

How Rhetoric May Reduce the Ill Effect of Emotional Labor & Lead to More Fulfilling Careers in Service Industries

Leah Hauck, Daisy Pignetti Ph.D., University of Wisconsin-Stout

INTRODUCTION:

What is Emotional Labor?

Emotional requirements of a job that employees must display a certain set standard of emotions.

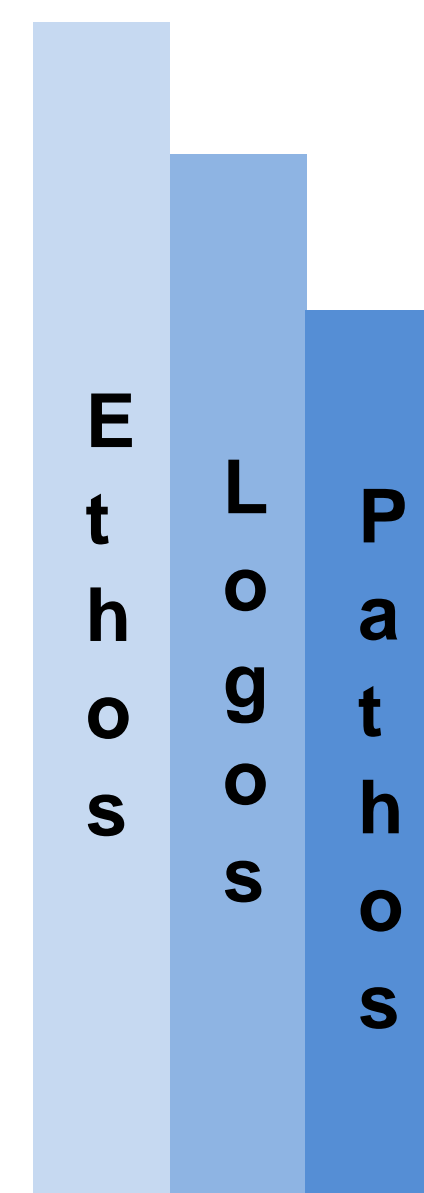
Who Experiences Emotional Labor?

Everyone, emotional labor is mostly seen in service-related industries; e.g. Educators, Medical Personnel, Law Enforcement, Hospitality Workers.

Surface vs. Deep Acting

Surface acting, the individual, deceives others on their true and real feelings.

Deep acting, the individual, deceive themselves, so they try to fulfill a particular emotion that is appropriate to the occasion.



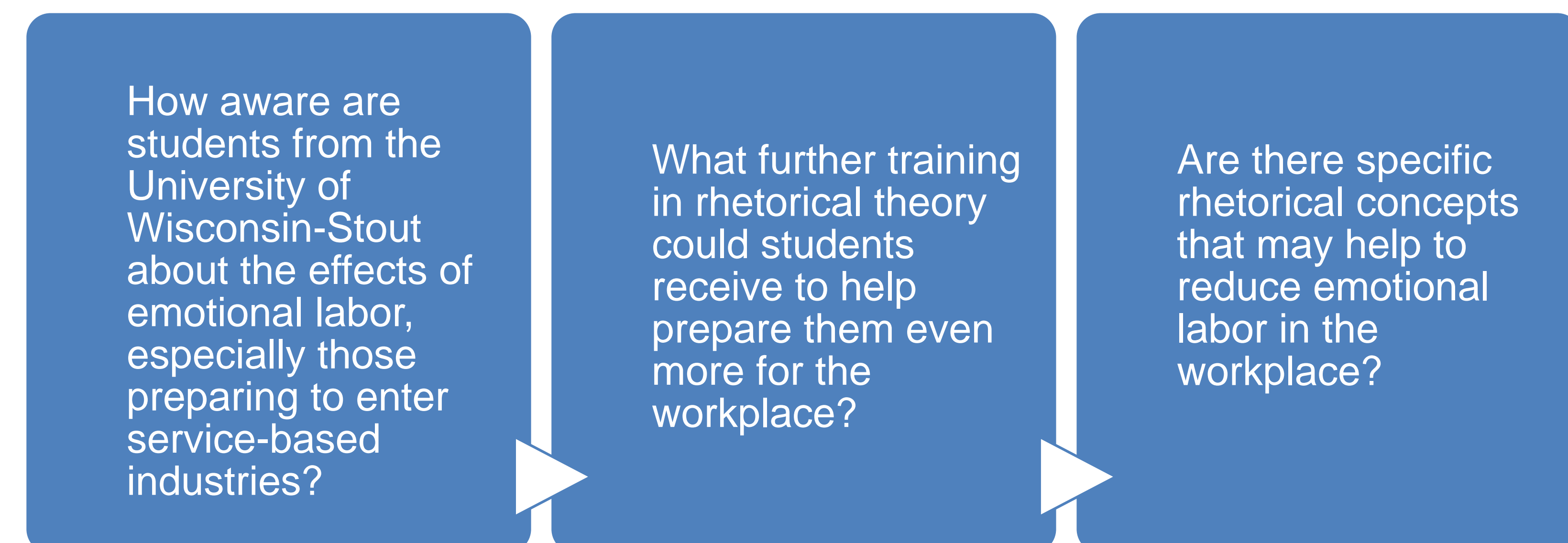
What is Rhetoric?

The art of effective or persuasive communication.

What Might Emotional Labor & Rhetoric have in Common?

Like a burden of physical labor, emotional labor can break down the emotional and mental structure of a person, easily leading to burnout. Effective communication methods may help guard against the ill effects of emotional labor leading to more fulfilling and sustained careers.

MAIN RESEARCH QUESTIONS:



PARTICIPANTS:

- 53 junior & senior level undergraduate students in three different service-based majors



- 1 Program Director



METHODS:

- Two data gathering methods: Qualtrics survey for students and email interview with program director.

RESULTS:

Major high points of the study

92% of surveyed students did not know what emotional labor was by name, but after given the definition, 96% of students could think of a particular time they experienced some form of emotional labor in a job, whether it be negative or positive.

Have you ever heard of the term emotional labor before this survey?

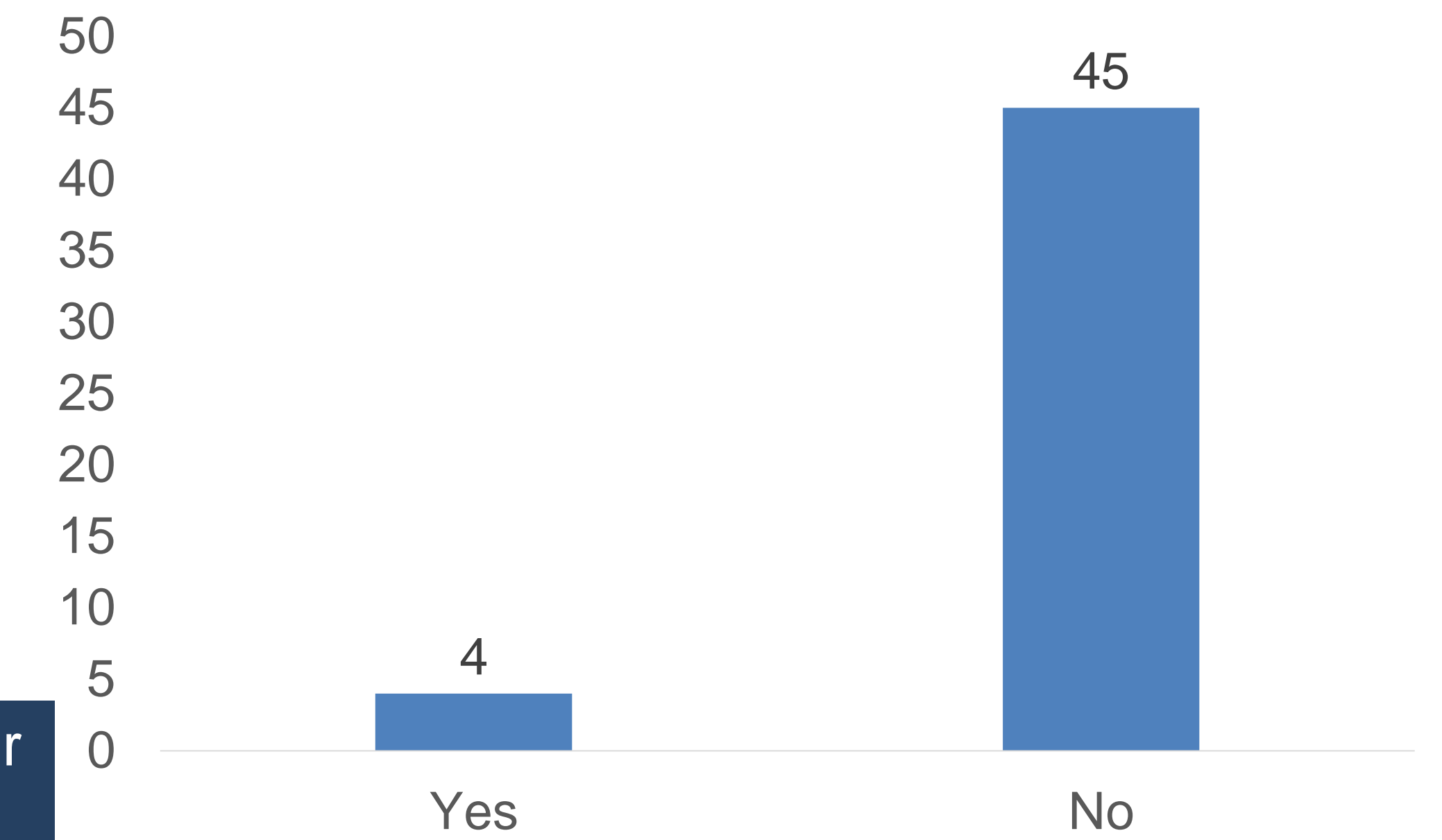
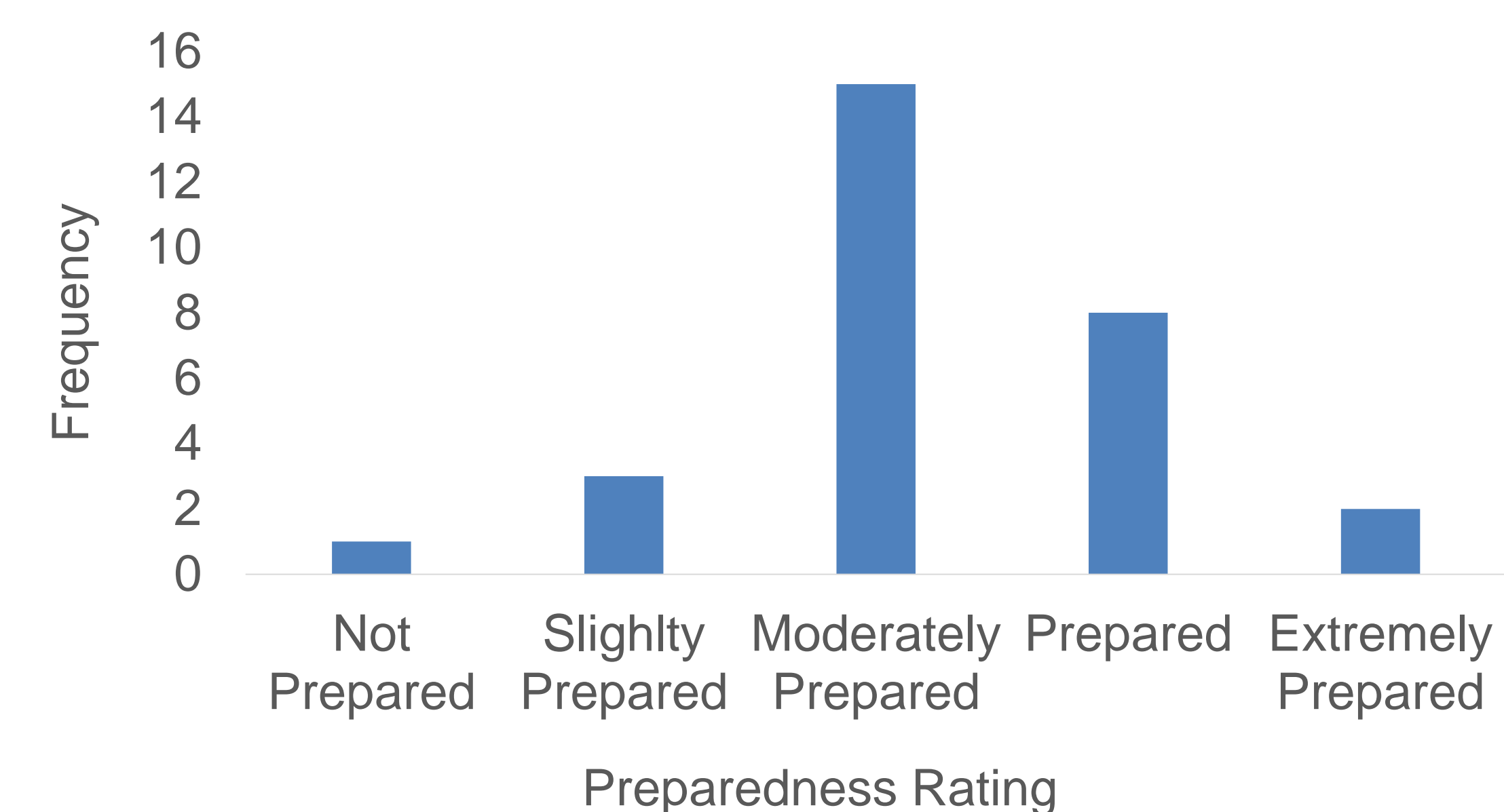


Figure 1.

54% of participants expressed showing some form of surface or deep acting, either by putting on a physical or emotional front when dealing with a negative emotional laborious situation.

Theme	Definition	Frequency
Physical Response	Participants responded to negative situations by smiling, breathing deeply, wiping tears or using a professional tone	7(13%)
Emotional Response	Participants responded to negative situations by being calm, not thinking about it or patient	8(15%)
Other	Other comments that did not fit the theme	12(23%)

How prepared do you feel you are to handle the emotional laborious aspects of your chosen career path?



76% UW-Stout students mentioned being prepared on rhetoric either through the classroom or workplace.

Figure 2.

DISCUSSION:

The key component of this study was to find any relationship between emotional labor and rhetoric.

This study tried to come to a new conclusion and test the theory that being proficient in rhetorical concepts (e.g. public speaking, writing) may lead to less burnout from emotional labor but unfortunately, the results of the survey did not render enough common themes between the two.

Studying emotional labor with an emphasis on rhetoric against an external audience may give college curriculum the opportunity to match industry standards within the classroom.