). Whereas male lecturers are not expected by their students to act in a caregiver manner, just as a professional lecturer (MacNell, Driscoll & Hunt, 2015). This means that female lecturers must undertake emotional labour to be seen as comparable by their students (Sprague & Massoni, 2005). This additional labour means that more female lecturers are falling out of the leaky pipeline and out of HE (Cooper, 2019). Whilst there is a wealth of research in these areas, there is little research on gender bias within SLTA nominations. This research study aims to remedy this.

2.6 Road Map of Methodology Chapter

The next chapter contains the methodology of this research study and its theoretical framework. It first discusses the context of the dataset before exploring how the data was collected and prepared. The chapter details how the data analysis was undertaken, from the thematic network analysis, the frequency of mentions and the creative nonfiction. It also explains how the theoretical framework of feminist critical theory was selected for this research study and which other theories were discounted. Lastly, it summarises the ethical approval and considerations of this research study.

Chapter 3: Methodology and Theory

This chapter explains the context of the research, the data collection process, and how the data was prepared and analysed. It will also introduce the paradigm of feminist critical theory that was used to frame this research study.

This chapter will begin with a discussion of the context of the data, including the institution and their SLTAs process in section 3.1. The next section, 3.2. will detail how the data was collected for this research study. In section 3.3, there will be an exploration of how the data was prepared for data analysis. Following this, section 3.4 will explore the selected theory, feminist critical theory. Section 3.5 explores the data analysis of this research study, including discounted and included data analysis tools, and how the thematic network analysis, frequency of mentions analysis and creative nonfiction were undertaken. Section 3.6 details the ethical approval processes for this research study and any considerations and mitigations. Concluding this chapter is the roadmap for the following Results chapters.

3.1 Context of the Data

The dataset for this research is nominations from SLTAs. SLTAs can be run by a Students' Union (or Association), a university, or in partnership. These awards can be run differently from institution to institution; therefore, a further explanation of the participating institution, how their SLTAs are run, and the details of the dataset can be found in 3.1.1, 3.1.2, and 3.1.3.

3.1.1 Context of the Institution

The participating institution is a teaching-oriented university in the UK. The institution has several campuses. It also has several partner colleges, a few distance learning courses, and online courses. Most students who study on campus live at home or commute; however, there are student accommodation halls for each of the institution's locations. Across the institution, there are approximately 25,000 students.

The courses offered by the institution vary and include humanities, social sciences, life sciences and arts.

3.1.2 Context of the Student-Led Teaching Awards

The SLTAs are well established at the participating institution, having been launched approximately ten years ago. The nomination period for the awards occurs every academic year between February and March. Students are invited to nominate staff members through an online form. Students are asked to provide the name of the lecturer they are nominating and a reasoning for their nomination, although only the name is a required answer. Therefore, some nominations do not have a reason provided. During the time period in which this dataset occurred (2016/7 to 2019/20), there were nine different awards:

1. Best Lecturer
2. Best Supervisor
3. Best Course Leader
4. Student Partnership Award
5. Student Support Award (for non-teaching staff)
6. Best Course Representative
7. Best Faculty Representative
8. Best Student Council Member
9. Best Student of the Year

Please note that these are generalised names of the awards to protect the participating institution's anonymity.

Only awards one through five are for staff members, and only students can nominate staff members. Award number five is for non-teaching staff. Awards six to nine are for students, and staff and students were allowed to nominate in these categories. Therefore, awards one to four could be appropriate for this research study. However, the Best Lecturer Award was selected for this research study as it was the only award solely focused on learning and teaching.

Additionally, it was the most popular award in relation to the number of students nominating lecturers in it every academic year. The awards at this institution attracted approximately 1,500 nominations, and the Best Lecturer Award received about 200 nominations yearly. There was a similar split of female to male lecturers being nominated, as 40% to 60%, yearly in this award.

After the nomination period had ended, the staff who organised the SLTAs organised the nominations. This organisation included collating the nominations into judging packs by award category. They also recruit student volunteers to judge the staff awards, and a mix of varied staff and student representatives to judge the student awards. At the judging panels, the judges are informed of the essential points in which to judge fairly and given time to read through the nominations. The judges narrow the nominees down to a top five as a group. Individually, the judges vote for their top three using single transferable vote (Electoral Reform Society, n.d.). Apart from the staff who organised the SLTAs, no one would know the winners until the awards ceremony. All shortlisted staff and students are invited to the awards ceremony, and students representatives are invited on stage to announce the winners. The winners receive an award and a certificate. All nominees across all the awards receive the nominations students had submitted for them.

3.1.3 Context of the Dataset

This research study's dataset contains four years' Best Lecturer Award nominations (2016/17 to 2019/20). These four years were selected as the above awards stayed the same and provided consistent data. In total, 750 lecturers were nominated for the Best Lecturer Award across these four years. Of the 750 nominations, there were 291 female lecturers and 459 male lecturers, as seen in Table 1.

Year	Female Lecturers	Male Lecturers	Total Lecturers
2016/17	60	118	178

2017/18	77	118	195
2018/19	78	126	204
2019/20	76	97	173
Total	291	459	750

Table 1. Number of Lecturers Nominated for Best Lecturer Award by Year

The Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) data confirms that for these four years around 2,000 academics worked at this institution (Higher Education Statistics Agencyb, n.d.); this number is quite stable over this period. Over this period, there were more male lecturers than female, as shown in Table 2 (Higher Education Statistics Agencya, n.d.).

Year	Female Lecturers	Male Lecturers
2016/17	45.5%	54.5%
2017/18	44.5%	55.5%
2018/19	44.0%	56.0%
2019/20	44.0%	56.0%

Table 2. Number of Male and Female Lecturer at Institution by Year (%)

The ratio of female lecturers to male lecturers working at this institution is 4:5. The ratio of female lecturers to male lecturers nominated for the award of Best Lecturer is 1:2. Although there is not a vast difference between the number of female and male lecturers working at this institution, for every one female lecturer nominated for the award of Best Lecturer, there were two male lecturers nominated. Additionally, 55% of

the student body was made up of female students in the period investigated in this research study.

3.1.4 Gender of the Lecturers

The gender of the lecturers who were nominated and are within the dataset was captured by the participating institution during the SLTAs process. This was either done by the staff knowing the lecturers well or by viewing the pronouns used by the lecturers on their email signatures or staff profiles. For SLTAs process, this ensured that all documentation, such as the 'you've been nominated' letters, used the correct pronouns for all lecturers. This means that the gender identifiers in this dataset come from the gender identity the lecturers wished to show in their roles, either by verbal or written communication.

3.2 Data Collection

3.2.1 Approaching the Participating Institution

The researcher previously worked in the participating institution and on these particular SLTAs. Therefore, the researcher had a working relationship with the participating institution. The researcher approached the institution with a participant information sheet and a consent form to ask for the dataset to be used in this research study. The institution approved the use of this data as the students are informed when they are nominating that the nominations will be shared anonymously, and they wished to help inform research on SLTAs.

3.2.2 Transfer of the Data

In the process of the SLTAs themselves, the staff who organised them, anonymised the nominations for the judging panels. These staff worked through all the nominations and added a gender identifier (either F for female or M for male). After this, every nomination was edited to remove any names, course/module titles, and pronouns were removed and replaced, for example, replacing she with they. Before the participating institution transferred the data, they made sure they only shared the

version of the nominations that had been anonymised and were listed as, for example, Lecturer 1 (2016/17) F.

3.3 Data Preparation

3.3.1 Anonymity Check

The participating institution made the data anonymous before the researcher received the dataset. However, the researcher did an anonymity check prior to data analysis to ensure that any identifying data was removed. After this step, the researcher waited several weeks to return to the data to mitigate for potential researcher bias, where they might remember any mentions of gender. Where identifying data was needed to make sense of the nomination, for example, 'a lecturer in STEM', the researcher noted that this wording could not be shared as a direct quote within the thesis or any other text for public use.

3.3.2 Splitting Nominations from their Gender Identifiers

This was a two-step process. In the first step, the nomination text was aligned with both numerical and gender identifiers. The data was inputted into a spreadsheet and split into four tabs, for each of the four academic years. Each lecturer was given a numerical identifier (1 to 750), which was listed with their gender identifier (M or F), and then their nominations. These were intentionally randomised (within their academic years), to ensure that there were not blocks of female lecturers and male lecturers.

For the second step, a second spreadsheet was created in order to separate the numerical identifiers from the gender identifiers. This spreadsheet only listed the numerical identifiers and the nominations but not the gender identifiers. This would ensure that when the researcher read the nominations for the data analysis from this spreadsheet, there would be no indicator of gender. This ensured that the researcher could mitigate against any researcher bias in knowing the lecturers' gender.

3.3.3 Preparing for the Thematic Network Analysis

The nominations were analysed by hand, rather than by a software such as NVivo, as the researcher wanted to ensure the student voice was not lost in a system-based approach and felt more comfortable that it would be retained in a manual approach. The researcher highlighted themes within the nominations and made space within the spreadsheet in order to write notes on themes.

A third spreadsheet was made that represented the codebook, including the Basic Themes, Organising Themes and Global Themes. This codebook is included in the Appendix.

3.4 Theoretical Framework

3.4.1 Feminist Critical Theory

Feminist critical theory is a lens that examines the social structures that perpetuate gender inequality (Coletti et al., 2021; Tsakmakis, Akter & Bohren, 2023). A critical approach to feminism is situational; it is not an objective truth that applies to all. Through using feminist critical theory, the researcher can demonstrate what gender inequalities are occurring within the dataset to contribute to literature (Gannon & Davies, 2012). As it is situational, it can give one point of view and, in many cases, including this research study, a Global North view (Allen, 2013). It is important to highlight that although the results of this research can be applied to the wider UK HE landscape, it does not reflect all experiences women have in academia in the UK, let alone the wider world.

This approach is also aware of 'binary categories—such as man/woman and good/evil' (Gannon & Davies, 2012). Bowker and Star's (2000) work on classification confirms that categories can disappear into our society and become the norm. In using a feminist critical theory approach, the researcher can seek not to 'give advantage or […] suffering' to the binary categories of man/woman (Bowker & Star, 2000, p. 156). Therefore, even though the researcher seeks to demonstrate gender inequalities that women in academia face and will do so by highlighting the advantages men in

academia have, and the researcher will not seek to bring suffering upon men. Another important point to consider with categories is to ensure the researcher does not define those not in a category as the opposite, such as loud with quiet, as this is a range rather than binary categories (Gannon & Davies, 2012).

Feminist critical approach seeks to 'emancipate people within subordinated categories' (Gannon & Davies, 2012, p. 68). It is a form of work that seeks to liberate women from the structures of the social world that oppress them. Other feminist theory approaches, such as postmodern and post-structural, are deconstructive, whereas feminist critical approaches are 'up-front about confronting existing power structures and practices' (Gannon & Davies, 2012, p. 69). By using this theory, the researcher seeks to add to literature that would liberate women in academia from the oppression they face.

This theory enables for analysis that understands how students construct their perceptions of their lecturers of different genders, grounding their perceptions in the social world that has been constructed in a way that generally affects those who identify themselves as women in a negative manner. This theory can be a good grounding for the discussion of gender differences in this study in the reality of the current academic landscape and highlight the range of biases that students have of their lecturers that have a detrimental effect.

The researcher decided to use these detailed elements of feminist critical theory to undertake feminist research. In conjunction with the creative nonfiction used in this research study, the researcher wishes to confront the oppression, bias and inequality that women in academia face.

3.4.2 The Term 'Gender' in this Study

The term gender is important to this study. It is a complicated term as it is not always used consistently, meaning people understand it differently. The term gender is closely linked with the terms 'sex' and 'gender identity'. HESA records data about HE in the UK and uses the UK Government's definitions of 'sex' and 'gender'. They define

'sex' as 'referring to the biological aspects of an individual as determined by their anatomy, which is produced by their chromosomes, hormones and their interactions' (Office for National Statistics, n.d.). For 'gender', they define this as a social construction and that 'gender identity is a personal, internal perception of oneself, and so the gender category someone identifies with may not match the sex they were assigned at birth' (Office for National Statistics, n.d.). The UK government used this understanding in the Census 2021. The Census is a survey that runs every ten years to understand all the people who live in England and Wales (Census, n.d.). The 2021 Census included, for the first time, both a question on sex and gender identity. Sullivan (2020) discusses this change and concludes that these terms are 'entirely distant concepts', and it is essential to use the correct term.

There is a myriad of studies on gender bias in SETs that may use the term gender differently. However, in this study, gender is used to discuss lecturers' gender identity. During the process of the SLTAs for this research study, the lecturers' gender identity was sought from lecturers' staff profiles, their pronouns listed on their email signatures, or from the knowledge of the SLTAs organising staff. This process was undertaken to ensure that all documentation relating to the SLTAs used the correct pronouns. It is important to note that this research study focuses on the students' perceptions of their lecturers and therefore the nominations that make up the dataset are based on the students' perceptions of their lecturers' gender identity, which may not align with the lecturers' *actual* gender identity.

3.5 Data Analysis

3.5.1 Introduction

The dataset in this research was analysed using a thematic network analysis, a frequency of mentions analysis and through creating creative nonfiction. Thematic network analysis is a qualitative data analysis method devised by Attride-Stirling (2001). It is similar to thematic analysis but differs in that it produces network maps as part of the analysis. The thematic network analysis will build a picture of how students perceive their lectures of different genders when praising them and act as a way of

structuring the data. To further structure the data, the researcher will analyse the frequency of mentions for the whole dataset and by female and male lecturers. The researcher will rely on this structuring of the data in order to analyse the data and create creative nonfiction in the form of short stories. These short stories will show, not tell the reader, how students perceive their lectures in the data's context.

3.5.2 Thematic Network Analysis

3.5.2.1 Introduction to Thematic Network Analysis

Thematic network analysis is a method of analysing qualitative data as devised by Attride-Stirling (2001). Thematic network analysis is similar to thematic analysis, as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006; 2013). In both, the researcher breaks down the dataset into appropriate sections for analysis. In this research study, this is individual nominations. The researcher reads the nominations and identifies the recurring themes. In a thematic analysis, these themes are usually organised into themes and sub-themes, which can then be analysed and discussed. In a thematic network analysis, the themes are organised into three different levels: Basic, Organising, and Global Themes. Basic Themes are the 'lowest-order theme that is derived from the textual data' (Attride-Stirling, 2001, p. 388). Basic Themes are combined into Organising Themes to represent 'clusters of similar issues' (Attride-Stirling, 2001, p. 389). Global Themes are the 'super-ordinate themes encompassing the principal metaphors in the data as a whole' (Attride-Stirling, 2001, p. 389). These themes can then be displayed on a thematic network map, as shown in Figure 1.

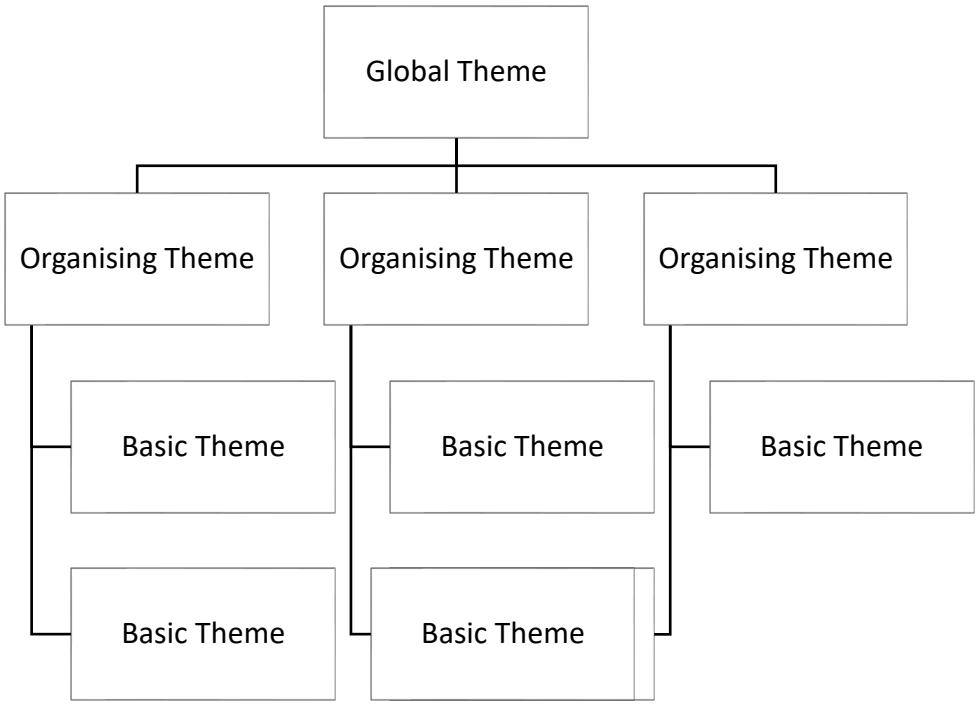

Figure 1. Example of a Network Map

As teaching practice is made up of many smaller actions and intentions, a move from thematic analysis to thematic network analysis provides the opportunity for the connections found in the data to be analysed and to 'illustrate the relationships between them' (Attride-Stirling, 2001). It allows for the broader practice of lecturers and the more expansive student experience of teaching and learning to be woven together in this research. The use of thematic network analysis also complements the use of creative nonfiction, as the themes and network map become a basis for storylines, characters, themes, and dialogue.

3.5.2.2 Process of Thematic Network Analysis

3.5.2.2.1 Coding the Dataset

Step one of the thematic network analysis meant 'dissecting the text into manageable and meaningful text segments' (Attride-Stirling, 2001, p. 390). In this dataset, the text was dissected into individual nominations. Therefore, this meant that each of the lecturers' nominations in one academic year – and the SLTAs cycle – was treated as a separate entity rather than compiling all their nominations as one. This is based on the knowledge that some lecturers were only nominated once in a cycle. Although some

lecturers may have been nominated up to fifteen times, dissecting the text for analysis by individual nominations gave an equitable approach to analysing the nominations.

3.5.2.2.2 Identifying the Themes

The initial read-through of the individual nominations resulted in 167 codes. The researcher was not concerned with overlapping codes or duplications during this read-through. The aim was to understand the dataset and highlight codes to start the pattern and structure understanding process.

After this, the researcher analysed the dataset and the 167 codes to identify duplicated areas, such as 'understanding of subject' and 'knowledge of subject'. This led to 55 codes being removed at this stage. The next stage was to ensure that all codes were specific enough to not overlap with other codes but also not to be broad. To assist with this, the researcher recorded the frequency of mentions of each of the 112 codes across the four academic years. Codes with a very low frequency were eliminated; for example, 'responsible' was mentioned once across the dataset. Where a code had a low frequency, the researcher delved into basic linguistic research to understand where codes could be merged; for example, 'memorable lecturers' was merged with 'enjoyable lectures', and 'kind' was merged with 'nice'. This resulted in a remaining 65 codes.

3.5.2.2.3 Constructing the Networks

At this stage, the number of codes was manageable to begin delving into them and understanding how they related. The researcher grouped the 167 codes into themes that would become the 38 Basic Themes; a full table of these codes and Basic Themes can be found in the Appendix.

The individual nominations were reread, this time not lecturer by lecturer, academic year by academic year, but rather within their Basic Themes groupings. This allows patterns and relationships to be found in order to organise the Basic Themes into Organising and Global Themes. Thematic network analysis aims to 'summarise

particular themes in order to create larger, unifying themes that condense the concepts and ideas mentioned at a lower level' (Attride-Stirling, 2001, p. 393).

This step showed how the data split into different sections: students and staff. The first, students, contained Basic Themes that revolved around how the students received learning and support and how the staff made them feel. The second section contained Basic Themes that depicted how staff had either knowledge, a suitable teaching method, a positive attitude, or the skills of a good employee. From this, it was clear that there was more at play within these two categories. For example, within the Basic Themes that had been grouped under 'students', some themes focused on the learning and support they had received. Other themes focused on consumerism, such as lectures being 'worthwhile' and 'worth the time and money' and lecturers being good for the university's reputation.

3.5.3 Frequency of Mentions Analysis

3.5.3.1 Introduction to Frequency of Mentions Analysis

The use of frequency of mentions analysis allows the researcher to understand the 'strength' of each Basic, Organising and Global Theme. This analysis tool allows for a simple counting method of each theme to produce a numerical outcome. The researcher undertook a frequency of mentions analysis for the whole dataset for all themes and then for the female and male lecturers' nominations.

3.5.3.2 Process of the Frequency of Mentions Analysis

Once the thematic analysis network was completed, the researcher undertook a count of the mentions of each Basic Theme using the notes they made in the thematic network analysis. In a new spreadsheet, they listed each Basic Theme and the number of mentions. The researcher then totalled these numbers for each Organising and Global Themes.

Once the frequency of mentions had been recorded for the whole dataset, the researcher reunited the nominations with their gender identifiers. In doing so, the

frequencies of nominations that matched with each Basic Theme, and therefore Organising and Global Theme, could be split into female and male lecturers. This allowed the researcher to produce a new spreadsheet that showed the split of female and male frequencies within each Basic, Organising and Global Theme. It is the separation of the data by gender that provides the basis for the creative nonfiction produced in this research study.

3.5.4 Creative Nonfiction

3.5.4.1 Truth and Storytelling in Creative Nonfiction

The term creative nonfiction is contradictory. It promises a creative license on truths. Creative nonfiction experts are keen to highlight that creative nonfiction is 'deeply committed to the truth', and it is the truth that the writing is built upon (Caulley, 2008, p. 426). Despite this, creative nonfiction experts understand the contradictory nature of the method of writing; as Harper (2013, p. l) states, 'the moment any story is told, truth, as an unbiased, objective quality, disappears.' It is perhaps more appropriate to say that creative nonfiction is based on the truth as understood by the writer, who is truthful with themselves, rather than the broad statement that creative nonfiction is based on truth (Harper, 2013).

Nonfiction is a well-known genre of writing, and its selling power lies in the fact that perspective readers know that the things that happened within the book actually happened (Harper, 2013, p. xl). Nonfiction and creative nonfiction differ due to their foci. Nonfiction focuses on the truth, whereas creative nonfiction focuses on the story. The balance between truth and fiction in creative nonfiction is more of a balance between truth and storytelling. The truth remains a constant, but how one writes the truth differs.

The truth can be discovered in various ways for creative nonfiction writers. No matter the method of collecting and recording the truth, it is impossible for the writer to be 'fully in control or stabilize what is truth, fact, or fabrication' (Mays, 2018, p. 336). In addition, as the creative nonfiction leaves the writer and moves to the

readers, the truth goes through another transformation as the writing is now open for interpretation by the readers.

What can a creative nonfiction writer do to be as truthful as they can in their writing? They must be truthful to themselves. In fact, they have a duty to relay the truth to others as accurately as possible, and this can only be done when the writer is truthful to themselves (Harper, 2013, p. l). When focusing on the story in creative nonfiction, the writer has the power to decide what features in the story, what is revealed and when, and where the story begins and ends, which will determine how the truth is told. The balance between the truth and storytelling is exceptionally delicate; however, the truth in creative nonfiction is always told.

3.5.4.2 Creative Nonfiction in this Research Study

This research study's balance of truth and storytelling will differ from the balance in other creative nonfiction works. In academia, there is a need to ensure that ethical issues are considered, and, in this research study, staff anonymity must be preserved, which changes the balance of truth and storytelling. This research study follows a study by Orr et al. (2021), who interviewed participants in order to create composite characters built up from various participants who shared similar stories. This research study incorporated this approach. Instead of interviewing participants, this research data was in the form of SLTAs nominations, used a thematic network analysis to sculpt and sort the data in order for fictional characters and storylines to be created from the truths within the data.

Creative nonfiction is used in this research as a way to both analyse the data and show, not tell, the readers the results of the research. In the process of creating the creative nonfiction, the researcher delved into the words the students used in their nominations to understand further how students perceive their female and male lecturers differently. The outputs of the creative nonfiction, several short stories, provide a qualitative output that protects staff anonymity as the short stories contain fictional characters and storylines based on the truths of the dataset. It also opens the

outputs of this research study wider than the academic community due to its untraditional makeup.

Creative nonfiction was chosen over other similar methods, such as ethnography, autoethnography, and other creative genres. Ethnography is a research form in which the researcher witnesses the experiences within the study (SAGE, n.d.a). Although this would have given the researcher some insight into how students perceive their female and male lecturers differently, it would not have given the researcher the students' own voices. Autoethnography would have allowed the researcher to discuss their own insights of their experience within the HE sector but would have only been able to examine how their students' behaviour suggested how they were perceived (SAGE, n.d.b). No students' own voice could have been assumed; additionally, as the researcher is female, they would not have been able to discuss this from a male point of view. Other creative genres include poetry, prose, and script. These genres tend to be used for fictional stories and have the ability to subvert societal expectations and norms. Creative nonfiction ensured that the characters and storylines stay within the societal norm that the readers share.

Overall, this research study's approach to creative nonfiction had to place importance on the truth and storytelling. Writing is best when it is simple. It is when it is most enjoyable for readers, but behind the scenes, creative nonfiction is messy, complex and full of important decisions. As both an educational researcher and creative nonfiction writer, the researcher needed to turn complicated data into successful stories.

3.5.4.3 Process of Producing Creative Nonfiction

The thematic network analysis and frequency of mentions analysis structured the data in order for the researcher to produce creative nonfiction. To produce the creative nonfiction, the researcher re-read the nominations and studied the frequency of mentions for each Theme in turn. While re-reading, the researcher made notes of key elements found, such as recurring words and phrases and strength of feeling. Once the

researcher had done this for all Themes, they mapped out their notes and how they related to each other. This began the process of creating characters and storylines.

Next, the researcher studied the literature in areas that had come up within their notes, such as emotional labour, academia as a masculine space, and teaching as an act of performance. Additionally, they look at these notes through the lens of feminist critical theory, which allows the researcher to examine the social structures at play that would further gender inequality. When these notes were added, six personas began to form. Personas are used across different research areas and are a tool to summarise characteristics of people in order to share information (Weinhandl, et al., 2024). These six personas embodied the six different 'characters' found within the dataset. The six personas are The Professional Man, The Confident Expert, The Penalised and The Performing Woman, The Perfect Woman, The Mother and The Friend, and The Quiet Woman.

Once the personas were defined, the researcher began to build the characters who would embody the personas. These personas and characters drove the storylines, as well as using the truth found in the dataset. The researcher trialled different storylines until they felt they had written a short story that genuinely depicted the character and storyline that embodied each persona.

The researcher embedded their own experience and knowledge of the participating institution to bring a sense of authenticity to the short stories. It was important to the researcher that the short stories all took place within the same fictional institution, as this further demonstrates the breadth of gender inequality that was found within the one participating institution's SLTAs nominations. To check the anonymity of the lecturers who were nominated within the dataset, the researcher shared the short stories with colleagues who worked on the SLTAs at the same time as themselves to ensure that they could not identify any lecturers. They confirmed that they could not identify any lecturers.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

3.6.1 Ethical Approval

Ethical approval for this research was given on the 16th of June 2022, through the Lancaster University research ethics process. The ethics approval letter can be found in the Appendix.

3.6.2 Ethical Risk Status

As this research study will use data that has already been collected, there are no high-risk ethical considerations, and the research is deemed to be a low-risk project.

3.6.3 Ethical Considerations and Mitigations

In order to protect the staff members discussed in the SLTAs nominations, the participating organisation made the data anonymous. The dataset the researcher received only contained the nominations, the year the SLTAs nominations were submitted, and a gender identifier (M or F). As part of the data preparation, the researcher checked the dataset for any identifying information, such as course titles or local information and names that may have been missed. If information was needed to make sense of the nomination, for example, '*as a lecturer in STEM'*, the researcher kept this for the data analysis but ensured that this would not be presented in the thesis or other public outputs to protect anonymity. To further protect anonymity, the researcher does not refer to the name of the participating institution and referred to them in terms such as 'a UK research-oriented university'.

In this research study, there are direct quotes from the SLTAs nominations. The researcher has ensured that the quotes are used appropriately, using wording that adequately demonstrates the argument and does not contain any identifying information. Direct quotes from the dataset will be seen in this form: '*direct quote*'. The direct quotes are the students' own words and therefore the researcher has not corrected any spelling or grammatical errors within them in order to retain the student voice. The use of creative nonfiction in the thesis negates some anonymity issues. The short stories produced for this research study and that are found in this research study are based on the dataset but contain fictional characters and storylines. These short

stories allow the reader to understand the truth of how students perceive lecturers within this context whilst protecting staff anonymity. The researcher has shared the short stories with the colleagues who worked on the SLTAs at the same time as them to confirm that no staff are identifiable within them.

The researcher's positionality also poses an ethical consideration. As a previous organiser of the SLTAs used in this study, the researcher has a positive stance. Although this research study is not typically insider research, due to the close links to the SLTAs in question, the researcher acted according to ethical guidelines for insider research (Fleming, 2018; Toy-Cronin, 2018). Therefore, the researcher ensured that they held the role of the researcher as more important compared to the role of the insider, despite any conflicts it may create. There were pre-existing relationships with some of the lecturers nominated in the dataset. However, through anonymity and the amount of time that had passed since the researcher had worked on the SLTAs, and within the participating institution, the researcher could not recall lecturers from their nominations. Although the researcher does have a positive stance on SLTAs, this research study did not ultimately seek to prove that students can evaluate teaching excellence within them. Instead, the researcher used the dataset to show *what* students say about teaching excellence rather than comment on the quality of what students say about teaching excellence.

The dataset was safely stored on the researcher's Microsoft OneDrive via their Lancaster University account on a password-protected device as per Lancaster University's Research Data Management Policy (Lancaster University, n.d.). As per the policy, data will be kept for the recommended ten years (Lancaster University, n.d.).

3.7 Road Map of Results Chapters

The following two chapters contain the results of this research study. The first results chapter will explore the thematic network analysis and explain each of the Basic, Organising and Global Themes in turn. The second results chapter will detail the frequency of mentions for each Basic, Organising and Global Theme for the whole

dataset and then will examine the frequency of mentions for each Basic, Organising and Global Theme for female lecturers and male lecturers.

Chapter 4: Results – Thematic Network Analysis

This chapter contains the results of the first part of the data analysis in this research study, the thematic network analysis. The thematic network analysis involved a bottom-up approach, with the Basic Themes defined first. The Basic Themes were then grouped into common areas into Organising Themes. Lastly, all the Organising Themes in this research study were grouped into one of four Global Themes. In this chapter, each Global Theme will be explored in turn in its own section. Each theme will be detailed, using direct quotes from this research study's SLTAs nominations. Each section will begin with a short introduction and the relevant network map for that Global Theme. It will then discuss each Organising Theme, including its Basic Themes. The chapter will conclude with a summary of all the Global Themes found in the dataset.

4.1 Global Theme 1: Students as Consumers

This Global Theme collates themes that relate to students as consumers. Students as consumers forces students into a transactional role (Sabri, 2010; Tight, 2013). This transaction is students paying for a product, their degree, and therefore expect high quality service (Raaper, 2021).

This Global Theme contains all data from the SLTAs nominations that defined students as consumers. It has three Organising Themes, each detailed in turn below. The Thematic Network Map for this Global theme is shown in Figure 2 and discussed in

full, theme by theme, below.

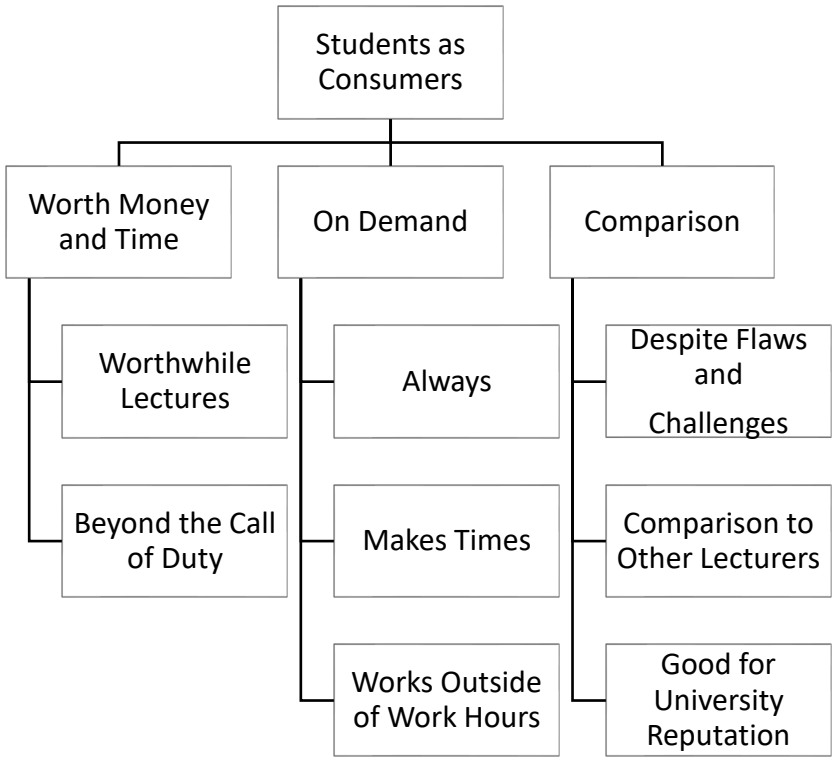

Figure 2. Thematic Network Map of Global Theme 1 – Students as Consumers

4.1.1 Organising Theme 1.1: Worth Money and Time

Molesworth, Nixon & Scullion argue that students' seek to '*have* a degree' rather than '*be* learners' (2009, p. 278), and this places students as consumers. Organising Theme 1.1: Worth Money and Time aligns with this statement. Students within the nominations relating to this Organising Theme praised lecturers who provided a high-quality service, both in relation to teaching and support that will allow them to be successful in their studies, rather than lecturers who empowered them to be learners.

In Basic Theme 1.1.1: Worthwhile Lecturers, students' nominations relate to the students as consumers movement, as students show how they feel that they need to feel that their money is well spent on the service they are paying for. In this context, it is the perception by students that their lecturers are worthwhile, in relation to both their time being well spent and being worth the money they have spent on the degree. Students, within their nominations, praised lecturers for being *'fully committed to*

making [the] educational experience worth your time' and for always being *'beneficial'*. Students were keen to nominate lecturers whose lectures were so worthy that you *'wouldn't dream of missing one'*, which meant those lectures had *'the highest turnouts for attendance out of all of [their] lectures'*. Indeed, this praise suggests that students evaluate teaching by its worth, as consumers, rather than the experience of it, as learners. This could deter lecturers from focusing on learning activities that enrich the learning experience, but rather focus on students attaining high level outcomes.

Students valued a high standard of 'customer service', where the lecturers went above and beyond for them (Raaper, 2021). In Basic Theme 1.1.2: Beyond the Call of Duty depicts how students believe that their lecturers go beyond the role of a lecturer in order to help them academically and emotionally, and in turn, is confirmation that their money is well spent. This builds on findings from Lowe & Shaw (2019), who also found similar findings. The most common phrases used in relation to this theme were *'they go above and beyond'* and *'they go the extra mile'*. Although these phrases were used in conjunction with a range of activities the lecturers had done, they mainly were stated in nominations that revolved around student support.

Some nominations stated specific actions that they felt the lecturers had gone above and beyond. One student commented that their lecturer had *'supported me with my health issues when I couldn't go on a trip and managed to get me a funded trip on different transportation so I could go on the trip.'* Another student wrote, *'believe it or not, the email came through at around 4am – (dedication right there!)'*. Students in this dataset appeared not to consider how this extra work, at any given time of day, demonstrates unhealthy work behaviours. Lubicz-Nawrocka & Bunting (2019, p. 74), in their study on SLTAs confirm that students recognise this devotion by their lecturers, but they give a warning that SLTAs should not 'mistakenly promote a poor work/life balance'.

4.1.2 Organising Theme 1.2: On Demand

Students value those lecturers who are on demand (Rolfe, 2010; Su & Wood, 2012). Within the scope of Organising Theme 1.2: On Demand is the concept that students wish their lecturers to be always available, no matter the day or time, which brings a similarity to the consumerist act of wanting everything and anything whenever the consumers want it, for example next-day delivery and all episodes of a series available at the same time.

Basic Theme 1.2.1: Always includes all the ways students use the word always, or synonyms of, to describe a lecturer's practice. The use of the word *'always'* or *'consistent'* frequently arises in the nominations and in relation to numerous things. One student's nomination contains the word always in every sentence:

> *'This lecturer always makes the most complex of lessons simple and easy to understand. They are always approachable when you're unsure about anything and is very easy to talk to. They always show that they are interested in you as a person not just as another student and takes the time to recognise you. Their feedback is always useful and timely so that you can improve upon it for the next piece of work.'*

It is also used alongside phrases that refer to availability, such as *'always there to help'* or *'always available to help us, day or night'*. As the frequent use of the synonym of always, the word *'consistent'* used within the nominations suggests, students appreciate their lecturers who are consistent in their practice. Students commented that their lecturers were *'consistently present'*, *and 'consistent with all lectures'* and one student's nomination for a particular lecturer only contained the word *'consistency!'*. This suggests that students see their lecturers as on-demand services, always available, always there if they need them. Of course, always and consistency can be defined differently by different students. However, Lubicz-Nawrocka & Bunting (2019, p. 67) argue that it was the 'concerted, visible effort' of

lecturers that students praised. Despite how it is defined, lecturers are under pressure to be on-demand.

Basic Theme 1.2.2: Makes Time describes how students perceive their lecturers have made time for them outside of the expected time the lecturers should give within their role. Common phrases within the nominations are: *'they make time'*, *'they give up their spare time'*, *and 'they are willing to go out of their way'*. Students felt that the lecturers they nominated would always *'make [themselves] available for students'*, with one student commenting that they knew their lecturer '*would meet with me ten times a week if it would help me and that is rare to come by*'. Although students state this as making or giving time, they are showing that they praise lecturers who put them first. Other academics have confirmed this (Thompson & Zaitseva, 2012; Matheson, 2019). Matheson (2019, p. 11) calls this act as 'the giving of time'. Whereas, Thompson & Zaitseva (2012, p. 18) call it 'generosity with time'. There is a clear notion within this Basic Theme that students acknowledge this generosity of time and appreciate being put first, before a lecturers' other tasks and duties.

Basic Theme 1.2.3: Works Outside of Working Hours incorporates all the ways students have commented that the lecturer works outside of their usual working hours. Students reference working outside of work hours in different ways; some students call it *'spare time'*, some state it as *'availability 24/7'*, and others state that their lecturers *'sacrifice their home time'*. The majority of the nominations within this theme discuss how lecturers provide academic help after hours. One student commented that their lecturer has *'no qualms staying behind to help you if your computer messes up and can't run the software needed for a piece of coursework*'. Another commented that the lecturer *'supported us in the lab […] even after 5pm.'* Again, students appreciate being put first but here they appreciate being put before a lecturer's own personal life and commitments. This is a worrying finding as it demonstrates that students may not understand, and/or appreciate, how this affects their lecturers as human beings, rather than someone who is providing them a service (Raaper, 2021).

4.1.3 Organising Theme 1.3 Comparison to Other Lecturers

Students are able to evaluate teaching excellence in this dataset. Students evaluate teaching practice in various ways, and within Organising Theme 1.3: Comparison, they demonstrate that they do this by comparison. Students compare the teaching practice of their lecturers on the basis of some lecturers facing more challenges than others, by those who are excellent despite flaws that other lecturers do not have, by direct comparison to other lecturers, and by classifying some lecturers as good for the University's reputation. Some academics argue that students cannot evaluate teaching excellence (Bradley, Kirby & Madriaga, 2015; Madriaga & Morley, 2016), but this Organising Theme demonstrates that students can do this through comparison.

Basic Theme 1.3.1: Despite Flaws and Challenges includes the ways students believe their lecturer is a 'Best Lecturer' despite something, whether this be a challenge they face or a flaw they personally have. Students commented that their lecturers were the best even though they were busy being parents or being affected by illness. One student also commented that their lecturer achieved so much in their lecture despite being *'the last one of the week'*. The other part of this Basic Theme discusses how lecturers may not be good at one thing or do not do one thing, but how this does not deflect from their eligibility to win the Best Lecturer Award in the students' eyes. Some of the examples of this are*, 'while their assignment written feedback is basic'* you can see them for further verbal feedback, and '*their feedback might not be the fastest, however, it helps to improve for the next assignment*'. This is an interesting Theme as it demonstrates that students understand that challenges and flaws do not necessarily detract from a lecturer being the 'best'. However, in a consumerist view it depicts how students evaluate teaching like they might review a product, for example the battery on the phone is rubbish but it's still a five-star product. Wang, Du & Wang (2023) in their study on consumer product reviews, examined them via four variables: sensory, cognitive, affective and social. Students evaluate their lecturers through these variables; by describing the sensory information they have received through learning (engaging lecturers), using cognitive information (last lecturer of the day may be when students' energy is at its lowest), describing their

emotions (students feeling valued), and their social relationships (with their lecturers and the learning environment they provide), which demonstrates the consumerist approach to student evaluation of teaching.

Basic Theme 1.3.2: Comparison to Other Lecturers describes how students understand their lecturer's practice in relation to others. Within this Basic Theme, it is clear that some students are able to evaluate their lecturer's practice by comparing it to other lecturers they have had in the university experience. Although this evaluation is helpful to the students, it can be difficult within these nominations to understand what the nominated lecturer is like in practice as the researcher does not have the complete circumstantial information of all the lecturers discussed. Despite this, it is interesting to understand what areas of a lecturer's practice are regularly compared within the dataset. Students commented on what their lecturer does compared to others, such as giving further feedback where *'other lecturers have brushed me off when I've asked'* and that their lecturer has given the most useful feedback. Students also pointed out areas of how the lecturer is, in terms of their attitude. An example of this comes from one student's nomination: *'if you ask them a dumb question, they are not condescending like most other lecturers'*. Indeed, this suggests that students may not always be able to define excellent teaching, but they can clearly state what they deem to be bad practice. Following on with the example of product review and Wang, Du & Wang's (2023) study, explores how students in this dataset have evaluated teaching using affective language and described how lecturers have made them feel.

Basic Theme 1.3.3.: Good for University Reputation depicts how students believe their lecturer is good for the university's reputation. This includes references to be respected, popular, and said to be explicitly good for the university's reputation. Some students comment that their lecturer is a *'fantastic person to have representing the course and the university'*. Others go further to push the university to find more lecturers like them to enhance the university's reputation. One student wrote in their nomination, *'does the university want lecturers to fly the flag and put the university on the map? Please get more lecturers like them'*. This Theme explores how students in

this dataset put lecturers into a box of how they appear to the wider community. It was important to these students to 'sell' the lecturer, or the university, to others.

4.1.4 Summary of Global Theme 1

Students in this dataset demonstrate that they align with the students as consumers movement by how they have evaluated their lecturers in this dataset. These students value a consistently available high-standard service that withstands comparison. They have written their nominations in a manner which is similar to product reviews and have even tried to 'sell' the best lecturer or the university to others (Wang, Du & Wang, 2023).

However, although all these concepts align with students as consumers, they could also align with students who wish to have the best education they can access (Brooks, et al., 2021). Both consumers and learners want a high-standard, always available, top of the league table service, but only consumers expect this as a given due to the financial transaction they have made (Raaper, 2021). This reasoning led the researcher to collate all these themes under the Global Theme of Students as Consumers, as there was an underlying sense that students expected their lecturers to be on demand, to go above and beyond, and to be, well, the best. Students cannot be blamed for this; they are regularly forced into the role of consumer (Sabri, 2010; Tight, 2013). Plus, with the cost of living crisis, students are understandably more concerned with the destination - the outcome of the degree and the career they can attain -, rather than the journey – the learning experience – as students are facing debt, part-time jobs, and unemployment (Hordósy & Clark, 2019; Gibson Smith, Johnston & Cleland, 2023; Szkody et al., 2023; Cifuentes-Faura, Faura-Martínez & Lafuente-Lechuga, 2024).

4.2 Global Theme 2: Students as Learners

This Global Theme encompasses themes and codes that relate to students as learners. It is the opposite of the students as consumers movement and the first Global Theme. It involves all the ways students value learning and how they align themselves with the

students as learners movement (Tomlinson, 2017; Brooks et al., 2021; Ashwin et al., 2023). This Global Theme brings together themes in which students have received learning and learning support, and relies on Ambrose et al.'s definition of learning:

> 'we define learning as a process that leads to change, which occurs as a result of experience and increases the potential for improved performance and future learning' (2010, p. 3).

This definition enabled the researcher to classify themes as either learning – a process that leads to change – and teaching, which sits within Global Theme 3: Lecturers as Academics.

Global Theme 2: Students as Learners has three Organising Themes. Organising Theme 2.1: Learning Environment looks at how students perceive their lecturers to have provided an excellent learning environment where they feel challenged, safe and known. The Thematic Network Map for this Global Theme is shown in Figure 3 and discussed in full, theme by theme, below.

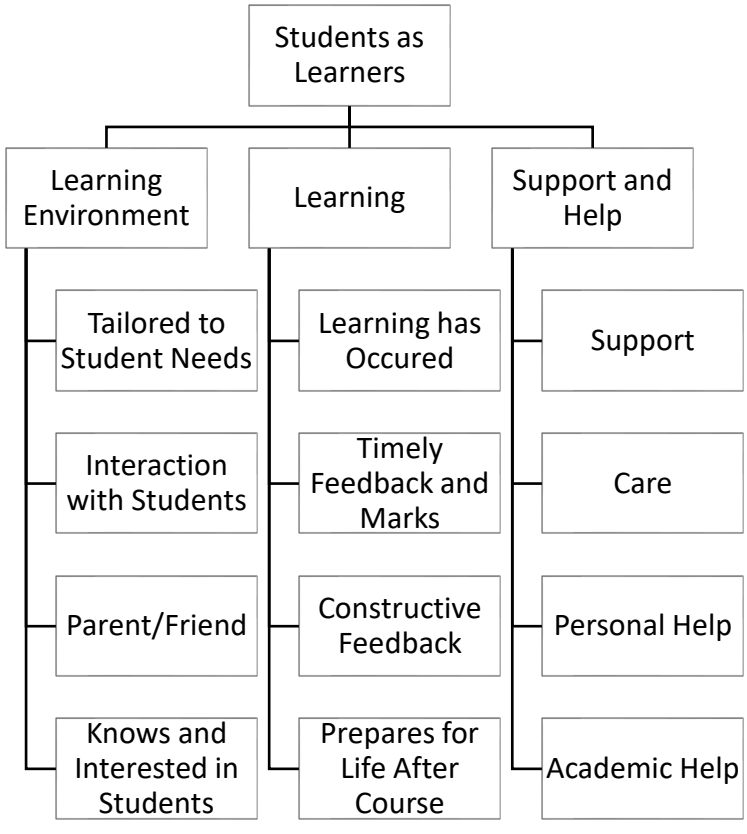

Figure 3. Thematic Network Map of Global Theme 2 – Students as Learners

4.2.1 Organising Theme 2.1: Learning Environment

This Organising Theme brings together the Basic Themes and codes that relate to the safe learning environment the lecturer has built. Students value being truly *known* by their lecturers (Allred, King & Amos, 2021; Dransfield, Wood & Su, 2022).

The first Basic Theme, 2.1.1: Tailored to Student Needs, incorporates all the ways students perceive their lecturer to have tailored the material or their teaching style to student needs. Students nominated lecturers who *'teach […] in multiple ways so as every student understands'* and *'always [trying] to cater for our needs*'. Students also noted that their lecturers tailored to various Specific Learning Difficulties, in particular. One lecturer was nominated for *'making voice recording of readings for [dyslexic] students and reading and discussing texts aloud with us in class to aid our understanding'*. Although it takes a lot of time and effort to tailor to student needs, it is clear that first the lecturers need to know their students, therefore, this adds to literature that argues that students wish to be known by their lecturers (Allred, King & Amos, 2021; Dransfield, Wood & Su, 2022).

Basic Theme 2.1.2: Interaction with Students depicts the myriad of ways that lecturers positively interact with their students. This included how the students felt they could ask questions and were listened to. Students mainly commented on how the lecturer created the learning environment to ensure that all students felt they could interact within it, with one student calling it a *'safe and encouraging classroom environment where everyone feels comfortable to engage'*. Students felt that their lecturer had created *'a sense of community and brings students together'* for interaction. Students in this dataset valued a learning environment that was built on security and trust (Matheson, 2019).

The third Basic Theme, 2.1.3: Parent/Friend, contains the ways in which students perceive their lecturer as a friend, parental figure or an equal. Students wrote in their nominations that they found their female lecturers to be parental, such

as *'they are very much like a parent'*, and motherly, such as '*They are like a parent to our course, and we wouldn't know what to do without them*'. They commented that their male lecturers felt like *'they are a friend'* and were *'extremely approachable as a friend and lecturer*'. Students also nominated lecturers whom they perceived as treating them as equals. One student stated that their lecturer was *'so very intelligent but never make you feel inferior'*. Another student wrote, *'there's not a single time where they have made me feel less than them, like lecturers sometimes do, instead they treat us as equals'*. It appears that students appreciate those lecturers who are accessible to students by creating an environment where all are equal. This differs greatly from the students as consumers movement, where the lecturer would be the service provider and the student the consumer (Raaper, 2021).

The final Basic Theme, 2.1.4: Knows and Interested in Students, describes how lecturers know about their students and how they appear to be genuinely interested in them. One student commented that their lecturer *'always show[s] that they are interested in you as a person not just as another student and take the time to recognise you'*. Students appeared to feel valued when the lecturer knew their names and recognised them in and outside the classroom. This is also a finding within SETs literature, where students give lecturers more positive SETs if they know their names (Allred, King & Amos, 2021). Students also commented on their lecturers taking the time to *'get to know each student on a personal level'* and how the *'incredible rapport [the lecturer has] with the students […] benefits all students immensely'*. Indeed, if lecturers know their students, the students value it and it enriches their learning experience. However, knowing students takes time and it cannot be found in the dataset if this time is a part of normal working hours, or additional time given by lecturers. Once again, the SLTAs may be highlighting an unhealthy work/life balance (Lubicz-Nawrocka & Bunting, 2019).

4.2.2 Organising Theme 2.2: Learning

This Organising Theme collates the Basic Themes and codes that relate to how learning has occurred for students in various formats, details of how the learning has

changed the students (Ambrose, et al., 2010), and how comprehensively students have understood what they have learnt (Mimirinis, 2020).

Basic Theme 2.2.1: Learning has Occurred incorporates how the students believe learning has occurred personally or for a wider group. This theme includes reference to learning that has occurred and that there has been a change in the student (Ambrose, et al., 2010). Students in their nominations write that they *'always take something away from their lectures'* or *'always learn something from their lectures'*. Another student comments that they *'find I leave the room feeling that I have really improved my knowledge and understanding of a topic as well as inspired to find out more for myself'*, demonstrating that not only has learning occurred, but they have been inspired for self-directed learning. One student used an interesting phrase to comment on the learning that had occurred, *'I always leave their lecturers with a brain explosion of knowledge'*. Students discuss how learning has changed them, and how they are active participants in the learning, and this demonstrates that students understand the concept of learning, as outlined by Ambrose et al. (2010).

Basic Theme 2.2.2: Timely Feedback and Marks describes assessment practices in relation to having feedback and marks/grades on time. Students commented in their nominations that timely feedback is useful as you can *'improve upon it for the next piece of work'*. Although students had different definitions of how timely is timely – e.g. *'always back within two weeks'* – there was a common understanding that timely meant prior to the following assessment. Some students also referenced that the lecturer always gave *'fair, truthful feedback'* that reflected their work and that it was fair across all students within their module. Lowe & Shaw (2019) found, in their study of best assessment and feedback practices detailed in SLTAs nominations, that students valued the trustworthiness and timeliness of feedback. However, they also comment that these activities being deemed as 'award-worthy suggests that the benchmark for standard practice is quite low' (Lowe & Shaw, 2019, p. 130). This is something to consider but within this Basic Theme, it can be argued that students view fair and timely marks as activities that can change and develop them on their learning journeys.

The third Basic Theme, 2.2.3: Constructive Feedback, depicts how constructive assessment feedback can develop learners. Students commented that the way the assignment was designed helped them improve and gave them constructive feedback, such as *'the assessments have given us a lot of freedom and allowed us to truly develop of critical thinking*'. Students mainly praised those lecturers whose constructive feedback gave both positives and areas for improvement, *was 'insightful'*, and led *'to a greater understanding of [their] work overall'*. The act of giving constructive feedback allowed students to develop and improve. Moreover, as Thompson & Zaitseva (2012) argue, students see it as a way that lecturers show they want the students to succeed.

The final Basic Theme, 2.2.4: Prepares for Life After the Course, contains how lecturers prepare their students for life after the course/module. Students reference various things within this theme in their nominations. The first relates to employability and how the lecturer has assisted *'in finding students opportunities outside of the classroom'* or *'creating opportunities for career development'*. One student wrote, *'when I created my own work, [they] gave a wealth of useful information and arranged for me to take my work to workshops and gain funding for a pilot trial'*. The second relates to building skills that are not *'only helpful for uni life but to carry through into the real world'*. Lastly, students referenced how their lecturers have inspired in them a sense of lifelong learning; one student stated that *'they show us that learning is a way of living and learning knows no barriers'*. This Basic Theme highlights the concept of students as learners. Students value those lecturers who see their learning experience as 'a vehicle to not just gain knowledge and discipline-specific skills […] but towards the student changing as a person' (Matheson, 2019, p. 918).

4.2.3 Organising Theme 2.3: Support and Help

This Organising Theme brings together the Basic Themes and codes that discuss care, help and support. Within this theme, there are four Basic Themes.

The first Basic Theme, 2.3.1: Support, describes the variety of ways lecturers support their students. This theme contains non-specific examples of support. Students wrote in their nominations that the support they received was *'outstanding […] on an individual level', 'the love and support they gave us never faded'*, and *'unconditional'*. Some students also pointed out that this support is given whether or not the lecturer still teaches them. This finding demonstrates that students are not swayed by the teaching they currently receive, rather they remember those who used to teach them. There are also a few nominations where students commented that they *'probably wouldn't still be on the course if not for'* their lecturer and the support they gave. It is likely that lecturers are giving support beyond the scope of their role and this constitutes emotional labour (Sprague & Massoni, 2005).

Basic Theme 2.3.2: Care contains the ways in which students feel that their lecturers care about them. Many of the nominations that reference the lecturer caring for their students also contain the word genuinely. Some examples are *'there is always a sense that they genuinely care about their job and students'*, they *'genuinely cared about every single one of us'*, and they *'genuinely care about my personal wellbeing as well as my success at university'*. There is also another element to this Basic Theme, and that is food. Students referenced food several times as one of the ways they knew their lecturer cared for them: '*they bring us cake'*, they *'bring us biscuits each time'*, they *'bake for their students!'*. One student commented that they felt that their lecturer cared for them by *'understanding that students found early mornings hard, they would bring in coffees, teas and biscuits on our early lectures'*. Interestingly, students only stated that their female lecturers made or baked the food, whereas the male lecturers bought it. This finding suggests that gender stereotypes are at play within the dataset as it aligns with other studies (Taillie 2018; Wolfson et al. 2021), and this is discussed further in Chapter 8.

Basic Theme 2.3.3: Personal Help depicts the ways in which lecturers help students in personal matters. This theme includes how help was given for personal, emotional or mental health issues. Students felt their lecturers took an *'interest in your health'* and provided *'a strong level of pastoral care'*. Students nominated

lecturers who helped students when they faced difficult situations that affected their university work. One student commented that their lecturer '*assisted, advised and given information to me when I was going through tough time in my life*. *They have gone beyond their role as a lecture to ensure my welfare is of priority'. Another student wrote that 'at times when I was most frustrated, [they] provided me with the moral and pastoral support I needed to keep me going and provided me with some much-needed humour in what I found a very tough situation*'. Several nominations provided a lot of detail where lecturers provided mental health support. Although it would not be ethical to share many of these nominations due to the high level of detail, one student commented that they felt about the lecturer providing them mental health support, 't*his lecturer is without a doubt my life saver'.* Once again, this suggests that lecturers are undertake emotional labour when giving support (Sprague & Massoni, 2005), and also suggests that the SLTAs may be perpetuating an unhealthy work/life balance for lecturers (Lubicz-Nawrocka & Bunting, 2019).

Basic Theme 2.3.4: Academic Help depicts the ways in which lecturers help students in academic matters. Within this Basic Theme, students commented that their lecturers gave them academic help within and outside the classroom environment. One student wrote that *'if there is uncertainty with a subject topic they will always find the time to help you with either 1 to 1 teaching or hosting specific tutorials on the subject if there are a few students who are also having difficulty*'. Another student commented how their lecturer supported them and 'given me confidence and helped me to change my mindset from "*OMG! I can't do these reports' to 'OMG! I can do these reports"*. This Basic Theme differs from 2.2.1 Learning has Occurred as it references specific times when additional help and support was given.

4.2.4 Summary of Global Theme 2

In this dataset, students have shown that they value a learning experience that enables growth, development and change, in line with Ambrose's (2010) view of learning as a change process. Students appreciated the way their lecturers made learning personal for them by tailoring a learning environment that best enabled them

to go through the learning change process (Matheson, 2019). Students also demonstrated that support and care, in all its forms, enabled them to stay as learners and grow as learners. Students valued timely and constructive feedback that allowed them to develop throughout their modules and courses (Thompson & Zaitseva, 2012; Lowe & Shaw, 2019). Students were even able to pinpoint that learning had occurred and that the learning had changed them.

Overall, this Global Theme demonstrates that students value learning that is transformative. A significant element within the SLTAs nominations in this Global Theme is the personal level of learning; students value lecturers who know their names, are interested in them, and genuinely care about them. Students want to be truly *known* (Allred, King & Amos, 2021; Dransfield, Wood & Su, 2022). However, this Global Theme has also brought to light issues relating to lecturers undertaking emotional labour. These findings do suggest that there is work to do to ensure that SLTAs do not perpetuate unhealthy work/life balances for lecturers (Lubicz-Nawrocka & Bunting, 2019).

4.3 Global Theme 3: Lecturers as Academics

This Global Theme collates the Basic Themes and codes that relate to lecturers being academics. This Global Theme was developed using Advance HE's UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF) as a tool to bring together the data. The UKPSF can be found in the Appendix. It was selected as it is a globally renowned scheme with over 150,000 Fellows worldwide (Advance HEb, n.d.) The UKPSF, as defined by Advance HE, is a 'comprehensive set of professional standards and guidelines for everyone involved in teaching and supporting learning in HE' (Advance HEc, n.d.). The UKPSF framework identified the SLTAs nominations aligned with the activities lecturers undertake that make up teaching.

Global Theme 3: Lecturers as Academics has three Organising Themes. The Thematic Network Map for this Global Theme is shown in Figure 4 and discussed in

full, theme by theme below.

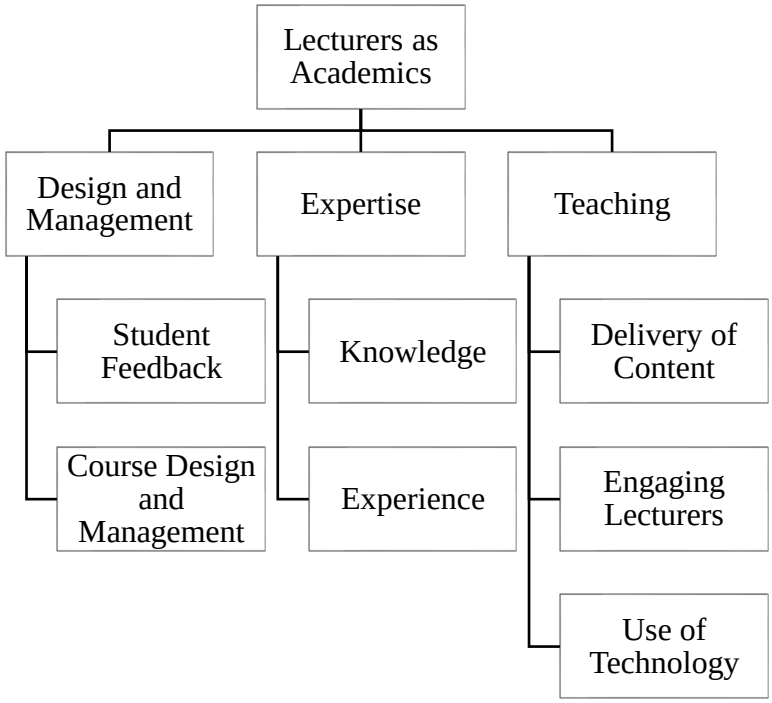

Figure 4. Thematic Network Map of Global Theme 3 – Lecturers as Academics

4.3.1 Organising Theme 3.1: Design and Management

This Organising Theme collates Basic Themes and codes that relate to the design and management of the course/module and how student feedback impacts this and the lecturers' practice. Within this Organising Theme there are two Basic Themes.

The first Basic Theme, 3.1.1: Student Feedback, contains the ways students believe their lecturers ask for, listen to and act on student feedback. Students wrote that their lecturers were *'champions [of] student voice'* and that they made students' *feel like our voices are heard'*. Students commented that their lecturers ask for student feedback; one student said their lecturer *'always checks up on students to ensure they are doing things correctly and are happy in the way they are delivering the material'*. Students also praised lecturers for listening to their feedback, with one student commenting that *'you can take any issues forward to them and know that they will get you a response'.* Lecturers also personally acted upon the student feedback; one student wrote, *'[they have] worked hard to list to the students' needs*

and implement these into the course', and another wrote they *'listen to our worries about the course [and] has put changes in place already'*. The act of student voice is about knowing your students (Allred, King & Amos, 2021; Dransfield, Wood & Su, 2022) and giving them equal status in the running of the course, which aligns with the students as learners movement.

The second Basic Theme, 3.1.2: Course Design and Management, describes how lecturers have designed and managed the course/module. The first element of this theme relates to the design of the course/module, with one student commenting that they could tell their lecturer had 'thought *through the whole learning experience process for the student including facilitating learning via group work, use of props* and *effective use of technology*. Another student discussed the variety of the teaching methods, *'when it comes to their pedagogy, they use a variety of teaching methods from blended learning, expert-class debates, videos, self-reflection, and the old classic of lecturing'*. Another student commented that '*every lecture was well planned and delivered so that students could understand and progress within the module, there was always a clear and distinct direction in where the lectures were heading*'. Outside of this design and management of the course, students commented on the range of guest speakers that were arranged to come in and speak to the class, from an inspiring entrepreneur to a guest lecturer who took the students on 'a *philosophical journey around the nature of referencing'.* These findings demonstrate that students understand that their learning experience is not solely defined by the learning they receive but goes much further back to the design of the course/module and how it has been organised.

4.3.2 Organising Theme 3.2: Expertise

This Organising Theme brings together the Basic Themes and code that reference a lecturer's knowledge of experience. Within this Organising Theme there are two Basic Themes.

Basic Theme 3.2.1: Knowledge describes how lecturers have expertise and knowledge of their subject and of teaching. Students commented on how their

lecturer's knowledge is an '*inspiration*', that it is '*it is an absolute pleasure to learn from their vast intellect*', and one student wrote that they '*truly have never been left so in awe of someone's knowledge*'. Students recognised that it was important for someone with this knowledge to teach and pass it on to university students. One student also commented how their lecturer paid '*rigorous attention to academic developments [to] ensure teaching resources/sources are contemporary and relevant*', showing that students recognise their lecturer's continuing professional development and commitment to the knowledge of their subject. Students recognise the practice that lecturers undertake to maintain and enhance their knowledge in their subject areas. Although, there is was little discussion of lecturers' research; other studies have found that students benefit from their lecturers' research outputs being brought into the classroom (Healey et al., 2010; Thompson & Zaitseva, 2012; Griffioen, 2020).

Basic Theme 3.2.2: Experience incorporates how lecturers have experience in their subject area. It did not set out to exclude experience of teaching, but the only reference to experience within the dataset was to experience within the lecturers' industry. Students commented that their lecturers' *apply their experience to the course to give students a deeper understanding of how the material applies within the field*', '*they always have a great story to tell from their experiences'*, and they '*have got us in touch with some big names within the UK industry'*. Although, it is important to note that the participating university of this research study had a wealth of courses that related to industry, such as music and healthcare, which may not be the same for all institutions.

4.3.3 Organising Theme 3.3: Teaching

This Organising Theme contains the Basic Themes and codes that relate to the teaching practice of the lecturer. Within this Organising Theme, there are three Basic Themes.

The first Basic Theme, 3.3.1: Delivery of Content, contains all the ways students perceive their lecturer's delivery of the content as of good quality. This theme includes references to the teaching style of the lecturer, and whether they have command of

the classroom. Students commented on how their lecturers '*present in a lively manner and connect with room and you on an individual level'* and how their lecturers are '*animated while teaching'*. Students also wrote about how their lecturers presented in a way that allowed the students to '*easily understand*' the concepts. One student stated that their lecturer's '*way of explaining the content is very good, when I am listening I can follow a logical order and see where things fit in the content*'. This finding suggests that the lecturers must perform and deliver the content in a particular manner, not matter how they are feeling (Berry & Cassidy, 2013).

Basic Theme 3.3.2: Engaging Lectures depicts how students believe their lectures to be engaging and enjoyable. The majority of nominations in this theme reference a way in which the lecturer involved the students in the lecture. One student commented that their lecturer's '*classes are very engaging and enjoyable, a pleasure to attend*'. Another student wrote that their lecturer '*never carries out a boring lecture [and] keeps us entertained'*. The fact that the lecturer's lectures were engaging made students want to attend them and aided their learning. Again, the use of the word '*enjoyable´* suggests that the lecturer has to perform and bring enjoyment to the classroom (Berry & Cassidy, 2013).

The third and final Basic Theme, 3.3.3: Use of Technology, describes how the lecturers use technology in order to advance learning. Students regularly referenced the use of VLE spaces, how their lecturer has uploaded '*all of the lecture materials and additional guidance is on VLE in the appropriate files'*, and how this was done '*well in advance*' of the lecture itself. Students also praised lecturers who recorded their lectures, which helped students with personal issues, accessibility needs, or for revision. Some nominations discussed how the lecturers used the VLE spaces to facilitate additional learning, such as '*new articles that will help us learn more about the module they teach*'. Although there were not many specific details in the nominations about other technology being used for teaching purposes, some students did comment that their lecturers did use '*a lot of different technologies to allow us to have a greater understanding of the module*' and that they go '*over and above trying to integrate technology more into the course'*. It is clear the students value the use of

technology in the classroom. In an ever-changing technology landscape, lecturers must keep up to stay relevant.

4.3.4 Summary of Global Theme 3

This research study demonstrates that students can understand, verbalise and value activities that lecturers undertake that align with the UKPSF. This finding is important as there is a divide within the literature on SLTAs, with some academics believing students cannot judge teaching excellence (Bradley, Kirby & Madriaga, 2015; Madriaga & Morley, 2016) and those who believe students can (Lubicz-Nawrocka & Bunting, 2019; Matheson, 2019). If students can express that they believe that the elements of their lecturer's teaching practice that align with the UKPSF, students can judge teaching excellence on the same level as a globally renowned teaching framework (Advance HEc, n.d.). In the SLTAs nominations in this Global Theme, students were able to express that the course design and management, acting on student feedback, effective lectures, and knowledge, which aligns to these areas of the UKPSF: A1, A2, A5, K1, K2, K3, K4, K5, K6, V3, and V4. However, it should be noted that in other Global Themes, all the remaining Areas of Activity (A), Core Knowledge (K) and Professional Values (V) were ticked off the list, including A3, A4, V1, and V2.

Interestingly, this Global Theme highlights two key findings. The first is that lecturers need to stay relevant. They need to do this by undertaking research and continuing professional development activities relating to teaching, the knowledge of their subject, and technology. The second key finding is that lecturers can be seen as performers. They must deliver engaging content to their students, no matter their mood or personal circumstances (Berry & Cassidy, 2013). Both of which, keeping relevant and performing, are tiring and time consuming. It is clear that it is important to students 'how they are taught (pedagogy) but also on what they are taught (curriculum, subject matter, disciplinary knowledge)' (Mimirinis, 2020, p. 277).

4.4 Global Theme 4: Educators

This Global Theme encompasses the Basic Themes and codes that relate to lecturers as educators. This Global Theme differs from the previous one as it focuses on activities and traits that would be applicable to the broader term of educator. Wong & Chiu argue that lecturers are both educators and 'accountable service providers' (2019, p. 223). The foundation of this Global Theme is the idea that being an educator is only part of a lecturer's role. It includes all the SLTAs nominations that relate to lecturers' traits and attitudes, not how they achieve the 'accountable service provider' (Wong & Chiu, 2019, p. 223), part of their roles. Within this research study, the service provider part of the roles is classified as the actual teaching and the act of maintaining knowledge to undertake that teaching.

This Global Theme has three Organising Themes. The Thematic Network Map for this Global Theme is shown in Figure 5 and discussed in full, theme by theme, below.

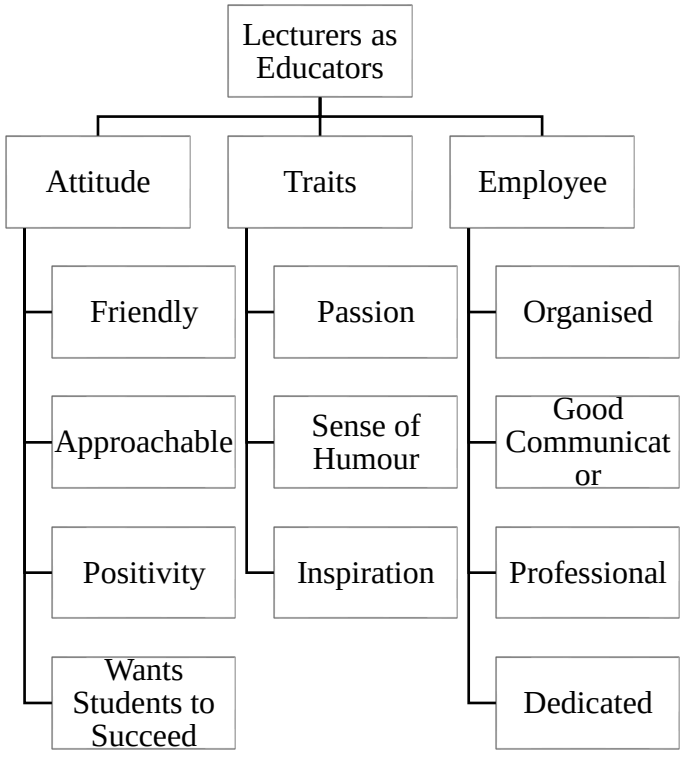

Figure 5. Thematic Network Map of Global Theme 4 – Lecturers as Educators

4.4.1 Organising Theme 4.1: Attitude

This Organising Theme encompasses the Basic Themes and codes that relate to the lecturer's attitude. Within this Organising Theme, there are four Basic Themes.

The first Basic Theme, 4.1.1: Friendly, describes how the lecturer produces a learning environment that is friendly by being kind, nice, friendly and welcoming. One student commented how their lecturer '*make every single student feel welcome*', and another commented that they are '*so friendly that no one is afraid to come to them with any issue*'. There is a sense that these lecturers are not friendly to individual students but to all. One student had high praise for their lecturer, writing, '*they are always incredibly nice (I don't think I have seen them express an emotion that wasn't Joy) and a general pleasure to be around'*. It is not only a safe learning environment that students value but how the lecturer acts within it which is important to students (Matheson, 2019).

The second Basic Theme, 4.1.2: Approachable, depicts how the students believe their lecturer to be an approachable person. Students commented that their lecturers are '*always approachable when you're unsure about anything and is very easy to talk to*' and '*extremely approachable if further help needed*'. The students wrote in their nominations that they feel their lecturers are approachable for any issues, personal or academic. One student stated that they '*always feel comfortable talking to [them] about any difficult I face*', and another wrote that they are approachable for '*any students wishing to have clarification on anything [they] have presented in lectures*'. Students value lecturers' '*open door policy*', and those who are very approachable become the '*first member of staff to go to if [they] had an issue/needed help*'. Again, this highlights the students as learners movement, where students believe their lecturer is approachable and on their level, rather than a service provider and consumer relationship (Raaper, 2021).

Basic Theme 4.1.3: Positivity describes how the lecturer produces a positive learning environment. It includes references to the lecturer's positivity and being able to spread the positivity. Students wrote in their nominations that the lecturers' positivity affected them, such as '*always bubbly and happy, which projects onto*

others', '*always brightens up your day with their smile and laughter*', and '*no matter what mood you're in they will always match it with a smile and positive energy'*. Interestingly, there is likely performativity at play within this Theme which may mean that lecturers are performing their positivity to enable student learning (Berry & Cassidy, 2013).

The fourth Basic Theme, 4.1.4: Wants Students to Succeed, incorporates how the students feel that their lecturer wants them to succeed. Students commented that they felt their lecturers were '*motivating*' and '*just wants their students to do well and hates to see them falter*'. Students also wrote in their nominations that lecturers boosted their confidence and pushed them to '*achieve their full potential*'. Some students also felt that this meant not only academically but also personally. One student wrote, *'[they are] very passionate about watching their students succeed, they not only care about academic success, but their students' personal well-being*'. Students value the activities that enable student success but this Theme makes it clear that students also appreciate when they can explicitly see that their lecturers want them to succeed, which aligns with other studies on SLTAs (Thompson & Zaitseva, 2012; Bradley, Kirby & Madriaga, 2015).

4.4.2 Organising Theme 4.2: Traits

This Organising Theme collates the Basic Themes and code that encompass how students perceive their lectures' positive traits and how this has an impact on their learning. Within this Organising Theme, there are three Basic Themes.

The first Basic Theme, 4.2.1: Passion, describes how passionate lecturers are about their subject and about teaching. Students commented on how their lecturer's passion made the learning more enjoyable, with one student stating, '*they are passionate about their subject so much so that one does not want to ever miss any lecture'*, and another student wrote, '*they are always enthusiastic when it comes to delivering the subjects that they teach, and it makes me enjoy the subject even more*.' Students also felt that their lecturer's passion increased their excitement for a future career in the subject area, with students stating that '*their enthusiasm [is] contagious*'

and '*they are so passionate when they teach that it makes me excited for my career in the industry*'. Some students went beyond the words passion and enthusiasm and called it love, saying, '*their love for their subject has no bounds*.' Students' learning experience is enhanced by their lecturers' passion and love for their subject. Su & Wood (2012, p. 144) state that 'passionate teaching is a social process – it happens in the contexts of relationship with students'. This echoes many of this research study's findings, that students wish to be *known* by their lecturers (Allred, King & Amos, 2021; Dransfield, Wood & Su, 2022).

Basic Theme 4.2.2: Sense of Humour incorporates how students perceive their lecturers to have a sense of humour and are funny. Students nominated lecturers who '*makes the whole class laugh*' but '*never fails to get key information across*'. Students valued lecturers' sense of humour in the '*stressful time at University*' that can '*sort you right out at 9 o'clock in the morning*'. One student described an intriguing new career path for their lecturer, '*they bring life to every single lecture, if they could be a stand-up academic comedian the crowd would love them*'. Humour has been found as a pedagogical tool and as a method of engaging students in the classroom, however, humour is subjective and has individual definitions (Bakar & Kumar, 2019).

The final Basic Theme, 4.2.3: Inspiration, contains the ways in which students believe their lecturers to be an inspiration to them. Most of the nominations within this theme have simple statements, such as '*they are a very inspirational lecturer*', '*they are an inspiring person*', and '*they are an inspirational teacher*'. Others elaborate slightly; one student commented that their lecturer inspired them and made them '*excited about my future career in the field*'. Another student wrote that they believe that their lecturer has '*inspired many students to want to keep doing this degree*'. Although students value lecturers' love and passion for their subject, by being inspirational, it's 'contagious' (Dransfield, Wood & Su, 2022, p. 978) so they also reinforce in students their own love for the subject and, in turn, helps motivate them in their learning journeys.

4.4.3 Organising Theme 4.3: Employee

This Organising Theme combines the Basic Themes and codes that reference how the lecturer is a good employee. Within this Organising Theme, there are four Basic Themes.

The first Basic Theme, 4.3.1: Organised, contains the ways in which lecturers are organised in their roles. This theme includes references to the organisation of work and self and excludes references to the organisation of the course. The majority of nominations within this theme are simple statements, such as '*they are very organised*' and they are '*always organised*'. However, a few select nominations state that their lecturers come to class '*prepared and organised for [lectures]*'. Organised and consistent went hand in hand, and students appreciated when they could rely on their lecturers' organisation.

Basic Theme 4.3.2: Good Communicator describes the ways in which lecturers communicate effectively and in a timely manner with their students. This Basic Theme relates to communication outside of the classroom, such as emails and VLE announcements. The first element of this theme relates to timely responses to emails; students wrote that '*they always answer emails*' and '*they respond to every email within 24 hours, which is their self-set goal*'. The second element of this theme is about clear communication, where students understand what is expected of them. One student wrote, '*their communication was clear, and we always knew what we needed to do to prepare for their module*'. Lastly, the students praised lecturers who regularly communicated with their students. One student nominated a lecturer because '*they are great at staying in contact with us, letting us know what to read ahead of class and emailing us with any information or news they think we would be interested in*'. Another student nominated their lecturer for the weekly communication via the VLE and suggested this is because the lecturer '*cares and is there to support us every step of the way!*'. This is a big Basic Theme and encompasses a myriad of activities relating to communication. Students value clear and transparent communication, that is timely and supportive. Lecturers are expected to be both an excellent verbal and written communicator in their roles by students in this dataset. This Theme also contains nominations that describe unhealthy work/life balances in relation to answering

emails any time of day or night, and when on leave, as noted by other studies on SLTAs (Lowe & Shaw, 2019, Lubicz-Nawrocka & Bunting, 2019).

Basic Theme 4.3.3: Professional incorporates the ways students perceive their lecturers to be professional. This theme contains nominations on how lecturers '*are always on time (10-15mins) before the lecture or tutorial time throughout the year*'. One student also called their lecturer the '*ultimate role model in all aspects of professional life'*. Students either expect their lecturers to be both professional and their equals, or separate students want professional lecturers and others wish lecturers to be their equals. Future study could explore the split in students' wishes in this respect.

The Basic Theme 4.3.4: Dedication depicts how dedicated lecturers are to their course and their students. Some students referenced that their lecturer was '*very hardworking*', had an '*amazing work ethic*', and a '*dedication to the degree that should be honoured*'. Some students wrote specific examples of their lecturers' hard work and dedication in their nominations. One student wrote, '*they are hardworking, even on modules that they don't teach*', and they '*put together endless amount of work and tireless hours to create a simulation that better us'*. Dedication can be interpreted differently by students, so we cannot know whether this dedication is appropriate or is due to emotional labour undertaken by the lecturer. Therefore, once more, this calls into question whether or not SLTAs may be perpetuating unhealthy work/life balances (Lubicz-Nawrocka & Bunting, 2019).

4.4.4 Summary of Global Theme 4

Students within this dataset were clear that they valued the way in which their lecturers acted as educators and as employees, and these were important factors when nominating for the Best Lecturer Award. This Global Theme could be viewed as how lecturers make students feel. Students felt they could approach their lecturers with any problems, especially as they were friendly and positive. Students appreciated that their lecturers made them feel that they wanted them to succeed just as much as

the students themselves wanted to succeed (Thompson & Zaitseva, 2012; Bradley, Kirby & Madriaga, 2015). Students were made to feel inspired and motivated by their lecturer's passion; this empowered them to stay on track within the course and pursue future study and employment in the lecturer's subject of expertise (Dransfield, Wood & Su, 2022). Although the number of SLTAs nominations that mentioned the Basic Theme 4.2.2: Sense of Humour was not particularly high, students wanted to nominate the lecturers who made them laugh, once again highlighting this Global Theme as one that centres around how students were made to feel by their lecturers. Furthermore, this Global Theme highlights several key findings found in the other Global Themes. These are that it is important to students that lecturers *know* them (Allred, King & Amos, 2021; Dransfield, Wood & Su, 2022), and that lecturers may be performing in the classroom to enhance the student learning experience (Berry & Cassidy, 2013), and there may be elements of the nominations that may be perpetuating unhealthy work/life balances within the SLTAs (Lubicz-Nawrocka & Bunting, 2019).

4.5 Summary of Chapter

Overall, the dataset contains varied views on teaching excellence, demonstrating the width and breadth of actions a lecturer must undertake to be nominated for a Best Lecturer Award, and how different students may view teaching excellence differently. There are several key findings highlighted in this chapter that are discussed below.

The first key finding is that students strive to receive excellent teaching no matter whether they define themselves as a consumer or a learner, indeed some students define themselves as both (Brooks, et al., 2021). Students value those lecturers and their teaching practices that enabled them to be successful, as defined by the student, for example to attain a degree or to become a lifelong learner.

The second finding relates to students being able to evaluate teaching. It has already been discussed in Chapter 2 that some academics believe that students are not able to evaluate teaching practice (Bradley et al., 2015; Madriago & Morley, 2016; Lakeman et al., 2023a; Arroyo-Barriguete, 2023), and those who do believe students

can (Lowe & Shaw, 2019; Lubicz-Nawrocka & Bunting, 2019; Matheson, 2019; Karm, Sarv & Groccia, 2022). Furthermore, the researcher stated that they held the belief that students can judge teaching from their unique perspective, whether or not it aligns to formal frameworks. However, from reviewing the nominations against the UKSPF, it is clear that students discussed every single dimension within the UKPSF and can evaluate teaching in a manner that relates to a formal framework.

The third finding relates to how students are made to feel. Several of the Basic Themes demonstrate that students value lecturers and their teaching practices that make them feel something positive, from feeling welcome, safe, motivated, and inspired to important. From this dataset, it is clear that students value being truly *known* by their lecturers (Allred, King & Amos, 2021; Dransfield, Wood & Su, 2022), and understand how being known enhances their learning experience from lectures being tailored to their needs, to their personal moods and behaviours noticed, to being cared for.

The fourth finding brings to light how lecturers may be performing in the classroom. This performativity relates to hiding their own emotions in order to provide a positive classroom environment (Berry & Cassidy, 2013). Of course, without understanding the lecturers' own perspective on the teaching that is described by the students in the nominations, we are unable to confirm if they were performing.

The final finding relates to the SLTAs potentially perpetuating unhealthy work/life balances. Lubicz-Nawrocka & Bunting (2019), when discussing their own SLTAs, stated that the awards 'should not mistakenly promote a poor work/life' but students are just praising those lecturers who have most positively affected their learning experiences. However, it is for those staff who run SLTAs to ensure that they do not perpetuate unhealthy work/life balances and add to the pressure academics feel to work in an unhealthy manner.

Chapter 5: Results – Frequency of Mentions

This chapter contains the second part of the data analysis in this research study, the frequency of mentions analysis. The frequency of mentions analysis was first undertaken for the whole dataset before being split into the female and male lecturers. Therefore, this chapter first features the frequency of mentions analysis for the whole dataset before moving on to the analysis by female and male lecturers. The first section of the chapter will discuss the frequency of mentions of each Global, Organising, and Basic Themes. The second section will discuss the frequency of mentions of each Global, Organising and Basic Themes for female and male lecturers.

5.1 Frequency of Mentions – Dataset

5.1.1 Overview

In this section of this chapter, the frequency of mentions of each of the Global, Organising and Basic Themes will be analysed. Although this analysis stage aimed to understand if there were any differences in the nominations for female and male lecturers, the frequency of mentions across the whole dataset was initially explored.

The distribution of frequency of mentions is fairly even across the four Global Themes, with Global Theme 1 – Students as Consumers as an outlier, with approximately 300-600 fewer mentions than the others, as shown in Table 4. It could be argued that the students as consumers movement was still building during this time period, and within the dataset, the frequency of mentions for Global Theme grew fairly steadily over the four years. It would be an interesting future study to look at more recent SLTAs nominations to see if that has changed, as the landscape of HE is now different even a few years later with changes to the governance of HE, particularly with the development of the OfS.

	Frequency of Mentions

Global Themes	2016	2017	2018	2019	Total
GT1: Students as Consumers	152	137	167	195	651
GT2: Students as Learners	324	234	276	352	1,186
GT3: Lecturers as Academics	313	248	290	317	1,168
GT4: Lecturers as Educators	248	217	207	283	955

Table 4. Frequency of Mentions for Each Global Theme

Both Global Theme 2: Students as Learners and Global Theme 3: Lecturers as Academics remain at the highest frequencies within the whole of the dataset. This finding shows that students value the learning and teaching they receive in their university experiences the most, which is a promising finding for those who do not wish to see students move towards the consumer, away from the learner. This finding is important as it demonstrates that students still wish to access HE to grow and develop, to not just attain a degree (Ashwin, et al., 2023). Although, Global Theme 4: Lecturers as Educators is never far behind, showing that students, after learning and teaching, value how lecturers make them feel within this dataset.

5.1.2 Global Theme 1: Students as Consumers

Organising Themes 1.1: Worth Money and Time and 1.3: Comparison to Other Lecturers had a similar frequency of mentions across the dataset, at approximately 100 mentions. Organising Theme 1.2 had 300 more mentions, as shown in Table 5. It is not surprising that this Global Theme had the lowest overall frequency of mentions

and that Organising Theme 1.1: Worth Money and Time and 1.3: Comparison to Other Lecturers, were lower, as all advertisements and promotion of the SLTAs focussed on how the students perceived their university experiences and did not stray into students as consumers language or imagery. Despite this, there are still nominations that contain consumerist language and demonstrate that some students see themselves as consumers (Nixon, Scullion & Hearn, 2018).

	Frequency of Mentions				
GT1: Students as Consumers	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**	**Total**
OT1.1: Worth Money and Time	20	35	37	39	131
BT1.1.1: Worthwhile Lectures	14	16	15	10	55
BT1.1.2: Beyond the Call of Duty	6	19	22	29	76
OT1.2: On Demand	103	82	101	128	414
BT1.2.1: Always	61	55	66	79	261
BT1.2.2: Makes Time	25	21	33	35	114
BT31.2.3: Works Outside of Working Hours	17	6	2	14	39
OT1.3: Comparison	29	20	29	28	106
BT1.3.1: Despite Flaws/Challenges	12	3	9	4	28
BT1.3.2: Comparison to Other Lecturers	12	10	12	15	49

BT1.3.3: Good for University Reputation	5	7	8	9	29

Table 5. Frequency of Mentions for Global Theme 1: Students as Consumers

Basic Theme 1.1.1: Always had the highest frequency of mentions across Global Theme 1, pushing its Organising Theme to the highest overall frequency of mentions. Across the dataset, there were 261 mentions of either the word always or consistent. Without going back to the student nominators and asking about their motivations, it is difficult to decipher if the students expected their lecturers to always be available and consistent or if they saw it as an act of teaching excellence. Despite this, it is clear from the findings that students really value consistency across the lecturers, modules and course. This main takeaway from the frequency of mentions analysis of Global Theme 1 is that students value the 'giving of time', which is consistent and occurs any time of day or night (Matheson, 2019, p. 11).

5.1.3 Global Theme 2: Students as Learners

Students were more likely to mention Organising Theme 2:3, Support and Help than the other Organising Themes, as shown in Table 6. Organising Theme 2:3 Support and Help had 600 more mentions than Organising Themes 2.1: Learning Environment and 2.2: Learning. Within the SLTAs nominations, students suggest that it is the support, care and help of the lecturers that enables them to continue studying, grow and develop, and be more successful in their academic study.

	Frequency of Mentions				
GT2: Students as Learners	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**	**Total**
OT2.1: Learning Environment	53	18	22	48	141

BT12.1.1: Tailored to Student Needs	12	10	10	16	48
BT2.1.2: Interaction with Students	16	6	10	19	51
BT2.1.3: Parent/Friend	14	2	2	4	22
BT2.1.4: Knows and Interested in Students	11	0	0	9	20
OT2.2: Learning	66	50	50	57	223
BT2.2.1: Learning has Occurred	14	14	11	15	54
BT2.2.2: Timely Feedback and Marks	13	9	4	4	30
BT2.2.3: Constructive Feedback	27	18	21	26	92
BT2.2.4: Prepares for Life After Course	12	9	14	12	47
OT2.3: Support and Help	205	166	204	247	822
BT2.3.1: Support	131	122	124	156	533
BT2.3.2: Care	42	28	55	50	175
BT2.3.3: Personal Help	15	8	10	27	60
BT2.3.4: Academic Help	17	8	15	14	54

Table 6. Frequency of Mentions for Global Theme 2: Students as Learners

From the trends in Organising Theme 2.3: Support and Help, the frequency of mentions mainly increases through the four years and is at its highest by 2019/20. Most of the other Basic Themes within the other two Organising Themes are steady across the years or decline or increase but return to the 2016/17 frequency by 2019/20. Interestingly, the two Basic Themes that decline over the dataset are Basic Theme 2.1.3: Parent/Friend and Basic Theme 2.2.2: Timely Feedback and Marks. We can only speculate as to why. For Basic Theme 2.1.3: Parent/Friend, it could be that the SLTAs were becoming more grounded into the institution's culture year by year, and students felt that referring to their lecturers as mothers or friends would not secure them the Best Lecturer Award, as they were able to view previous winner's nominations. For Basic Theme 2.2.2: Timely Feedback and Marks, there was a big push for lecturers to stick to a 20 working day return of marks and feedback policy during this time period, which may have led to students seeing this as a gold standard, but rather something they expected of all their lecturers.

Basic Theme 2.3.1: Support has the highest frequency at 533 over the four years. Through their nominations, students have made it clear that they really value the support lecturers give. However, this Basic Theme contains mostly generalised statements relating to support, so we cannot tell what support was given, nor can we tell if this support relates to the normal duties of a lecturer, or if it was given as an addition in the form of emotional labour (Sprague & Massoni, 2005).

5.1.4 Global Theme 3: Lecturers as Academics

For Organising Themes 3.1 and 3.2, there is slight variation over the time period, apart from Basic Theme 3.1.1: Student Feedback. There is a slight improvement in students citing student feedback as an indicator of best practice, which is positive, as it demonstrates that student voice was either becoming more embedded in teaching practice or students were understanding its importance over this time period. Another key finding is for Organising Theme 3.2: Expertise. It is clear from the frequency of mentions that students valued more and therefore nominated their lecturers for knowledge (106 mentions) over being experienced (36 mentions). However, in this

dataset, the mentions of experience all related to industry experience, which is not necessarily applicable to every course taught at this institution.

	Frequency of Mentions				
GT3: Lecturers as Academics	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**	**Total**
OT3.1: Design and Management	28	17	28	31	104
BT3.1.1: Student Feedback	2	3	10	10	25
BT3.1.2: Course Design and Feedback	26	14	18	21	79
OT3.2: Expertise	39	35	29	39	142
BT3.2.1: Knowledge	30	28	17	31	106
BT3.2.2: Experience	9	7	12	8	36
OT3.3: Teaching	246	196	233	247	922
BT3.3.1: Delivery of Content	116	80	93	110	399
BT3.3.2: Engaging Lectures	116	104	124	121	465
BT33.3.3: Use of Technology	14	12	16	16	58

Table 7. Frequency of Mentions for Global Theme 3: Lecturers as Academics

Students were more likely to mention their lectures in relation to the delivery of the content and providing engagement lectures within the nominations collated under Global Theme 3: Lecturers as Academics, as shown in Table 7. It boasts a frequency of 922, the highest number for any of the Organising Themes. This is a

sensible finding, as this is the main focus of the promotion of the SLTAs. It is also a positive finding, as it does not suggest that lecturers are undertaking emotional labour as teaching is well within a lecturer's normal duties. However, as discussed in Chapter 7, there could be an element of performativity in the act of teaching which can be taxing (Berry & Cassidy, 2013).

5.1.5 Global Theme 4: Lecturers as Educators

Students were more likely to mention the attitude of their lectures within the nominations collated under Global Theme 4, as shown in Table 8, suggesting that friendly and positive-natured lectures affect students' experiences at university within this dataset. Organising Theme 4.1: Attitude had nearly 200 more mentions than both of the other two Organising Themes within this Global Theme. Indeed, students, across the dataset suggest that they want to be *known* by their lecturers and treated as equals (Allred, King & Amos, 2021; Dransfield, Wood & Su, 2022).

	Frequency of Mentions				
GT4: Lecturers as Educators	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**	**Total**
OT4.1: Attitude	107	88	84	130	409
BT4.1.1: Friendly	31	22	33	46	132
BT4.1.2: Approachable	26	29	20	46	121
BT4.1.3: Positivity	21	14	5	13	53
BT4.1.4: Wants Students to Succeed	29	23	26	25	103
OT4.2: Traits	70	69	69	77	285
BT4.2.1: Passion	37	37	42	44	160

BT4.2.2: Sense of Humour	11	18	11	20	60
BT4.2.3: Inspiration	22	14	16	13	65
OT4.3: Employee	71	60	54	76	261
BT4.3.1: Organised	6	9	5	5	25
BT4.3.2: Good Communicator	37	28	26	47	138
BT4.3.3: Professional	12	11	11	6	40
BT4.3.4: Dedication	16	12	12	18	58

Table 8. Frequency of Mentions for Global Theme 4: Lecturers as Educators

Students were less likely to mention that their lectures were professional, potentially because they believe that mentioning other things, such as being organised or providing timely feedback, inexplicitly states that they perceive their lecturers as professional. Interestingly, Basic Theme 4.2.2: Sense of Humour had a higher frequency of mentions than four other Basic Themes (4.1.3: Positivity, 4.3.1: Organised, 4.3.3: Professional, and 4.3.4: Dedication), showing that humour and fun within the classroom is essential to the students within this dataset. As Bakar & Kumar (2019) state, humour can be a useful pedagogical tool for lecturers to wield.

5.1.6 Summary of Section

The frequency of mentions for the entire dataset provides interesting findings for this research study. For the Global Themes, analysis shows that students deem teaching and learning as the most valuable part of teaching excellence, with the way lecturers support their students not far behind. A full list of the frequencies of mentions for all themes from highest to lowest can be found in the Appendix. This is a positive finding for those who wish to see the students as learners movement to continue, and for

students to see HE as a place where they can grow, develop, change their lives and the lives of others (Ashwin, et al., 2023). It is also positive then as Global Theme 1: Students as Consumers had the lowest of all frequencies. However, it is important to note that students can see themselves as both consumers and learners (Gupta, et al., 2023). Indeed, Organising Theme 1.2: On Demand, details how students value a consistent, 'giving of time', which would be important to both a consumer or learner (Matheson, 2019, p. 11).

Support and care are shown to be important in this dataset. From the frequency of mentions analysis, Organising Theme 2.3: Support and Help was found to be the second highest, at 822 mentions. Basic Themes 4.2.1: Passion, 4.3.2: Good Communicator, 4.1.1: Friendly, and 4.1.2: Approachable also had high frequencies. Each of these Basic Themes adds to the findings that students value support. It was lecturers' passion that motivated students to learn, students found friendly and approachable lecturers easier to call on for both academic and personal support, and students were clear that good communication inside and outside of the classroom supported their success. Together, these are social activities, showing lecturers know their students and provide them with tailored support that enables their individual successes (Su & Wood, 2012; Thompson & Zaitseva, 2012; Allred, King & Amos, 2021; Dransfield, Wood & Su, 2022).

Overall, these findings provide a detailed list of what students value in the university academic experience and what they consider to be teaching excellence. In this dataset, students want a consistent learning and teaching experience from lecturers who treat them and value them as individual human beings and provide high-level support for them to succeed.

5.2 Frequency of Mentions – Gender

5.2.1 Overview

In this section of this chapter, the frequency of mentions of each of the Global, Organising and Basic Themes will be analysed by separating the data between the female and male lecturers nominated within the dataset.

The distribution of frequency of mentions is reasonably even across Global Theme 1: Students as Consumers for both female and male lecturers, as shown in Table 9. In Global Theme 2: Students as Learners and Global Theme 4: Lecturers as Educators, male lecturers began with more frequent mentions. Eventually, female lecturers gained more than them throughout the years. Overall, in Global Theme 4: Lecturers as Educators, female and male lecturers had a similar frequency of mentions. Meanwhile, in Global 2: Students as Learners, despite female lecturers gaining more frequency of mentions throughout the years, male lecturers still had more frequency of mentions over the whole time period.

	Frequency of Mentions									
	2016		**2017**		**2018**		**2019**		**Total**	
Global Themes	**F**	**M**	**F**	**M**	**F**	**M**	**F**	**M**	**F**	**M**
GT1: Students as Consumers	61	91	72	65	87	80	97	98	317	334
GT2: Students as Learners	121	203	124	110	132	144	196	156	573	613
GT3: Lecturers	108	233	122	143	143	175	141	207	514	758

as Academics										
GT4: Lecturers as Educators	93	155	118	99	110	97	159	124	480	475

Table 9. Frequency of Mentions for Each Global Theme by Female and Male Lecturers

In Global Theme 3: Lecturers as Academics, male lecturers had significantly more frequency of mentions throughout all years. Over the whole time period, male lecturers had 758 mentions within this Global Theme, whereas female lecturers only had 514 mentions. Looking at this dataset's Global Theme level, we can see gender differences at play.

5.2.2 Global Theme 1: Students as Consumers

Within the nominations collated under Global Theme 1: Students as Consumers, as shown in Table 10, male lecturers only had the higher frequency of mentions for Organising Theme 1.2: On Demand, with about 50 more mentions than their female colleagues. However, when we delve into the Basic Theme level, we see that male lecturers had more mentions for Basic Theme 1.2.1: Always, Basic Theme 1.2.3: Works Outside of Working Hours, and Basic Theme 1.3.3: Good for University Reputation. Could male lecturers within this dataset have more time to work outside working hours? Some students think so, calling the time male lecturers give up as '*spare time*'. Students called the time female lecturers gave up as them '*sacrificing*' family and home time. This could be a gender stereotype at play that assumes that their male lecturers do not have or do not participate in responsibilities outside of work (Connell, 2005; Ciciolla & Luthar, 2019; Hjálmsdóttjr & Bjarnadóttir, 2021).

	Frequency of Mentions

	2016		2017		2018		2019		Total	
GT1: Students as Consumers	**F**	**M**	**F**	**M**	**F**	**M**	**F**	**M**	**F**	**M**
OT1.1: Worth Money and Time	6	14	19	16	24	13	22	17	71	60
BT1.1.1: Worthwhile Lectures	2	12	8	8	10	5	5	5	25	30
BT1.1.2: Beyond the Call of Duty	4	2	11	8	14	8	17	12	46	30
OT1.2: On Demand	38	65	42	40	45	56	60	68	185	229
BT1.2.1: Always	23	38	28	27	24	42	37	42	112	149
BT1.2.2: Makes Time	10	15	9	12	21	12	17	18	57	57
BT1.2.3: Works Outside of Working Hours	5	12	5	1	0	2	6	8	16	23
OT1.3: Comparison	17	12	11	9	18	11	15	13	61	45
BT1.3.1: Despite Flaws/Challenges	6	6	2	1	7	4	4	0	19	9
BT1.3.2: Comparison to Other Lecturers	9	3	6	4	9	3	9	6	33	16

BT1.3.3: Good for University Reputation	2	3	3	4	2	6	2	7	9	20

Table 10. Frequency of Mentions for Global Theme 1: Students as Consumers by Female and Male Lecturer

Students may also perceive their male lecturers through the stereotype of men being the 'traditional' professors, compared to women who are more likely to be seen as teachers, and therefore, were more likely to nominate them for being good for university reputation and being a '*flagship*' for the university (Miller & Chamberlin, 2000; Renström, Sendén & Lindqvist, 2021; Khokhlova, Lamba & Kishore 2023).

Female lecturers had a higher frequency of mentions for the Basic Theme 1.1.2: Beyond the Call of Duty, which could be seen as a positive theme. However, we cannot know how these acts of going above and beyond have affected the lecturer. There is no telling if this has affected both their work and home lives, nor if it could be defined as emotional labour that detracts from their normal duties (Gelber, et al., 2022). Female lecturers also had more mentions in Basic Themes 1.3.1: Despite Flaws/Challenges and 1.2.3: Comparison to Other Lecturers. These findings suggest that female lecturers have to work harder to be nominated by succeeding against these perceived challenges/flaws and by being compared to other lecturers. Additionally, female lecturers appear to be facing gender stereotypes within this dataset, and potentially undertaking emotional labour.

5.2.3 Global Theme 2: Students as Learners

The frequency of mentions for male lecturers was higher for Organising Theme 2.1: Learning Environment and Organising Theme 2.2: Learning, with a difference of only two mentions for Organising 3:1: Support and Help, as shown in Table 11.

	Frequency of Mentions

	2016		2017		2018		2019		Total	
GT2: Students as Learners	**F**	**M**	**F**	**M**	**F**	**M**	**F**	**M**	**F**	**M**
OT2.1: Learning Environment	17	36	9	9	8	14	27	21	61	80
BT2.1.1: Tailored to Student Needs	3	9	4	6	5	5	8	8	20	28
BT2.1.2: Interaction with Students	5	11	3	3	3	7	10	9	21	30
BT2.1.3: Parent/Friend	8	6	2	0	0	2	3	1	13	9
BT2.1.4: Knows and Interested in Students	1	10	0	0	0	0	6	3	7	13
OT2.2: Learning	20	46	28	22	27	23	25	32	100	123
BT2.2.1: Learning has Occurred	6	8	6	8	3	8	6	9	21	33
BT2.2.2: Timely Feedback and Marks	3	10	5	4	4	0	3	1	15	15

BT2.2.3: Constructive Feedback	7	10	11	7	13	8	12	14	43	49
BT2.2.4: Prepares for Life After Course	4	8	6	3	7	7	4	8	21	26
OT2.3: Support and Help	84	121	87	79	97	107	144	103	412	410
BT2.3.1: Support	55	76	56	66	46	78	81	75	238	295
BT2.3.2: Care	16	26	17	11	35	10	33	17	101	74
BT2.3.3: Personal Help	10	5	6	2	7	3	23	4	46	14
BT2.3.4: Academic Help	3	14	8	0	9	6	7	7	27	27

Table 11. Frequency of Mentions for Global Theme 2: Student as Learners by Female and Male Lecturers

Throughout this Global Theme, the frequency of mentions for the Basic Themes is relatively similar, but male lecturers had a high frequency for Basic Theme 2.3.1: Support. This Basic Theme contained all references to non-specific support. Do students feel that their male lecturers supported them but did not care for them or did not give them personal support? Potentially. It could also be argued that male lecturers may have cared for their students and given them personal support, but students did not use these particular words and phrases and leaned toward a non-specific statement on support.

Female lecturers had more frequencies of mentions for Basic Theme 2.3.2: Care and Basic Theme 2.3.3: Personal Help. Once again, we can theorise this finding in two ways. Do students perceive their female lecturers as caring and giving more personal help? Or, do students feel more comfortable writing about the care and personal help their female lecturers gave within their SLTAs nominations? No matter the reason, there is a gender bias in play. Either female lecturers are undertaking more of this caregiver role (Sprague & Massoni, 2005; Barrett & Barrett, 2011; Sigurdaottir et al., 2013; Broido et al., 2015; Gelber et al., 2022), or students only feel that their female lecturers can be linked publicly to this behaviour (Sprague & Massoni, 2005).

5.2.4 Global Theme 3: Lecturers as Academics

Students were more likely to mention Organising Theme 3.3: Teaching when nominating male lecturers, compared to female lecturers, within the nominations collated under Global Theme 3: lecturers as Academics, as shown in Table 12.

	Frequency of Mentions									
	2016		**2017**		**2018**		**2019**		**Total**	
GT3: Lecturers as Academics	**F**	**M**	**F**	**M**	**F**	**M**	**F**	**M**	**F**	**M**
OT3.1: Design and Management	10	18	7	10	14	14	12	19	43	61
BT3.1.1: Student Feedback	1	1	2	1	4	6	7	3	14	11
BT3.1.2: Course Design and Feedback	9	18	5	9	10	8	5	16	29	50

OT3.2: Expertise	18	21	17	18	11	18	20	19	66	76
BT3.2.1: Knowledge	12	18	10	18	6	11	17	14	45	61
BT3.2.2: Experience	6	3	7	0	5	7	3	5	21	15
OT3.3: Teaching	77	169	94	102	113	120	101	146	385	537
BT3.3.1: Delivery of Content	36	80	36	44	49	44	44	66	165	234
BT3.3.2: Engaging Lectures	36	80	50	54	58	66	49	72	193	272
BT3.3.3: Use of Technology	5	9	8	4	6	10	8	8	27	31

Table 12. Frequency of Mentions for Global Theme 3: Lecturers as Academics by Female and Male Lecturers

In every Basic Theme, male lecturers had more mentions, apart from Basic Theme 3.2.2: Experience, where female lecturers had six more mentions than their male counterparts, and Basic Theme 3.1.1: Student Feedback, where female lecturers had three more mentions. These are not particularly significant findings as the numbers are so close to the male lecturers.

Male lecturers had almost 200 more mentions than the female lecturers in this dataset for Organising Theme 3.3. It is a key finding of this research study. When nominating their female lecturers, students are less likely to mention teaching, a vital component of a lecturer's role. Does this mean that they are nominating female lecturers for other reasons, such as care and personal support in place of teaching? Or

do they feel that male lecturers are better in terms of excellent teaching within this dataset? Once again, the stereotype of the 'traditional' image of a professor, who is male, may be at play (Miller & Chamberlin, 2000; Renström, Sendén & Lindqvist, 2021; Khokhlova, Lamba & Kishore 2023). This type of professor would be excellent at teaching. This could influence the students' nominations for female and male lecturers, disadvantaging female lecturers.

5.2.5 Global Theme 4: Lecturers as Educators

Within all the Organising Themes within Global Theme 4: Lecturers as Educators, the frequency of mentions is relatively similar, as shown in Table 13.

	Frequency of Mentions									
	2016		**2017**		**2018**		**2019**		**Total**	
GT4: Lecturers as Educators	**F**	**M**	**F**	**M**	**F**	**M**	**F**	**M**	**F**	**M**
OT4.1: Attitude	44	63	50	38	42	42	76	54	212	197
BT4.1.1: Friendly	17	14	21	1	17	16	27	19	82	50
BT4.1.2: Approachable	7	19	15	14	10	10	25	21	57	64
BT4.1.3: Positivity	8	13	8	6	2	3	10	3	28	25
BT4.1.4: Wants Students to Succeed	12	17	6	17	13	13	14	11	45	58
OT4.2: Traits	18	52	34	35	38	31	40	37	130	155

BT4.2.1: Passion	12	25	17	20	25	17	23	21	77	83
BT4.2.2: Sense of Humour	0	11	8	10	3	8	7	13	18	42
BT4.2.3: Inspiration	6	16	9	5	10	6	10	3	35	30
OT4.3: Employee	31	40	34	26	30	24	43	33	138	133
BT4.3.1: Organised	5	1	7	2	5	0	5	0	22	3
BT4.3.2: Good Communicator	16	21	16	12	18	8	29	18	79	59
BT4.3.3: Professional	6	6	5	6	3	8	2	4	16	24
BT4.3.4: Dedication	4	12	6	6	4	8	7	11	21	37

Table 13. Frequency of Mentions for Global Theme 4: Lecturers as Educators by Female and Male Lecturers

There were several Basic Themes where male lecturers had a higher frequency of mentions, but the most significant was Basic Theme 4.2.2: Sense of Humour. Students either felt that their male lecturers had more of a sense of humour than their female lecturers or felt that only when their male lecturers were funny, did they wish to reward that by putting it within their SLTAs nomination for that male lecturer. Interestingly, other studies have found that students state their male lecturers are funny and the female lecturers provide fun, once again highlighting that a female lecturer has to provide something compared to simply being (Sprague & Massoni, 2005).

Students valued friendliness, passion and good communication the most in this Global Theme, with female lecturers having the most mentions for friendliness and good communication and male lecturers having the most for passion. Students were more likely to mention female lecturers in these Basic Themes: 4.1.1: Friendly, 4.3.1: Organised and 4.3.2: Good Communicator. Although for Basic Themes 4.1.1: Friendly and 4.3.2: Good Communicator, the frequency of mentions had a more significant gap between female and male lecturers, Basic Theme 4.3.1: Organised holds an exciting finding. Despite only a gap of 19 mentions, male lecturers only had three mentions of being organised over the whole dataset. Additionally, there were no mentions of male lecturers being organised in 2018/19 and 2019/20.

5.2.6 Summary of Section

Students nominated their female and male lecturers quite equally for the Basic Themes which make up quite a lot of expected duties of a lecturer, from giving constructive feedback on time, to giving academic help, and using student feedback to make positive changes. These Themes relate largely to the students as learners movement which demonstrates that students nominate lecturers for the way they help them grow and develop in their learning journeys (Ashwin, et al., 2023). Additionally, these findings reinforce another finding from this research study, that students value those lecturers who give them the gift of time (Matheson, 2019). Although there is little difference for Basic Theme 1.2.2: Makes Time, there are gender differences in when this time is given to students.

Students perceive their female and male lecturers differently in this dataset. Male lecturers were more likely to be nominated for undertaking their regular professional duties and are seen as the stereotypical image of a lecturer, who is good for the University's reputation (Miller & Chamberlin, 2000; Renström, Sendén & Lindqvist, 2021; Khokhlova, Lamba & Kishore 2023). Whereas, female lecturers were seen to be motherly, caring for their students, and helping them with their personal problems, which has been found in other studies (Sprague & Massoni, 2005; Barrett & Barrett, 2011; Sigurdaottir et al., 2013; Broido et al., 2015; Gelber et al., 2022).

Students evaluated their female lecturers by comparing them to other lecturers and saying that despite their flaws and challenges, they still remained good enough to be nominated for the Best Lecturer award. Female lecturers in this dataset were also nominated more for going beyond the call of duty, from the dataset an assumption can be made that female lecturers may be undertaking emotional labour. By undertaking this emotional labour, female lecturers may be at a disadvantage in their academic career, from progression to retention (Barrett & Barrett, 2011; Boring, 2017; Cooper, 2019; Gelber et al., 2022).

In conclusion, the findings of this research study showed that students perceive their female and male lecturers differently. It appears that female lecturers had to go beyond the call of duty to gain a nomination, usually by undertaking emotional labour, and male lecturers appeared just to have to be excellent at their jobs.

5.3 Roadmap to Discussion Chapter

The final part of the data analysis process will be explored in the Discussion chapter. As the thematic network analysis and the frequency of mentions analysis were tools to structure the data in order to produce creative nonfiction, they were detailed within the Results chapters. However, the creative nonfiction allows the reader to understand the findings of this research study from a real-life perspective of the short stories; this is included within the Discussion chapter. The discussion chapter will explore the six personas found within the dataset, the short stories produced to explore and depict each persona, and a discussion about each persona and what the findings mean for the HE sector.

Chapter 6: Discussion

This chapter explores this research study's key findings and discusses their implication for the higher education sector. The key findings relate to the two Research Questions of this study, set out below:

> RQ1: How do students perceive their lecturers and lecturers' teaching practice when nominating their lecturer for the award of Best Lecturer in Student-Led Teaching Awards?
>
> RQ2: Do students perceive their lecturers differently in relation to the lecturers' gender when nominating their lecturer for the award of Best Lecturer in Student-Led Teaching Awards?
>
> RQ2a: If so, how does it differ?

This chapter answers these questions and discusses the importance of giving students a voice in evaluating teaching whilst protecting female lecturers from any unfair gender bias that is contained in those evaluations. Although literature on SETs has discovered gender bias and called for university administration to mitigate bias, this research study makes an original contribution by demonstrating the same gender bias when students are given an opportunity to evaluate teaching in a wholly positive and informal manner through SLTAs. Additionally, the key findings in this chapter are accompanied by creative nonfiction in the form of short stories. These short stories are derived from the dataset to show, not tell, the reader the reality of student perceptions of their female and male lecturers. The use of creative nonfiction makes an original contribution by combining creative writing to explore personas found in educational research. It brings the data to life and allows the reader a new way of understanding the findings of this research study.

This chapter is organised into six different sections relating to each of the six personas found within the dataset. These personas were derived from the STLAs nominations and allowed the researcher to structure fictional characters and

storylines based on the truths within the dataset. Each section begins with a short description of the persona, followed by at least one short story to explain the persona, and is concluded with a discussion about the persona, using the results of this research study and relevant literature to explore what these findings mean for the HE sector. The sections and the short stories are listed in summary below:

- THE PROFESSIONAL MAN
    - Ewe – Three Lampposts and a Lift
- THE CONFIDENT EXPERT
    - Jing – The Wrong Dance Shoes
- THE PENALISED AND PERFORMING WOMAN
    - Luke, Rashid, and Emma – But That's Her Just Doing Her Job
    - Kate – The Delicate Performance of Emails
- THE PERFECT WOMAN
    - Wendy – How Late is too Late?
- THE MOTHER AND THE FRIEND
    - Lizzie and Ciaran – A Pint or Cake?
- THE QUIET WOMAN
    - Deepti – No Snooze Button

6.1 Persona: THE PROFESSIONAL MAN

The Professional Man is one who is good for a university's reputation, a well-known commercial image of a professor – and therefore, is probably white – and excels in terms of professionalism. The persona of the Professional Man brings together the nominations in which students perceive their male lecturers as flagships for the university, which perpetuates the concept of academia being a male space.

6.1.1 Ewe – Three Lampposts and a Lift

The door closes with a loud click, and the chatter that once filled the room simmers to silence.

"Good, you are all here. I am just going to chat to the media team, and then we can go over the agenda for today," Michael, the Head of Marketing and Communications, tells us.

Deepti smiles at me, and her excitement is contagious. I can't believe I was asked to do this either. Sarah, the only other woman in our group, is a little more cynical, but only in front of us; she doesn't share her concerns with the wider group. I don't blame her. I wouldn't want to tell any of the men here, including the Head of MarComms, that we were only chosen as there had to be some female representation in the campaign.

Still, we have a foot in the door. We are going to be in the University's next marketing campaign. We are going to be in the new Freshers video, on lampposts, on lift doors, on posters, and on email banners.

"Okay, all, we are going to send everyone over to makeup and costume first," Michael says as he rejoins us.

"Costume?" Richard laughs, which starts all the male lecturers laughing.

"You could make it sound more manly," Liam adds.

"Call it what you want, fellas, but those lovely costume ladies over there are going to tell you what to wear, and you'll do it," Michael replies.

I try not to look at her, but I do. Kate subtly raises her eyebrow, and I reply with a tense smile. She walks with me over to the makeup chairs.

"We are diversity hires here, Ewe," she whispers.

"We are a foot in the door," I whisper back.

She shakes her head at me. "You'll see, the three of us will barely be in this campaign. I could be using this time to answer emails, mark assignments, or even have uninterrupted time to do research."

We catch each other's eye and laugh, but it's without any soul. We both know that we hardly ever get the chance for uninterrupted time to do research. Still, I am hopeful for the campaign, and when someone comes to do my makeup, I sit back and enjoy it.

I love every minute of the photoshoot. I enjoy that people took the time to choose makeup and clothing that suits me and make me look like the Engineer lecturer I used to dream about when I was still doing my PhD all those years ago. I love it so much I tell my family and friends about it. I love it so much that I swear it puts a spring in my step when lecturing.

Even one month later, I am walking out of a lecture hall smiling after a great discussion with my first-year students. Until I see something that stops me right there on the overpass to the other side of campus. There on a lamppost is Liam. Liam, in scrubs with a stethoscope hanging around his neck, with a lazy but confident smile on his face. I want to run across campus in search of other lampposts, lifts and posters, but I make myself walk. I can't be seen running around campus.

The next face I see on a lamppost is Richard, the face of the Football department. I walk a bit further, and there's another Richard. And another. I reach the Engineering office building, and there he is again on the lift. I'm not even featured in my own building, and Richard got three lampposts and a lift. On the walk to my office, I tell myself that I am out there somewhere and tell Kate's voice in my head to leave me alone. I unlock my computer and read the newest email in my inbox. It's from Kate, and she's copied in Deepti. There are no words, just her email signature featuring the new University marketing banner. It has the words "teaching excellence by excellent teachers". There are four lecturers on it from the photoshoot. Every single one of them is a man.

6.1.2 The Professional Man

Students in this research study stated that male lecturers were good for university reputation, more so than female lecturers. Is this because these lecturers are truly so excellent that they deserve to be the flagship for the university, or is it because

flagships for universities are commonly men, and the students have brought this stereotype to their nominations? The data cannot tell us for sure. Despite this, there is an argument to be made using the words and phrases the students used in their SLTAs nominations that mentioned that a lecturer was good for university reputation. Most of the words and phrases relate to commerciality: *'representation*', '*put the university on the map'*, '*bring in more students'*.

The commercial image of a professor is stereotypically male. It could be argued that this stereotype played a part in some of the nominations. Many studies have found that there is a perception that male lecturers are professors or lecturers, whereas female lecturers are teachers (Miller & Chamberlin, 2000; Renström, Sendén & Lindqvist, 2021; Khokhlova, Lamba & Kishore 2023). Teacher is a term that is most associated with compulsory education rather than academia. Miller & Chamberlin (2000) call the term professor as a status which is reserved for male lectures in students' perceptions. It may well be that female lecturers would never be perceived as good commercial representation for universities as students do not associate them with this high-status level within academia.

This research study also found that male lecturers' nominations also contained more reference to course design compared to female lecturers. We cannot know students' understanding of how a course is designed. We also cannot expect them to know the intricacies of course design – which is not done by an individual but by a team. Once again, we face a similar question – do students perceive their female lecturers as having enough power and status to design a course, not just teach it? Routinely in academia, female lecturers are seen as not as qualified as male lecturers – and there is an argument that female lecturers may not be as qualified because they do not get the same opportunities to advance in academia compared to their male colleagues (Luke, 1997: Mitchell & Martin, 2018). Looking through a feminist critical theory lens, the societally structured stereotypes of female lecturers not being a commercial image representing universities or professors and of being of a lower status than their male colleagues highlight social norms in which the students in this dataset could have been influenced by when making their nominations.

When looking at the SLTAs nominations in the dataset, there is an apparent divide in how students talk about their female and male lecturers in terms of course design. For the male lecturers, students related their excellent course design capabilities to industry *'it has proven useful in application in my position in the workplace which is evidence of well thought out course that is relevant to industry'* and knowledge '*[we] expand our knowledge during our time on the course'.* Meanwhile, in the female lecturers' nominations, students stated that the course was well organised, with the phrase *'well structured course'* coming up four times. This research study has shown that within this dataset, students perceive their male lecturers as industry experts and knowledgeable and their female lecturers as organised in the entirety of their teaching practice, but also within the specific element of teaching practice of course design.

Academia is a masculine space (Luke 1997; Goodman & Harrop, 2000; Leathwood & Read, 2008; Mitchell & Martin, 2018). It was a space that women 'had no or limited access' to, and although women now have access to it here in the United Kingdom, it is still a masculine space (Goodman & Harrop, 2000, p. 3). Female lecturers can be stereotyped in ways that make them appear not to fit into the academic sphere, whether this be not at all or only in a lower status than their male colleagues (Leathwood & Read, 2008; Mitchell & Martin, 2018). The professional, masculine academic world causes barriers to female lecturers (Sisson & Iverson, 2014). Luke argues that the masculine academic world stops female lecturers from advancing 'through informal and hidden cultural barriers' (1997, p. 436). One such example of a barrier is the organisation of part-time lecturers' workload in a way that allows them to pursue their research and attend scholarship activities, and female lectures are more likely to be part-time due to caring or childcare commitments (Barrett & Barrett, 2011; Cooper, 2019).

The Professional Man is a socially structured concept. The Professional Man is *the* stereotype; it is what comes to mind for many people when they are asked about a lecturer or what comes up when you Google the term 'professor'. The Professional Man is not just the high-status, powerful lecturers and professors; they

are the commercial images of universities. They are marketing material; they draw in students from across the world. The Professional Man may not exclude women from academia, but he is not doing much to help them thrive alongside him.

6.2 Persona: THE CONFIDENT EXPERT

The Confident Expert is a masculine persona. He is an expert in his subject area and is seen to be very knowledgeable. He is confident in his delivery when sharing his knowledge with his students. This persona demonstrates the space in which male lecturers can share their knowledge without the fear of being perceived as arrogant. The Confident Expert persona is one who is also deemed humorous within his teaching sphere and is confident in bringing humour into the classroom.

6.2.1 Jing – The Wrong Dance Shoes

Jing hated doing open days. It was always a Saturday when her daughter had dance class, and her son played rugby. Getting her husband to sort out the rugby was easy enough but getting him to get their daughter dressed in her dance uniform with the right shoes for the right type of dance practice they were doing that day was much harder. She usually ended up getting up even earlier than she needed, laying out the dance uniform and packing her daughter's bag for practice with the correct shoes in.

Jing was good at putting her personal life to the back of her mind whilst at work. She actually liked meeting prospective students. They were always so amazed by the big, old buildings and by the facilities on campus. The Biomedical building was fantastic. It had huge windows, coloured with pinks and oranges. When the light shone in, the coloured windows made spotlights on the floor, which she, when she knew she was definitely alone, used to play hopscotch as she walked. She'd always felt that child play was really healthy in small doses as an adult.

Open days always consisted of subject talks for the prospective students. Jing loved teaching. She enjoyed commanding the room and watching students go from a place of little knowledge to a lot of knowledge. She loved doing practical sessions and

seeing first-hand what her students had learned from her. Every year, when the dreaded peer review assessment day came around, Jing could barely sleep. She hated the idea of someone watching her and assessing her. Her teaching always suffered when being watched. Plus, she got the same feedback every time: you've got a great presence, but you need to work on your confidence; if you'd publish more, you'd be more confident in your knowledge, but overall, the students rate you fairly well. After every peer review, she'd try to fit in more research time, and she would send her work to journals. Still, it was always a lengthy process of going back and forth between herself and the reviewers. If she wanted to teach well, she needed to use her time to prep, and as usual, research fell lower down her to-do list. Jing didn't worry too much about her good SETs scores. They were never excellent, but they were no cause for concern. She always thought if there was more time in the day, her scores might increase.

The open day subject talk involved herself and a male colleague in her department. Once again, Jing had found herself nervous about teaching in front of her colleague. She went first and was glad for it. It had gone well; she had gotten lots of smiling prospective students and some very good nodding from their parents and guardians. She was pleased right up until the moment her male colleague asked her for a quick chat after they were done,

"Jing," he said firmly. "Good job today."

Jing couldn't help but get a little irate. I don't need you to talk to me like that, she thought to herself; you are not my superior. Still, she thanked him.

"I noticed that you came across a little," he drifted off, considering his next words. "Arrogant."

Jing was shocked. She echoed his words back to him, "arrogant?"

"Yes. The thing is, you see, you come across as almost too confident. Your research is hardly in the best journals and prominent. I think you need to let people know that you are young and early in your career."

What was Jing to do but agree to take his feedback on board? She didn't feel like she was in a position to advocate for herself. Instead, she took his negative feedback quietly. She took it quietly back to her car, back home and to her family, where she was instantly berated for packing the wrong dance shoes for her daughter even though she really believed she hadn't. Again, Jing took the negative feedback quietly; she felt like nothing she did was right anymore.

6.2.2 The Confident Expert

In this research study, students in their nominations mentioned being knowledgeable, excellent delivery of content, and giving engaging and worthwhile lectures, more so for male lecturers than female lecturers. Of course, one could say that male lecturers were better at these things than their female colleagues, and that is why they were nominated. However, if you look at these findings through a feminist critical theory lens, it is important to explore why these findings may be the way they are.

The Confident Expert is seen to be knowledgeable, but that does not necessarily mean they *are* knowledgeable. In this research study, students perceive their male lecturers to be knowledgeable in their subject areas, but are they? We cannot know this from the dataset, but we can tell that students are more likely to nominate a male lecturer for being knowledgeable. Being able to present knowledge to students must come from somewhere, so is this from a place of knowledge, from a lecturer's own research and scholarship, or is it from being able to share knowledge that they do not comprehensively understand confidently? These potential answers are speculated on the basis that the students equally evaluate their lecturers of different genders. If they do not, there is a third potential answer: the bar is set lower for male lecturers than female lecturers. For example, the use of technology was mentioned in more of male lecturers' SLTAs nominations compared to female lecturers. It could be argued that this is due to a stereotype. The stereotype has been

mentioned previously – the commercial image of a professor being male, probably white, and it will also be extended here to cover the possibility of them being old. This stereotype could affect students' nominations by presenting a lower bar for those male lecturers who fit into the commercial image of a professor, so students decide that those lecturers who are able to play a video's sound from the interactive whiteboard and not their laptop as something worthy of a Best Lecturer Award. Therefore, male lecturers may be getting nominations for being above this low standard set in students' minds. In contrast, female lecturers have to go far beyond the low standard in order to gain a nomination (MacNell, Driscoll & Hunt, 2015).

Research is a vital component of many lecturer's working lives. Although, it should be noted that not all lecturers are allocated research time, and some have teaching-only contracts. Research keeps the lecturer relevant and up to date in their field and enables them to provide excellent teaching. Indeed, Kandiko Howson, Coate & de St Croix argue that within academia the:

> 'Prestige economy operates through such indicators as publication rates, first/last (depending on the field) author status, international keynotes and editorial roles. These indicators are mainly associated with research rather than teaching (2018, p. 535).

The prestige economy relies on research and scholarship activities. In turn, being able to undertake these activities would, in theory, enable a person to become more knowledgeable, reputable, and potentially more confident in their field. It is a fair assumption that male lecturers who participate in research and scholarship activities may gain nominations for being knowledgeable. However, studies have found that female lecturers are less likely to have the time to undertake research activities (Aitchison & Mowbray, 2013; Boring, 2017; Lubienski, Miller & Saclarides, 2018; Gelber et al., 2022).

Routinely, female lecturers are allowed less time to undertake research; this is partly due to the emotional labour they have to undertake in their teaching duties (Gelber, et al., 2022); this is discussed further in the persona of The Quiet Woman. Female lecturers are also less likely to have as many published scholarly works compared to their male colleagues (Lubienski, Miller & Saclarides, 2018). When looked at holistically, taking into account that female lecturers have less time to devote to research and are less likely to have confirmation that their research is of a high standard through getting published, they suffer 'long-term disadvantages' (Lubienski, Miller & Saclarides, 2018, p. 80), to their career progression. Postareff & Lindblom-Ylänne argue that if teachers 'perceived that they had a good level of content knowledge, [their] confidence tended to be high' (2011, p. 801). In relation to this research study, it may be that female lecturers are not seen as The Confident Expert because academia has not allowed the time and space to become confident in their expertise (Gelber, et al., 2022).

If we look at broader social standards that are applied to women but not men, we can also assume that some female lecturers fear acting confident in their knowledge. Women who are good at their jobs often present themselves as masculine and hide their femininity to avoid reprisal for acting confident (Hirst & Shwabenland, 2018). However, male colleagues do not always like this, as shown in Jing's story. Dozier (2017) confirms this; they also go on to state that women who act masculine in the workspace can be negatively evaluated and less likely to be seen as compatible with leadership roles. Female lecturers may not be willing to express their knowledge without caveats, for example, 'I am only early in my career, so I may be wrong, but I think it is this...'. Women are often unable to *own* their knowledge. Knowledgeable women are often called obnoxious or arrogant. Female lecturers have to '[play] the SET game' (Lakeman, et al., 2023a, p. 757) and can be punished for 'failing to do their gender right' (Adams, et al., 2021, p. 804) so they cannot be the Confident Expert without any fear. Once again, their gender assigns them to a role they *have* to play in order to maintain good student evaluations, which in turn helps with career progression and retention.

The Confident Expert can also be funny. In this research study, male lecturers were more likely to have a mention of a sense of humour within their SLTAs nominations than their female colleagues. Are female lecturers doing their gender right by not being funny in the classroom? Male lecturers certainly are; not only are men funny in their lecturers casually but also through planning humour into their lecturers (Bakar & Kumar, 2019). Interestingly, Sprague & Massoni (2005) found in their study that students thought their male lecturers were funny, but their female lecturers were fun. The Confident Expert is confident in his ability to bring humour into the classroom and knows it will be well received by his students, just by the very fact of being a man.

6.3 Persona: THE PENALISED AND THE PERFORMING WOMAN

The Penalised Woman has to fulfil societal expectations. She has to present herself in line with gendered expectations, or she faces retribution. The Penalised Woman is severely judged for things that her male colleagues are not. The Penalised Woman is likely to be aware of the unfair gendered expectations placed upon her and sees in her day-to-day life the ways in which her male colleagues are praised for things she cannot be seen to do and for things she is not given time to do. However, The Penalised Woman must become The Performing Woman in order not to be even more unfairly judged, evaluated, and treated. The Performing Woman performs in interactions with her colleagues and students. The Performing Woman has to be everything, all of the time. She cannot let her performance 'mask' slip.

6.3.1 Luke, Rashid and Emma – But That's Her Just Doing Her Job

Emma and Rashid sat next together, facing away from the campus cafe's serving counter. They had already bought their food, but it lay unopened on the table before them.

"Orange Lucozade, chicken and sweetcorn sandwich, and," Rashid pauses to think, "a king-size Mars bar."

“A mars bar? On a Thursday? No way,” Emma laughs gently. “Thursdays he needs a pick up, so he’ll go for his favourite, the forever controversial Turkish delight.”

They hear steps approaching them, but neither of them turns to it. They wait patiently for their friend Luke to place his items on the table. Emma whoops a little too loudly, and Rashid audibly sighs.

“What?” Luke asks his friends, bemused.

“Turkish delight,” Rashid says flatly.

“Okay,” Luke says, still not understanding the joke.

“I have to do Emma’s washing up for the rest of the week,” Rashid tells him.

“And she’s a messy cook,” Emma talks about herself, a grin on her face.

Luke lets the two of them talk among themselves. He is very used to being the quiet one in their trio. He was so happy to have been put in the same halls as them; he had friends from the very first day of moving on campus. He opens his chicken and sweetcorn sandwich when the screen mounted on the wall changes. It had been advertising the National Student Survey for the last few minutes, but being in second year, it didn’t apply to him. Now, it had turned into a colourful item, and it grabbed his attention.

“Hey, have you heard of that before?” He asks as he nods to the screen.

Emma and Rashid look over their shoulders.

“Nope!” Emma confirms.

“Oh yeah, I did it last year,” Rashid says as he turns back to Luke. “It was really easy to be fair. You just say which lecturer you want to nominate and then write why. I put Richard last year; he was shortlisted but didn’t win.”

"Huh? I can't believe I've not heard of it. It's actually a nice thing to do," Emma comments before sipping her coffee. "I am going to do it right now. Maybe we should all do it?"

Emma takes out her phone and types Student-Led Teaching Awards into the search bar on the student portal of the university website. She clicks through to the form and looks at the blank text boxes for a minute before putting the phone down.

"How do we choose just one lecturer?" she asks the boys.

"I'm going to put Richard again," Rashid says, "he's a legend."

Emma looks at Luke. Rashid is on Football Coaching, but they are both on BioMed.

"What about Jing?" Emma asks him.

Luke shrugs.

"She's great! She's so enthusiastic and helps so much with our practicals."

"Isn't that what she's supposed to do?" Luke asks rhetorically. "How about Dave?"

"Well, yeah, Dave is really knowledgeable, and his research is really cool."

"I think Dave deserves it more than Jing. He does loads of research and is obviously more dedicated."

Rashid drops his phone to the table and leans back in his chair. "I'm all done."

Emma's face is screwed up as if in pain, but Luke knows that is her deep-thinking face. He waits patiently for her to think. He continues eating his sandwich.

"Okay, hear me out," Emma starts.

Luke swallows the last bite of his sandwich before speaking, "go on."

"What about Eira?"

"The research student?"

Emma nods enthusiastically. "She's a research student, but she's been teaching us all year. She answers our emails anytime day or night, she bakes us food, she gave us her lab schedule so we can go the lab and ask her any questions we have. Like she is constantly available. She might not be a proper lecturer, but I reckon she's done enough to be nominated."

Luke ponders it and then agrees with a nod. "You nominate Eira, and I'll nominate Dave."

"You're not nominating Eira too?" Emma asks, a little offended that he's not bought into her passionate speech about how great Eira is.

"They're both as good as each other. May as well both get a nomination, right?" Luke replies, not even noticing that Emma is a little annoyed.

Emma doesn't reply but puts all her focus into writing a lovely nomination for Eira. She had read in the guidance that these awards aren't a popularity contest. It doesn't matter how many times a lecturer is nominated; what counts is what the students write about them. Emma was going to do her best to make it happen with her nomination. But for the rest of the day, she couldn't help but wonder why Eira, who had truly gone above and beyond, was put in the same category as Dave. Luke said that he thought Dave was better than Jing, but Emma thought they both did their jobs just as well as each other. At least, Emma thought, she gave Eira the best chance she could, and if nothing else, Eira would get to read the lovely nomination she wrote about her.

6.3.2 Kate – The Delicate Performance of Emails

Kate was getting arduously close to being told off by the Head of School. She knew it, and so did her colleagues. After the marketing campaign, Kate felt it, for the first time

in her career, about speaking out on behalf of herself and her female colleagues. Kate was, of course, brushed off by Michael, the Head of MarComms, about how the women were 'diversity hires' in the marketing campaign and how Kate must have just not seen herself, Deepti and Ewe, but that doesn't mean they aren't on marketing materials. Kate didn't know what she expected. She should have never stuck her neck out. She was now on her best behaviour.

She was the first to turn up for the monthly School meeting. The Business school was big in terms of the number of students registered for a Business course, but there weren't many courses run by the school, and therefore, there wasn't a huge staff team. Kate was the only female lecturer. Kate was sitting with her laptop open to her emails. She continued to answer student emails as everyone filled in before the meeting. She didn't stop when the Head of School started it. She maintained good eye contact, smiled and nodded when she should and even wrote down important notes, but she didn't have time to stop answering emails.

After ten minutes, the door opened and her colleague from Business Analytics, Colin. Colin was looking at his phone and typing. He momentarily looks up and nods at the Head of School. He finds the only empty seat to her right and sits down. He doesn't stop typing. Kate couldn't help herself, and she stared at his screen. He's reading a student email asking for an extension. Kates watches him write a response.

The deadline is the deadline.

Colin

[Sent from my iPhone]

Kate looks back at her screen and realises she is emailing the same student. The student has emailed to say that they've been called for Jury Service for the two weeks before the next assignment deadline and asked if Kate could give them an extension for two weeks. As it is a 100% assignment, Kate looks up the guidance given to staff on extensions. It states that deadlines should be strict as these assignments can be

worked on throughout the whole module and are time-consuming for external examiners, so we shouldn't cause any more inconvenience by having extensions adding time to their work. Kate's email looks very different to the same student.

Dear Louis,

Thank you for your email.

Unfortunately, I am unable to grant an extension for this assignment. I have checked with the guidelines, and because this is a 100% assignment – an assignment you start at the beginning of your module and add to throughout the module – I cannot say yes to your request. This is also due to teaching finishing in advance of the assignment deadline and your Jury Service, as this means you will not miss any teaching that you would need to complete this assignment.

However, I can offer you one-to-one sessions before your Jury Service in which I can support you. I will also always be available throughout your Jury Service, so if you are able to do any studying during this time, you can contact me for support.

I apologise again for not being able to accept your request. Please know that I am available for assignment support via email, in pre-booked one-to-on sessions, or during my office hours.

Many thanks,

Kate

Kate rereads her email and couldn't see any way she could cut it down. She could never reply the way Colin did. She has to be on her best behaviour. If any of her students complained about her, she really would be in trouble with the Head of School. She could hear him in her mind right now telling her that she is very lucky to be in a Business School, which is a male-dominated place. And doesn't she know it. Kate should be listening to the Head of the School, but instead, she is seething with jealousy.

She is jealous of Colin and every man in this room. But her jealousy remains under wrap. She keeps on her 'work Kate face' and presses send.

6.3.3 The Penalised and The Performing Woman

Male lecturers, the stereotypical image of a professor, are expected by students to undertake their roles well. As Gelber et al. states, 'expectations on male identified staff [...] are likely to fall within the remit of their normal professional duties' (2022, p. 214). The expectations of male lecturers are to perform their regular duties, which could explain why there are more mentions within the Organising Theme 3.3: Teaching in this dataset. There is a stark difference between the number of mentions for male and female lecturers in the Basic Themes of 3.3.1: Delivery of Content and 3.3.2: Engaging Lecturers. If male lecturers are only expected by students to undertake their normal duties, then if they do so, they may be seen by students to be worthy of a Best Lecturer nomination.

For female lecturers, they are expected to undertake more than their normal duties, usually in the form of emotional labour (Gelber, et al., 2022). On top of their regular duties, they are expected to be caring, go above and beyond, and undertake societal-formed gendered tasks, such as organising outings (Sprague & Massoni, 2005; Barrett & Barrett, 2011; Sigurdaottir et al., 2013; Broido et al., 2015; Gelber et al., 2022). Female lecturers will have to perform additional duties compared to their male colleagues to see themselves in the nominations list for the award of Best Lecturer. Boring (2017) makes this very argument in relation to SETs:

> Students sometimes reward (or at least do not penalise) women on stereotypically female criteria, while systematically rewarding men on stereotypically male criteria" (2017, p. 35).

Boring's study outlines the criteria in a manner similar to this research study, with male criteria including being knowledgeable and having leadership skills and female criteria including 'course preparation' and 'attention given to students' (2017, p. 35).

The Penalised Woman has a fight on her hands; she is disadvantaged from the start. Suppose female lecturers have to perform additional duties to fit into students' expectations of them. In that case, this means they have to perform even more 'above and beyond' duties to be seen as worthy of a nomination (MacNell, Driscoll & Hunt, 2015). This may be why many nominations for male lecturers focus on activities deemed as normal professional duties, such as being knowledgeable, delivering content well, and giving engaging lectures. Therefore, female lecturers' SLTAs nominations in this research study are not filled with talk of delivery of content and engaging lecturers; theirs are filled with the exceptional mental health care they demonstrated or their lenity in regards to a student's personal circumstances, their time being taken up by meticulously helping students succeed in projects, such as musical bands or start-up businesses.

Male lecturers in this dataset were compared to their colleagues, not to be deemed good enough to be nominated but to be highlighted as a gold standard, to be *'good for university reputation'*. Male lecturers were regularly described as excellent for undertaking their professional duties. A clarification is needed here; this is the aim of this particular award within STLAs. The award for Best Lecturer is for a person who undertakes their role excellently, not someone who goes above and beyond regularly – it is not the aim of SLTAs to perpetuate unhealthy work/life balances. Although it is accepted that certain things lecturers do may go above and beyond, for example, a lecturer might have helped a student with a last-minute placement swap. This dataset shows that female lecturers must regularly go above and beyond within their job roles. So, in the SLTAs nominations for female lecturers, you can see the reality of how they do this. Students describe their awful mental health experience and how their lecturer went truly above and beyond to support them, how they helped them quit smoking, or how they helped their band find gigs in the local area. You would assume that, since female lecturers' nominations are mostly filled with references to going above and beyond, and male lecturers' nominations discuss their excellence in performing their normal work duties, female lecturers would be more likely to win the award. This is

not the case at this institution. Of the four years of SLTAs nominations in this research study, a male lecturer won three years, and a female lecturer won one year.

Students have gendered expectations of their lecturers (Adams et al., 2021). The Performing Woman is trying not to be The Penalised Woman, who is penalised because of her gender. The Performing Woman is putting on a performance, the performance of playing up to her students' gendered expectations of her (Adams et al., 2021). Earlier on in this research study, the term emotional labour was discussed, and the definition in which it was used in this research study was confirmed. The definition given for emotional labour when used in this research study was the unseen and unappreciated additional work that female lecturers have to undertake. In doing so, a second definition of the term emotional labour was discounted. This definition was the process of hiding one's true feelings and emotions. This definition is important for the Performing Woman. The Performing Woman must hide her true feelings and emotions in the workplace. Berry & Cassidy found that females "[report] higher levels of emotional labour than males" (2013, p. 31). It is not just a call to ensure that your personal life and feelings do not affect your work and your students; it is more than that, especially for female lecturers. Like Kate, in her story, female lecturers need to fulfil their gender expectations by not sharing their thoughts and feelings that are not in line with the masculine-dominated academic sphere. It is important to point out that the researcher chose Kate to work in a Business School as it has been found that students do not particularly like having female lecturers in business courses (Clayson, 2020).

Students expect their female lecturers to act feminine, but not too feminine in a way that does not comply with the expectation to undertake emotional labour (as in hiding their thoughts and feelings). Students can judge their female lecturers harshly regarding their personalities (Mitchell & Martin, 2018). Female lecturers have to perform for their students to ensure their personality is acceptable to them and will not bring them any repercussions, such as negative evaluations (Adams et al., 2021). They also cannot stray into masculine territory with a possibility of 'student disapproval' (MacNell, Driscoll & Hunt, 2015, p. 294). The Performing Woman has to

learn the correct amount of femininity and masculinity they can portray to their students. There is an additional challenge with this. Femininity and masculinity are being defined and redefined regularly. Therefore, female lecturers need to keep up with the gendered expectations of their students all the time to ensure they can put on the right performance and, therefore, try to escape penalisation (Adams et al., 202)1.

6.4 Persona: THE PERFECT WOMAN

The Perfect Woman has no choice but to be perfect. Unlike the Penalised Woman, who acts in a manner in which not to face reprisal, the Perfect Woman acts in a manner that allows her to win by comparison to others. The Perfect Woman is constantly compared to her female colleagues and is expected to be better than them in order to be said to be doing her role correctly. She is also reduced to her flaws and challenges and is said to be good despite her flaws and challenges.

6.4.1 Wendy – How Late is too Late?

I'm late again. I bite the inside of my cheek as my heart picks up the pace. I feel a trickle of sweat run down my back as I will myself up the last of the stairs. When I finally reach the right room, I can tell from a glance that some students have given up and left. Or maybe they never came; my mind cruelly taunts me.

I pull up a chair to the front and gratefully sit down. Without moving my body too much, I stretch to reach the wireless keyboard and clicker. I input my username and password and get today's PowerPoint presentation up on the screen.

"Thank you for waiting for me," I tell my students. I see a few of them give me an empathic smile. "For anything I don't get to cover today because of the time lost, I will make sure to record and post on the VLE by the end of the week."

I lose myself in teaching, and my earlier anxiety is now forgotten. After twenty minutes of sitting down, my back hurts so badly I know I have to move. I try to move whilst still speaking, but a groan escapes me.

"I'm sorry," I say, my cheeks turning red. "One moment."

I reach forward and hold onto the table in front of me. I use it to help me get out of the chair. I am initially so stiff I cannot straighten up. I bend over backwards slightly to stretch my back out until I can lean against the wall by the computer with some sort of resemblance of a normal posture. I stay there for the rest of the lecture. I don't get to finish all the content, so once again, I apologise.

I realise my students don't expect me to move so quickly after the lecture. After standing up, I am not so stiff and can quickly get my things together to walk to my next lecture. I end up catching up some of my students down the corridor and overhear their conversation.

"It was twenty minutes, Sam," a girl with long red hair complained.

"I know, but it's not her fault. She was literally hit by a car, and it messed up her back," Sam replies.

"And they make her walk from the other side of campus and to the top of a tall building with no working lift," a third student comments.

"She might always be late, but she's still good," Sam says.

They all nod and agree with him. I should take the 'good' part of the comment. It's nice that they think I am good at my job, but I am stuck on the caveat given and wonder if I would still be good or even if I would be great if I wasn't always late. If it wouldn't make me even later for my next class, I'd stop right here, pull out my phone and email the Head of School again. They still haven't sorted out the timetabling for changing my classes to more accessible rooms for me. Instead, I take a deep breath and speed up. I walk past my students with a curt nod and massage my back with one hand as I try to be as on time as I possibly can be for my next class.

6.4.2 The Perfect Woman

The Perfect Woman persona is one in which The Penalised and The Performing Woman aim to be perceived by their students and colleagues. In this study, Organising Themes 1.3 is dedicated to Comparison. In this Discussion Chapter, there has already been an argument relating to one of this Organising Theme's Basic Themes – 1.3.3: Good for University Reputation. However, the other two Basic Themes – 1.3.2: Comparison to Other Lecturers and 1.3.1: Despite Flaws/Challenges - will be discussed in relation to the persona of the Perfect Woman.

The findings of this research study show, for some students, they are able to evaluate teaching practice by comparison. Students can create their own baselines for what is deemed excellent teaching by comparing the practice of their lecturers. Therefore, within the nominations, there are many that contain statements such as *'they are better than all the lecturers I have this year'*. This, when *not* looking at through the feminist critical theory lens, is an acceptable way for students to evaluate teaching practice. Students are not usually well-versed in teaching practice frameworks and must decipher what they deem as excellent without this external guidance. However, when we *do* look at it with a feminist critical lens, we can see some worrying trends.

Within and outside of academia, women are compared to other women. They are also routinely discussed in terms of their flaws. The Perfect Woman stands up to this comparison, and she excels despite her flaws, even though she knows they will still be discussed. If we bring this idea into popular culture, it is common for women to have to be perfect in terms of their behaviour and bodies. Women are constantly compared to others and judged based on things that are not relevant, e.g. she's a great actress despite also being a mother; for not such a skinny woman, she does okay on the dating scene. Men are not as often described like this. We do not hear that a man is a fantastic chef, considering he has two children under three years old, or he's a great popstar considering his behaviour towards women is lacking. The Perfect Woman exists outside of academia. The Perfect Woman must always be excellent, as she knows she will be compared to others. She cannot be excellent on her own. For a woman to be called excellent, there is a price to pay. Either other women must be put

down by the fact that this woman is excellent – and therefore better than them – or by having a flaw or a challenge pointed out.

Female lecturers are under the pressure to be the Perfect Woman (MacNell, Driscoll & Hunt, 2015). They are constantly evaluated by students in their roles, and through evaluation comes comparison. They must be better than their female colleagues to get good evaluations, which ensures there is a toxic environment for female colleagues in these spaces. They will also regularly get their flaws told to a wider audience. Female lecturers in this research study had their illnesses discussed, their challenges with childcare, and even their timetabling issues described in detail so the student nominator could demonstrate to the judging panel that this nomination was valid. This is very intrusive, but the Perfect Woman cannot change it. The Perfect Woman would not be the perfect woman if she tried to change this unfair environment.

On the other hand, male lecturers do not face these issues. Like in popular culture, male lecturers in this research study were less likely to be compared to other male lecturers to validate their excellent teaching practice, and their flaws and challenges were less likely to be discussed within the SLTAs nominations. One male lecturer alone can be an excellent lecturer; he does not need to bring down other men on his way to this status. It impacts female lecturers; they must perform even more emotional labour to maintain the Perfect Woman status. Wright's (2018) study had one participant who found out that her male colleagues asked for a pay rise every year for completing their duties. The participant stated that she 'just wrote a thing to the principal every year saying, 'I've been a good girl''. The Perfect Woman would not get a pay rise like this, not like her male colleagues. The Perfect Woman is only perfect in the company of other women.

6.5 Persona: THE MOTHER AND THE FRIEND

The Mother and the Friend are two sides of the same coin. They are ways in which students describe and perceive their lecturers and identify them. The female part of this persona is the Mother. The Mother is a caregiver who supports her students

through their personal and emotional issues. The Friend is the male part of this persona. The Friend is not an authoritative figure; he is approachable and supports them academically but does not tend to spot differences in his students' moods and behaviours.

6.5.1 Lizzie and Ciaran – A Pint or a Cake?

Ciaran groaned as the alarm buzzed loudly. Lizzie didn't even open her eyes; she just put a pillow over her face.

"Liz shut it off," Ciaran said sleepily.

"Your side," Lizzie manages to say.

He doesn't reply.

"Your alarm," Lizzie tells him.

He groans again but switches it off. He reluctantly gets out of bed and opens the curtains. Now it was Lizzie's turn to groan.

"Sorry, but you need to get up in like half an hour anyway," Ciaran defends himself.

"Don't worry, Maggie will bring in coffee/tea and cake for the 9am," Lizzie says with a slight smirk.

"Aww, don't make me jealous. I am about to go to training in the cold, and Maggie, your 'second mother', is baking you a cake," Ciaran says with his head almost entirely in the wardrobe, searching for a pair of socks.

"You shouldn't have taken football then," Lizzie teases gently.

"Oh yes, my apologies, Miss Psychology, you're right. I should have taken an "indoor" course to get this kind of treatment."

Lizzie finally sits up and smiles at Ciaran. They've been together since comprehensive school and came to university together. She knows when to tease and when not to. "I'm just lucky. Plus, you are doing what you love; that's awesome."

He pulls socks from the wardrobe and chucks them in a bag. He shoves it on his shoulder, rushes over to Lizzie and briefly kisses her.

"6pm at the pub?" he asks.

"I'll see you then," Lizzie confirms.

Lizzie does, in fact, get coffee and cake. Nothing better than chocolate cake for breakfast, she thought as she settled down for Maggie's lecturer on ethics in psychology research. She handouts a cheat sheet when thinking about research ethics. She knows that we will soon be coming up with our dissertation projects and will all have to submit research ethics forms for review. She gives a handout to my friend, Victoria, next to me and it's on blue paper. I love how Maggie didn't have to be told about this. She knew Victoria was dyslexic and preferred blue paper before our first class. In that first class, she had asked us all our names and wrote them down. When she gave out handouts, she gave Victoria hers, on blue paper, with no fanfare. It was just done for her, no problem.

After Maggie's happy farewell and promise of uploading the lecture to the VLE space in the next hour, Lizzie, Victoria and Jamie walked to the library together. Jamie was one of those friends that they always chatted to when they saw them but didn't bother much outside of uni.

"Maggie emailed me after last week and said that she thought I didn't seem my normal self, and she was there if I needed any support," Jamie tells the girls.

They both audible make aww noises.

"I know; what would we do without Maggie?" they ask Lizzie and Victoria.

“I don’t know,” Lizzie confirms,” but I know I wouldn’t make it through today without her famous chocolate cake.”

The coffee and chocolate cake breakfast keeps Lizzie going through a mammoth library student session and a 4pm lecture but she immediately tells Ciaran she’s starving when she arrives at the pub at 6pm. He laughs and asks her what she wants.

“Sausage, chips and beans, please,” Lizzie flutters her eyelashes at him.

“A child’s meal,” Ciaran teases. “I’m having a mixed grill. I’ll go up an order, you find a table.”

Lizzie watches as Ciaran disappears into the busy crowd by the bar. She flicks through her social media accounts and even reads the news. She can’t believe how long it takes for Ciaran to come back.

“Where were you?” she asks upon his return.

He sits opposite her and smiles, “Richard was sitting at the bar.”

“Richard?” she asks but immediately remembers. “Oh yeah, Richard. Was it weird to see him outside of uni?”

Ciaran confidently shakes his head. “Nah, he’s a legend. Like he’s an actual god in football, I swear.”

“Do you fancy him or something?” Lizzie teases but gently reaches out for Ciaran’s hand.

“Shut up, Lizzie,” he says, but he takes her hand. “He’s cool. He’s a friend. We had a quick drink and a chat together.”

Lizzie raises her eyebrows at this. A pint with a lecturer, she couldn’t imagine it. She thought about whether she’d prefer a pint or a cake. She’d pick a cake every time.

6.5.2 The Mother and The Friend

Students are clear within their nominations that they value being treated as an individual human being that their lecturer knows, acknowledges and interacts with them. It is important to students that their lecturers know who they are (Allred, King & Amos, 2021). In this research study, male lecturers were perceived to be more like friends and interacted more on this level with their students. In comparison, female lecturers were called students' mothers. In all of the SLTAs nominations in this research study, no male lecturers were called anything parental, like fatherly. These findings helped create the dual persona of The Mother (female lecturers) and The Friend (male lecturers).

Lizzie and Ciaran's story above shows some of the ways the female lecturers in this dataset acted, which in turn led the students to call them motherly or like their mother. Interestingly, in the dataset, the students stated that both their male and female lecturers brought in food for them, but only in the female lecturers' nominations do they claim that their female lecturers made them the food. We cannot know if this is true, but we can assume that students have a stereotypical perception that cooking and baking are feminine activities, which is why they may only say their female lecturers cooked or baked for them (Taillie 2018; Wolfson et al. 2021).

The main way that the data supports this persona, apart from the students actually calling their female lecturers their mother and their male lecturers their friends, is from the Organising Theme 2.3: Support and Help. This theme held four Basic Themes – 2.3.1: Support, 2.3.2: Care, 2.3.3: Personal Help, and 2.3.4: Academic Help. There were 822 mentions of this theme within the entire dataset. It is clear that students value feeling cared for and supported throughout their university careers. The amount of mentions for the Basic Theme of 2.3.1: Support and 2.3.4: Academic Help is fairly balanced between male and female lecturers. However, female lecturers had more mentions in the Basic Themes of 2.3.2: Care and 2.3.3: Personal Help compared to their male colleagues. This has been found in other studies, such as Sprague & Massoni's study, which found that the 'words that meant Compassionate,

Sensitive, Giving, and Attractive were used only to describe best women teachers' (2005, p. 783).

When looking at the dataset, there is no contesting that students perceive their male lecturers as supportive of them and their academic work and wish to note this when writing their SLTAs nominations. Female lecturers were more likely to be nominated for being caring. However, is there a difference between these two terms? Supportive, as defined in the Oxford English Dictionary, means 'giving help, encouragement, or sympathy to someone' (Oxford English Dictionaryb, n.d.). Meanwhile, the Oxford English Dictionary (Oxford English Dictionarya, n.d.) defines caring as 'kind, helpful, and showing that you care about other people'. Both terms mean helpful, and with sympathy in one and kindness in the other, it can be argued that they are very similar. Here, in this research study, we can pose the question: Is there a difference between the gendered use of these two terms? In other words, is supportive more akin to the masculine and caring more akin to the feminine? Are the students in this dataset using two separate words to largely mean the same thing? We cannot be sure if male and female lecturers give the same level of care and support or if students genuinely believe that their female lecturers are more caring. What can be deduced from the dataset is that the students mention that female lecturers are more likely to bake or cook them food, pick up on their mood changes, proactively seek to support their students, and are good at supporting students' disability and accessibility needs without being asked.

There is an impact on viewing female lecturers as mothers and male lecturers as friends. It can add to the already quite deep-rooted stereotype that work is a masculine sphere and home is a feminine sphere. Mothers tend to undertake emotional labour at home, and if they are then seen to be a mother at work, too, it can be assumed that this entails even more emotional labour. Broidio et al. (2015) argue that if we value women this way, we demonstrate benevolent sexism. Sigurdaottir et al. push this argument further by stating that students valuing their female lecturers acting in a caregiver, motherly way 'could potentially have a notable effect on how female and male teachers develop in their academic work and the

(re)creation of gendered expectations or stereotypes' (2023, p. 964). If female lecturers need to be caring to get good evaluations and progress in their careers, then they will be caring and motherly, and this gets praised, so they continue, starting a cycle they cannot get out of. Friends come and go, but a mother is a mother for life. The Mother is trapped by her very definition, but the Friend, he has freedom.

6.6 Persona: THE QUIET WOMAN

The Quiet Woman undertakes unseen, unacknowledged and not outwardly appreciated emotional labour at home and work. The Quiet Woman is quiet in her approach. She knows that without her emotional labour, the things that need to get done will not be done. She is quiet with her generosity of time (Thompson & Zaitseva, 2012; Matheson, 2019), and this impacts her career progression within academia.

6.6.1 Deepti – No Snooze Button

No snooze button. That's what I decided when I came up with my new rule of getting up at 4:30am every morning. But it's day six, and the temptation of pressing that snooze button is taking over. I watch my finger hover over the button, my eyes slowly adjusting in the dark. I remind myself that the no snooze button rule wasn't just for my benefit – it's much easier to just wake up once rather than wake up every three minutes with the snooze button – but it is also for my husband's benefit. He isn't exactly pleased that the alarm will go off at 4:30am but when I promised it would only go off once and I would shut it off quickly, he okayed it. I don't want to keep disturbing him with my new rule. He's got important work to do and needs his sleep. With that in mind, moving my finger from the snooze button to the alarm off button is much easier.

After a quick refreshing shower, I settle into the study with a large mug of black coffee. I open my work emails and hear them all ping in. 30 emails. I only checked them five hours ago. I glance at them and am disappointed to find only one is spam, and two are mass emails that I can file away and delete. Another email is from Angela, the only other female lecturer in our small Geology department. She is answering an email I sent at about 11pm checking a detail about an upcoming field trip we weren't asked to

organise but have ended up taking the reins after little organisation was done by others in the department. A student raised that the bus booked is not accessible, and we are working on finding a different, accessible bus company we can use. I can see that Angela replied at 2.31am. At least, under her signature, it says sent from her phone. I hope that she was in bed, just checking emails and not still up working.

My other emails are from students, mainly extension or office hours requests. I answer them as swiftly as I can. Getting up this early was supposed to allow me time to do my research before the kids wake up, before work, before I pick up the kids from school before I make dinner before I clean the house and before I prep for the kids' next day in school. Instead, I am writing a long apology email to the student who raised the issue about accessibility for the field trip. It's not that I am not sorry for the issue; it's unacceptable. But it's an inherited issue from a male colleague who decided he did not have time to organise the field trip anymore; it was getting in the way of his research. Now, it's getting in the way of mine. The research I have to wake up at 4:30am for. When all my emails are done, I open up the article I am currently working on, but I cannot completely focus. A small part of my mind remains conflicted. Can I be annoyed that I have been distracted from this research because of students' accessibility issues? It certainly feels wrong. Nevertheless, I am on my way to sorting it and hopefully supporting the student; they've even got a 5am email to prove it.

6.6.2 The Quiet Woman

The Quiet Woman is not necessarily a quiet person; rather she is quiet in terms of the emotional labour she undertakes. Emotional labour is undertaken both within her home and work spheres. It is unseen, and she cannot be *loud* about this additional work she undertakes for fear of retribution or for the fear that it will still be unappreciated and left for her to undertake regardless. Throughout this chapter, female lecturers have been linked to going above and beyond and how they need to do so in order to be in a chance of being nominated for the award of Best Lecturer. The concept of going above and beyond is personal; each student will define this differently, so of course in some instances students will define professional normal

duties as going above and beyond (Lowe & Shaw, 2019). Despite this, in most instances of students nominating their lecturers for going above and beyond is due to the lecturers undertaking additional duties and performing emotional labour. Indeed, it is their generosity of time that students recognise and write into their nominations for their lecturers (Thompson & Zaitseva, 2012; Matheson, 2019). These students may not perceive this generosity of time as emotional labour, nor think about the impact of this. However, because it makes them feel like a valued human being who is being supported to succeed, to them, of course, it is a positive.

In this study, students nominated male lecturers more for working outside work hours. However, when examining the details within these nominations, there are several instances of students nominating their female lecturers for working outside of work hours without defining it as such, for example, that they answered their email at 4am. Is there a stereotype at play here? Do students perceive their lecturers as, in their own words, having '*spare time*' to give, whereas their female lecturers '*sacrifice*' their home/family time? It could be that it is the *actual* timing of the time they work outside of hours that makes a difference. Suppose male lecturers are able to stay after a lecture has finished and do not worry about, for example, picking up their children from school or making dinner for their family. Does this feel different to students compared with their female lecturers, who find pockets of time to work outside of hours, for example, at 4am? More male lecturers' nominations had the word consistent than female lecturers. This could suggest that male lecturers' availability was given in a consistent manner, whereas female lecturers have to find time when they can. Indeed, female lecturers are most likely undertaking emotional labour at home, with childcare, managing a household, and caring responsibilities, so they cannot give consistent service around all their additional duties at home. For the Basics Theme of 1.2.2: Makes Time, female and male lecturers had the same number of mentions, showing that when students needed them to make time for them, they did. Therefore, the concept of lecturers working outside of work hours could just be down to students' individual perceptions.

There is a huge impact for female lecturers both on the amount emotional labour they have to undertake and the student perceptions of this work. Just by the very fact that female lecturers undertake emotional labour, they become time-poor. In their work sphere, a time-poor lecturer usually has little time to undertake activities that help advance their careers, as they focus on retaining their careers instead (Gelber, et al., 2022). The Quiet Woman does not have time for research, attending conferences, sitting on committees, networking, and publishing their work. All these activities are important for career progression (Boring, 2017). The emotional labour of their home sphere also has an impact. The time taken up by childcare and caring responsibilities can affect not only the time they have available to work in a manner that helps advance and retain their careers in academia but also sometimes means that they have to reduce their hours in work (Barrett & Barrett, 2011), or fall out of the leaky pipeline all together (Cooper, 2019).

Students, by only praising female lecturers who balance all their emotional labour duties and still put their students first, perpetuate this unhealthy gendered idea that female lecturers, and women, are expected to undertake this unseen and unappreciated work. Lubicz-Nawrocka & Bunting argue in their study on SLTAs:

> "Although teaching awards should not mistakenly promote a poor work/life balance for teaching staff who go above and beyond by working outside of what is expected for their job, student nominators do recognise the time and effort that excellent teachers devote" (2019, p. 74).

Students are unintentionally keeping the Quiet Woman quiet. It is the wider higher education sphere's responsibility to stop this from happening. As Kandiko Howson, Coate & de St Croix state, 'indeed, it is those doing the 'housework' who enable other academics to pursue externally oriented prestige' (2018, p. 544). Until those who

benefit from female lecturers' emotional labour help to make a change, the Quiet Woman will stay quiet.

6.7 Summary of Chapter

The six personas (The Professional Man, The Confident Expert, The Penalised Woman and The Perfect Woman, the Performing Woman, the Mother and the Friend, and the Quiet Woman) are derived from the SLTAs nominations that make up this dataset. These personas are depicted in the creative nonfiction in the six short stories found in this chapter. Although these short stories are fictional, they are based on the truth of the dataset. These six personas enabled a discussion which was undertaken through the lens of feminist critical theory. This theory allowed the researcher to look at their data in a way that analyses how students' perceptions are affected by the gendered expectations that are grounded in societal norms.

Overall, these six personas demonstrate a gender bias. Female lecturers are penalised just for being a woman. Therefore, they undertake quiet, unseen emotional labour (Sprague & Massoni, 2005); they perform the way they are expected to (Adams et al., 2021), including being motherly so that they can be the perfect woman (Sigurdaottir et al., 2023). Male lecturers are seen as the commercial image of a lecturer and allowed to be a confident expert. Female lecturers within this study were less likely to win an award. In fact, in their nominations, they had to have references to more of the themes found in the thematic network analysis compared to their male counterparts in order to be shortlisted for the award of Best Lecturer. Female lecturers have to do more than their male colleagues to be seen as worthy by a student for them to write a nomination for them, and they have to do even more in their nominations in order to win. Indeed, out of the four years of SLTAs nominations included in this dataset, only once did a female lecturer win the Best Lecturer award.

Students judge winners based on what is written within the SLTAs nominations, not the number of times a lecturer was nominated. It is not the judging panel's fault that they have not selected female winners; they have no idea who the nominations are written about, nor their gender. Students writing the nominations have gender

bias so ingrained in them that the judging panel do not stand a chance to avoid perpetuating the gender bias. It does not seem to matter what the guidance said that was given to students nominating. Banks (2021) ran a study to determine if new guidance given to students nominating would make a difference and found that it only really made things worse. The new guidance was written using the Advance HE'S UKPSF as a framework, using terms like professional and engaging, and all terms used were based solely on a lecturer's normal duties. Banks (2021) found that students used these terms even more so in the nominations they wrote for male lecturers and seemed to avoid using them in female lecturers' nominations. Therefore, when it came to the judging panel, the students on the panel used the guidance given to students nominating to guide them. They gravitated towards the nominations that used words and phrases found in the guidance, which was more likely to be a male lecturer's nomination. Therefore, the winners were more likely to be male lecturers.

What do we do to stop the bias? Do we give different guidance to students when nominating? Do we teach them about gender bias within HE and how it can filter into their nominations? Do we train the students on the judging panel about gender bias and expect them to decipher what nominations need their attention more in terms of undressing gender bias? Do we give nominations to the judging panel with an assigned gender? We could even have a female and a male Best Lecturer every year, but that would also open up various other arguments. Renström et al. (2021) recommends sharing the found gender biases with both lecturers and students. By being aware of these biases, the lecturers can make their own judgments on how they teach – do they focus on the professional regular duties or 'should they be accommodating and responsive, which hence results in being liked?' (Renström, et al., 2021). Students can alter the way they evaluate their lecturers of differing genders by taking into account these known biases.

Is this problem even solvable at the SLTAs level? Is this an academia or even a global issue? It is indeed a global issue, an issue within academia, and an issue within SLTAs. We cannot solve it all, but we can play our part at the SLTAs level. Future research studies can look into the different ways we can negate gender bias, and

hopefully, one day, we can find a solution that enables an equitable playing field for female and male lecturers within SLTAs. As Cobb & Godden-Rasul state ‘effective feminism is surely all about responding to events as they arise, while at the same time working continually towards more long-term goals’ (2017, p. 238). This must be tackled at an SLTAs level, an academic level, and a global level.

6.8 Road Map of Conclusion Chapter

The Conclusion chapter is split into three sections. The first is a discussion to bring together all of the research study in order to answer this research study’s research questions and demonstrate how this study makes an original contribution to the body of literature it sits within. The second section discusses the limitations of this research study. The third section discusses the implications of this research study on future practice and research. The chapter concludes with the researcher’s final thoughts.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

This chapter summarises this research study and explores the key insights derived from the findings. This research study aimed to use SLTAs nominations to understand how students perceive their lecturers and if students perceive female and male lecturers differently. It also aimed to produce creative nonfiction in the form of short stories to demonstrate, not tell, the readers the reality of gender differences within the dataset. Students within the dataset perceived teaching excellence via four main themes: students as consumers, students as learners, lecturers as academics and lecturers as educators. Students also perceived their female and male lecturers differently, with the findings depicting female lecturers within this dataset undertaking emotional labour. It is this emotional labour, rather than their teaching, that students discuss more often within their female lecturers' nominations.

This chapter will begin with a summary of the key findings of this research in section 7.1. Section 7.2 will explore how this research study has brought an original contribution to the body of literature it sits within. In the next section, 7.3, the limitations of the study are explored. In section 7.4, the implications this research study has on future practice and future study are discussed. Lastly, in 7.5, this chapter concludes with the researcher's final thoughts of this research study.

7.1 Gender Bias in SLTAs

There is gender bias in SLTAs nominations of this dataset. This study examined nominations for 750 lecturers who were nominated for the award of Best Lecturer over a four-year period. To begin with, fewer female lecturers were nominated. Only 291 female lecturers were nominated, compared to 459 male lecturers, a ratio of 1:2. The ratio of female to male lecturers working at this institution during this period was 4:5. This suggests that, within this dataset, students think of male lecturers more when it comes to nominating them for the award of Best Lecturer, potentially because men are usually synonymous with a typical 'professor' compared to women (Miller &

Chamberlin, 2000; Renström, Sendén & Lindqvist, 2021; Khokhlova, Lamba & Kishore 2023).

This thesis took a journey from undertaking a thematic network analysis on all nominations without the gender identifiers to determine how students describe their lecturers and lecturers' teaching practice to determining how this differs between female and male lecturers. Lastly, in the discussion chapter, the six personas (the Professional Man, the Confident Expert, the Penalised Woman and the Performing Woman, the Perfect Woman, the Mother and the Friend, and the Quiet Woman) found in the dataset were explored. To aid the reader's understanding, they were accompanied by creative nonfiction in the form of short stories.

Female lecturers appear to undertake more emotional labour in order to be nominated (Boring, 2017). They undertake this emotional labour in order not to be penalised by their students (MacNell, Driscoll & Hunt, 2015; Mitchell & Martin, 2018). This also meant that their time was taken up by emotional labour, which could affect their career progression and retention (Sprauge and Massoni 2005; Barrett and Barrett, 2011; Broido et al., 2015; Gelber et al., 2022). When nominated in this dataset, they were more likely to be nominated for attitudes and activities related to caregiving, such as caring, giving personal support, and being motherly, than for activities related to teaching. The findings of this study suggest that male lecturers are awarded for undertaking their normal duties. In contrast, female lecturers have to go beyond the call of duty and undertake emotional labour in order to be nominated for the same award. It is important to note that female lecturers' nominations had to contain more Basic Themes in order to be shortlisted within this dataset. This resulted in fewer female lecturer winners, with only one of the four years of this dataset having a female lecturer winning the Best Lecturer Award.

This study was completed through a feminist critical theory lens, which allowed the researcher to approach this research with the aim of understanding students' perceptions that are based on societal gendered expectations. The findings of this study demonstrate how SLTAs in their current set-up are open to gender bias.

However, this is not the fault of those who organise SLTAs. This gender bias is so set in society and within academia that it finds its way into SLTAs. The study shows that female lecturers have to undertake emotional labour (Sprague & Massoni, 2005; Barrett & Barrett, 2011; Sigurdaottir et al., 2013; Broido et al., 2015; Gelber et al., 2022), put on a performance (Sprague & Massoni, 2005; MacNell, Driscoll & Hunt, 2015; Boring, 2017; Gelber et al., 2022; Renström et al. 2021) to do 'their gender right' (Adams et al., 2021). Moreover, they have to work against unfair advantage, where men are not held to the same high standards they are (MacNell, Driscoll & Hunt, 2015; Boring, 2017; Gelber et al., 2022). They are also in a masculine world. Academia was made and built by men, and women are simply trying to fit into a world that was not made for them and has not truly been adapted for them (Luke, 1997; Goodman & Harrop, 2000; Leathwood & Read, 2008; Mitchell & Martin, 2018).

7.2 Original Contribution

This research study makes an original contribution to the body of literature by using SLTAs nominations, an informal student evaluation process, to discover how students perceive their lecturers of different genders. The research study adds to the body of literature by depicting that students perceive and describe their male and female lecturers differently (Miller & Chamberlin, 2000; Sprague & Massoni, 2005; MacNell, Driscoll & Hunt, 2015; Mitchell & Martin, 2018; Adams et al., 2021). This research study argues that these differences are due to societal gendered expectations and that the gender bias within the nominations negatively affects female lecturers. Female lecturers are less likely to be nominated and win the award of Best Lecturer in the SLTAs. When they are nominated, they appear to have had to put in more work than their male colleagues. This original contribution shows that there is gender bias even when students are informally evaluating their lecturers and their lecturer's teaching practice and even when they are doing so when they are praising their lecturers.

SLTAs nominations and/or awards are used in promotion and CPD activities, such as Advance HE Fellowship applications. If female lecturers are less likely to win an SLTA, this could affect their career progression within HE. Female lecturers face more

barriers to career progression in HE, such as caring responsibilities, childcare and part-time contracts, and this research study shows how the SLTAs could add another barrier. There is much work to be done to ensure that female lecturers can progress within HE and help turn the masculine space of academia into one that is open to all, which exemplifies the need to mitigate against gender bias in SETs and SLTAs in order to reduce barriers to female academics' career retention and career progression (Sprague & Massoni, 2005; Barrett & Barrett, 2011; Boring, 2017; Kandiko Howson, Coate & de St Croix, 2018; Gelber et al., 2022). These findings could also apply to both work and home spheres. This research study ultimately shows that women are more likely to undertake emotional labour, a time-consuming and unnoticed act. Emotional labour is tiring and unfair. We, as a society, need to work harder to ensure that gender biases like these are eradicated. We also need to make sure we change the 'masculine' academic world into one that welcomes all (Luke, 1997; Goodman & Harrop, 2000; Leathwood & Read, 2008; Mitchell & Martin, 2018).

For all genders, we need to mitigate against the unhealthy work/life balance that are being perpetuated by SLTAs, for instance, sending emails at 4 am. Being aware of gender inequalities will allow SLTAs organisers to ensure all staff have an equitable chance of being nominated and winning an award.

This research study also contributes to the literature claiming that students have a valid viewpoint on teaching practice in SLTAs (Lubicz-Nawrocka & Bunting, 2019; Matheson, 2019). Although students may not have knowledge of what the sector or what academics define as teaching excellence, students have a valid viewpoint as the receivers of teaching. This valid viewpoint from students, demonstrates what students value from their lecturers, which could influence ongoing work on teaching excellence. The nominations from the dataset that were used to form thematic network maps and short stories could also be a good resource for HE staff in their continual professional development, as they will depict real-lived experiences of what other academics are doing in their teaching practice and what students think is important to their university experiences.

This research study also makes an original contribution by using creative nonfiction to demonstrate how students perceive and describe their lecturers and their lecturers' teaching practice when praising them. This research study used the concept of personas to discuss the findings of the study but also used the personas to produce fictional characters and storylines that were based on the truths found in the dataset. This creative nonfiction was created in the form of short stories so the readers could immerse themselves in the world of those personas. The original contribution of using creative nonfiction in this way when discussing SLTAs shows how creative writing and educational research can be used together within research. It allowed the researcher to step back and look at the data as it has been structured through the thematic network analysis and frequency of mentions analysis and delve even deeper. The researcher was able to not only tell the reader the direct quotes from the SLTAs nominations but also bring these into the short stories in order to make the reader feel. It is the researcher's aim to make the readers feel outraged by the gender bias within the creative nonfiction and motivate others to work on eradicating gender bias from within SLTAs, academia, and society.

7.3 Limitations

7.3.1 Gender Identity

This study relied upon the gender identifiers given within the dataset. These gender identifiers were given to lecturers based on either the pronouns they put in their email signature or the gender listed on their staff profile. This meant that it was the gender identity the lecturer wished to give to the public, which, in one way, is precisely what the researcher wanted to use. However, the staff profiles and pronouns could potentially not have been up-to-date, and there was no other method used to check if each gender identifier was correct. The research assumed the data was correct and was pleased that the gender identifiers used were the gender identities the lecturers wished to show in their roles.

7.3.2 Student Nominators

The nominators (the students) were unknown in this study. It is unclear as to the motivations of the students when nominating. There is no data as to what promotional material they engaged with, why they decided to make a nomination, or how long they spent writing it. The researcher did not know their gender and could not make any discoveries as to whether the nominators' gender made a difference to the nominations they wrote and about whom. Other studies have found that the gender of the student nominator can make a difference in how they perceive and write about lecturers of different genders (Boring, Ottoboni & Stark, 2016; Boring, 2017). Knowing the gender of the student nominator could have helped to explore where the gender biases at play within the dataset stem from just male students, just female students, or a mixture of both. However, the researcher recommends it for future study.

7.3.3 Institution

The research acknowledges that the study is limited by having only one participating institution. However, this study makes an original contribution to the body of literature. Future study based on other institutions' SLTAs nominations would be greatly received and would enable academics to make comparisons of the findings across many different types of institutions.

7.3.4 Surveys

The SLTAs nomination form is very similar to other surveys that students are asked to complete as part of their studies. Although SLTAs are a joyous event, the researcher acknowledges that they come with very similar issues akin to other surveys, including survey fatigue, time to fill out the survey, understanding the survey, promotion of the survey, and having access to the survey (Adams & Umbach, 2012; Estelami, 2015, Spooren & Christiaens, 2017; Hoel & Dahl, 2019; McClain, Gulbis & Hays, 2018). These issues may affect the students who were able and wished to place a nomination in the SLTAs, and knowing which students were nominated, for example, students with disabilities, students from different levels of study, and students with caring

responsibilities, might have affected the way the data in this research study was interpreted.

7.4 Reflexivity

Reflexivity allows the researcher to reflect on their positionality within their work and what impact this has had (England, 1994). This section contains my reflection on my positionality and how this may have impacted this research study.

My background in leading SLTAs led me to undertake a PhD and focussing my research on SLTAs. Within my work on SLTAs, I felt that the nominations were underused, and it felt to me that students were able to write about teaching excellence in a clear and nuanced manner. However, I left the job role where I was responsible for SLTAs at the start of my PhD and I feel that this distance allowed me to look at the SLTAs nominations with fresh eyes. This research study aimed to understand what students said about their lecturers and did not ultimately seek to discover if students could discuss teaching excellence or not. Therefore, my positive stance on SLTAs enabled me to value what the students were saying, allowing me to delve into this dataset to discover what the students were saying about their lecturers.

The distance from SLTAs after leaving my job and moving to a new institution to work allowed me to look at the dataset with no preconceptions of who the nominations were written about. This research study was not a typical insider researcher, as I had pre-existing links with SLTAs in question but did not work on them, or within the institution anymore. This allowed me to hold the role of researcher, rather than the role of insider, as more important with ease. I was able to undertake this research with the students' voices as the most important element, rather than worrying about breaking down relationships with colleagues.

Despite my distance from the SLTAs, it was vital that the research design was one of rigour to ensure that I was able to approach my work with no preconceptions of who the lecturers were, what events were being discussed and the genders at play. By ensuring that the participating institution and I undertook a check of the dataset to

ensure all gender and identifying data was removed was an important step of data preparation. After I had done this check, I waited several weeks to return to the data to ensure I had forgotten any identifying data I had to remove. I was able to analyse the data with no gender identifiers which also ensured that I did not find gender bias simply because I was a feminist researcher trying to discover if there was gender bias in SLTAs.

However, I was a feminist researcher employing the use of feminist critical theory. I used the theory to guide me in developing the creative nonfiction short stories that are within the discussion chapter. As I had found gender bias, I felt it was my duty to inform the readers of it in the most accessible manner. It is important to note here that if I had used a different theory or if another researcher had undertaken this research with a different theory, the creative nonfiction may not be the same.

Reflexivity has allowed me to reflect on my own positionality within this research and enabled me to be transparent with how my positionality has impacted this research study.

7.5 Implications

7.5.1 Implications for Future Practice

SLTAs perpetuate gender bias, societal gendered expectations, and unhealthy work/life balances. It is essential for those who organise SLTAs to understand how gender bias can affect nominations and consider ways in which they can mitigate this, such as:

- Helping students understand their own gender biases
- Providing guidance for students to enable them to avoid describing their lectures with gender stereotypes – following on from Banks (2021)
- Deciphering how best to run student judging panels to avoid gender biases affects their judgement

- Analysing their own SLTAs nominations to look for the gender biases at play within their own institutions and working with the broader institution to reduce gender inequality

7.5.2 Implications for Future Study

SLTAs nominations are valuable and contain interesting data. Lubicz-Nawrocka & Bunting call them 'valuable, albeit underused, resources for understanding student perceptions of teaching excellence in UK higher education institutions' (2019, p. 65). There is a need to use SLTAs nominations after that cycle's awards are wrapped up to utilise the wealth of student feedback they hold. Thompson & Zaitseva's (2012) call to use the nominations more widely was echoed by Seppala & Smith (2020). This researcher has aimed to answer this call alongside Matheson (2019), who conducted interviews with SLTAs winners to learn more about their teaching practices, and Lowe & Shaw (2019), who used their institutions' SLTAs nominations to discover the best assessment feedback practices.

There is a plethora of future study that is needed in this area. Some are listed below:

- Studies involving other institutions' SLTAs nominations so they can be compared
- Studies that look at other demographics, such as disability, ethnicity and age, to explore the intersectionality with gender
- Studies that engage with staff who were nominated to discover the realities of their practice
- Studies that analyse student nominator's gender to discover if this has an effect on the gender biases at play in the nominations
- Studies that look into the motivations for students nominating their lecturer

- Studies that examine different factors that may affect nominations, such as time taken to write a nomination, how the students found out about the SLTAs and the level and year of study

7.6 Final Thoughts

Students have the ability to evaluate teaching excellence, but they do it in their own way, and academics cannot expect them to judge the quality of teaching in the same way that they would do so. Matheson confirms this when they state that ‘students, when asked for evidence-based nominations, are clearly able to recognise teaching excellence’ (2019, p. 15). However, some academics believe that students are unable to evaluate teaching practice because students cannot do it the same way they would (Bradley et al., 2015; Madriago & Morley, 2016; Lakeman et al., 2023a; Arroyo-Barriguete, 2023). Bradley et al. argue that SLTAs are ‘not a measure of teaching effectiveness or scholarship of teaching. The awards are about student perceptions of inspirational teaching’ (2015, p. 238). They highlight an argument given here in this research study. Students can evaluate teaching from their perspective, which is their perception of excellent teaching, which is truly valuable. There is a group of academics who 'trust students as appropriate feedback givers’ (Karm, Sarv & Groccia, 2022, p.11). This view is shared by several other academics (Lowe & Shaw, 2019; Lubicz-Nawrocka & Bunting, 2019; Matheson, 2019). This research study aligns with this argument. Students within this dataset were able to identify a myriad of attitudes and activities that lecturers undertake that, to them, were akin to teaching excellence. Additionally, students hit every Area of Activity, Core Knowledge and Professional Value with the UKPSF, demonstrating that they evaluate teaching excellence in a way that aligns with a renowned HE teaching framework.

When looking holistically at the dataset of this study, it follows Zou et al.’s (2020) finding that teaching excellence is split into teaching and development and teaching excellence as the impact it has on students. It is clear from this thesis’ findings that students value learning and teaching but also how it enables them to progress and grow and how their lecturers treat them, know them and make them feel

(Allred, King & Amos, 2021; Dransfield, Wood & Su, 2022; Ashwin et al., 2023). It is clear from this dataset that students still largely see themselves as learners, rather than consumers (Tomlinson, 2017; Brooks et al., 2021; Ashwin et al., 2023). A positive finding in a HE landscape that appears to be forcing students into the role of consumers.

This thesis also confirms that there is gender bias found within SLTAs nominations, similar to the gender bias found within SETs. Female lecturers have a fight on their hands to win a SLTA. They have to undertake more emotional labour in order to be nominated. They are then less likely to be shortlisted and to win the award of Best Lecturer. There is work to be done to mitigate these biases within SLTAs. Additionally, SLTAs organisers need to further consider how SLTAs potentially perpetuate unhealthy work/life balances for all lecturers and how this can be mitigated (Lubicz-Nawrocka & Bunting, 2019).

Overall, this study argues that women in society are undertaking thankless, time-consuming and unnoticed emotional labour. This emotional labour detracts from other activities female lecturers can participate in that would help their changes of career progress and attainment (Gelber, et al., 2022). It is a worrying finding, not only for female lecturers but for wider society. We are not only putting up barriers for female lecturers, we are losing out on their expertise, and the possibility of advancements. Additionally, this emotional labour does not only affect work but home lives (Connell 2005; Taillie 2018; Ciciolla and Luthar 2019; Hjálmsdóttir and Bjarnadóttir 2021; Wolfson et al. 2021). Women are tired, time-poor and thankless. Academia, and the wider world, are failing women (Barrett & Barrett, 2011; Chavez and Mitchell, 2020; Smele, Quinlan & Lacroix, 2021). We as a society need to tackle this in the fight for gender equity.

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Appendix

Ethics Approval Letter

16th June 2022

Dear Sophie Banks,

Thank you for submitting your ethics application for *'Using Student-Led Teaching Awards nominations to produce creative non-fiction to depict students' views on their lecturers' teaching practice'.* The information you provided has been reviewed by Dr Natasa Lackovic and I can confirm that approval has been granted for this project.

As principal investigator your responsibilities include:

- ensuring that (where applicable) all the necessary legal and regulatory requirements in order to conduct the research are met, and the necessary licenses and approvals have been obtained;
- reporting any ethics-related issues that occur during the course of the research or arising from the research (e.g. unforeseen ethical issues, complaints about the conduct of the research, adverse reactions such as extreme distress) to the Research Ethics Officer (Dr Murat Oztok or Dr Natasa Lackovic).
- submitting details of proposed substantive amendments to the protocol to Dr Natasa Lackovic (spvr) for approval.

Please do not hesitate to contact your supervisor if you require further information about this.

Kind regards,

Alison Sedgwick

Programme Administrator

Doctoral Programme in Educational Research

Head of Department

Professor Paul Ashwin, BA, MSc, PhD

Professors

Carolyn Jackson, BSc, PhD

Don Passey, BSc, MA, PhD

Murray Saunders, BA, MA, PhD

Malcolm Tight, BSc, PhD

Paul Trowler, BA, MA, Cert Ed., PhD

http://www.lancaster.ac.uk/fass/edres/

Educational Research

County South

Lancaster University

Bailrigg Campus

Lancaster

LA1 4YD

United Kingdom

TEL: (+44) (0)1524 593572

Codebook

Global Theme 1	Students as Consumers	Description	Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria	Example Quote
Organising Theme 1.1	*Worth Money and Time*			
Basic Theme 1.1.1	Worthwhile Lectures	This theme incorporates how students perceive their lectures being worthwhile, in relation to both their time being well spent and worth the money they have spent on their degree.	Inclusion: worthwhile, time well spent, worth the student loans. Exclusion: enjoyable lectures, I learned a lot in lectures.	*Fully committed to making [the] educational experience worth your time*
Basic Theme 1.1.2	Beyond the Call of Duty	This theme depicts how students believe that their lecturers go beyond the role of lecturer in order to help them academically and emotionally.	Inclusion: they go above and beyond, they go the extra mile. Exclusion: when these phrases are not included.	*They are fully committed to making [the] educational experience worth your time*
Organising Theme 1.2	*On Demand*			
Basic Theme 1.2.1	Always	This theme includes all the ways students use the word always, or synonyms of, to describe a lecturer's practice.	Inclusion: always, consistent. Exclusion: when these words are not included.	*Consistently present*
Basic Theme 1.2.2	Makes Time	This theme describes how students perceive their lecturers have made time for	Inclusion: they make time, they give up their spare time, they are willing to	*They will drop anything they are doing to help you*

		them, outside of the expected time the lecturers should give within their role.	go out of their way. Exclusion: when time is not included.	
Basic Theme 1.2.3	Works Outside of Working Hours	This theme incorporates all the way students have commented that the lecturer works outside of their usual working hours.	inclusion: they email me back anytime of day, they always stay late. Exclusion: when time is not included in this manner.	*They are very helpful when not in class and even when off teaching hours*
Organising Theme 1.3	*Comparison*			
Basic Theme 1.3.1	Despite Flaws/Challenges	The theme includes the ways students believe their lecturer is a 'Best Lecturer' despite something, whether this be a challenge they face or a flaw they personally have.	Inclusion: despite being rubbish at PowerPoint, despite being time poor. Exclusion: when a flaw or a challenge is not explicitly said to have an effect on the lecturer.	*Their feedback might not be the fastest, however, it helps to improve for the next assignment'*
Basic Theme 1.3.2	Comparison to Other Lecturers	This theme describes how students understand their lecturer's practice in relation to others.	Inclusion: this lecturer is the only one who record lectures. Exclusion: where lecturer's practice is not related to another's.	*If you ask them a dumb question, they are not condescending like most other lecturers*
Basic Theme 1.3.3	Good for University Reputation	This theme depicts how students believe their lecturer is good for the university reputation.	Inclusion: respected, popular, good for university reputation. Exclusion:	*Does the university want lecturers to fly the flag and put the university on the*

			where the lecturer's practice is not related to a wider sense of reputation and popularity.	*map? Please get more lecturers like them*
Global Theme 2	**Students as Learners**	**Description**	**Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria**	**Example Quote**
Organising Theme 2.1	*Learning Environment*			
Basic Theme 2.1.1	Tailored to Student Needs	This theme incorporates all the way students perceive their lecturer to have tailored the material or their teaching style to student needs.	Inclusion: references to how lectures and delivery of content is tailored to student needs. Exclusion: where tailoring to student needs is done institutionally, rather than on a personal lecturer level.	*They ensure lessons are tailored to the needs of the students*
Basic Theme 2.1.2	Interaction with Students	This theme depicts the myriad of ways that lecturers positively interact with their students.	Inclusion: can ask silly questions, will listen to me. Exclusion: wider communication with a group of students.	*Creates a safe and encouraging classroom environment where everyone feels comfortable to engage*
Basic Theme 2.1.3	Parent/Friend	This theme contains the ways in which students perceive their lecturer as a friend or a parental figure.	Inclusion: parent, mother, father, friend. Exclusion: references to lecturer, teacher.	*They are very much like a parent*

Basic Theme 2.1.	Knows and Interested in Students	This theme describes how lecturers know about their students and how they appear to be genuinely interested in them.	Inclusion: knows my name, always says hello in corridor. Exclusion: references to professional courtesy.	*They always show that they are interested in you as a person not just as another student and take the time to recognise you*
Organising Theme 2.2	*Learning*			
Basic Theme 2.2.1	Learning has Occurred	This theme incorporates how the students believe learning has occurred for them personally, or for a wider group.	Inclusion: always learn a lot in class, I have great knowledge now. Exclusion: references to learning passively, rather than something has changed the student.	*I find I leave the room feeling that I have really improved my knowledge and understanding of a topic*
Basic Theme 2.2.2	Timely Feedback and Marks	This theme describes assessment practices in relation to having feedback and marks/grades on time, and the fairness of them.	Inclusion: always get marks on time, feedback helps me prepare for next assessment. Exclusion: references to content of feedback.	*Their feedback is always useful and timely so that you can improve upon it for the next piece of work*
Basic Theme 2.2.3	Constructive Feedback	This theme depicts how constructive feedback from assessments can develop learners.	Inclusion: feedback always tells me how I can improve, feedback gives me a sense of what I can do well. Exclusion: references to the timely manner of feedback.	*They have provided guidance with my work which has led me to a greater understanding of my work overall*

Basic Theme 2.2.4	Prepares for Life After Course	This theme contains how lecturers prepare their students for life after the course/module.	Inclusion: references to how learning applies beyond the course. Exclusion: how learning only applies to doing well on assessments.	*They show us that learning is a way of living and learning knows no barriers*
Organising Theme 2.3	*Support and Help*			
Basic Theme 2.3.1	Support	This theme describes the variety of ways lecturers support their students.	Inclusion: encouraging, accommodating. Exclusion: specific references to help and care.	*Outstanding student support on an individual level*
Basic Theme 2.3.2	Care	This theme contains the ways in which students feel that their lecturers care about them.	Inclusion: they care about us. Exclusion: references to support without care/feeling cared for.	*There is always a sense that they genuinely care about their job and students*
Basic Theme 2.3.3	Personal Help	This theme depicts the ways in which lecturers help students in personal matters.	Inclusion: specific references to the ways lecturers support them personally. Exclusion: references to non-specific and academic related support.	*This lecturer is without a doubt my life saver*
Basic Theme 2.3.	Academic Help	This theme depicts the ways in which lecturers help students in academic matters.	Inclusion: specific references to the ways lecturers support them academically. Exclusion: references to non-specific and personal related support.	*Without all of their support, I would not have achieved the grades that I have currently reached*

Global Theme 3	Lecturers as Academics	Description	Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria	Example Quote
Organising Theme 3.1	*Design and Management*			
Basic Theme 3.1.1	Student Feedback	This theme contains the ways students believe their lecturers listen to and act on student feedback.	Inclusion: listens, asks for, acts on student feedback. Exclusion: student feedback processes outside of the lecturer's scope, e.g. the National Student Survey.	*They champion student voice*
Basic Theme 3.1.2	Course Design and Management	This theme describes how lecturers have designed and managed the course/module.	Inclusion: assessment design, flow of the course's content. Exclusion: management of student behaviour.	*Fantastic lecturer who has designed a truly unique course with amazing opportunities*
Organising Theme 3.2	*Expertise*			
Basic Theme 3.2.1	Knowledge	This theme describes how lecturers have expertise and knowledge of their subject and of teaching.	Inclusion: knowledgeable, expert. Exclusion: references to experience.	*From day one they have been an inspiration in the way that they teach and the knowledge that they have about the subject*

Basic Theme 3.2.2	Experience	This theme incorporates how lecturers have experience in their subject.	Inclusion: experienced. Exclusion: references to knowledge.	*They are an inspiration, as is their experience with the industry*
Organising Theme 3.3	*Teaching*			
Basic Theme 3.3.1	Delivery of Content	This theme contains all the ways students perceive their lecturer's delivery of the content is a good quality.	Inclusion: amazing teaching style, commanding voice, dynamic. Exclusion: references to the content of the module/course.	*Present in a lively manner and connect with room and you on an individual level*
Basic Theme 3.3.3	Engaging Lectures	The theme depicts how students believe their lectures to be engaging.	Inclusion: enjoyable lectures, varied teaching methods, relevant information. Exclusion: references to how the content is delivered by lecturer.	*Their classes are very engaging and enjoyable, a pleasure to attend*
Basic Theme 3.3.3	Use of Technology	This theme describes how the lecturers use technology in order to advance learning.	Inclusion: recorded lectures, use of simulation suites, use of VLE spaces. Exclusion: use of technology communication tools.	*The lectures were recorded and uploaded onto the VLE which was very helpful for revision*
Global Theme 4	**Lecturers as Educators**	**Description**	**Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria**	**Example Quote**
Organising Theme 4.1	*Attitude*			

Basic Theme 4.1.1	Friendly	This theme describes how the lecturer produces a learning environment that is friendly.	Inclusion: references to lecturers being friendly and producing a friendly environment. Exclusion: references to other students.	*This lecturer is genuinely one of the nicest lecturers I've had*
Basic Theme 4.1.2	Approachable	This theme depicts how the students believe their lecturer to be an approachable person.	Inclusion: approachable nature of lecture. Exclusion: welcoming, nice, kind.	*They are always approachable when you're unsure about anything and is very easy to talk to*
Basic Theme 4.1.3	Positivity	This theme describes how the lecturer produces a positive learning environment.	Inclusion: references to lecturer's positivity and being able to spread the positivity. Exclusion: references to other students.	*they always brighten up your day with their smile and laughter*
Basic Theme 4.1.4	Wants Students to Succeed	This theme incorporates how the students feel that their lecturer wants them to succeed.	Inclusion: they want us to succeed, they bring out the best in us. Exclusion: references to success being for the lecturer's gain, e.g. for a promotion.	*This tutor is one of those lecturers who, you can tell, just wants their students to do well and hates to see them falter*
Organising Theme 4.2	*Traits*			

Basic Theme 4.2.1	Passion	This theme describes how passionate lecturers are about their subject and about teaching.	Inclusion: passionate, passion for subject, passion for teaching. Exclusion: references to other passions.	*They are passionate about their subject so much so that one does not want to ever miss any lecture*
Basic Theme 4.2.2	Sense of Humour	This theme incorporates how students perceive their lecturers to have a sense of humour and are funny.	Inclusion: sense of humour, makes us laugh at 9am. Exclusion: lectures being fun.	*They also have a pretty good sense of humor which can sort you right out at 9 o clock in the morning*
Basic Theme 4.2.3	Inspiration	This theme contains the ways in which students believe their lecturers to be an inspiration to them.	Inclusion: they inspire me, they are inspirational. Exclusion: going above and beyond.	*Overall, they just inspire me and make me excited about my future career in the field*
Organising Theme 4.3	*Employee*			
Basic Theme 4.3.1	Organised	This theme contains the ways in which lecturers are organised in their role.	Inclusion: references to organisation of work and self. Exclusion: organisation of the course.	*They come to class well prepared and organised for each lecture*
Basic Theme 4.3.2	Good Communicator	This theme describes the ways in which lecturers communicate effectively with their students.	Inclusion: effective communication, timely communication, varied communication. Exclusion: delivery of content.	*They are great at staying in contact with us, letting us know what to read ahead of class and emailing us*

				with any information or news they think we would be interested in
Basic Theme 4.3.3	Professional	This theme incorporates the ways students perceive their lecturers to be professional.	Inclusion: professionalism. Exclusion: professionalism in the context of how they interact with students.	*They are the ultimate role model in all aspects of professional life*
Basic Theme 4.3.4	Dedication	This theme depicts how dedicated lecturers are to their course and their students.	Inclusion: dedicated to the course, dedication to their students. Exclusion: references to working outside of work hours.	*Their dedication to the degree that should be honoured*

Codes and Basic Themes

Basic Themes	Codes
BT1.1.1: Worthwhile Lecturers	Makes you want to attend, doesn't want learning to end, worthwhile lectures, memorable lectures
BT1.1.2: Beyond the Call of Duty	Above and beyond
BT1.2.1: Always	Always, consistent
BT1.2.2: Makes Time	Makes/gives time, willing to go out of their way
BT1.2.3: Works Outside of Working Hours	Spare time, support out of work hours
BT1.3.1: Despite Flaws/Challenges	Faces challenges, poor feedback, no complaints, does good even with time of lecture, getting good marks, late feedback, doesn't use tech, good even though they are new
BT1.3.2: Comparison to Other Lecturers	Comparison to other lecturers, reason they are still at university
BT1.3.3: Good for University Reputation	Good for university reputation, popular, respected
BT2.1.1: Tailored to Student Needs	Tailor to student needs, respectful, adaptive

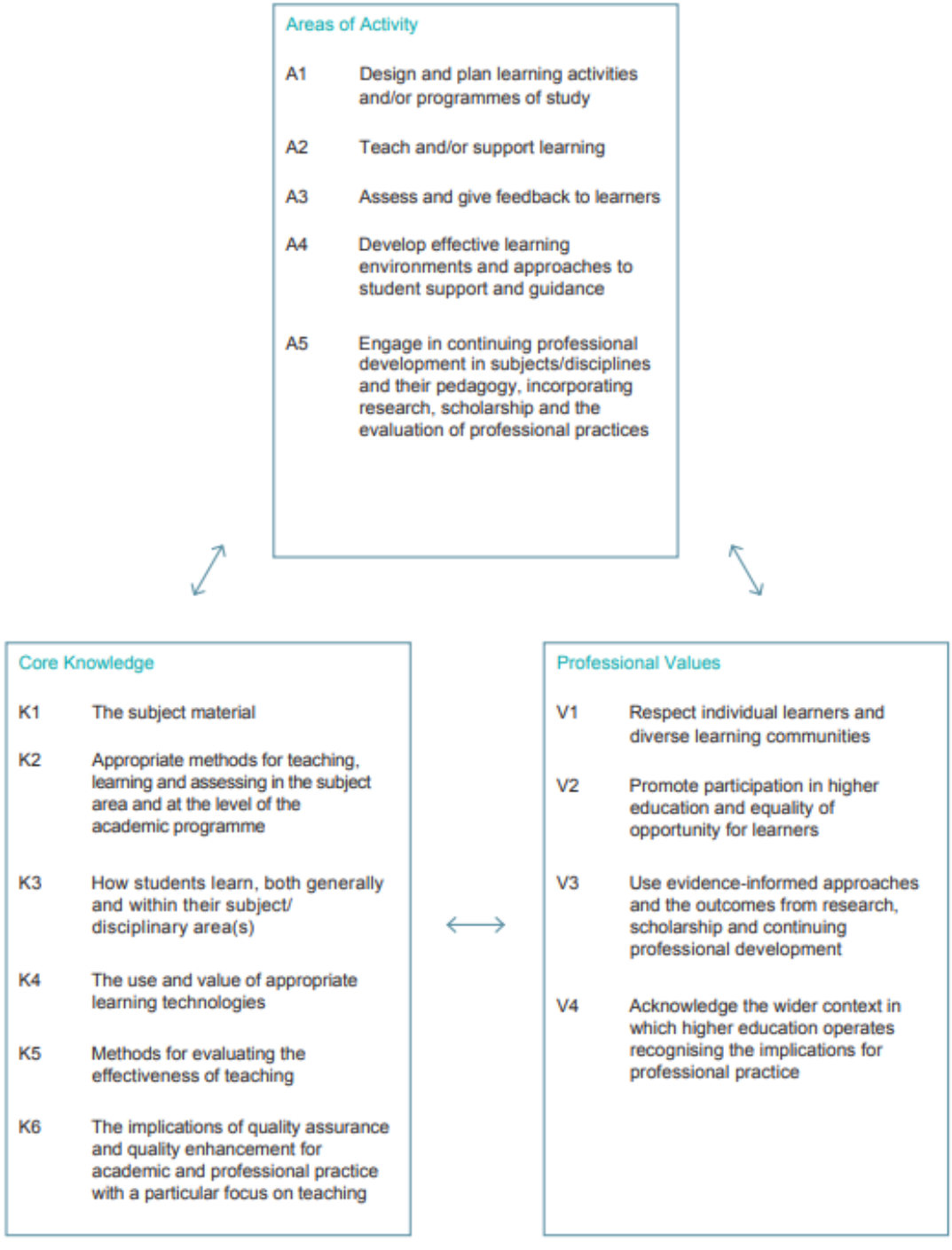
BT2.1.2: Interaction with Students	Can ask silly questions, good learning environment, challenging learning environment, will answer questions
BT2.1.3: Parent/Friend	Identifier, students as equals, role model
BT2.1.4: Knows and Interested in Students	Acknowledges students outside of classroom, value students, knows students, interested in students
BT2.2.1: Learning has Occurred	Provokes deep thinking, learning has occurred
BT2.2.2: Timely Feedback and Marks	Timely feedback, marks on time, fair marks
BT2.2.3: Constructive Feedback	Good feedback, good verbal feedback, developmental assignments, interesting assignments
BT2.2.4: Prepares for Life After Course	Promotes a sense of lifelong learning, prepares students for future study, helps us better ourselves, prepares for life after course
BT2.3.1: Support	Boosts student's confidence, supportive, meets students in person, gives support (non-specific), help (non-specific), encouraging, helpful, accommodating, focuses on students who put in effort
BT2.3.2: Care	Caring, puts students first, understanding, students' best interests at heart, empathy, thoughtful, food, patient

BT2.3.3: Personal Help	Mental health support, notices moods, emotional support, listens well
BT2.3.4: Academic Help	Helps individuals academically, assignment help, academic help outside of the classroom, academic support in the classroom, placement help
BT3.1.1: Student Feedback	Acts on student feedback, listens to student feedback, asks for student feedback
BT3.1.2: Course Design and Management	Course design, good management, original, lecture materials, EDI focus, student as partners, creative, innovative, problem solving skills, creative lecturer, arranges guest speakers, accessible
BT3.2.1: Knowledge	Understanding of subject, pedagogical understanding, knowledge of subject, insightful, knowledge (non-specific), resourceful
BT3.2.2: Experience	Experienced, referenced to CPD, industry knowledge
BT3.3.1: Delivery of Content	Positive adjective, delivery of content, places subject in real world, keeps you focused, command over class, dynamic (listed twice in codes), doesn't waste time, makes the difficult easy, easy to understand
BT3.3.2: Engaging Lectures	Teaching methods, interesting lectures, enjoyable lectures, engaging lectures, teaching style, relevant lectures, relatable, varied lectures, challenging lectures

BT3.3.3: Use of Technology	Use of tech, content online, recorded lectures
BT4.1.1: Friendly	Kind, nice, friendly, welcoming
BT4.1.2: Approachable	Approachable, easy going, calming, open-minded
BT4.1.3: Positivity	Positive attitude, pleasant nature, personable, interesting person, confident, charisma
BT4.1.4: Wants Students to Succeed	Brings out best in students, wants students to succeed, believes in their students, doesn't give up on their students, trusts students, motivating
BT4.2.1: Passion	Enthusiasm, passion, loves teaching, loves subject
BT4.2.2: Sense of Humour	Sense of humour/funny
BT4.2.3: Inspiration	Inspirational
BT4.3.1: Organised	On time to lectures, prepared for class, organised, consciousness, attention to detail
BT4.3.2: Good Communicator	Good with emails, informative, effective comms
BT4.3.3: Professional	professional, firm/strict, responsible, reliable, honest, competent, productive, doesn’t lie
BT4.3.4: Dedication	Hardworking, dedication

UK Professional Standards Framework

Dimensions of the Framework



Frequencies of All Themes from Highest to Lowest

Frequency of Mentions from Highest to Lowest					
Global Themes		**Organising Themes**		**Basic Themes**	
GT2: Students as Learners	1,186	OT3.3: Teaching	922	BT2.3.1: Support	533
GT3: Lecturers as Academics	1,168	OT2.3: Support and Help	822	BT3.3.2: Engaging Lectures	465
GT4: Lecturers as Educators	955	OT1.2: On Demand	414	BT3.3.1: Delivery of Content	399
GT1: Students as Consumers	651	OT4.1: Attitude	409	BT1.2.1: Always	261
		OT4.2: Traits	285	BT2.3.2: Care	175
		OT4.3: Employee	261	BT4.2.1: Passion	160
		OT2.2: Learning	223	BT4.3.2: Good Communicator	138
		OT3.2: Expertise	142	BT4.1.1: Friendly	132
		OT2.1: Learning Environment	141	BT4.1.2: Approachable	121

		OT1.1: Worth Money and Time	131	BT1.2.2: Makes Time	114
		OT1.3: Comparison to Other Lecturers	106	BT3.2.1: Knowledge	106
		OT3.1: Design and Management	104	BT4.1.4: Wants Student to Succeed	103
				BT2.2.3: Constructive Feedback	92
				BT3.1.2: Course Design and Management	79
				BT1.1.2: Beyond the Call of Duty	76
				BT4.2.3: Inspiration	65
				BT4.2.2: Sense of Humour	60
				BT2.3.3: Personal Help	60

				BT3.3.3: Use of Technology	58
				BT4.3.4: Dedication	58
				BT1.1.1: Worthwhile Lecturers	55
				BT2.2.1: Learning has Occurred	54
				BT2.3.4: Academic Help	54
				BT4.1.3: Positivity	53
				BT2.1.2: Interaction with Students	51
				BT1.3.2: Comparison to Other Lecturers	49
				BT2.1.1: Tailored to Student Needs	48
				BT2.2.4: Prepares for Life After Course	47

				BT4.3.3: Professional	40
				BT1.2.3: Works Outside of Working Hours	39
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