Emotional Display Requirements and Emotional Labor Strategies in Teaching and Coaching

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Management - Organizational Behavior (School Sport)
20-minute oral presentation (including questions) Saturday, June 3, 2017
Abstract 2017-323 10:10 AM
Room: Torrey’s Peak

One of the unique characteristics of high school physical education teachers in the United States is that the same individual often fulfills the dual occupational roles of coaching a sport(s) and physical education (PE) teaching (Konukman, Agbuga, Erdogan, Zorba, & Demirhan, 2010). Although some similarities do exist, there are considerable differences between the two roles in terms of group characteristics (Chelladurai & Kuga, 1996); skill sets and abilities (Richards & Templin, 2012); as well as required leadership style (Kwon, Pyun, & Kim, 2010). Further, these differences are problematic because they have been associated with such role stressors as role conflict, role ambiguity, and role overload among teacher/coaches (T/Cs; Ryan, 2008), which in turn resulted in negative individual-level consequences such as reduced self-esteem, increased anxiety and tension, and burnout (Richards, Templin, Levesque-Bristol, & Blankenship, 2014). Although the literature provides significant insights regarding the differences between PE teaching and coaching and its negative consequences, it overlooks the labor associated with controlling one’s emotions and displaying appropriate emotions (i.e., emotional labor).

Emotional labor is a recent organizational construct that has received increasing attention in such organizational sciences as organizational behavior and organizational psychology (Grandey & Gabriel, 2015). Emotional labor is comprised of the three components of (a) emotional requirement, (b) internal emotional regulation, and (c) emotional performance (Grandey and Gabriel (2015). That is, when individuals recognize the appropriate emotions in a given context (i.e., emotional requirement), they engage in internal emotional regulation strategies to modify their emotions (i.e., emotional regulation), and then express them accordingly (i.e., emotional performance).

Both teaching (Sutton, 2004) and coaching (Lee, Chelladurai, & Kim, 2015) involve an intensive level of emotional experience ranging from joy to anger) as both settings require a high degree of leader-follower interaction. However, due to the differences between PE teaching and coaching, each role may require different emotional displays and different internal emotional regulation strategies to be effective on each role. Indeed, Wharton and Erickson (1993) stated that different occupations required different emotional display rule including positive, negative, and neutral emotions based on specific work environments. However, little is known about the differences in emotional experiences between the two roles.

The primary purpose of this study was two-fold. First, we explored the differences in the required emotional display between the teaching and coaching roles. Second, we examined if T/Cs perform different internal emotional regulation strategies while performing each role.

The participants were 399 T/Cs from 45 states in the United States. Participants categorized 15 different emotional display behaviors as required or not required in each of teaching and coaching situations. These 15 behaviors were chosen based on Diefendorff, Richards, and Croyle’s (2006) recommendation. The questionnaire contained the categories of positive emotional expression (six items), negative emotional expression (six items) and neutral emotional expression (three items). The participants completed the questionnaires as both PE teachers and coaches. The stem for the teaching segment was “Please think about yourself as a teacher. Do you see this emotional display as a required part of your teaching?” and for coaching was “Now, please think about yourself as a coach. Do you see this emotional display as a required part of your coaching?” The response format was either expected (“Yes”) or not expected (“No”).

As for the adoption of different emotional labor strategies, participants were asked to complete the surface acting and deep acting subscale of Emotional Labor Strategies Scale of Diefendorff, Croyle, and Gosserand (2005) and the genuine expression scale from Kruml and Geddes (2000). The response format for was 5-point Likert scale ranging.
from 1 (never) to 5 (always). Participants were again asked to complete the two versions of questionnaires for PE teaching and coaching. As this was a new set of items, the content-related validity of the questionnaires were reviewed by a panel of judges or experts (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003) and the principal components analysis (PCA) was used to examine the factor structure of the T/C categorizations.

Differences in emotional displays as either required or not in the two contexts were assessed with the Pearson chi-square test. Further, differences in the utilization of emotional labor strategies were examined with multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA).

Chi-square tests revealed that there was no significant difference in the perception of positive emotional display as required among participants (PE teacher = 99.0%; coach = 98.3%; \( \chi^2 = .649, p > .05 \)). However, at the item level, the item “acting friendly to students / athletes” (PE teacher = 98.5%; coach = 91.6%; \( \chi^2 = 19.547, p < .01 \)) and “acting cheerful around students / athletes” (PE teacher = 95.5%; coach = 89.9%; \( \chi^2 = 8.757, p < .01 \)) were found to be statistically different.

On the other side, there was a significant difference in the perception of negative emotional behavior between PE teaching and coaching (PE teacher = 13.9%; coach = 35.4%; \( \chi^2 = 47.774, p < .01 \)). At the item level, all the five items were perceived differently among participants. Specifically, there was a difference in the item “expressing how upset I feel” (PE teacher = 26.1%; coach = 67.1%; \( \chi^2 = 127.918, p < .01 \)); “expressing disappointments toward student / athletes” (PE teacher = 64.2%; coach = 74.0%; \( \chi^2 = 8.417, p < .01 \)); “expressing anger toward student / athletes” (PE teacher = 16.6%; coach = 32.1%; \( \chi^2 = 24.994, p < .01 \)); “expressing how unhappy I feel” (PE teacher = 20.9%; coach = 52.6%; \( \chi^2 = 82.870, p < .01 \)); “expressing frustration toward student / athletes” (PE teacher = 40.6%; coach = 67.7%; \( \chi^2 = 55.720, p < .01 \)) and “acting coldly to student / athletes” (PE teacher = 3.3%; coach = 17.5%; \( \chi^2 = 4.780, p < .05 \)). Finally, there were significant differences in the utilization of surface acting (PE teacher = 2.25 [SD = .75]; coach = 1.91 [SD = .72]; \( t = 9.947, p < .01 \)), deep acting (PE teacher = 3.57 [SD = .77]; coach = 3.71 [SD = .80]; \( t = -3.81, p < .05 \)), and genuine expression (PE teacher = 3.89 [SD = .55]; coach = 4.20 [SD = .52]; \( t = -10.65, p < .01 \)).

This study contributes to a theoretical extension of the research on emotion and organizational behavior by integrating T/Cs’ emotional experience into research on emotional labor, which has not been adequately explored in the past. Specific explanations of the underlying frameworks used in this study (i.e., role theory and the dual role of teaching and coaching) and significant theoretical and practical implications will be discussed during the presentations.