EMOTION MANAGEMENT AND FEELINGS IN TEACHING AND EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP
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EMOTION MANAGEMENT AND FEELINGS IN TEACHING AND EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

EDITED BY
IZHAR OPLATKA AND KHALID ARAR

United Kingdom – North America – Japan – India – Malaysia – China
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Introduction

Izhar Oplatka and Khalid Arar

Emotion and its display are critical and fundamental to human activity in all organisations. It is defined as

an awareness of four elements that we usually experience at the same time: appraisal of a situation, changes in bodily sensations, the free or inhibited display of expressive gestures and a cultural label applied to specific constellations of the first three elements. (Hochschild, 1990, pp. 118–119).

Yet, emotions are generally of short duration and are associated with a specific stimulus, as opposed to ‘mood’ which is more enduring, more diffuse and less related to specific stimuli (Frijda, 1993). Most theories of emotions acknowledge the relationship between specific emotions and specific types of behaviours. Thus, pleasant emotions are assumed to engender a number of important organisational processes, such as skill building, creativity, effective social relations, organisational commitment, collective orientations and prosocial behaviours (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2013).

For many years, emotional reactions at work were seen as disruptive, weak and a deviation from the sacred rationality in the organisation (Zembylas, 2005). But, during the last two decades, a greater legitimacy has been given in many Western countries to emotion management and displays in the workplace, and the research on emotions in organisations began to deal with the question of why and how employees may display or manage particular emotions, including emotions that differ from how they feel (e.g. Ashkanasy, Zerbe, & Hartel, 2002). In this sense, life in schools is complex substantially because emotion is integral to the processes of teaching and learning and, therefore, school leaders and teachers need to manage their school/class emotionally as well as rationally (Hargreaves, 2000). Both cognition and emotion are equally important in guiding, facilitating or inhibiting leadership and teaching capabilities (Harris, 2004).

Past research has identified a wide variety of emotions and emotional engagements among school leaders and teachers including passion, empathy, excitement, satisfaction, intuition, relief, joy, trust, compassion, empathy, adrenaline rush and caring (e.g. Beatty, 2000; Cliff, 2011; Oplatka & Gamerman, in press; Yamamoto, Gardiner, & Tenuto, 2014). In addition, the literature centres on negative emotions
of school leaders, such as fear of failure (Gronn, 2003), a sense of emotional ‘woundedness’ (Johnson, Aiken, & Steggerda, 2005), anxiety, fear, pain, demoralisation, anger, frustration, despair, dissatisfaction, distress (James & Vince, 2001), disempowerment, threatened self and disillusionment with the system (Beatty, 2000).

However, most research on teacher emotion and emotion in educational leadership has focussed hitherto almost entirely on Western educational systems, although emotion is highly contextualised and influenced considerably by national and local culture and society (Arar, 2017; Arar & Oplatka, 2018). Nevertheless, there is still little research knowledge concerning emotions in management and teaching interwoven in different social and cultural norms, including the experience of teachers and school administrators of emotion and feelings expression and suppression in different organisational arenas. Nor do we know much about the specific constraints that shape the choices of emotions expression among educators in different cultures. We also have little data about role of emotions in education in developed societies which might enrich our understanding of management and administration mechanism in these societies. These unexplored areas of knowledge could be valuable for those who are attempting to lead and teach, bearing in mind how emotions interwoven in culture. Thus, this book has prompted our continued research about the role of culture on educational leadership and management. This book seeks to fill such gaps in knowledge and practice, tracing the potential and the dilemmas involved in emotions and feeling expression in different education arenas.

To fill the gap in this knowledge, our book entitled: Emotion Management and Feelings in Teaching and Educational Leadership: A Cultural Perspective, aims at highlighting the connection between culture and emotion management in teaching and educational leadership and allows researchers from different parts of the world to demonstrate how national and local culture and societal arrangements influence the way educational leaders and teachers express their feelings, display their emotion or suppress emotion publically.

Given the above challenges, the contribution of our volume is that it facilitates dialogue and fertilisation of ideas among researchers from both developed and developing societies while trying to confront the following questions from several perspectives: (1) How is emotion perceived by educators in different societies and countries? (2) What is the relationship between educational leadership, teaching and emotion in traditional and modern societies? What kind of motion and emotion regulation strategies are common among teachers worldwide?

We hope that the book’s chapter will enable teachers and educational leaders from both modern and traditional/marginalised societies to expose their voices and tell their own stories of feelings, emotion management and emotion regulation at work. The chapters expand our knowledge beyond the cultural boundaries of Anglo-American nations and evoke new considerations in the research on emotion in organisations.

Overview of Sections and Chapters

A brief overview of emotions in education suggests that takes different forms and unfolds on different scales in different societies and cultures. Besides, in different
societies, feeling and emotion expression vary according to perceptions, accepted norms, political correct, community expectations, etc. The data show that the Western perspectives of emotion literature may not necessarily be valid in a case where locally embedded needs and dynamics are interwoven (Arar, 2017; Arar & Oplatka, 2018). This book has attracted 14 contributions from different parts of the world, depicting different aspects of emotions interwoven in cultural and various educational features. Additionally, the contributions depict the diverse impacts of emotions in management and teaching. The complexity of this issue suggested organisation of the book under three main sections. The first section covers theoretical discussions on culture and context of emotion in education. The editors analyse current scholarship on teacher emotion and leader emotion produced almost entirely in Western countries which highlights the lack of harmony in the understandings of emotion’s role in management and teaching in different societies and cultures. Hence the authors call for contextualising this scholarship by juxtaposing emotion with basic characteristics of traditional and transitional societies. Chris James makes the case that emotions are central in organising in schools and that the way members of staff oversee their emotion processes is crucial to the legitimacy of the institution. He points to three forms of affects, feelings, moods and emotions. Feelings and moods are affective states, the description of which depicts our inner world. Emotions are very different. They entail a process in which an event of some kind is experienced and appraised. This appraisal results in physiological responses, psychological changes and social responses, which entail actions. Emoting can therefore change the influencing effect of an action. The social actions resulting from the emotion process and emoting are subject to a whole range of ‘rules’: personal, inter-personal, institutional and cultural.

The second section of the book focusses in educational management and emotions in different countries and cultures and brings to the readers the different emotions expression and suppression among educators in different cultures. The chapter by Weisheng Li and Meng Tian highlights strategies of emotion management among junior high school teachers in Shanghai, China. The authors highlight that classroom teaching and the professional learning community activities were two typical settings in which the teachers experienced the most intensive emotions. Most Shanghai teachers managed their momentary emotions by either genuinely expressing their emotions that matched their roles and the scenario, or by purposely suppressing emotions to meet social and organisational expectations. Furthermore, most teachers adopted the long-term mood regulation strategy by aligning their emotions with long-term goal achievement in the future. In another contribution from the UK, Joanne Cliffe depicts how one female headteacher’s emotional experiences as she coped in difficult circumstances during an intense period of scrutiny as she led her staff towards school improvement and out of special measures reported by using ‘EQ Map’ delineated through a series of interviews with a headteacher. Her findings show that a sense of work satisfaction emerged as a result of tackling challenging situations. Yet, the author found that an increased awareness of one’s emotions led to being mindful regarding the emotional state of others, as the headteacher sought opportunities to bring about
school improvement and address challenges presented by being placed in special measures. She points up to a distinctive list of 21 key features of emotional management emerged from the scales of the EQ Map capturing a model in relation to coping under internal and external pressures.

The chapter by Alia Sheety presents how Liberian and Palestinian school leaders in Israel define leadership and reflect on the role of emotions in their collectivist transitional societies by using a restorative practices framework, combining a focus on cognitive (rational) and emotional (affective) components to analyse the data. Her results indicate a high level of emotional involvement when discussing decisions related to individual students and an effort to suppress emotions when discussing professional decisions related to teachers or the institution. Differences were found in the way emotions were handled in relation to school level (elementary vs high school), gender and the principal’s development stage while she concludes how these emotions affects the implementation of educational policies. In another contribution, Khalid Arar identifies strategies used by Arab deputy-principals in Israel to manage their emotions at work. He further finds that deputies describe their relations with the principal and the teachers in terms of closeness, attentiveness, support, encouragement, inclusion and conflict resolution. Yet, deputy-principals reported suppressing their emotions, because their expression might be understood as a personal weakness. They felt that an effective deputy has to conceal some of his/her unpleasant emotions (hate, anger or fear) to emphasise that the principal is the real ‘boss’ in the school. Arab cultural norms dictate that female deputy-principals cannot display their emotions in front of a male teacher and vice versa. He further concludes that understanding both the social and organisational contexts in which Arab deputies work may clarify connections correlations between organisational culture, professional ethics and emotion regulation.

Amaarah DeCuir discusses how Muslim women in leadership mobilise emotionally. She addresses how culture, gender and social roles influence a leaders’ ability to self-direct their professional growth and development. Moreover, she discusses Muslim women’s ability to demonstrate emotional management within professional and societal contexts that marginalise their intersecting cultural and religious identities.

Serafin Antúnez, Patricia Silva and Charles L. Slater disclose factors affecting emotional management in two Spanish schools facing high challenging circumstances including high rates of emigration. They describe how directors with self-managing capacities are needed to manage their own emotions. They also need to mobilise people (teachers, students and families) by focussing on their feelings of satisfaction, identification with the group, belonging, joy, success, unity and cohesion. The content of this chapter presents the study of the emotional management of directors who perform their work in two highly complex schools in Catalonia, Spain. The views of these directors as well as teachers and families examine: (1) the construction of their professional identity, (2) their social and ethical commitment to the community, (3) the orientation towards the values of social justice and (4) their emotional leadership practices focussed on personal attention towards all of the actors in the school community. The chapter
concludes with 10 suggestions that can be useful to improve the professional practice of school directors. These should also be taken into account when designing and implementing initial and ongoing training programmes for school leaders and to inspire ideas for future research.

From different cultural understanding of emotional expression. The third and last section of the book focusses on cross-cultural understandings of educators’ feelings and emotions. The first chapter by Rinnelle Lee-Piggott describes how new school principals’ emotions in Trinidad and Tobago inherited in school cultures. Emerging from a multiple case study research design, in which a critical incident technique was the main source of data on new principals’ emotional experiences, the findings show that the new principals experienced predominantly negative emotions and wounding, often linked to pre-formed expectations of school members. Also, influenced by a need to protect their leadership authority, they selected which emotions to disclose versus which to suppress. Deniz Örücü depicts the case of a leading school principal in a large suburban Syrian refugee school in Turkey through exploring his emotions and the ways in which he de/regulates them, while performing his professional duties. She revealed the impact of the cumbersome reality of culture on the emotions, which is a blend of religion, faith, traditions and consequent values in this case and the strategies selected for emotion regulation. She concludes that emotional regulation techniques are an outcome of his patriotic values, deep belief in justice and humanity, formed by his faith and Anatolian culture he adopted. Furthermore, she highlighted that the principal’s paternalistic care and relevant display of emotions create a form of trust and confidence in the other members of the fragile school community and parents, which is significant in demonstrating the impact of local needs. In another work from Turkey, Kadir Beycioğlu and Mehmet Sinçar explore through qualitative lens how school principals in Turkey conceptualise the emotion of shame and to reveal the role of shame and its effects on the behaviours of school principals’ work in schools through data obtained from six principals working in state schools in Turkey. Their results show that principals conceptualise the feeling of shame in terms of moral base in the formation of interpersonal relations in school organisations. Although, they concluded that shame experienced by school principals has restorative effects on school leaders’ behaviours which is affected by the collectivist nature of the Turkish culture. José Weinstein, Javiera Peña, Javier Marfán and Dagmar Raczyński present teachers trust building with their principals in Chilean schools. Using the critical incident technique in interviews with 34 teachers from the Valparaíso Region (Chile) their study findings show that incidents are easily remembered when a subordinate relationship is involved. Many critical incidents are related to situations in which teachers are particularly vulnerable. Furthermore, the arrival of new teachers to a school is crucial when building bonds of trust. Benevolence is the facet that stands out the most in incidents reported by teachers and school leaders, while satisfaction is the most recurrent emotion. In the case of school leaders, benevolence is closely followed by competence. In the case of teachers, benevolence is followed by honesty, openness and competence. In this case, the associated emotion is affection. The final chapter in this section by Rose
Anne Cuschieri documents how school leaders from Malta perceive willpower by trying to establish if cultural background gives a different perspective to the phenomenon of willpower. Her results show that albeit culture has an impact on expected leader behaviour, and national cultures adopt different views on desired leadership qualities.

References


