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EDITED BY

Douglas F. Kauffman,
Medical University of the Americas –
Nevis, United States

REVIEWED BY

Angelica Moè,
University of Padua, Italy

*CORRESPONDENCE

Mei-Lin Chang
mchang6@kennesaw.edu

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Editorial: Teachers' emotion regulation and emotional labor: Relationships with teacher motivation, well-being, and teaching effectiveness

Mei-Lin Chang^{1*}, Irena Burić² and Hui Wang³

¹Department of Secondary and Middle Grades Education, Kennesaw State University, Kennesaw, GA, United States, ²Department of Psychology, University of Zadar, Zadar, Croatia, ³Department of Special Education and Counselling, The Education University of Hong Kong, Tai Po, Hong Kong SAR, China

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Editorial on the Research Topic

[Teachers' emotion regulation and emotional labor: Relationships with teacher motivation, well-being, and teaching effectiveness](#)

Teaching is laborious work requiring a great deal of emotional awareness, understanding, and regulation to develop and maintain supportive relationships with students. The scholarship on teacher emotion has been flourishing in recent decades (Chen et al., 2020; Chen and Cheng, 2022), and existing literature has underscored the significance of teacher emotion in shaping teacher motivation, wellbeing, and instructional quality (Frenzel et al., 2021). However, research on teachers' emotion regulation and its related constructs, such as emotional labor, is still underdeveloped and limited in the range of cultures, contexts, and research methodologies (Wang et al., 2019). The pioneer research on teacher emotion regulation was first published in Sutton (2004), followed by a few subsequent publications around 2009–2010 (Çukur, 2009; Sutton et al., 2009; Hülshager et al. et al., 2010; Tsouloupas et al., 2010). Since then, the field has gradually flourished in the past two decades. In a recent meta-analysis of publications regarding teacher emotion regulation, it was found that only about 88 quantitative and empirical papers exist thus far (2006–2022) that have closely examined teacher emotion regulation (Wang et al., under review). Among these empirical studies, only a few adaptive forms of emotion regulation (i.e., cognitive reappraisal) and emotional labor strategies (i.e., deep acting) have been identified for their associations with effective teaching and student outcomes [e.g., student engagement by Burić and Frenzel (2020); adoption of a need supportive and motivating style by Moè and Katz (2021)], teacher enthusiasm (e.g., Gaspard and Lauer mann, 2021), and teacher wellbeing (e.g., Chang, 2013; Yin et al., 2016). Our understanding of these constructs is still inadequate regarding how regulatory processes

function during various contexts of teaching and in what ways they deeply intersect with teacher motivation, wellbeing, teacher-student relationships, and teaching effectiveness.

Overview of the special issue

In seeking to develop a more systematic understanding of teacher emotion regulation and emotional labor, this Research Topic is titled: “*Teachers’ emotion regulation and emotional labor: Relationships with teacher motivation, well-being, and teaching effectiveness.*” It was designed to spark the publication of new empirical evidence and potential linkages of the antecedents, processes, and effects of teacher emotion regulation and emotional labor. The collection of six papers contextualized our understanding of teacher emotion regulation and emotional labor by drawing studies from a diverse sample, including preservice and in-service teachers and college instructors with cultural representation from Austria, China, and the U.S., and a variety of methodologies including systematic review, and quantitative, qualitative, and mixed method approaches.

Contextual variety in emotion regulation

This collection of articles answered critical questions in addressing the contextual differences in emotion regulation: **In the post-secondary education context**, what do we know about university faculty and college instructors’ coping and emotion regulation strategies for stress management (Salimzadeh et al.)? Does emotional labor matter for university teaching (Han et al.)? **In the team-teaching context**, how do team teachers co-regulate and communicate their emotions in the team-taught classroom environment (Muehlbacher et al.)? **In addressing cultural and ethnic context**, how do Confucian familism, emotional labor, and work-family conflict explain the variance in teachers’ emotional exhaustion (Zhu et al.)? How prevalent is imposter syndrome among preservice teachers, and how are minority group membership and identity related to imposter syndrome? What is the association between imposter syndrome and teachers’ emotion regulation competency (LaPalme et al.)? Finally, **in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic**, to what degree did teachers experience burnout, and how did individual (i.e., emotion regulation strategies) and contextual factors (e.g., school administrative support) intersect with different facets of teachers’ emotional experiences (Chang et al.)?

Theoretical frameworks

Across these six contributions, Grandey (2000, 2015) theoretical framework of emotional labor and Gross (1998) process model of emotion regulation are the dominant

theoretical frameworks. Salimzadeh et al. adopted both models to examine the existing literature regarding the prevalence and consequences of emotion regulation and emotional labor. Han et al. and Zhu et al. examined emotional labor and its antecedents and consequences aligned with Grandey’s integrative model. Muehlbacher et al. and Chang et al. conducted qualitative investigations and contextualized Gross’ process model of emotion regulation in team-teaching and pandemic teaching, respectively. Similarly, LaPalme et al. adopted Gross’ model of emotion regulation to examine how preservice teachers’ emotion regulation was related to their imposter syndrome.

Theoretical and empirical contributions

Each article provides a unique lens to help us better understand the contextual influences of teachers’ emotion regulation processes. For instance, although emotional labor, especially faking and hiding emotions, was frequently reported to correspond with high job stress, burnout, and less job satisfaction, Salimzadeh et al.’s systematic review found that emotional labor may not be entirely detrimental for faculty. Specifically, conducting emotional labor allows faculty to act professionally in college classrooms and hence, provides better career development opportunities. Han et al. documented that surface acting in the university teaching context impeded teachers’ teaching efficacy in instructional strategy and learning assessment. They also found that deep acting and expressing naturally felt emotions enhanced teachers’ self-efficacy. Muehlbacher et al. identified how team teachers communicated and engaged in co- and shared emotion regulation such as situation modification, reappraisal, authentic display, and suppression. The collaborative relationships in a team-teaching environment afforded teachers ample opportunities to use humor, encouragement, and praise in teaching, providing teachers with workload relief and immediate emotional support. Zhu et al.’s study revealed the cultural effect of Confucian familism on teachers’ use of deep and surface acting strategies and how it may play the dual role of motivator and stressor for Chinese teachers’ emotional labor and wellbeing.

Moreover, Chang et al.’s study depicted how the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated teachers’ stress and negative emotions and challenged effective emotion regulation in teachers. The overwhelming negative emotions associated with protocols during pandemic teaching impeded their cognitive processes for reappraisals which in turn caused burnout. Finally, in examining the emotion regulation among pre-service teachers, LaPalme et al. discovered that many pre-service teachers experience imposter syndrome and using maladaptive coping strategies may exacerbate it.

In sum, this collection of papers elaborated on the multi-faceted functions of teachers' emotion regulation, provided evidence concerning the benefits of adaptive emotion regulation on teacher wellbeing and fostered a comprehensive understanding of the roles that teacher emotion regulation and emotional labor can play in improving their motivation, wellbeing, and teaching effectiveness.

Author contributions

All authors listed have made a substantial, direct, and intellectual contribution to the work and approved it for publication.

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