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Emotional Labor and the Work of School Psychologists

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Abstract

As the field of school psychology faces critical shortages, investigations of work factors affecting job satisfaction and burnout are of increasing importance. One such factor is emotional labor, which is defined as the work of managing one's emotions and emotional expressions so as to align to the expectations of the job or profession. In this study, practitioners (N = 192) were surveyed regarding their work experiences, recognition of display rules (standards that guide employees' emotional expression), surface acting (the form of emotional labor in which employees manage their external emotional expression), job satisfaction, and burnout (consisting of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment). Multiple regression analyses showed that display rule recognition was positively related to surface acting, and surface acting was positively related to emotional exhaustion and depersonalization while negatively related to job satisfaction and personal accomplishment. Results suggest that emotional labor may be an important aspect of the work of school psychologists – impacting both job satisfaction and burnout. Limitations and implications for research and practice are discussed.

Emotional Labor and the Work of School Psychologists

Emotional labor refers to the work of managing the emotions one feels or expresses to others so as to conform to the expectations of the job or profession (Hochschild, 1983). While many situations in life call for the regulation and management of our emotions, emotional labor is distinct in that this type of emotion regulation is considered part of the job (Grandey, 2000). There is accumulating evidence that as the emotional labor demands increase in a job, so too do burnout and stress (Grandey, Fisk, & Steiner, 2005; Kammeyer-Mueller et al., 2013). Due to the shortage of school psychologists in many parts of the country, it is critical that practitioners are prepared to deal with emotional aspects of the job that may contribute to burnout and potential turnover in our profession. While emotional labor has been researched in a variety of fields, there has been little investigation of this phenomenon among education professionals in public schools, and none among school psychologists in particular. In this article, we examine the role of emotional labor in the work of school psychologists and discuss its impact on job satisfaction and burnout.

The Practice of School Psychology

The work of school psychologists is multifaceted, including a wide array of practices and services (Skalski et al., 2015). School psychologists most typically work in public school systems to help students succeed academically, socially, and emotionally. They frequently serve students with disabilities to ensure that they receive appropriate instruction and supports. Although the practitioner's role may vary somewhat by district or by state, the National Association of School Psychologists' (NASP) Model for Comprehensive and Integrated School Psychological Services (2010), also known as the NASP Practice Model, provides a service delivery model based on a problem-solving framework in which both student-level and school-

wide assessment data are used to develop and promote effective academic and behavioral services. This entails regular collaboration and consultation with family members, teachers, other service providers, and other stakeholders regarding assessment results, interventions, and learning environments, for individual students as well as entire school systems. In addition, practitioners often respond to the mental health needs of students and help coordinate services in the event of a school crisis. Finally, in all of these practices, an overarching role of the school psychologist is that of student advocate.

For many school psychologists, these demands are manageable or may be outweighed by positive feelings of personal accomplishment. In fact, school psychologists' job satisfaction levels have been consistently higher than for other school professionals including teachers, with 90% reporting they are satisfied or very satisfied with their jobs (VanVoorhis & Levinson, 2006; Worrell, Skaggs, & Brown, 2006). Studies examining job satisfaction and burnout among practitioners have found several contributing factors. These include the amount of perceived supervisor and coworker support (Gibson, Grey, & Hastings, 2009), the number of school buildings served (Proctor & Steadman, 2003), and the need for crisis intervention services (Bolnik & Brock, 2005).

While school psychologists tend to be more satisfied with their jobs overall, there are several job factors that may make them prone to emotional labor. Hosp and Reschly (2002) found a great deal of variability in the job roles and activities of practitioners. In addition to differences by region, there appeared to be a significant discrepancy between the actual and preferred job practices and activities reported by school psychologists, with practitioners preferring to spend less time in meetings and report writing and more time providing interventions and prevention screenings (Filter, Ebsen, & Dibos, 2013). Additionally, school

psychologists are often required to interact with a large number of different stakeholders and colleagues. Whereas in many fields, workers interact with their customers, coworkers, and supervisors to varying degrees, a number of different groups might represent the "customer" to a school psychologist. These might include students, parents, teachers, and school administrators. Because each of these "customers" of various ages and perspectives are expecting good, supportive service in their interactions with the school psychologist, there is an implicit requirement of emotional management (e.g., expressing positive and suppressing negative emotions).

Emotional Labor Processes

Hochschild (1983) was the first to use the term *emotional labor* in her discussion of the frequent tension between one's private feelings and emotions and the expectations of one's job role. It was her contention that for many, emotions and the management of emotions are an important aspect of work. In subsequent years, a great many researchers have investigated the antecedents and effects of emotional labor. While this research continues to evolve, there is broad consensus on a definition of emotional labor that incorporates both *surface acting* and *deep acting* (Diefendorff, Croyle, & Gosserand, 2005; Fisk & Friesen, 2012; Grandey, 2000; Scott & Barnes, 2011).

Surface acting consists of managing the emotional expressions revealed to others without any attempt at changing the underlying feelings. This type of emotional labor may be regarded as "faking" or pretending to feel something other than what is truly felt. For example, an airline employee may attempt to express sorrow and contrition that a traveler's luggage has been lost, despite not actually feeling these emotions. In addition to the effort involved in disguising the actual emotions, surface acting may result in emotional dissonance which has been shown to lead

to increased job stress and burnout (Fisk & Friesen, 2012; Kenworthy, Fay, Frame, & Petree, 2014).

In contrast to surface acting, deep acting is the work of trying to manage one's internal feelings in accordance with the external expression. According to Grandey (2000), this may be done through attentional deployment (i.e., thinking about things that elicit the appropriate emotion, similar to "method acting") and/or cognitive change (i.e., attempting to view or reframe the situation is such a way as to call forth the appropriate emotion). The airline employee, for instance, might attempt to think of a sad experience or to put themselves in the traveler's situation in order to issue a more sincere apology for the lost luggage. Although both surface acting and deep acting involve some type of effort, surface acting has been found to be more detrimental while deep acting has been linked to positive outcomes (Judge, Woolf, & Hurst, 2009; Kammeyer-Mueller et al., 2013; Scott & Barnes, 2011).

Emotional Display Rules

Emotion management in the workplace is generally seen as a response to organizational *display rules* (Grandey, 2000; Hochschild, 1983). Emotional display rules are intended to guide employee emotional expressions in such a way as to create positive interpersonal interactions, increase customer satisfaction, and foster a positive regard for the organization or profession (Diefendorff, Richard, & Croyle, 2006). In some professions, these display rules may be explicitly stated – for example, "Service with a smile" – or be part of a formal code of conduct. In other fields, they may be implicit, yet understood to be appropriate or "professional" (Diefendorff et al., 2006; Grandey, 2000).

Diefendorff and colleagues (2006) report that while most companies have no formal written policies regarding appropriate emotional displays, a vast majority of surveyed employees

and their supervisors considered emotional display rules to be a required and enforceable job expectation. This is significant because although most school districts are unlikely to have formal, explicitly stated display rules, educators and school psychologists may still regard the display of positive emotions as an important part of the job. These assumptions are supported in many of NASP's training and practice resources. For instance, Domain 10 of the NASP Practice Model includes work characteristics such as communication and interpersonal skills (Skalski et al., 2015). While a positive emotional display towards stakeholders is not explicitly listed, it may be inferred as a necessary component of effective communication and interpersonal skills. Within the organization, Principal 2 of the NASP Practice Model Organizational Principles deals with professional Climate: "Cooperative and collaborative relationships among staff members are promoted" (Skalski et al., 2015, p. I-6). Relatedly, Principal 4 supports practices that "result in positive, proactive communication among employees at all administrative levels" (p. I-6). These statements may promote an understanding among school psychologists that in addition to their specific work roles and practices, a positive emotional expression is also part of the job.

Antecedents of Emotional Labor

In addition to display rules, other job characteristics have been proposed as variables that may influence emotional labor. For instance, higher levels of emotional labor are found among employees who perceive their supervisors to be hostile or abusive (Carlson, Ferguson, Hunter, & Whitten, 2012) or who are subjected to disrespectful or uncivil treatment by customers (Diefendorff & Croyle, 2008; Rupp & Spencer, 2006). In contrast, employees who feel supported by their supervisor (Grandey, 2000) and who feel that they can be authentic around their coworkers without fear of rejection (Grandey, Foo, Groth, & Goodwin, 2012) tend to engage in less emotional labor. Thus, the frequency and quality of encounters that a worker has

with their customers, supervisor, and other coworkers, greatly impacts the amount and effects of emotional labor. These findings have been replicated in school settings, as perceived supervisor support was found to impact job satisfaction and burnout among therapists providing discrete-trial training to students with autism (Gibson et al., 2009).

Independent of job characteristics, personal variables have also been shown to influence emotional labor. One important aspect is affectivity or disposition. A number of studies have demonstrated that a negative affect is related to higher levels of surface acting while a positive affect is related to lower levels of surface acting (Grandey, 2000; Judge, et al., 2009; Kammeyer-Mueller et al., 2013). This is not surprising: because display rules typically call for positive interactions with customers, we would expect that more effort would be required for an employee with a negative affect to engage in that type of customer interaction. Other personal variables examined in the literature include personality traits. Extraversion, conscientiousness, and agreeableness typically correlate negatively with surface acting while neuroticism correlates positively (Diefendorff et al., 2005; Judge et al., 2009).

Outcomes of Emotional Labor

Emotional labor has been linked to long-term consequences at the individual level and also at the organizational level (Grandey, 2000). At the individual level, the most frequently studied outcomes are job satisfaction and burnout. While surface acting is generally associated with lower levels of job satisfaction, deep acting is sometimes found to be associated with higher levels (Judge et al., 2009; Kammeyer-Muller et al., 2013). One explanation for this may be that workers who express emotions which are aligned to their actual emotions feel less “fake” (Grandey, 2000). Thus, the high level of emotional dissonance created by surface acting may be a primary factor in reduced job satisfaction. Another explanation pertains to the conservation of

resources theory (Hobfoll, 1989). Because workers have a limited supply of personal resources (e.g., energies), a depletion in one area limits their capacity in other areas. This drain is thought to contribute to decreased job satisfaction (Grandey et al., 2005). A final explanation is that workers who are inauthentic in their emotional expressions may be seen as less effective by others (Chi, Grandey, Diamond, & Krimmel, 2011), and thus be less satisfied with their jobs.

Burnout is typically defined and measured by three components: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a lowered sense of personal accomplishment (Maslach & Jackson, 1996). Emotional exhaustion is often seen as the core component of burnout, and refers to a depletion of emotional resources and energy (Grandey, 2000). Consistent with the conservation of resources theory (Hobfoll, 1989), a loss of resources in this area may result in personal stress for the worker. This may cause the worker to withdraw and detach from customers and coworkers, leading to depersonalization. This process may eventually impact the worker's sense of personal accomplishment, the final component of burnout (Grandey, 2000). Thus, a worker experiencing job burnout would be expected to score high in emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, and low in personal accomplishment. In a great many studies, a strong link has been established between high levels of surface acting and burnout, particularly emotional exhaustion (Carlson et al., 2012; Chau, Dahling, Levy, & Dieffendorff, 2009; Grandey et al., 2005; Grandey et al., 2012; Judge et al., 2009; Kammeyer-Mueller, 2013).

In addition to effects on the quality of life for the individual worker, burnout and low job satisfaction may also have an indirect effect on the organization itself. Several studies have linked burnout to work withdrawal and diminished work performance (Chi et al., 2011; Scott & Barnes, 2011). In addition, poor job satisfaction and high levels of emotional exhaustion are likely to result in turnover (Chau et al., 2009). In the profession of school psychology, job

satisfaction levels are generally quite high (VanVoorhis & Levinson, 2006; Worrell, Skaggs, & Brown, 2006). However, due to critical shortages in the field, even a very small amount of turnover in the field can have a detrimental effect on school systems as well as the students they serve.

Present Study

We proposed to test a mediated model of emotional labor for school psychology practitioners. Because of previous findings regarding emotional labor in other professions, we predicted that the recognition of display rules would increase the likelihood that practitioners would need to manage and regulate their emotional expression.

Hypothesis 1: Display rules are positively related to surface acting.

Consistent with research on emotional labor in other fields, we expected that school psychologists who engage in a greater amount of surface acting would be more likely to experience burnout. We also expected that school psychologists who report less surface acting would experience greater job satisfaction. Therefore,

Hypothesis 2: Surface acting is related to the facets of burnout such that it is positively related to both emotional exhaustion and depersonalization while negatively related to personal accomplishment.

Hypothesis 3: Surface acting is negatively related to job satisfaction.

Finally, given the forgoing hypotheses, we also expected surface acting to mediate the relationship between display rules and both burnout and job satisfaction for school psychologists working with multiple stakeholders in educational settings:

Hypothesis 4: Surface acting mediates the relationship between display rules and emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, personal accomplishment, and job satisfaction.

Method

Participants

Participants in this study consisted of school psychology practitioners in various States in the U.S. (N = 192). Table 1 summarizes demographic characteristics that were included on the survey. There was diversity with respect to geographic region, while gender, ethnicity, and age of participants, as well as tenure in the field approximated those found in other national samples (Curtis, Hunley, Walker, & Baker, 1999; Filter et al., 2013). All participants had obtained a graduate-level degree and held state certification. In addition to personal characteristics, the survey also contained items regarding the characteristics of the schools in which participants worked (Table 2). While a large percentage of participants reported utilization of a Response to Intervention (RtI) and/or Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) model, there were no follow-up questions regarding the degree or quality of implementation. In other respects, there was diversity regarding the socio-economic level of the school community, grade-levels served, and student population. Thirty-six participants were excluded because they completed less than 60% of the key items in the study (Roth, Switzer, & Switzer, 1999), resulting in a final usable sample size of 156 participants.

Procedures

The study complied with Institutional Review Board policies of the authors' institution, and all participants provided consent. Most participants completed the survey online via *Qualtrics Survey Software*; however, a few (n = 18) completed paper-pencil versions. The first wave of data came from participants recruited in Nebraska through the state school psychology association membership directory and in Iowa by directly emailing the lead school psychologists in area education agencies and school districts (n = 100). The attempt was to recruit a significant

percentage of the entire population of practitioners in both States. A snowball sample approach was then used in recruiting the remaining participants (n = 92). A description of the study and a link to the survey were sent to practitioners in several States in the U.S., and they were asked to forward to other practitioners who might be interested in participating. No compensation was offered for participation, and all surveys were completed during the 2014-2015 school year.

Measures

The survey developed for this study included a number of previously validated instruments as well as other scales developed specifically for this study. Participant demographic variables and school characteristics were also assessed as discussed above.

Perceptions of emotional display rules and surface acting were assessed using the scales developed by Diefendorff, Croyle, and Gosserand (2005). The Display Rules (DR) portion and the Surface Acting (SA) subscale each consist of seven items. All items were arranged in a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree.* In some cases, the wording of the original items was adapted to reflect work in educational settings. For instance, the item "Part of my job is to make customers feel good" was changed to "Part of my job is to make the stakeholders (e.g., students, families, and colleagues) feel good." In this sample, both scales showed sufficient internal consistency (α = 0.83 for DR and 0.94 for SA).

Emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment were assessed using the Maslach Burnout Inventory – Human Services Survey (MBI-HSS; Maslach & Jackson, 1996). The MBI-HSS consists of 22 items, with nine items loading into Emotional Exhaustion (EE), eight items loading into Personal Accomplishment (PA), and five items loading into Depersonalization (DP). All items consist of positively worded statements that the respondent is asked to rate in terms of frequency of experience (i.e., *never* to *every day*) on a 7-point Likert-

type scale. As with the Diefendorff scales, the wording of some items was changed to reflect work in educational settings by changing the word "customer" to "stakeholder" and providing examples ("students, families, and colleagues"). Internal consistency estimates for EE, PA, and DP in this sample were $\alpha = 0.92$, $\alpha = 0.89$, and $\alpha = 0.70$, respectively.

Job Satisfaction (JS) was assessed with a 5-item scale developed by Bacharach, Bamberger, and Conley (1991). This measure explores the degree of agreement between employee expectations and perceived reality for broad aspects of the job. Participants are asked to respond to each item in a 4-point Likert-type scale ranging from *very dissatisfied* to *very satisfied*. In the current sample, the scale showed sufficient internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.91$).

Because individual differences in disposition have been found in the literature to influence emotional labor, our survey included The Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS; Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988). The PANAS assesses both factors of mood, and both were included as potential control variables. The PANAS consists of two 10-item mood scales that ask participants to rate the degree to which they feel, in general, a variety of mood descriptors, both positive (e.g., *inspired* and *active*) and negative (e.g., *ashamed* and *hostile*). All items are rated in a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from *very slightly or not at all* to *extremely.* Estimates for internal consistency for positive and negative affectivity in this sample were $\alpha = 0.89$ and $\alpha = 0.86$, respectively.

Results

Preliminary Analyses

Means and standard deviations were computed for all primary variables in the study (see Table 3). Bivariate correlations between the primary variables and demographic variables revealed that age and tenure correlated with personal accomplishment and depersonalization (see

Table 3). Therefore, age and tenure, along with gender, were included as covariates in subsequent hypothesis testing (Becker, 2005). Additionally, all correlations were in the expected directions providing preliminary support for the hypotheses.

Hypothesis Testing

As predicted in Hypothesis 1, display rules are positively related to surface acting and explain a significant amount of variance in surface acting while controlling for age, gender, tenure, and positive and negative affectivity, (b = .46, ΔR^2 = .10, p < .05; see Table 4).

Also, in support of Hypothesis 2 and 3, surface acting explains a significant amount of variance and is positively related to both emotional exhaustion (b = .24, ΔR^2 = .02, p < .05) and depersonalization (b = .30, ΔR^2 = .06, p < .05; see Table 5) and negatively related to personal accomplishment (b = -.15, ΔR^2 = .01, p < .05) and job satisfaction (b = -.15, ΔR^2 = .02, p < .05; see Table 6), all while controlling for age, gender, tenure, and positive and negative affectivity. This pattern of relationships suggests the possibility of mediation, which is consistent with Hypothesis 4.

Given preliminary support was found for all four mediated models – Hypotheses 1, 2, and 3 – we test Hypothesis 4 using Hayes's (2015) PROCESS macro to determine the indirect effects of display rules on emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, personal accomplishment, and job satisfaction through surface acting. Tables 4, 5, and 6 show that display rules relate to surface acting and that surface acting relates to the outcomes, suggesting mediation. Table 7 provides the formal test of the indirect effect of display rules on the outcome variables through surface acting using 5,000 bootstrap samples (Hayes, 2015). Based on these results, display rules significantly indirectly relates to emotional exhaustion (ab = .11, p < .05), depersonalization (ab

= .13, $p < .05$), personal accomplishment (ab = -.07, $p < .05$), and job satisfaction (ab = -.07, $p < .05$). Thus, these results support Hypothesis 4.

Discussion

In summary, the findings from this study support findings from previous research regarding the effects of emotional labor in other professions. We found that our sample of school psychologists perceived emotional display rules to be a guiding factor in their work, and that this recognition was related to their levels of surface acting. We also found that practitioners who reported high levels of surface acting in their work were more likely to report experiencing higher levels of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, and lower levels of personal accomplishment and job satisfaction. Finally, we found that the relationship between display rules and these variables (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, personal accomplishment, and job satisfaction) was mediated by surface acting. This provides support for the model of emotional labor tested in other studies (e.g., Diefendorff et al., 2005; Judge et al., 2009; Kammeyer-Mueller et al., 2013), and provides initial evidence that this model is also true in the field of school psychology.

Implications for Research

This study provides several implications for research. First, in terms of emotional labor research in general (Grandey, 2000), it seems important to begin to consider contexts outside the traditional service occupation context where the theory originated (Hochschild, 1983) and in which emotional labor has most often been studied. Whereas traditional service occupations include customer service type jobs such as retail work and restaurant servers, among others, school psychologists are typically associated with the professional class. Like other recent

research on emotional labor in alternative contexts (e.g. Shanock et al., 2013), our study further substantiates the call to expand the domain for which emotional labor is studied and applied.

Second, although there is a growing body of research concerning the challenges and changes within the practice of school psychology (Filter et al., 2013; Hosp & Reschly, 2002), this study further suggests there are other areas of employment psychology that can and should inform our understanding of the practice of school psychology. Specifically, showing that emotional labor occurs among school psychologists, an area of research and work experience not previously considered, one begins to wonder what other areas of the work experience are applicable to school psychologists? The implication here is the need to broaden the focus, including more mundane work-related context variables when considering and studying the work experience of school psychologists.

Practical Implications

Because of the applied nature of the study presented here, there are several practical implications for school psychologists, school psychology training programs, and educational administrators. The first has to do with the training that prospective school psychologists receive. Training programs that are NASP-approved provide coursework and applied experiences to prepare school psychologists-in-training to competently provide services aligned with the NASP Practice Model. However, as graduate programs focus on helping school psychologists-in-training acquire the necessary knowledge and skills, less attention may be given to preparing their students for the emotional rigors of the job. This study emphasizes the importance of ensuring that practitioners are adequately prepared for this aspect of their work. In addition to addressing overall coping skills and self-care, training programs should examine the role of emotional labor, particularly surface acting, in the daily work of the practitioner. For

students who frequently demonstrate positive affect or other personal characteristics associated with lower adverse effects of emotional labor, this may not be as critical. But for other school psychologists-in-training, it may be essential that they are educated on the potential negative impacts of surface acting prior to experiencing the emotional demands of the job during or after internship.

A related implication has to do with the personal characteristics of those who go into the field of school psychology. Because of the nature of the work, many school psychologists may choose to go into the field because of a desire to help others and to make a difference. Thus, for many practitioners, positive expressions to stakeholders may come from genuinely felt emotions. This may partially explain the overall high levels of job satisfaction among school psychologists (VanVoorhis & Levinson, 2006). However, for those with lower levels of these naturally felt emotions, the recognition of emotional display rules may force the practitioner to "fake" these feelings. This means that a good deal of reflection may be incredibly important for the prospective school psychologist to undertake when deciding upon a career. If the motivation to pursue school psychology is not, at least in part, bolstered by naturally felt positive emotions (e.g., compassion, empathy, agreeableness), it may be more likely that the individual will experience burnout and low job satisfaction due to the demands of emotional labor.

Finally, for practitioners already at work in the field, understanding emotional labor and the toll that it can take may potentially help school psychologists manage their emotions in healthy ways. For instance, a practitioner might make a concerted effort to actually feel the needed emotions (deep acting) rather than trying to fake these emotions, as deep acting is associated with better outcomes in previous research (Judge et al., 2009; Kammeyer-Mueller et al., 2013). Practitioners might also choose to seek out support from supervisors and colleagues

to mitigate the effects of emotional labor, as these variables have been found to reduce the effects of emotional labor in other studies (Grandey, 2000; Grandey et al., 2012).

Limitations

Although this study provides a necessary first investigation of emotional labor among school psychologists and carries the literature of emotional labor into a new and robust domain, the study is not without limitations that should be mentioned. First, this study is based on self-report surveys and may be subject to common method bias (CMB; Conway & Lance, 2010; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Jeong-Yeon, & Podsakoff, 2003). The assessment of variables occurred simultaneously through use of a common, single instrument, through self-report ratings on a survey. Potential differences between electronic and paper-pencil responses as well as between reported and actual behaviors are unknown. While it is not possible to definitively rule out these limitations as confounding factors, there are factors that mitigate this concern. For example, the hypothesized relationships were significant in the expected direction. Also, we heeded methodological recommendations by Podsakoff et al. (2003) to reduce common-method bias. We tried to create proximity and psychological separation by assessing the factors independently of each other. Social desirability tendencies are known to act as a precipitating agent of common-method bias. Individuals can tend to over-report positive descriptions of their thoughts and behaviors and under-report any thoughts and behaviors that could lead them to be perceived more negatively by others. Therefore, we instructed participants not to include identifying information on the survey because of Podsakoff and colleagues' (2003) suggestion that the participants be provided with anonymity.

Second, the sample consisted of working school psychologist practitioners from the U.S. and therefore is culturally biased. Thus, generalizing the findings to other cultural contexts may

be problematic. As such, future research should broaden the sampling frame to consider different cultures and how CMBs may have a greater or lesser impact on the development of workplace attitudes/behaviors. Another limitation related to the sample is the convenience sampling frame, which included a snowball approach of school psychologists across the United States. Thus, the sample is not a random sample, nor is it stratified in any way. However, based on the analysis of the sample demographics, we feel confident we have a relatively good representation of school psychologists across a broad spectrum of work experiences, gender, age, and tenure.

Future Directions

Based on the findings presented here, interesting avenues for further inquiry exist. First, although the study presented here is a necessary first step to understanding whether emotional labor is a job demand for school psychologists, a natural next step is to compare the demand of emotional labor to the variety of other job-related demands that school psychologists experiences. Is emotional labor an additional demand, beyond other demands? Does it have greater or lesser impact to other traditional job demands that school psychologists face? These and other variable analytic questions could be tested in a similar method as used here or through more complex methods such as a diary-type study where school psychologists record their experiences over a period of time allowing for both within and between subjects comparisons.

Conclusion

Although high levels of job satisfaction are generally reported among school psychologists, shortages in the field make it critical that factors impacting burnout are investigated. Findings from this study suggest that one such factor is emotional labor. Practitioners and their employers may benefit from further education regarding emotional labor, its impact, and effective coping strategies.

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Table 1

Participant Characteristics

Characteristics	Frequency	%
Gender		
Female	138	85.7
Male	23	14.3
Reported Race/ethnicity		
White	148	96.7
Black/African American	3	2.0
Asian American	1	0.65
Hispanic	1	0.65
State		
Iowa	59	36.6
Nebraska	33	20.5
Alaska	28	17.4
Florida	15	9.3
Kansas	9	5.6
Illinois	3	1.9
Texas	3	1.9
Mississippi	2	1.2
Missouri	2	1.2
Wisconsin	2	1.2
Connecticut	1	0.62
District of Columbia	1	0.62
Louisiana	1	0.62
Oregon	1	0.62
Washington	1	0.62
Characteristics	*M*	*SD*
Age	40.1	11.45
Tenure	11.7	8.26
Total Hours Worked per Week	42.7	6.4

Table 2

School Characteristics

Characteristics	Frequency	%
Reported Percentage of Free and Reduced Lunch		
0 – 20	20	12.9
21 – 40	33	21.3
41 – 60	46	29.7
61 – 80	29	18.7
81 – 100	27	17.4
Reported utilization of MTSS or RtI		
Yes	128	79.5
No	33	20.5
Community Type		
Urban	55	34.2
Suburban	47	29.2
Rural	59	36.6
Grades Served (all that apply)		
Preschool / Early Childhood	74	46.0
Elementary (K-5)	135	83.9
Middle School (6-8)	91	56.5
High School (9-12)	76	47.2
Characteristics	*M*	*SD*
Total Number of Students in All Building Served	1029	565.7
Total Number of Students with IEPs on Caseload	113.5	70.1

Table 3

Means, Standard Deviations, and Intercorrelations of All Measures

	M	*SD*	*1.*	*2.*	*3.*	*4.*	*5.*	*6.*	*7.*	*8.*	*9.*	*10.*
1. Display Rules	3.72	.68	(.83)									
2. Surface Acting	2.85	.91	.44*	(.94)								
3. Emotional Exhaustion	3.46	1.26	.22*	.53*	(.92)							
4. Personal Accomplishment	5.38	.91	-.05	-.41*	-.44*	(.89)						
5. Depersonalization	2.19	.99	.23*	.54*	.71*	-.43*	(.70)					
6. Job Satisfaction	2.86	.73	-.16*	-.45*	-.64*	.56*	-.51*	(.91)				
7. Negative Affectivity	1.78	.55	.23*	.52*	.71*	-.40*	-.57*	-.51*	(.86)			
8. Positive Affectivity	3.54	.63	-.06	-.37*	-.49*	.73*	-.44*	.55*	-.39*	(.89)		
9. Age	40.11	11.45	-.10	-.08	-.04	.18*	-.24*	.05	-.11	.11	-	
10. Gender[a]	-	-	-.04	-.05	-.01	.07	-.08	.01	.01	.09	-.03	-
11. Tenure	11.66	8.26	-.13	-.09	-.04	-.15*	-.20*	.05	-.13	.14	.77*	-.07

Notes. $N = 156$. Internal consistency estimates for each scale shown on diagonal in parentheses, where applicable.
[a]Variable is categorical, thus mean and standard deviation is not reported
*$p < .05$ (2-tailed).

Table 4

Multiple regression analysis of direct effect of display rules on surface acting

Model	Variable	*b*	*SE*	*t*	*p*	*F*	R^2	ΔR^2
Surface Acting								
Step 1	Intercept	2.79*	.65	4.31	.00	12.70	.29*	.29*
	Negative Affectivity	.70*	.12	5.70	.00			
	Positive Affectivity	-.29*	.11	-2.66	.01			
	Age	-.02	.01	-.20	.83			
	Gender	-.06	.18	-.35	.72			
	Tenure	.01	.01	.06	.95			
Step 2	Intercept	1.37*	.66	2.07	.04	25.42	.39*	.10*
	Negative Affectivity	.53*	.12	4.47	.00			
	Positive Affectivity	-.34	.10	-3.30	.00			
	Age	-.01	.01	-.33	.74			
	Gender	.01	.02	.09	.92			
	Tenure	.01	.01	.50	.61			
	Display Rules	.46*	.09	5.04	.00			

Note. $N = 156$.

*$p < .05$.

Table 5

Multiple regression analysis to show direct effect of surface acting on emotional exhaustion and depersonalization.

Model	Variable	*b*	*SE*	*t*	*p*	*F*	R^2	ΔR^2
Emotional Exhaustion								
Step 1	Intercept	2.49*	.71	3.51	.00	37.89	.56*	.56*
	Negative Affectivity	1.40*	.13	10.41	.00			
	Positive Affectivity	-.50*	.12	-4.16	.00			
	Age	.00	.01	.29	.77			
	Gender	.02	.20	.09	.93			
	Tenure	.01	.01	.56	.57			
Step 2	Intercept	1.81*	.73	2.45	.01	7.82	.58*	.02*
	Negative Affectivity	1.22*	.14	8.46	.00			
	Positive Affectivity	-.43*	.12	-3.56	.00			
	Age	.00	.01	.34	.73			
	Gender	.03	.19	.17	.86			
	Tenure	.01	.01	.56	.57			
	Surface Acting	.24*	.08	2.79	.01			
Depersonalization								
Step 1	Intercept	3.09*	.64	4.83	.00	19.01	.39*	.39*
	Negative Affectivity	.77*	.12	6.36	.00			
	Positive Affectivity	-.31*	.10	-2.89	.00			
	Age	-.02*	.01	-2.11	.03			
	Gender	-.29	.18	-1.60	.11			
	Tenure	.01	.01	.42	.67			
Step 2	Intercept	2.22*	.64	3.43	.00	16.41	.45*	.06*
	Negative Affectivity	.55*	.13	4.33	.00			
	Positive Affectivity	-.22	.10	-2.11	.04			
	Age	-.02*	.01	-2.15	.03			
	Gender	-.27	.17	-1.56	.11			
	Tenure	.01	.01	.42	.67			
	Surface Acting	.31*	.08	4.05	.00			

Note. $N = 156$.
*$p < .05$.

Table 6

Multiple regression analysis to show direct effect of surface acting on personal accomplishment and job satisfaction.

Model	Variable	*b*	*SE*	*t*	*p*	*F*	R^2	ΔR^2
Personal Accomplishment								
Step 1	Intercept	1.69*	.48	3.51	.00	50.21	.62*	.62*
	Negative Affectivity	-.21*	.09	-2.38	.01			
	Positive Affectivity	1.06*	.08	13.03	.00			
	Age	.01	.00	1.77	.08			
	Gender	-.02	.13	-.20	.83			
	Tenure	-.01	.01	-.95	.34			
Step 2	Intercept	2.02*	.50	3.99	.00	3.80	.63*	.01*
	Negative Affectivity	-.13	.10	-1.35	.18			
	Positive Affectivity	1.03*	.08	12.43	.00			
	Age	.01	.00	1.75	.08			
	Gender	-.03	.13	-.26	.79			
	Tenure	-.01	.01	-.94	.34			
	Surface Acting	-.12*	.06	-1.96	.05			
Job Satisfaction								
Step 1	Intercept	2.02*	.48	4.23	.00	21.07	.41*	.41*
	Negative Affectivity	-.47*	.09	-5.12	.00			
	Positive Affectivity	.49*	.08	6.03	.00			
	Age	.00	.01	.19	.84			
	Gender	-.02	.13	-.17	.86			
	Tenure	-.01	.01	-.70	.48			
Step 2	Intercept	2.43*	.49	4.87	.00	6.01	.43*	.02*
	Negative Affectivity	-.37*	.09	-3.76	.00			
	Positive Affectivity	.44*	.08	5.47	.00			
	Age	.00	.01	.15	.87			
	Gender	-.03	.13	-.24	.80			
	Tenure	-.01	.01	-.70	.48			
	Surface Acting	-.15*	.06	-2.45	.02			

Note. $N = 156$.
*$p < .05$.

Table 7

Bootstrapping results of indirect effect of display rules on emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, personal accomplishment, and job satisfaction

	Product of Coefficients			Bootstrapping Percentile 95% CI	
	Effect	*SE*	*Z*	Lower	Upper
DR→SA→EE	.11*	.05	2.22	.02	.25
DR→SA→DP	.13*	.04	2.90	.06	.25
DR→SA→PA	-.07*	.03	-2.09	-.15	-.02
DR→SA→JS	-.07*	.04	-2.08	-.16	.00

Note. $N = 156$. DR = Display rules; SA = Surface acting; EE = Emotional exhaustion; DP = Depersonalization; PA = Personal accomplishment; JS = Job satisfaction; CI = confidence interval; 5,000 bootstrap samples.
* $p < .05$.