

GENDER DIFFERENCES IN EMOTIONAL LABOUR AND JOB SATISFACTION AMONG HIGH SCHOOL RESIDENTIAL TEACHERS

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ABSTRACT:

This study examines gender differences in emotional labour and job satisfaction among high school residential teachers. Emotional labour, the process of managing emotions to meet job expectations, is a key yet overlooked aspect of teaching. Female teachers often experience greater emotional demands, which may impact their job satisfaction. A quantitative approach was used, surveying 210 residential teachers (105 male, 105 female).

Standardized scales measured emotional labour strategies (surface acting, deep acting) and job satisfaction. Descriptive statistics summarized key variables, independent samples t-tests assessed gender differences, and multiple regression analysis examined the relationship between emotional labour and job satisfaction. Findings indicate that female teachers engage in significantly deeper and surface acting than male teachers and report lower job satisfaction.

However, emotional labour does not directly predict job satisfaction, suggesting other workplace factors contribute more significantly to overall satisfaction. These results emphasize the need for institutional policies that recognize gendered emotional labour demands.

Schools should provide mental health resources, professional development, and workload management to support teachers, particularly women, ensuring better well-being, retention, and effectiveness in residential school environments.

Keywords: Deep acting, Emotional labour, Gender differences, Job satisfaction, Surface acting.

INTRODUCTION

Emotional Labour as a Crucial Aspect of Teaching

Teaching is an emotionally demanding profession that requires educators to regulate their emotions while interacting with students, parents, and colleagues. Hochschild (1983) coined the term "emotional labour," which describes the act of controlling emotions in order to meet the emotional demands of a job. In education, emotional labour involves suppressing negative emotions, displaying enthusiasm, and maintaining composure in stressful situations to create a conducive learning environment (Taxer & Frenzel, 2015).

High school residential teachers face even greater emotional demands compared to their non-residential counterparts. In addition to academic responsibilities, they provide pastoral care, mentorship, and emotional support to students living on campus.

These teachers must navigate complex emotional interactions both inside and outside the classroom, often addressing students' personal and psychological concerns beyond regular school hours (Chang, 2009). This continuous emotional engagement increases the risk of emotional exhaustion, burnout, and job dissatisfaction if teachers are not adequately supported (Sutton, 2004).

Although emotional labour is typically undervalued and unrecognised, the student-teacher relationship and educational atmosphere are influenced through it (Kinman et al., 2011). Nevertheless, if repeated over time without organisational backing and resources, emotional labour can bring about adverse effects such as reduced job satisfaction, increased stress levels, and greater teacher turnover (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002). Since emotional labour plays a major role in teaching, it is essential to analyse its impact on teachers' well-being, retention, and performance, particularly in stressful settings like residential schools.

Importance of Job Satisfaction in Teacher Retention and Performance

Teacher satisfaction is a significant predictor of teaching effectiveness, motivation, and job retention. Happy teachers are more inclined to have greater job commitment, improved classroom management, and more positive student relationships, while unhappy teachers are likely to suffer from burnout, disillusionment, and heightened turnover (Skaalvik&Skaalvik, 2017). High levels of teacher turnover have a detrimental impact on student achievement results in addition to school stability and institutional reputation (Borman & Dowling, 2008).

In residential school environments, job satisfaction is also affected by other factors like long working hours, emotional labour, and restricted free time (Hakanen et al., 2006). Residential educators, unlike day school teachers, stay with their students closely, and this tends to blur the boundaries between their professional and personal lives. The emotional demands of dealing with student behaviour, handling personal crises, and exerting authority without proper breaks can contribute to increased stress and emotional exhaustion (Maslach & Leiter, 2016).

Schools that don't meet these emotional needs can have high levels of teacher attrition, which derails students' learning and is expensive in recruitment costs. Strong institutional support, professional development, and healthy work-life balance can go a long way to enhancing job satisfaction and retention for teachers, as studies have found (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). Realizing the relationship between emotional labour and job satisfaction is hence fundamental in the conceptualization of policies to ensure teachers' well-being and professional satisfaction.

The Role of Gender in Shaping Emotional Labour Experiences

Gender is also significant in determining how teachers undergo and enact emotional labour. Gendered emotional roles are often imposed by societal expectations and workplace requirements, which affect how men and women manage and display their emotions at work. Women teachers are often required to be more caring, sympathetic, and emotionally expressive, practicing deep acting—whereby they adjust their internal feelings to match anticipated emotions (Diefendorff et al., 2005). In contrast, male teachers are likely to be expected to show authority, emotional regulation, and calmness, and therefore are likely to practice surface acting—where they hide their genuine emotions without adopting the anticipated emotional expression (Brotheridge & Lee, 2002).

These gendered expectations can generate unique emotional costs for male and female teachers. Women might have more emotional exhaustion from having to be available as an emotional buffer at all times, while men would grapple with the emotion suppression and associated work stress, and detachment emotionally (Cottingham et al., 2015). Under residential schools where teachers need to be present after class time as well, gendered demands are likely to deepen the emotional costs of working as an educator and impact job retention and satisfaction.

Through an examination of how gender affects the experience of emotional labour, this research hopes to gain a better understanding of the emotional challenges teachers experience, how they cope with these challenges, and how these experiences contribute to their job satisfaction. Solving these problems can assist school administrators in creating fair support systems that acknowledge and adapt to the specific emotional labour demands of male and female teachers.

Emotional labour is a core but under-researched area of teaching, especially in high school boarding schools where teachers need to constantly manage their feelings within and outside the classrooms. The emotional labour of teaching necessitates teachers to use various emotional labour approaches—surface acting (adjusting emotional displays without altering inner feelings), deep acting (internalising ideal emotions), and natural emotional display (expressing true emotions) (Grandey, 2000). Nevertheless, the manner in which male and female teachers perform emotional labour is sometimes influenced by public expectations and work-place requirements, resulting in possible inequality of emotional load and career satisfaction (Diefendorff et al., 2005).

Studies indicate that women teachers are more prone to employ deep acting given stereotypical gender roles that prioritize caregiving and emotional expression while men may use surface acting as a means of sustaining authority and emotional control (Cottingham et al., 2015). Such emotional labour strategies could account for different levels of stress, emotional exhaustion, and job satisfaction. Nonetheless, few studies have examined how these gendered differences are exhibited in high school residential environments, in which teachers have intense emotional labour requirements owing to their dual role as educators and residential carers. Furthermore, although emotional labour might depreciate job satisfaction, there can exist external factors like work environment and social support to act as moderating variables (Hakanen et al., 2006).

A supportive work environment, relationships with colleagues, and administrative support might act as buffer against the negative influence of emotional labour and maintain teachers' job satisfaction and professional commitment. Empirical studies of the moderating impacts are however limited, especially in residential school environments where work-life boundaries tend to become blurred.

Given these research gaps, this study aims to seek understanding for the following objectives

1. To examine gender differences in emotional labour strategies (deep acting and surface acting) among high school residential teachers.
2. To assess whether the impact of emotional labour on job satisfaction is stronger for female teachers than for male teachers.
3. To analyse the overall effect of emotional labour (deep acting and surface acting) on job satisfaction among high school residential teachers.

By addressing these questions, this study seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of gendered emotional labour experiences and their implications for teacher well-being, job satisfaction, and institutional policies in residential schools.

• **Hypotheses:**

H_{0 1} : There is no significant difference in surface acting and deep acting between male and female teachers.

H_{0 2} : The effect of emotional labour on job satisfaction does not differ between male and female teachers.

H_{0 3} : Emotional labour does not have a significant negative effect on job satisfaction.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The three key theoretical pillars on which this research is founded provide a comprehensive understanding of emotional labour, its gendered nature, and its impact on high school residential teachers' job satisfaction.

1. Hochschild's (1983) Emotional Labour Theory

Hochschild (1983) originally defined emotional labour as the act of managing emotions to satisfy work requirements. She identified three primary strategies:

- Surface Acting: Employees change their outward show of feeling without changing their inside feelings.
- Deep Acting: Employees consciously attempt to align their inner emotions with those they need to perform on the job.
- Genuine Emotional Expression: Employees display feelings that align with their true emotions naturally.

In the teaching profession, educators frequently engage in emotional labour to maintain a supportive and motivating environment. Gender differences may influence which emotional labour strategy is predominantly used, affecting levels of emotional exhaustion and job satisfaction.

2. Affective Events Theory (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996)

Affective Events Theory (AET) explains how workplace events trigger emotional reactions, which, in turn, influence job attitudes and behaviours (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). The theory highlights:

- Emotional experiences at work (e.g., student interactions, administrative support) shape job satisfaction and well-being.
- Positive work events (e.g., recognition, student progress) enhance job satisfaction, while negative events (e.g., conflict, excessive emotional demands) lead to burnout.
- Emotional labour can act as a mediator, linking work experiences with teachers' overall job satisfaction.

This framework is crucial in understanding how emotional labour strategies contribute to teachers' emotional experiences and workplace outcomes.

3. Gender Role Theory (Eagly, 1987)

Gender Role Theory posits that societal expectations shape emotional expression and behaviour (Eagly, 1987).

Key principles include:

- Women are expected to be more nurturing, empathetic, and emotionally expressive, making deep acting more common among female teachers.
- Men are often encouraged to exhibit emotional control, dominance, and professionalism, leading to a higher tendency for surface acting.
- These gendered emotional expectations impact emotional labour experiences, potentially leading to differences in job satisfaction, stress, and burnout.

Through the synthesis of these three theories, this research examines how differences in gender impact emotional labour tactics, the effect of emotional experience at work on job satisfaction, and how societal norms influence teaching emotional regulation.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To explore gender differences in emotional labour methods, their impact on job satisfaction, and the moderating role of social support and work environment, this research adopts a quantitative approach.

To identify trends, relationships, and statistical differences in male and female residential teachers' emotional labour, a quantitative method permits systematic collection and analysis of quantitative data.

The target population for this study consists of high school residential teachers who work in boarding schools, where they interact with students both in academic and non-academic settings, necessitating significant emotional labour.

A stratified random sampling method was employed to ensure equal representation of male and female teachers. This approach allowed for meaningful comparisons between gender groups while minimizing sampling bias.

A total of 210 residential teachers was selected for participation, with an equal distribution of 105 male and 105 female teachers.

Data was collected through a structured survey questionnaire, consisting of standardized scales to measure emotional labour strategies and job satisfaction.

The following survey Instrument were employed in the study:

1. Emotional Labour Scale (Brotheridge & Lee, 2003) – Measures surface acting, deep acting, and natural emotional expression among teachers.

2. Job Satisfaction Scale (Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire) – Assesses overall job satisfaction levels among residential teachers.

The methods of Data Analysis used in the study were:

1. Descriptive Statistics
2. Independent Samples t-tests
3. Multiple Regression Analysis

DATA ANALYSIS

Descriptive Statistics

Gender	Deep Acting (Mean \pm SD)	Surface Acting (Mean \pm SD)	Job Satisfaction (Mean \pm SD)
Female	4.27 \pm 0.61	3.53 \pm 0.63	3.61 \pm 0.50
Male	3.52 \pm 0.54	2.84 \pm 0.70	3.96 \pm 0.52

Interpretation:

The descriptive statistics reveal that female teachers engage in higher levels of deep acting (Mean = 4.27) and surface acting (Mean = 3.53) than male teachers (3.52 and 2.84, respectively).

In contrast, male teachers report higher job satisfaction (Mean = 3.96) compared to female teachers (Mean = 3.61).

These findings suggest that female teachers experience greater emotional labour demands, which may contribute to lower job satisfaction.

Independent Samples t-tests

Comparison	t-Statistic	p-Value	Interpretation
Deep Acting (Female vs. Male)	-9.37	p < 0.001	Female teachers engage in significantly more deep acting than male teachers.
Surface Acting (Female vs. Male)	-7.59	p < 0.001	Female teachers engage in significantly more surface acting than male teachers.
Job Satisfaction (Female vs. Male)	4.95	p < 0.001	Male teachers report significantly higher job satisfaction than female teachers.

Interpretation:

The t-test results show statistically significant differences between male and female teachers across all variables ($p < 0.001$). Female teachers engage in significantly deeper and surface acting than male teachers, confirming that emotional labour is more pronounced among women. Additionally, male teachers report higher job satisfaction, indicating that greater emotional labour demands may negatively affect female teachers' work experiences.

Multiple Regression Analysis

Predictor	Coefficient (β)	t-Value	p-Value	Interpretation
Deep Acting	0.045	0.728	0.467	Not a significant predictor of job satisfaction.
Surface Acting	0.014	0.259	0.796	Not a significant predictor of job satisfaction.
Gender (Female = 1, Male = 0)	-0.392	-4.28	p < 0.001	Female teachers have significantly lower job satisfaction than male teachers.

Interpretation:

Regression analysis indicates that gender is a significant predictor of job satisfaction ($\beta = -0.392$, $p < 0.001$), meaning female teachers experience lower job satisfaction than males, even after accounting for emotional labour strategies. However, deep acting and surface acting do not significantly predict job satisfaction, suggesting that other workplace factors may play a stronger role in influencing satisfaction levels.

KEY FINDINGS

- **Descriptive Statistics** – Female teachers engage in more deep and surface acting than male teachers, while male teachers report higher job satisfaction, suggesting a possible negative impact of emotional labour on female teachers.
 - **Independent Samples t-tests** – There are significant gender differences in emotional labour strategies and job satisfaction ($p < 0.001$), confirming that female teachers experience greater emotional labour burdens and lower job satisfaction compared to males.
 - **Multiple Regression Analysis** – Gender is a significant predictor of job satisfaction ($p < 0.001$), with female teachers reporting lower satisfaction. However, deep acting and surface acting do not significantly predict job satisfaction, suggesting that other workplace factors influence job satisfaction more than emotional labour itself.
1. H_{01} is rejected because female teachers engage in significantly deeper and surface acting than male teachers ($p < 0.001$).
 2. H_{02} is rejected because gender was a significant predictor of job satisfaction, with female teachers reporting lower satisfaction ($p < 0.001$).
 3. H_{03} is accepted because deep acting and surface acting did not significantly predict job satisfaction in the regression analysis ($p > 0.05$).

While emotional labour differs significantly between genders, the regression analysis shows that deep acting and surface acting do not significantly predict job satisfaction. Therefore, H_{03} is accepted, indicating that emotional labour alone does not have a direct negative effect on job satisfaction in this sample. However, gender differences in job satisfaction suggest other workplace factors may contribute to dissatisfaction among female teachers.

CONCLUSION

This study explored gender differences in emotional labour strategies and their impact on job satisfaction among high school residential teachers. The results indicate that female teachers engage in significantly deeper and surface acting than their male counterparts, suggesting that they experience a greater emotional burden in their professional roles. Additionally, male teachers report higher job satisfaction, which implies that emotional labour demands may contribute to lower satisfaction among female teachers. The independent samples t-tests confirmed that these gender differences were statistically significant, reinforcing the idea that women in teaching roles may face higher expectations for emotional regulation, which could affect their overall well-being.

However, multiple regression analysis showed that deep acting and surface acting did not significantly predict job satisfaction, suggesting that emotional labour alone may not directly impact satisfaction levels. Instead, gender itself was a significant predictor, indicating that broader workplace conditions, such as institutional policies, workload, or support systems, may play a more crucial role in determining job satisfaction. These findings emphasize the need for organizational interventions to support teachers, particularly women, by providing emotional labour management strategies, professional development, and mental health resources to enhance job satisfaction and well-being.

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APPENDIX – RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

Section 1: Demographic Information

(Please select or fill in the appropriate option.)

- 1. Gender:** ☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Prefer not to say
- 2. Age:** ____ years
- 3. Years of Teaching Experience:** ____ years
- 4. School Type:** ☐ Public ☐ Private
- 5. Work Schedule:** ☐ Full-time ☐ Part-time
- 6. Number of Students in Your Care (Residential Setting):** ____

Section 2: Emotional Labour Scale

(Indicate how often you engage in the following behaviours on a scale from 1 to 5: 1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Often, 5 = Always.)

Surface Acting

- 1.** I fake emotions that I do not really feel in front of students.
- 2.** I hide my true emotions when interacting with students.
- 3.** I put on an emotional display to meet job requirements.

Deep Acting

- 4.** I try to actually feel the emotions I need to display at work.
- 5.** I put effort into genuinely feeling the emotions I need to show.
- 6.** I work to change my feelings to match the emotions I must express.

Section 3: Job Satisfaction Scale

(Rate your level of agreement with the following statements on a scale from 1 to 5: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.)

- 1.** I feel satisfied with my current teaching job.
- 2.** My job gives me a sense of accomplishment.
- 3.** I receive adequate support from my school administration.
- 4.** My work responsibilities are manageable.
- 5.** I feel emotionally exhausted from my teaching responsibilities.
- 6.** I have a good balance between work and personal life.
- 7.** I feel valued by my students and colleagues.
- 8.** I would recommend this job to others as a fulfilling career.

Section 4: Additional Open-Ended Questions (Optional)

(Teachers can provide written responses to gain deeper insights.)

1. What aspects of your job contribute most to your satisfaction?
2. What challenges do you face in managing emotional labour?
3. What kind of support would improve your job satisfaction?