

Digital Era in China: Teachers Emotional Labor in Live-Streaming Education

La era digital en China: el trabajo emocional de los docentes en la educación transmitida en vivo

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Abstract

In the Digital Era, global digital transformation has become an irreversible trend. In China, this phenomenon is particularly evident, especially in the education sector, where live-streaming Education, a new educational model, stands in stark contrast to traditional education. In 2023, the market size of China's Live-streaming Education industry has reached 232.69 billion yuan, a figure that not only reflects the rapid growth of Live-streaming Education but also reflects the challenges faced by the traditional education industry. The ascent of Live-streaming Education owes to digital technologies' strong interactivity and connectivity.

Distinct from the traditional teachers, teachers in Live-streaming Education not only have to focus on the quality of the teaching content and the efficiency of knowledge transfer but also need to pay attention to the language and attitude of teaching to boost the sales of course products. This dual role demands that teachers invest more complex Emotional Labor to establish strong interactions with students, and strong connections with the platform, ultimately attaining the dual goals of teaching and sales.

This research endeavors to delve into the complex Emotional Labor of teachers in Live-streaming Education, with the group of live-streaming teachers on Douyin (the largest live-streaming platform in terms of user scale in China) serving as the research subjects. The study: (a) tracing and analyzing the Emotional Labor exerted by these teachers in Live-streaming Education; (b) exploring how Emotional Labor assists them in balancing the dual roles of teachers and salespersons; (c) exploring how Emotional Labor enables them to establish strong connections with students and the platform; (d) investigating how the emotional experiences of this group are integrated with the general trends of social development, thereby influencing and transforming the existing educational ecosystem in China. This provides a new perspective on understanding the changes in the education industry in the digital age.

Key Words: Digital Era; Emotional Labor; Live-streaming Education; China.

Resumen

En la era digital, la transformación digital global se ha convertido en una tendencia irreversible. En China, este fenómeno es particularmente evidente, especialmente en el sector de la educación, donde la educación en vivo, un nuevo modelo educativo, contrasta marcadamente con la educación tradicional. En 2023, el tamaño del mercado de la industria de la educación en vivo en China alcanzó los 232,69 mil millones de yuanes, una cifra que no solo refleja el rápido crecimiento de la educación en vivo, sino que también refleja los desafíos que enfrenta la industria de la educación tradicional. El ascenso de la educación en vivo se debe a la fuerte interactividad y conectividad que brindan las tecnologías digitales.

A diferencia de los maestros tradicionales, los maestros de educación en vivo no solo tienen que centrarse en la calidad del contenido de la enseñanza y la eficiencia de la transferencia de conocimientos, sino que también deben prestar atención al lenguaje y la actitud de la enseñanza para impulsar las ventas de los productos del curso. Esta doble función exige que los maestros inviertan un trabajo emocional más complejo para establecer interacciones sólidas con los estudiantes y conexiones sólidas con la plataforma, logrando en última instancia los objetivos duales de enseñanza y ventas. Esta investigación se propone ahondar en el complejo trabajo emocional de los profesores en la educación en directo, con el grupo de profesores que transmiten en directo en Douyin (la plataforma de transmisión en directo más grande en términos de escala de usuarios en China) como sujetos de investigación. El estudio: (a) rastrea y analiza el trabajo emocional ejercido por estos profesores en la educación en directo; (b) explora cómo el trabajo emocional les ayuda a equilibrar los roles duales de profesores y vendedores; (c) explora cómo el trabajo emocional les permite establecer fuertes conexiones con los estudiantes y la plataforma; (d) investiga cómo las experiencias emocionales de este grupo se integran con las tendencias generales del desarrollo social, influyendo y transformando así el ecosistema educativo existente en China. Esto proporciona una nueva perspectiva para comprender los cambios en la industria de la educación en la era digital.

Palabras claves: Era digital; trabajo emocional; Educación en línea; China.

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Digital Era in China: Teachers Emotional Labor in Live-Streaming Education

Introduction

Emotional Labor in Chinese Live-streaming Education in the Context of Digital Transformation: The worldwide digital transformation has triggered profound changes in the education industry, especially in China, where the rapid development of information technology has led to the gradual migration of education from the traditional classroom to a highly interactive and personalized virtual space. This study focuses on the core Emotional Labor issues in this transformation. Live-streaming education, as an important manifestation of digital transformation, not only breaks the limitations of time and space, but also introduces a new model of highly interactive, instant feedback and personalized teaching (Selwyn, 2020), and according to 2023, the market size of China's live streaming-education market has already reached 232.69 billion RMB. In this process of change, live platforms such as Douyin and Kuaishou have become an important force in driving this transformation and have become an important vehicle for the dissemination of educational content, with a range of people covered and an influence that far exceeds that of Tencent Classroom, Muke, and other online platforms specialized in educational research and development. According to the statistics of China Internet Development Report 2023, the monthly active users of Douyin have exceeded 900 million, of which more than 65% of e-commerce transactions are realized through short videos and live broadcasting. This data not only reveals the popularity of live streaming technology but also shows the key role and potential influence it plays in changing the mode of educational interaction and teaching scenarios.

The characteristics of live-streaming education and the theoretical demand for Emotional Labor

The rise of live-streaming Education is not only a product of technological advancement and

market demand, which drives the transformation of an educational model that requires teachers to be adaptable in multiple roles, including educator, facilitator, and content marketer (Zhao, 2023). This means that teachers need to invest more in Emotional Labor to cope with the emotional performance requirements specific to the live environment. This multiplicity of responsibilities requires teachers to engage and sustain students' attention through well-designed emotional performances while teaching content to promote course sales. As a result, teachers in live-streaming education not only have to invest a great deal of cognitive labor but also need to perform a great deal of Emotional Labor to maintain audience engagement and loyalty. Emotional labor (EL) was introduced by Hochschild (1983) and refers to the process of regulating and managing emotions at work to conform to organizational or audience expectations. While in traditional education, teachers are primarily responsible for cognitive labor, in live education, teachers' Emotional Labor is more complicated. Emotional labor involves not only the emotional output of maintaining students' attention in the classroom but also dealing with the challenges posed by uncertainty and real-time interactions in live-streaming environments, and it is not only about the management of teachers' emotions, but also about the emotional interactions between teachers and students. According to Hochschild's (1983) theory, Emotional Labor can be subdivided into "surface acting" and "deep acting". Surface acting is when teachers fulfill audience expectations by displaying external emotions that fit the needs of the teaching situation, often with a certain degree of detachment. Deep acting, on the other hand, involves teachers realizing natural emotional expressions through internal emotional adjustments to increase the realism of the emotional performance (Grandey, 2003). Both forms of Emotional Labor become particularly important in live-streaming education

contexts. Teachers need to adjust their emotional performance according to the interactive feedback from the platform and the needs of the audience to convey professional educational content while demonstrating enough affinity and entertainment to maintain audience interest and engagement. This emotional management is not only motivated by pedagogical needs, but also to meet the demands of user experience and retention in a commercialized environment (Goffman, 1959; Van Dijk, 2012). In this process, the Emotional Labor of the teacher becomes a bridge between education and commerce, and a central element in driving the platform economy.

The social impact of Emotional Labor and the reshaping of the educational ecosystem

Emotional labor in the field of education is not only limited to classroom teaching, nor is it only the adjustment at the level of individual teacher's behavior, it is closely related to social-cultural and economic development. With the deepening of digital transformation, the commercialization and personalization of the education model are becoming more and more significant. In this context, Emotional Labor in live education gradually becomes part of the teaching profession and influences changes in the entire educational ecosystem, occupying a central position in the educational ecosystem. Bain & Taylor's (2000) study points out that Emotional Labor is a key factor in maintaining customer relationships in the service industry, and when applied to the field of education, this kind of labor has likewise become a part of the relationship between teachers and students, an important link in the relationship between teachers and platforms. Effective management of teachers' Emotional Labor in live-streaming education not only helps teachers establish a deep emotional connection with students but also enhances the platform's user stickiness and commercial value by increasing classroom interactivity and fun. This change has reshaped the professional orientation of teachers, requiring them to go beyond the role of traditional educators and become a synthesis of the fusion of entertainment and education. At the same time, the burden of teachers' Emotional Labor has increased, posing a potential risk of burnout and psychological stress (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002). The popularity of this form of labor also reflects the increasing commercialization of education and the acceptance of the "commodification of emotion" (Hochschild, 1983; Zembylas, 2005). Therefore, the purpose of this study is to explore the specific manifestations of Emotional Labor in live-streaming education

and to analyze how it plays a role in the digital transformation of education in China. Analyzing the performance of Emotional Labor in live-streaming education, will not only provide new perspectives for teachers' professional development but also provide theoretical and practical references for educational administrators and policy makers.

In summary, with the deepening of digital transformation and the rise of live-streaming education, teachers' Emotional Labor play an increasingly critical role in the new educational ecology. An in-depth study of Emotional Labor can help us understand the differences between live-streaming education and traditional education models and reveal the multiple impacts of this shift on teachers, students, and education platforms. Through an in-depth analysis of Emotional Labor theory, this study will explore the characteristics of teachers' Emotional Labor in China's live-streaming education and their roles and challenges in the process of digital transformation of education and will expand the application and practical significance of the theory of Emotional Labor in the educational and digital domains, providing new perspectives on the future reform of education.

Literature Review

Review of Emotional Labor Theory

The concept of Emotional Labor was first introduced by Arlie Hochschild in her book *Managing the Mind* in 1983 and is defined as the management of emotions by individuals at work to meet organizational or social expectations. Hochschild classified Emotional Labor into surface acting and deep acting. Surface acting refers to individuals who display emotions that conform to external demands without involving changes in internal emotions, often with a degree of detachment, while deep acting requires individuals to achieve a natural expression of emotions through internal emotional adjustments to achieve a sense of authenticity and internal consistency (Grandey, 2003). Gabriel and Koopman (2019) suggested in their study that Emotional Labor is dynamic in the sense that teachers must flexibly adjust their emotional expression in different teaching situations to meet the expectations of students and the teaching environment. Humphrey, Pollack and Hawver (2021) explored the effectiveness of affective labor in different work environments, emphasizing that in educational settings, teachers' affective labor is not only about personal emotion management, but it is also closely

related to students' learning experiences. In addition, Mesmer-Magnus, DeChurch, and Wax (2020) analyzed the impact of Emotional Labor on different types of jobs and pointed out that Emotional Labor in educational work is highly similar to the service industry, and that teachers need to balance emotional management with professional performance in the teaching process. Bono and Ilies' (2022) study emphasized the impact of Emotional Labor on the long-term effects on job satisfaction, noting that the deep acting of Emotional Labor contributes to professional identity and reduces emotional burnout. Weiss and Cropanzano (2020) note that the deep acting of Emotional Labor contributes more to long-term professional stability and emotional well-being than superficial acting, which is particularly important in educational contexts, where the professional demands of the teaching profession often call for long-term emotional commitment.

Emotional labor in educational contexts and its complexity

In traditional education, teachers are mainly responsible for cognitive labor, i.e., knowledge transmission and instructional design, but they also inevitably need to regulate their emotions to maintain classroom order and facilitate student learning (Hargreaves, 1998). Yin et al. (2019) emphasize that Emotional Labor is widely used in modern education, and that teachers are not only the transmitters of knowledge, but also emotionally connected to students. Cross and Hong (2020) stated that with the complexity of educational environments, teachers' Emotional Labor has become an important factor affecting students' learning experience and classroom engagement. Kim and Asbury (2020) further emphasized that Emotional Labor in the virtual classroom requires teachers to manage their emotion and the use of technology to balance effective teaching and learning. Parker et al. (2020) examined how teachers can use emotion regulation strategies in education to improve classroom engagement and learning outcomes. They noted that the complexity of teachers' Emotional Labor lies in meeting both the emotional and academic needs of students. Schutz and Zembylas (2022) analyzed the long-term effects of Emotional Labor on teachers' mental health and burnout, emphasizing the importance of Emotional Labor on educational outcomes and teachers' professional satisfaction. Jiang & Ren (2021) further noted that the emotional labor complexity increases the pressure on teachers to cope with multiple tasks, which is particularly evident in live education, where

teachers need to manage emotions in real-time interactions to maintain the class atmosphere and teaching effectiveness.

Digital Transformation and the Changing Role of Education

The education industry has experienced significant changes with the digital transformation across the globe. Live-streaming education, as an innovative form, breaks the time and space constraints of traditional education (Selwyn, 2022), and at the same time brings about a shift in role orientation. Teachers are no longer just knowledge transmitters, but also have multiple roles as facilitators, content creators, and course sellers (Lim & Wang, 2021). Bailey and Lee (2020) pointed out that the role of the teacher in digital environments is no longer one-dimensional, but multidimensional, and needs to be adapted and demonstrated with Emotional Labor according to the rules of the platform and the needs of the audience. Mishra and Koehler (2020) examined the reshaping of teachers' roles in technology-driven education, emphasizing the need for teachers to be both pedagogically competent and technologically adaptable, which increases the complexity of Emotional Labor. Trust and Whalen (2020) noted that teachers are not only knowledge disseminators in digital environments but also need to take on the roles of mentors and supporters and that their Emotional Labor in live education is further complicated by the need to maintain a balance between course content, platform interactions, and viewer expectations. Wang and Woo's (2021) study further point out that teachers need to acquire multiple skills in digital education, not only to deliver knowledge effectively but also to maintain viewer engagement and learning experience, which exacerbates the burden of Emotional Labor.

The Impact of Live -Streaming Platforms on Educational Models

Live streaming platforms such as Jieyin have had a significant impact on educational models, with these platforms giving teachers and students new roles that are different from those in traditional classrooms. Cain and Fink (2020) note that the platforms' instant feedback mechanisms, such as the number of likes, pop-ups, and comments, have had a significant impact on teachers' teaching behaviors, forcing them to make constant adjustments in their affective labor in order to capture and maintain students' attention. Xu and Ko's (2021) study revealed that teachers need to use Emotional Labor more frequently to respond to

audience demands and maintain audience interactions in platform algorithm- and data-driven teaching. Veletsianos and Kimmons (2020) further noted that teachers' Emotional Labor on live-streaming platforms is driven by the goal of commercialization and the need to not only ensure the quality of teaching content but also the need to balance course sale and optimize the user experience. Redmond and Lock (2021) analyzed how the interaction mechanisms on live-streaming platforms shaped teachers' Emotional Labor, noting that teachers need to adjust their emotional expressions and teaching styles during live-streaming based on feedback from the platforms. Anderson and Dron (2020) examined the importance of real-time interaction and the importance of feedback mechanisms, arguing that while the instantaneous interaction opportunities provided by platforms enhance student engagement, they also exacerbate the complexity of teachers' Emotional Labor. Dolan (2021) emphasized that real-time feedback mechanisms and social tools on platforms force teachers to maintain a high level of emotional engagement as the course progresses, which makes Emotional Labor more frequent and complex.

Multiple Effects of Emotional Labor in Live Education

Research has shown that the role of Emotional Labor in education is not limited to classroom management but also has a significant impact on teacher burnout and mental health (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002). Lee and Song (2019) emphasized that long-term investment in Emotional Labor can easily lead to emotional exhaustion and burnout among teachers. Wiese and Tay (2020) stated that there is a complex relationship between Emotional Labor and job satisfaction, and that sustained emotional output may improve interaction in the short term, but in the long term, it may have a negative impact on teachers' mental health. Montgomery and Rupp (2023) examined the long-term effects of Emotional Labor on occupational health, noting that the Emotional Labor teachers undertake in live environments involves not only maintaining the classroom atmosphere but also involves the challenges of dealing with unexpected situations and real-time interactions. Kang and Diao (2021) further analyzed how teachers balance emotional regulation and teaching goals in live education, and they found that the burden of emotional management faced by teachers may lead to emotional burnout and decreased career satisfaction. Huang and Lin's (2022) study pointed out that Emotional Labor in live-streaming education not only involves emotional management but is also closely

related to professional identity and the fulfillment of social expectations, and teachers are prone to psychological stress and professional challenges in this high-intensity environment.

Interactive methods and manifestations of Emotional Labor in live-streaming education

One of the important manifestations of teachers' Emotional Labor in live-streaming education is the interactive approach, such as the use of emoticons, online phrases, and real-time pop-ups to communicate with students. Such interactions add interest and intimacy to the lesson, demonstrating the teacher's emotional output and emotional regulation (Goffman, 1959). Dolan's (2021) study noted that teachers need to respond quickly to real-time pop-ups and viewer feedback, and that this immediacy requirement increases the frequency and complexity of affective labor. Redmond and Lock (2021) emphasized that this kind of Emotional Labor in interactions must not only demonstrate affinity but also balance the quality of teaching and learning with commercialization goals. Lewis and Cunningham (2022) noted that teachers' use of emojis and online phrases as part of their Emotional Labor in live-streaming education helps to bring them closer to their students, but it also makes Emotional Labor more complex and unpredictable. Anderson and Dron (2020) suggested that the instant interaction and feedback mechanisms of live-streaming platforms increase the real-time demands of teachers' Emotional Labor, making it necessary for teachers to constantly adjust their emotional performances. Wang and Woo (2021) examined how teachers use creative expressions (e.g., emoticons, pop-up language) in live classrooms to enhance classroom interactions, and that this Emotional Labor While it can increase students' engagement and interest in learning, it also requires teachers to be highly flexible in managing and adjusting their emotions in response to different reactions from the audience. Xu and Ko (2021) also analyzed how real-time pop-ups and immediate feedback from the audience affected teachers' Emotional Labor. They found that teachers need to quickly adjust their emotions and performance in a live classroom in response to audience reactions to maintain a positive classroom atmosphere. This need makes teachers' affective labor include not only surface acting but also deep acting to ensure the authenticity of interactions and coherence of lessons.

The literature review shows that Emotional Labor presents a more complex and multilayered

character in the field of education, especially in live-streaming education. It not only has far-reaching effects on teachers' professional roles and teaching styles but also has a significant impact on teachers' professional health and the trend of commercialization in the education industry. Recent studies have revealed how teachers cope with the emotional management challenges of immediate interactions in live-streaming education and how to maintain a balance between satisfying the audience's needs and maintaining the quality of teaching and learning. These studies provide a solid theoretical and database for further exploring the Emotional Labor of different types of live education teachers and their impact on the educational ecosystem. However, according to the existing literature, two other aspects deserve in-depth research: (1) comparative studies on the Emotional Labor of different types of teachers. According to the existing literature, most studies focus on studying the general characteristics of Emotional Labor of teacher groups, but there is not enough research on the specific differences in the Emotional Labor of different types of online teacher groups, such as fresh graduates' education anchors and traditional offline teachers' transition anchors, in live-streaming education. Studying the differences between these groups in Emotional Labor performance, emotion management strategies, and teaching processes will help reveal how different types of teachers cope with the complexity of Emotional Labor in live education; (2) for the study of the dynamic relationship between teachers, students, and platforms and the interaction of Emotional Labor. While studies have explored the role of Emotional Labor in teacher-student interactions, how the platform as a third party affects such interactions has not been thoroughly studied. Specifically, how the platforms' algorithms and instant feedback mechanisms affect teachers' and students' affective labor, as well as the dual pressures that teachers bear in this three-way interaction, i.e., how to teach and the dual goal of commercialization, is a direction that deserves further research. Studying this dynamic relationship will help to better understand how teachers balance their roles and manage their relationships through Emotional Labor on the platform. Therefore, this study will mainly focus on these two aspects to enrich theories related to teachers' Emotional Labor practices in live-streaming education and provide new perspectives for understanding the changes in the education industry in the Digital Era.

Research Process & Contents

In this study, two groups of different types of live teaching on the Douyin platform were selected for comparative analysis: anchors who have been engaged in online education and traditional offline teachers transforming into online education anchors. Using qualitative research methods, this study conducted a six-month tracking study of two representative types of live education groups on the Douyin platform through participatory observation in order to explore the process of their Emotional Labor during the live-streaming education process, and the process of interaction with students and the platform. To ensure methodological rigor, the study systematically recorded and ethically protected the process of participant observation.

The reason why we chose the Douyin platform for this study is that it is the most active platform in China, and it covers a wide range of people, covering the whole country and a large age range, which makes it popular and universal. However, this study also has certain limitations, such as the subjectivity of the data, as the main method of data collection is qualitative observation, the results may be affected by the subjective interpretation of the researcher, future research can be verified and supplemented by combining quantitative methods.

The research subjects chosen for the article were two types of education anchors on the Douyin platform, and these two types of teachers were selected based on the following two criteria: 1) personal influence; 2) stable and long-term live education experience. Personal influence is filtered by the number of fans on the account, so each teacher selected has more than 5 million fans, which is to ensure the representativeness and wide influence of their teaching on the platform. The live teachers screened by the second criterion had more than two years of live teaching experience and a stable live schedule: each teacher had a regular schedule of live classes during the study period so that the researcher could conduct continuous observation and data collection. The study was also categorized according to the different types of live education, which were mainly divided into the following two types:

(1) Anchors who started online education right after graduation: these groups of teachers usually focus on language teaching and training, and they amplify their personal attributes to differentiate themselves from others, such as background in prestigious schools and cultural capital, in order to attract students and create a unique image of their

educational brand. These teachers often demonstrate a distinctly personalized teaching style through their innovative and interactive teaching style.

(2) Traditional offline teachers transforming into online education: these teachers started to contact online education and transformed to online education due to factors such as epidemics, and they have rich offline teaching experience. In the Douyin platform, their teaching content is mainly professional subject courses. They pay more attention to the transmission of knowledge points, and their interaction methods are more traditional but still show in-depth analysis and response to students' questions.

This study focuses on the two groups of teachers' groups' different performances of Emotional Labor in live-streaming education, their teaching contents and strategies, their interaction modes with students, and their responses to platform feedback. I have identified the complexity of their Emotional Labor in the real-time interactive environment through long-term observation. And I conduct an in-depth study of their personalities and commonalities in live teaching, which is both to explore how different groups of teachers can reach good interactions with students and platforms through their Emotional Labor, and to provide new perspectives for thinking for more groups who want to join online live education and for the change of education in the Digital Era. It also analyzes how different groups dynamically adjust their Emotional Labor process in their existing cultural capital and social capital to achieve their live-streaming education goals by revealing the different Emotional Labor processes of the two groups in live-streaming education.

Data collection for the article was conducted mainly through participant observation, which mainly involved observing two types of teachers' live courses, recording the two types of teachers' performance of Emotional Labor in different course contexts, including emotional expression, interaction style, and the use of language and body language. It also meticulously documented how teachers regulated and managed their emotions in order to maintain audience attention and engagement. For example, how teachers responded to feedback from pop-ups, likes, and comments during real-time interactions, and how they adapted their teaching style and emotional expression on the platform to suit the needs of the audience and the platform. Observations were conducted over a period of up to six months through regular weekly participation in live sessions with two types of teachers to ensure broad and consistent data. Detailed observation notes were recorded after each

observation, focusing on describing teachers' forms of Emotional Labor in different contexts, including the application of surface acting and deep acting. Teachers were also observed for their emotional reactions and coping styles when dealing with unexpected platform technical issues, challenging questions from students, or stress from platform feedback.

Three perspectives of course content and interaction were also analyzed: 1) Emotional labor performance process: how teachers advanced the classroom process and student interest through Emotional Labor in live courses were analyzed, including the frequency and context of using surface acting and deep acting. 2) Student interaction process: recorded and analyzed how teachers interacted with viewers through emotional expression using emoticons, online phrases, and real-time responses, and how these interactions affected student engagement and course effectiveness. 3) Platform feedback response: pay special attention to how teachers respond to immediate feedback from the platform (e.g., number of likes, changes in the number of pop-ups, real-time comments, live ranking, etc.), and how they adjust their emotions and teaching strategies driven by data, as well as publicize and sell their courses.

On this basis, a combination of thematic analysis and comparative analysis is applied: thematic analysis is to categorize and analyze the live broadcasts according to three main themes: Emotional Labor during the teaching process, Emotional Labor during interaction with classmates, student maintenance and course product sales. This allows for better identification of the Emotional Labor exhibited by different groups of teachers in different course processes and interactions. A thematic analysis of teachers' emotional expression and emotion regulation was also conducted to identify teachers' Emotional Labor strategies and their patterns of change in different teaching situations. For example, how to use positive emotions to engage students in a lesson or to deal with complex issues through calm and rational emotions. Comparative analysis combines longitudinal and cross-sectional analyses. longitudinal analysis: analyzes how each teacher's Emotional Labor evolves over time and course content by observing him or her over time. Horizontal analysis involves comparing the similarities and differences between the two types of teachers in terms of their Emotional Labor, emotion management, teaching styles, and interaction strategies, revealing how they differ in terms of their lesson style, personal branding, and audience interaction.

Findings and Discussion

Emotional labor in the teaching process

Through the observation of two groups of teachers on the Douyin platform, this study delves into the central role of Emotional Labor in live education and its diverse manifestations in a real-time interactive environment. Teachers who have been engaged in live teaching since graduation exhibit highly individualized and innovative Emotional Labor strategies, frequently using surface acting to express exaggerated emotions such as surprise, excitement, and even anger and anger in order to capture viewers' attention and build a unique educational brand. This strategy is in line with the theory of surface acting proposed by Hochschild (1983), which emphasizes the importance of extrinsic emotional expression in sustaining audience engagement. A study by Chen et al. (2024) found that Emotional Labor has emerged as a key strategy for engaging students and building teachers' personal brands in online education, especially on social media and live streaming platforms. In contrast, transformed traditional teachers rely on deep acting skills to convey stability and professionalism by regulating their internal emotions to an appropriate state. They are more concerned with maintaining authority and reliability in the classroom, which is in line with Ekman and Friesen's (1975) mask hypothesis on emotion regulation, emphasizing the role of deep acting in maintaining educator professionalism in the long run. Recent research (Wang & Zhang, 2024) suggests that deep acting is particularly effective in coping with stress and building trusting relationships, especially in live education to help teachers gain the long-term trust of students and parents. These findings highlight differences in the Emotional Labor of teachers from different backgrounds. Teachers who had been teaching live since graduation viewed Emotional Labor not only as a teaching tool, but also as a core part of their personal brand and competitive advantage. Transformed traditional teachers, on the other hand, viewed it as a means of maintaining order in the classroom and expressing professionalism, reflecting their long history of emotional management.

Emotional labor in interactions with students

In their interactions with students, teachers who have been engaged in live teaching since graduation tended to use online language, emoticons and pop culture elements to enhance intimacy and empathy. Their performance fits Goffman's (1959) theory of "performative interaction", which

emphasizes the reinforcement of the teacher's role through dynamic and highly interactive Emotional Labor. Xu et al. (2023) also pointed out that the use of online language and pop culture symbols in live webcasting can enhance viewers' sense of community and interactive participation. Sense of community and interactive participation, making students more willing to actively participate in learning. On the contrary, the group of teachers who transitioned from traditional offline education to online live broadcasting showed more rigorous Emotional Labor and more conservative emotional regulation in their interactions. They favored a structured approach to interaction, focusing more on in-depth answers to student questions and the integrity of lesson logic. Sutton and Wheatley's (2003) study also noted that teachers expressed professionalism and patience through deep emotional regulation. Deep interactions contribute to student trust and learning satisfaction (Zhao & Liang, 2024). This difference in the use of Emotional Labor reveals the strategic choices of the two types of teachers when faced with different teaching goals. Teachers who engaged in live teaching directly after graduation mobilized student engagement through innovative and emotional presentations, while the group of teachers who transitioned to live teaching engaged students through rational and thoughtful interactions.

Student Maintenance and Course Product Sales

Teachers from both groups perpetuate Emotional Labor in course sales but in different ways. Teachers who engaged in live teaching directly after graduation used humor, exaggeration, and emotionally driven strategies to pique student interest when selling courses and increasing student interaction. They dynamically adjusted their emotions and strategies through real-time data (e.g., number of likes and comments), a strategy that Grandey (2000) proposed as an "affective regulation strategy" that emphasizes the self-regulatory role of emotions in responding to external feedback. In their study, Kim and Lee (2024) noted that teachers who used data-driven Emotional Labor to increase course sales and students' willingness to purchase and enhance live-streaming interaction and loyalty. The group of teachers who transitioned to live teaching relied on their experience and expertise to take a more rational and moderate approach to sales. Their Emotional Labor shows robustness and logic, and they focus more on gradually guiding students to trust and interest in their courses. This is in line with Morris and Feldman's (1996) theory of 'deep Emotional Labor',

which they argue helps to reduce the exhaustion of Emotional Labor while maintaining long-lasting student relationships. Research has shown that this stable Emotional Labor increases student buy-in and long-term satisfaction with course content (Liu et al., 2024). This finding shows how live data can be a driver of Emotional Labor for both types of teachers. Teachers who began teaching live directly after graduation adjusted their strategies instantly through platform feedback to keep their courses hot, while the group of teachers who transitioned to begin teaching online built teaching and sales continuity through more stable and long-term strategies.

Platform Feedback Response

Under the influence of real-time platform feedback, teachers who started teaching live directly after graduation showed great flexibility and emotional regulation, and they quickly adjusted their emotions and teaching strategies according to the data (e.g., the number of pop-ups, likes, and live rankings) to keep the live broadcast engaging. This echoes Weick's (1995) "strain theory," in which teachers cope with uncertainty by constantly adjusting and adapting. Chen and Luo (2024) also emphasized in their study how live-streaming teachers can respond quickly to platform data to enhance their teaching effectiveness. The group of teachers who transitioned to doing live teaching showed more conservatism in responding to platform feedback, relying more on pre-set plans and infrequently deviating from the established teaching path. This group of teachers tended to stabilize the classroom through deep emotional regulation when they encountered unexpected problems or changes in platform data, which is consistent with the emotional regulation strategies studied by Diefendorff et al. (2005), which pointed out that stable emotional management helps reduce anxiety and enhance teachers' control. Therefore, teachers from different backgrounds have different strategies for Emotional Labor depending on their cultural and social capital. Teachers who had been teaching live since graduation relied on dynamic and extrinsic Emotional Labor to engage students and expand their brand reach. In contrast, transitioning teachers build pedagogical trust and maintain course stability through deep Emotional Labor and experience. Both also respond differently when confronted with real-time data from the platform, reflecting the diversity and flexibility of Emotional Labor in digital education.

Conclusion

This study provides an in-depth discussion and analysis of the Emotional Labor process of two types of teacher groups on the Douyin platform in the live-streaming education context, revealing the complex and dynamic features of Emotional Labor in this emerging teaching mode. The findings not only extend the application of Emotional Labor theory in the field of education but also provide some new thoughts on the new challenges and opportunities of the teaching profession in the Digital Era.

Complex and dynamic Emotional Labor process

Through the study, it is found that the Emotional Labor shown by teachers in live education is highly complex and dynamic, and their emotional performance is closely related to platform data and student feedback. Teachers must continually adjust their emotional and behavioral strategies based on real-time platform data and key student responses, which is consistent with the emotional regulation strategies proposed by Grandey (2000), emphasizing the importance of external drivers of Emotional Labor in digital environments. Surface acting is particularly common in interactions with students, as this type of emotional expression engages more students by maintaining a positive, lively classroom atmosphere, while also stimulating competition and interaction through a moderate sense of "detachment", which is also a key element in Goffman's (1959) theory of "performativity in social roles". This is also Goffman's (1959) idea of "performativity in roles". In the process of operating the platform and responding to real-time data, teachers are more likely to employ deep acting skills, demonstrating a high level of commitment to their live career and long-term business strategy. This is not only a form of Emotional Labor, but also a manifestation of professionalism and career, echoing Hochschild's (1983) analysis of the importance of Emotional Labor in professional roles.

Diverse Roles and Emotional Stress

Research has found that in live education, teachers not only play the role of knowledge transmitters, but also have multiple roles such as content creators, classroom managers, and emotional regulators. These diverse roles are extremely demanding in terms of Emotional Labor, resulting in the need for teachers to maintain a high degree of emotional stability and flexibility when responding to platform data and student feedback. Real-time

changes in platform data were found to be one of the key factors affecting teachers' Emotional Labor, and this external pressure leads directly to adjustments in Emotional Labor strategies, in line with Diefendorff et al.'s (2005) study on Emotional Labor responses to stress. Teachers need to quickly adapt and adjust their emotions and teaching strategies in the face of platform feedback such as likes, comments, and rankings, and this constant emotional management adds to their emotional burden. Wang and Zhang (2024) point out that emotional stress not only affects teachers' pedagogical performance, but may also have a detrimental effect on their long-term mental health.

Equalized Teacher-Student Relationship and Interaction Efficiency

It was also found that the relationship between teachers and students in live education was more egalitarian, and this mode of interaction increased students' professional identification with the teacher and their engagement in learning. Xu et al. (2023) showed that real-time interactive scenarios made it easier for students to participate in the course and to express themselves, which led to a reduction in emotional burnout. Students usually actively screen the instructor before entering the classroom, which provides the basis for course interaction. The nature of real-time interactions on the platform led to greater student engagement in the course, and this egalitarian and two-way relationship increased the effectiveness of teacher-student interactions and enhanced students' learning experience and satisfaction. Emotional Labor in this egalitarian relationship reflects the importance of teachers' ability to maintain classroom attraction through surface and deep acting, making Emotional Labor not only a means of pedagogical survival but also a bond in student-teacher interactions.

Integration of Pedagogical and Technological Adaptation Skills

Live-streaming teaching puts new demands on teachers, who need not only excellent pedagogical skills, but also proficiency in adapting to digital technologies. The rapid switching between rationality and sensibility increases the complexity of Emotional Labor. Teachers must quickly mobilize emotions in real-time interactions and incorporate digital technologies in their lessons to meet the dual needs of the platform and students. Kim and Lee (2024) also noted in their study that Emotional Labor becomes

more complex and exhausting in technology-driven educational environments. Teachers need to focus and put in extra Emotional Labor when adapting to platform technology to ensure the effectiveness of teaching and the overall quality of the live experience. Digital technology is not only a tool for education, but also a gas pedal of Emotional Labor, making it more challenging and dynamic.

This study provides new perspectives for understanding Emotional Labor in live education, revealing how teachers regulate their emotional and behavioral strategies to cope with complex pedagogical tasks and diverse role demands in a dynamic and technology-driven environment. On the practical side, these findings provide new ideas for educators new to the profession on how to flexibly adjust their emotional and interaction strategies in different scenarios, especially in response to real-time data. It also attempts to extend the application and practical implications of Emotional Labor theory in the educational and digital domains, providing new perspectives for future educational reform.

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