Proceedings of the 5th International Conference on Education Innovation and Philosophical Inquiries
DOI: 10.54254/2753-7048/56/20241596

The Impact of Teachers' Emotional Labor on Teachers and Students: A Literature Review

Jingjing Yu[1,a,*]

[1]*University at Albany, State University of New York, 1400 Washington Avenue, Albany, New York, The United States*
a. jingjyu6@163.com
**corresponding author*

Abstract: Emotional labor (EL) is a significant component of teachers' daily work. During their daily teaching activities, teachers experience various emotional responses. However, they do not always express their genuine emotions, but rather adopt different strategies to regulate their feelings. This process is referred to as emotional labor. Previous studies on teachers' EL have typically focused on a single aspect concerning either teachers or students. Therefore, this study synthesizes the effects of various EL strategies on both the cognitive and emotional well-being of teachers, as well as on students' academic and emotional development. By reviewing prior research on teachers' EL, we summarize the impact of EL on both teachers and students across different dimensions, aiming to provide a more comprehensive understanding of its effects. This review highlights the importance of recognizing and addressing EL in teaching.

Keywords: Teacher Emotional Labor, Cognitive Impact, Affective Impact, Classroom Participation, Academic Performance

1. Introduction

Emotional labor (EL) involves the effort, planning, and control necessary to express the emotions desired by an organization during interpersonal interactions. As such, it is a stress factor, but employees must engage in EL to manage their emotions and expressions to meet organizational objectives. In EL, individuals typically employ three strategies to regulate emotions: surface acting (SA), deep acting (DA), and expressing natural feelings. With the advent of studies on EL, researchers have increasingly focused on its role in various service industries. Teachers, who represent a distinct demographic within these industries, engage uniquely with EL primarily due to the extended duration and nature of their interactions. Teachers must interact with students and parents over prolonged periods, necessitating emotional labor both in and outside the classroom. Moreover, teachers' emotions serve specific functions. Regardless of whether the emotional stimuli employed by teachers are positive or negative, their aim is to engage students' psychological involvement in classroom teaching and maintain a positive emotional state among students to ensure the smooth progress of teaching activities. Consequently, teachers invest significant EL in their educational roles. As societal expectations of teachers grow, recognizing EL or as a critical aspect of teaching has become increasingly important. Additionally, emotions can impact teachers' behavior, students' behavior, and

© 2024 The Authors. This is an open access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License 4.0 (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

DOI: 10.54254/2753-7048/56/20241596

both classroom and personal outcomes. Therefore, it is crucial to study teachers' EL to enhance its quality.

Different EL strategies can impact various groups, such as teachers, school organizations, and students. Most research on teachers' EL has concentrated on its effects on teachers, including job burnout, self-efficacy, and self-satisfaction. However, the complexity of a teacher's role suggests that these aspects are interconnected and should be considered holistically. Thus, this paper reviews research on the impact of teachers' EL over the past ten years, primarily focusing on teacher development, student development, and societal organizations. This review aims to provide researchers and educators with a more comprehensive understanding of the repercussions of teachers' EL and a more nuanced view of the development of both teachers and students.

2. The Influence of Teachers' Emotional Labor on Teachers from Different Dimensions

Emotional labor is the third form of labor, following mental and physical labor. Exploring and analyzing the influence of EL on teachers from different dimensions can help educational administrators understand the value of emotional labor, respect it, and encourage teachers to adopt profound emotional expression methods or relaxed and happy natural emotional expression methods. In the following sections, this study will analyze and summarize the impact of teachers' El on teachers from three dimensions: cognition, emotion, and based on relevant research papers in the past decade.

2.1. The Influence of Teachers' Emotional Labor on Teachers' Cognition

The term "teacher's cognition" refers to teachers' understanding and identification with the profession. Correct cognition means that teachers can better perform their duties and effectively scaffold students. However, teachers experience various emotions during their teaching activities. In response to these emotions, teachers adopt different emotional regulation strategies to perform EL. Therefore, researching the influence of EL on teachers' cognition can help improve teacher education. This section divides the cognitive dimension into four parts based on previous studies: professional duty, self-efficacy, career goals, and professional identity.

First, teachers' emotional labor can effectively promote teachers to fulfill their professional duties. Professional duties include preparing lectures and lessons and interacting with various stakeholders. Emotional labor helps teachers maintain the positive classroom environment necessary for student development. For instance, Brown et al. examined the changing nature of teachers' emotional labor and professional responsibility in their interactions with 329 U.S. K-12 teachers. Their analysis identified three key professional responsibilities influenced by emotional labor: providing guidance, maintaining a positive classroom climate, and fostering school-based collaboration [1]. This research confirms the positive impact of teachers' EL on their professional responsibilities.

Second, there is a relationship between teachers' EL and self-efficacy. Teacher self-efficacy refers to teachers' confidence and ability to complete specific educational tasks. Studies have shown that teachers commonly use DA and SA to align the emotions they feel with those they are expected to express in class, thereby improving their self-efficacy. For example, Buric and Mornar examined the longitudinal interrelationship between teachers' emotional labor and self-efficacy through a survey of 3010 Croatian teachers [2]. The results demonstrated that when teachers experience negative emotions during daily teaching activities, those using DA can transform these emotions into positive ones, thus enhancing self-efficacy. Similarly, Lee and Van Vlack found that DA is correlated with experiencing positive emotions, which in turn positively influences self-efficacy, using a sample of 127 Korean English teachers [3].

Third, the influence of teachers' EL on career goals is significant. Teachers’ career goals involve their planning and aspirations. Yin's study showed that by employing three different strategies in DA,

DOI: 10.54254/2753-7048/56/20241596

teachers could experience more positive emotions and thus better achieve their career goals [4]. The research also found that while teachers experience more negative emotions when using SA strategies, such as pretending and withholding, these strategies can still help achieve professional goals [4]. However, overuse of SA may lead to emotional dysregulation in teachers, so it is crucial for teachers to be aware of the potential negative effects of this strategy [5]. Furthermore, this study also discovered that revealing teachers' natural emotions positively impacts the achievement of career goals [4].

Lastly, the influence of teachers' EL on professional identity is profound. Professional identity refers to teachers' identification with and understanding of their professional values, goals, roles, and behaviors. Brown et al. investigated the impact of EL on professional identity by surveying 486 K-12 teachers across 22 schools in the United States. They concluded that EL is an integral part of teachers' professional identity [6]. Moreover, the study results indicated that through the use of DA, the perception of teacher identity aligns with the ideal teacher identity, whereas SA highlights the disparity between reality and the ideal. This demonstrates that when emotions affect their own identity, teachers use EL to adjust and maintain the image of a "good teacher" [6].

2.2. The Influence of Teachers' Emotional Labor on Teachers' Emotions

Teachers engage in considerable EL in their daily work. Teaching involves not only imparting knowledge but also emotional work. Teachers' EL can positively or negatively affect their emotions. They use EL to regulate their emotions to create a better classroom atmosphere for students. EL consumes a lot of resources and energy, thus affecting the emotional dimension of teachers. In this section, based on previous studies, this study summarizes the influence of teachers' EL on their emotions from four aspects: emotional exhaustion, job burnout, teaching satisfaction, and teachers' well-being.

First, the use of different EL strategies affects emotional exhaustion differently. Emotional exhaustion refers to the fatigue teachers feel after experiencing intense emotions in daily teaching activities, which harms their mental health. Teaching is an emotionally demanding job. Studies have shown that EL influences emotional exhaustion [7]. According to Yao et al., who analyzed questionnaires from teachers in three different provinces in China, emotional labor was significantly correlated with emotional exhaustion, while deep acting had the opposite effect. Previous studies have also indicated that DA requires fewer emotional resources than SA, which helps replenish emotional resources and thus reduces emotional exhaustion [7].

Next, teachers' EL has positive as well as negative impacts on job burnout. Burnout is a state of physical, mental, and emotional exhaustion caused by prolonged work stress. As teaching requires complex social and emotional competencies, the varied emotional experiences of teachers during their work positively or negatively impact their professional experience. Recent studies have increasingly focused on the effects of EL on job burnout. The following discusses the impact on both principals and teachers. Silbaugh et al. focused on a principal from a public school in Pennsylvania County and found that SA led to inconsistencies between felt and expressed emotions, resulting in disharmony and eventually burnout [8]. Conversely, DA reduces dissonance and thus avoids burnout. In studies focusing on teachers, it has been found that while SA correlates positively with job burnout, DA and the expression of natural emotions correlate negatively. For instance, a study by Ntim et al. of 574 preschool teachers in Ghana found that SA was associated with increased burnout, while DA could mitigate it. Other studies support these findings, showing that DA and natural emotional expression enhance psychological capital and reduce job burnout [9-11].

The third aspect concerns the influence of EL on teaching satisfaction. Teaching satisfaction is defined as the pleasant emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's work as fulfilling or promoting the value of one's efforts [12]. Studies suggest that DA and the expression of natural

DOI: 10.54254/2753-7048/56/20241596

emotions positively affect teaching satisfaction [13]. Yin et al. studied 491 kindergarten teachers in Hong Kong and found that while SA was negatively correlated with teaching satisfaction, DA and the expression of natural feelings were positively correlated [14]. Zhu and Zhou noted that a combination of appropriate SA, high levels of DA, and natural emotional expression could benefit the teaching satisfaction of English-as-a-foreign-language teachers. The use of both DA and natural emotions can help alleviate the emotional dysregulation caused by SA, thereby enhancing teaching satisfaction [15]. This finding is consistent with those of Huang et al. and Yin et al., which showed that natural emotional expression significantly impacted teaching satisfaction, although there was no significant correlation with the other two strategies of emotional labor, namely SA and DA [16-17].

Lastly, the influence of teachers' EL on well-being is explored. Teachers' well-being refers to a teacher's ability to develop a positive dynamic balance between resources and challenges/needs. Wu et al. found that different EL strategies have varying effects on teachers' well-being [18]. Peng et al. studied 803 junior high school English teachers in China and discovered that among the three dimensions of EL in classroom teaching—expression of natural feelings, SA, and DA—only DA could significantly predict teachers' well-being, both directly and indirectly through commitment [10]. Furthermore, Zhao et al. pointed out that teachers with high psychological capital could use EL strategies more effectively, thus directly or indirectly improving their well-being [19].

3. The Influence of Teachers' Emotional Labor on Students from Different Dimensions

Teachers' EL not only affects various aspects of themselves but also their students. Many studies have focused on the influence of teachers' emotions on students. Teaching is often described as an emotional profession [20]. Teachers experience various emotions in response to different situations; however, not all of these emotions are always appropriate for the teaching environment [20]. Therefore, teachers need to use EL to regulate their emotions to appear more professional, because teachers' emotional expressions provide important information, such as their feelings and motivations, enabling students to respond timely and regulate their behaviors. Generally, teachers' EL impacts students' development. This study will summarize the impact of teachers' EL on students from the perspectives of academic and social-emotional dimensions.

3.1. The Influence of Teachers' Emotional Labor on Students' Academics

Academic development is crucial for every student. Good academic performance is inseparable from classroom participation. By using emotional labor to regulate their emotions, teachers can create a classroom environment that fosters students' development. In this section, teachers' EL's influences on students' learning is divided into two parts: classroom participation and academic performance.

Firstly, the EL strategies adopted by teachers impact students' classroom participation. Promoting students' learning is closely linked to their classroom participation. For example, Buric found that teachers, by using DA and SA strategies, display positive and enthusiastic emotions [21]. When students perceive their teacher's enthusiasm, they are more likely to adopt DA strategies and participate more actively in class. Similarly, the findings of Brown et al. indicate a significant association between EL variables and teachers' classroom behavior and interactions with students [22]. Specifically, SA was positively correlated with a negative classroom climate, while DA was negatively correlated with negative classroom climate, behavior management, productivity, and concept development, suggesting that DA enhances student engagement. However, contrary to expectations, Buric et al. showed that classes of students with teachers who frequently faked emotions were more actively engaged in learning activities, but DA had no significant predictive effect on classroom-perceived teaching strategies or student self-reported engagement [23].

DOI: 10.54254/2753-7048/56/20241596

Secondly, teachers' EL impacts students' academic performance. In Buric's research, it is noted that teachers' deep acting and strategies of pretending emotions are crucial for displaying enthusiastic behavior, thereby influencing students' learning outcomes. Studies have shown that EL involving faked emotions can enhance teaching performance by demonstrating higher levels of enthusiasm and improving student outcomes [21].

3.2. The Influence of Teachers' Emotional Labor on Students' Emotions

Teachers' EL also affects students' emotions. Emotion refers to an individual's attitude towards objective things and the corresponding positive or negative inner experience. Xie et al. surveyed teachers in various roles (principal, assistant teacher, and childcare teacher) in kindergartens in China [24]. The results pointed out that their EL affects children's emotions through different pathways. The expression and DA of emotions that principals naturally feel have indirect effects on children's competence, motivation, attention/persistence, and anxiety. SA had a direct effect on children's anger and aggression. However, when the subjects were assistant teachers, the study showed that their natural performance affected children's competence, motivation, and anxiety withdrawal indirectly. When the subjects were childcare teachers, the results showed that the expression of natural emotions had a direct impact on children's competence, motivation, attention/persistence, and sensitive-cooperative emotions. SA directly impacted children's sensitivity and cooperation, while DA directly affected children's ability/persistence, attention/persistence, and sensitive-cooperative emotions.

4. Conclusion

This study primarily summarizes past research on the influence of teachers' EL on both teachers and students across various dimensions. Teachers' EL constitutes a significant portion of their daily work, with various strategies employed to regulate their emotions and enhance their professionalism. The research is organized into two main parts: the impact of teachers' EL on teachers from cognitive and emotional dimensions, and its impact on students' academic and emotional development. By reviewing prior studies, this paper categorizes the cognitive dimension into teachers' professional responsibilities, self-efficacy, career goals, and professional identity. The emotional dimension is divided into emotional exhaustion, job burnout, teaching satisfaction, and teachers' well-being. Research indicates that different EL strategies have varying effects on these aspects. Additionally, this paper discusses the influence of teachers' EL on students' academic performance and emotions. Studies suggest that by employing EL, teachers can foster a more positive classroom environment, thereby enhancing students' classroom participation and academic performance. Furthermore, the impact of teachers' EL students' emotions varies depending on the teacher group.

Moreover, since the concept of teachers' EL is relatively new, there are few related research articles, leading to gaps in the literature. Studies in the past have often focused on the impact of teachers' EL on a single object; this paper attempts to summarize and categorize these studies, though more experimental data are needed to support the conclusions about the effects of teachers' EL.

In conclusion, reviewing previous research helps underscore the importance of studying teachers' EL, which is not only crucial for teachers' personal and professional development but also significantly affects students' growth. As the article highlights, the influence of teachers' EL is complex. Therefore, it is essential for more researchers to continue this line of inquiry, aiming to refine the theoretical framework of teachers' EL and understand its effects under various regulatory factors.

DOI: 10.54254/2753-7048/56/20241596

References

[1] Brown, E. L., Stark, K., Vesely, C., & Choe, J. (2023). "Acting often and everywhere:" Teachers' emotional labor across professional interactions and responsibilities. Teaching and Teacher Education, 132, 104227.

[2] Burić, I., & Mornar, M. (2023). Teacher dispositional affectivity, emotional labor, and self-efficacy: A longitudinal analysis. Current Psychology, 42(21), 18382-18395.

[3] Lee, M., & Van Vlack, S. (2018). Teachers' emotional labor, discrete emotions, and classroom management self-efficacy. Educational Psychology, 38(5), 669-686.

[4] Yin, H. (2016). Knife-like mouth and tofu-like heart: Emotion regulation by Chinese teachers in classroom teaching. Social Psychology of Education, 19, 1-22.

[5] Morris, J. A., & Feldman, D. C. (1996). The dimensions, antecedents, and consequences of emotional labor. Academy of Management Review, 21(4), 986-1010.

[6] Brown, E. L., Horner, C. G., Kerr, M. M., & Scanlon, C. L. (2014). United States teachers' emotional labor and professional identities. KEDI Journal of Educational Policy, 11(2).

[7] Yao, X., Yao, M., Zong, X., Li, Y., Li, X., Guo, F., & Cui, G. (2015). How school climate influences teachers' emotional exhaustion: The mediating role of emotional labor. International journal of environmental research and public health, 12(10), 12505-12517.

[8] Silbaugh, M. W., Barker, D. B., & Arghode, V. (2023). Emotional labor, emotional intelligence, and burnout among school principals: Testing a mediational model. Leadership and Policy in Schools, 22(1), 73-86.

[9] Ntim, S. Y., Qin, J., Antwi, C. O., Aboagye, M. O., Chen, S., & Mensah, E. T. (2023). Early childhood educators' emotional labor and burnout in an emerging economy: The mediating roles of affective states. Heliyon, 9(3).

[10] Peng, W., Liu, Y., & Peng, J. E. (2023). Feeling and acting in classroom teaching: The relationships between teachers' emotional labor, commitment, and well-being. System, 116, 103093.

[11] Tsang, K. K., Teng, Y., Lian, Y., & Wang, L. (2021). School management culture, emotional labor, and teacher burnout in Mainland China. Sustainability, 13(16), 9141.

[12] DeNeve, K. M., & Cooper, H. (1998). The happy personality: a meta-analysis of 137 personality traits and subjective well-being. Psychological bulletin, 124(2), 197.

[13] Yin, H. (2015). The effect of teachers' emotional labor on teaching satisfaction: Moderation of emotional intelligence. Teachers and Teaching, 21(7), 789-810.

[14] Yin, H., Tam, W. W. Y., Park, M., & Keung, C. P. C. (2023). Emotional labor matters for kindergarten teachers: an examination of the antecedents and consequences. The Asia-Pacific Education Researcher, 32(2), 239-249.

[15] Zhu, S., & Zhou, M. (2022). High school English-as-A-foreign-language teachers' emotional labor and job satisfaction: a latent profile analytical approach. Frontiers in Psychology, 13, 950229.

[16] Huang, S., Yin, H., & Han, J. (2019). Do Chinese teachers perform emotional labor equally? Multi-group comparisons across genders, grade levels and regions. Frontiers in psychology, 10, 428803

[17] Yin, H. B., Lee, J. C. K., & Zhang, Z. H. (2013). Exploring the relationship among teachers' emotional intelligence, emotional labor strategies and teaching satisfaction. Teaching and teacher education, 35, 137-145.

[18] Wu, T. J., Wang, L. Y., Gao, J. Y., & Wei, A. P. (2020). Social support and well-being of Chinese special education teachers—An emotional labor perspective. International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 17(18), 6884.

[19] Zhao, X., & You, X. (2021). The impact of psychological capital on vocational well-being: The mediation effect of emotional labor and its invariance across ethnicities. Current Psychology, 40(1), 102-112.

[20] Pi, Z., Yang, H. H., Chen, W., Hu, X., & Li, X. (2022). The role of teachers' emotions in students' outcomes: From the perspective of interpersonal emotions. Frontiers in Psychology, 13, 1075110.

[21] Burić, I. (2019). The role of emotional labor in explaining teachers' enthusiasm and students' outcomes: A multilevel mediational analysis. Learning and Individual Differences, 70, 12-20.

[22] Brown, E. L., Vesely, C. K., Mahatmya, D., & Visconti, K. J. (2018). Emotions matter: The moderating role of emotional labor on preschool teacher and children interactions. Early Child Development and Care, 188(12), 1773-1787.

[23] Burić, I., & Frenzel, A. C. (2021). Teacher emotional labor, instructional strategies, and students' academic engagement: A multilevel analysis. Teachers and Teaching, 27(5), 335-352.

[24] Xie, S., Wu, D., & Li, H. (2022). The relationship between Chinese teachers' emotional labor, teaching efficacy, and young children's social-emotional development and learning. Sustainability, 14(4), 2205.