

Text-Based Analysis of Teachers' Emotional Labor in American Educational Policies: An Exploratory Study Based on Grounded Theory

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Abstract: As a core component of educational work, teachers' emotional labor has long remained implicit within policy discourses. Adopting grounded-theory methodology, this study systematically analyzes federal educational laws, state-level policies and professional standard documents in the United States to explore how teachers' emotional labor is constructed, its underlying logic and institutional tensions embedded in policy discourses. Through three-level coding of 52 policy documents, three core categories are identified: instrumental emotional discipline, institutionalization of care-based ethics, and the accountability paradox of emotional labor. This paper unpacks the underlying mechanism through which American educational policies incorporate teachers' emotional labor into performance-management frameworks. The findings reveal a tendency of technical reduction of emotional labor in policy texts, where sophisticated emotional practices are converted into measurable behavioral indicators. While this process grants institutional legitimacy to emotional labor, it erodes its essential ethical-care connotation. This study establishes a novel analytical framework for understanding the policy-driven construction of teachers' emotional labor and puts forward reflective suggestions for educational policy-making.

Keywords: Teachers' Emotional Labor; American Educational Policies; Grounded Theory; Policy Discourse Analysis; Accountability System.

1. Introduction

Teaching consists of more than technical knowledge delivery. It is a profession deeply rooted in emotional-based practices. Since Hochschild (1983) put forward the concept of emotional labor, researchers have widely adopted this framework for service-industry studies. Educational research has paid far-later attention to this concept.

Teachers devote constant and complicated emotional efforts in daily routines. They build trust with students, regulate classroom emotional climate, meet parental expectations and maintain peer-to-colleague relationships.

The United States serves as a globally influential site for educational-policy experiments. Its education-reform history reflects shifts and conflicts within policy ideas. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965 allowed the federal government to intervene in local schooling. The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 put high-stakes accountability at the core of education governance. The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015 returned more decision-making power to individual states. American policymakers keep striking a balance among equity, education quality, efficiency and local autonomy. Two practical questions thus emerge. How do these top-down policy shifts reshape teachers' daily work? Specifically, how do policy documents frame, standardize and evaluate teachers' emotional labor?

This research question carries both theoretical and practical value. The existing literature on teachers' emotional labor mostly focuses on classroom interactions and personal feelings. Scholars seldom examine how institutional forces shape teachers' emotional work systematically. Practically speaking, teacher burnout and emotional exhaustion have become worldwide educational concerns. Policy

environments are widely recognized as a key contributing factor. Interpreting emotional-labor discourses from policy texts can clarify how institutions affect teachers' emotional practices. It also supplies practical evidence for policy improvement.

2. Research Objectives and Significance

This study carries out systematic analysis on American educational policy texts to answer the following core research questions:

- 1) How is teachers' emotional labor presented and constructed in American educational policy documents?
- 2) What underlying logic and hidden assumptions guide the construction of emotional labor within policy discourse?
- 3) What institutional influences does such policy construction bring to teachers' emotional practices?

The research adopts grounded theory and implements three-level coding analysis on federal laws, state-level policies and professional standard texts. It generates theoretical explanations based on empirical materials rather than verifying preset hypotheses. This methodological choice matches the exploratory feature of the research. Research on teachers' emotional labor in policy context is still an emerging field. In this context, open theoretical construction owns higher academic value than hypothesis testing.

3. Literature Review

3.1. Development Context of Emotional Labor Theory

The concept of emotional labor comes from Hochschild's classic research on flight attendants [1]. She defines

emotional labor as "the management of one's own feelings to produce visible facial and physical performances for the public" (p.7)[1]. She points out that this kind of labor has exchange value, is supervised by employers, and complies with the "feeling rules" set by organizations[1]. Hochschild divides two strategies of emotional labor. The first one is surface acting, which means people only change external emotional expressions without adjusting inner feelings. The second one is deep acting, which means people actively adjust inner feelings to fit organizational expectations[1].

Scholars continuously expand this conceptual framework in the following decades[2]. Ashforth & Humphrey put forward "genuine emotion expression" as the third strategy[2]. They mention that employees sometimes naturally show emotions that meet organizational requirements. Grandey integrates emotion regulation theory and constructs an integrated model of emotional labor. He regards emotional labor as a goal-oriented emotion adjustment process[3]. Morris & Feldman focus on dimension division of emotional labor and sort out key indicators such as interaction frequency, diversity of emotional expressions and working duration[4].

3.2. Progress of Research on Teachers' Emotional Labor

Scholars first introduced the emotional labor framework into education research in the late 1990s. Hargreaves put forward the pioneering concept of emotional practice of teaching[5]. He argued that emotion sits at the center of teachers' work rather than being a secondary factor. His qualitative work uncovered close connections between teachers' emotions, professional identity, teaching effectiveness and occupational commitment.

Later research developed along two separate strands. The first strand explores the inherent traits of teachers' emotional labor. Isenbarger and Zembylas coined the term caring emotional labor[6], highlighting the ethical nature of teachers' emotional devotion. Based on surveys of teachers in Hong Kong, Yin and Lee identified multiple layers of teachers' emotional labor amid policy reforms[7]. Schutz and Zembylas edited a comprehensive volume that systematically sorted out theoretical foundations and methodological advances in research on teacher emotion[8].

The second strand examines how organizational and policy forces shape teachers' emotional labor. Tsang discussed intensified emotional labor brought by accountability pressure[9]. Ye and Chen analyzed how curriculum reform disturbs teachers' emotional states[10]. A meta-analysis by Berkovich and Eyal illustrated complicated links between school leadership and teacher mood[11]. All these studies converge on one key question: how macro-level policy environments shape micro-level emotional practices.

3.3. Theoretical Perspectives of Educational Policy Discourse Analysis

Policy discourse analysis treats policies as discursive practices instead of neutral technical tools. Ball drew a clear line between policy as text and policy as discourse[12]. Policy as text focuses on interpretability and room for re-interpretation. Policy as discourse sets boundaries for people's thinking and behaviors. This theoretical framework offers conceptual tools to analyze how emotional labor is framed within policy documents.

Foucault's theory of power and knowledge also provides valuable insights[13]. By defining what can and cannot be stated, policy discourse creates fixed subject positions and limits possible actions. Within education, policy discourse constructs ideal figures such as effective teachers and professional educators, each carrying fixed expectations for emotional performance[14]. Bacchi's theory of problematization further explains how policies frame certain phenomena as social problems and generate corresponding governance effects. Studies on American education policies hold an important position in global academia. A large body of literature centers on NCLB and accountability systems[15]. Darling-Hammond criticized high-stakes testing for distorting regular teaching activities[16]. Empirical research by Valli and Buese found that accountability pressure fundamentally reshaped teachers' work, including their time allocation, role positioning and emotional experience[17].

Nevertheless, few existing studies conduct systematic analysis of emotional labor discourse embedded in policy texts. This sets the academic positioning of the present research. Using grounded theory, this study extracts discourses related to emotional labor directly from policy documents and builds theories through induction, filling this research gap.

4. Research Methodology

4.1. Research Design and Methodological Foundation

This study takes constructivist grounded theory as its methodological framework[18]. Unlike classic grounded theory, which aims to discover objective pre-existing theories, the constructivist approach recognizes researchers' active role in theory building. It holds that theories emerge from constant interaction between researchers and data. This standpoint matches the interpretive nature of policy discourse analysis. The meanings of policy texts are not self-evident; they are constructed through reading and interpretation.

Three reasons explain the choice of grounded theory instead of verifying pre-set theoretical frameworks. First, research on teachers' emotional labor in policy contexts remains exploratory, with no mature theoretical models to test. Second, policy texts cover diverse themes and complicated discourses. A preset framework may obscure valuable empirical findings. Third, the iterative analytical procedures of grounded theory can capture subtle details and internal tensions within policy discourse.

4.2. Data Sources and Sample Selection

This study combines purposeful sampling and theoretical sampling for data collection. Four criteria guide the selection of initial samples:

- 1) Three administrative levels are covered: federal, state and school district;
- 2) Text types include statutes, administrative regulations, policy guidelines and professional standards;
- 3) The time span ranges from 1965 to 2026;
- 4) All texts directly address teachers' roles, responsibilities and evaluation.

A total of 52 policy documents form the research sample, categorized by administrative level and type as shown in the table1 below.

Table 1. Classification and Quantity Statistics of Sampled Policy Documents

Document Category	Quantity	Specific Policy Texts
Federal-level policies	18	1. Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA, 1965) and all subsequent amendments 2. No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB, 2001) 3. Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA, 2015) 4. Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 2004) 5. Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 6. Supporting federal administrative regulations and official policy guidelines
State-level policies	22	1. California Education Code & California Standards for the Teaching Profession 2. Texas education statutes and supporting teacher evaluation framework 3. New York teacher certification rules and teacher professional development policies 4. Massachusetts regulatory documents governing teacher evaluation systems
Professional standards & school district documents	12	1. Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium Standards (InTASC) 2. California Standards for the Teaching Profession (CSTP) 3. National Education Association (NEA) code of professional conduct 4. Teacher handbooks and evaluation tools issued by large-scale public school districts

4.3. Data Analysis Procedures

Data analysis follows the three-stage coding process of grounded theory. The constant comparative method is adopted to guarantee systematic analysis.

Stage 1: Initial Coding

The author read policy texts line by line and sentence by sentence. I assigned initial codes to excerpts mentioning teachers' emotions, attitudes, interpersonal relations, care and classroom interactions. Codes were kept close to original text wording to retain the original meaning of documents. A total of 387 initial codes were generated in this stage.

Stage 2: Focused Coding

Constant comparison was conducted to group initial codes into higher-level conceptual categories. This step concentrated on discovering links among codes, as well as categorical relationships among conditions, strategies and outcomes. After repeated iterative analysis, all codes were consolidated into 28 focused codes.

Stage 3: Theoretical Coding

Based on focused codes, core categories were identified to construct theoretical propositions. Theoretical sensitivity was prioritized in this phase. I moved back and forth repeatedly between empirical materials and abstract concepts to build an interpretive theoretical framework. Three core categories were finalized: instrumental emotional discipline, institutionalization of care ethics, and accountability paradox of emotional labor.

Multiple strategies were adopted to enhance the trustworthiness of this study. Throughout the analytical process, newly collected data were constantly compared with existing codes, and the coding work ceased when no new conceptual categories could be derived from extra documents, with theoretical saturation reached after examining the 48th policy text. The researcher maintained analytical memos across the entire research procedure to record rationales for

coding decisions, interrelations between concepts, theoretical inspirations and reflective ideas, thus forming a complete and traceable analytical trail. Two researchers proficient in grounded theory were invited to independently check partial coded materials; all inconsistent coding results were fully communicated until unified understandings were formed. Meanwhile, the researcher engaged in consistent reflexive practice to reflect on how preexisting theoretical assumptions and personal value orientations could affect the interpretation of data, and sustained an open attitude in every analytical link.

5. Research Findings

Three interrelated core categories are extracted via three-stage coding analysis. These categories reveal the construction logic of teachers' emotional labor embedded in U.S. educational policies. The connotation, supporting empirical evidence and structural relations of each category are elaborated as follows.

5.1. Core Category 1: Instrumental Emotional Discipline

1. Category Connotation

Instrumental emotional discipline means policy texts incorporate teachers' emotional labor into measurable and manageable technical frameworks. Emotions are framed as instrumental means to hit educational goals, rather than ethical practices with inherent intrinsic value. This category covers three sub-themes: behavioral operationalization of emotion, performance-oriented emotional assessment, and standardized emotional norms.

2. Empirical Evidence

Discourses extracted from these policy documents bear distinct characteristics of technical rationality. Policies break teachers' emotions down into observable behavioral indicators such as establish, maintain, display and facilitate,

integrate these indicators into standardized evaluation systems, and link emotional performance to teacher accountability outcomes. The InTASC standards frame emotional support for individual and group learning merely as a tool to boost academic progress. Texas teacher evaluation

rules require educators to display specific mindsets, which assumes that inner feelings can be externally observed and quantified. New York state evaluation regulations further take student engagement as a numerical metric to judge the quality of teachers' emotional labor.

Table 2. Coding Analysis of Instrumental Emotional Discipline

Source of Document	Original Text Excerpt	Initial Coding	Focused Coding	Theoretical Coding
InTASC Standard 3	"The teacher works with others to create environments that support individual and collaborative learning, and that encourage positive social interaction"	Support individual learning; foster positive interaction	Emotional climate management	Instrumental emotional discipline
InTASC Standard 3	"The teacher promotes responsible learner use of interactive technologies to extend the possibilities for learning"	Encourage responsible technology use; expand learning opportunities	Technicalized emotional support	Instrumental emotional discipline
CSTP Standard 2	"Teachers establish and maintain learning environments that are physically, intellectually, and emotionally safe"	Build emotional safety; sustain learning atmosphere	Safeguard emotional well-being	Instrumental emotional discipline
CSTP Standard 2	"Teachers create physical or virtual learning environments that promote student learning, reflect diversity, and encourage constructive and productive interactions"	Boost learning outcomes; facilitate constructive communication	Diversified emotional space construction	Instrumental emotional discipline
Texas TAC	"Teachers embrace a growth mindset and respond to constructive feedback"	Adopt growth mindset; accept constructive feedback	Standardization of emotional attitudes	Instrumental emotional discipline
Texas TAC	"Teachers demonstrate the belief that all students can learn"	Show positive expectations for all students	Positive emotional expectation requirement	Instrumental emotional discipline
Danielson Framework	"Teachers establish and maintain a positive rapport with students"	Build positive teacher-student connections	Technical management of interpersonal emotion	Instrumental emotional discipline
NY 3012-d	"Observations to be conducted using a teacher practice rubric...student engagement"	Student engagement; standardized evaluation rubric	Quantifiable indicators of emotional labor	Instrumental emotional discipline
CA Ed Code 44662	"Assessment of certificated employee competence...as it reasonably relates to...establishing and maintaining an environment of learning"	Sustain learning atmosphere; teacher competency evaluation	Assessment of emotional competency	Instrumental emotional discipline
MA 603 CMR 35.03	"Effective teaching practice" includes "safe, respectful, culturally responsive environment"	Safe and inclusive classroom atmosphere; effective instruction criteria	Efficiency standard for emotional performance	Instrumental emotional discipline

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) frames "meeting unique student needs" as a legal obligation rather than a moral appeal. Failure to deliver such support

counts as a violation of student rights. The anti-discrimination clauses in Title IX institutionalize equitable care by formalizing complaint procedures and disciplinary rules.

Provisions on "equitable opportunity" laid out in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) uphold the logic of compensatory justice, mandating teachers to deliver differentiated care for disadvantaged learners.

3. Structural Relations

The institutionalization of care ethics brings two-sided outcomes. On one hand, institutional rules carry binding force and safeguard marginalized students' right to education. On the other hand, care is reduced to standardized, routine procedures such as periodic IEP reviews. This process strips care of its genuine emotional core and turns it into a mere compliance task.

4. Theoretical Links Among Core Categories

The three core categories do not operate separately. Instead, they form an interwoven theoretical structure. Instrumental emotional discipline serves as the foundational layer, defining the terms under which emotional labor becomes visible in policy discourse. Built upon this foundation, the institutionalization of care ethics grants emotional labor legal standing and professional accountability. The accountability paradox of emotional labor lays bare the fundamental conflict between the first two categories. Once care is turned into measurable tools and tied to professional repercussions, its original ethical meaning risks being lost.

This theoretical framework can be summarized as follows. U.S. educational policies render teachers' emotional labor observable via behavioral standards, turn it into a formal obligation through institutional rules, and bring it under administrative control with performance-based accountability. The combination of these three mechanisms creates a systematic paradox. Policies rely on teachers to deliver consistent emotional labor, yet the very rules meant to manage that labor erode the circumstances needed to sustain genuine caring practice.

5. Research finding summary

Through three-stage coding analysis, this study identifies three core categories and draws four major findings.

First, instrumental emotional discipline dominates the policy construction of teachers' emotional labor. The analysis reveals that U.S. educational policies incorporate teachers' emotional labor into the performance management system with a prominent tendency of technical reduction. Complex contextual emotional practices are simplified into measurable behavioral indicators, such as demonstrating positive attitudes, maintaining supportive classroom climates, and establishing effective communication with parents. Although such operationalization facilitates institutional supervision and performance evaluation, it separates emotional labor from its essence of ethical care and transforms it into a standardized and assessable technical task.

Second, the institutional paradox of care ethics prevails in policy design. Policy texts recognize the central role of care in education and embed requirements such as caring for students and promoting student well-being into professional standards. Meanwhile, institutional norms bound and proceduralize caring behaviors. While care ethics gains institutional legitimacy, it loses its spontaneous and context-based characteristics. Teachers' caring practices gradually shift from ethical consciousness to performative compliance, which fundamentally reshapes the inherent meaning of educational care.

Third, accountability systems create inherent dilemmas for teachers' emotional labor. This study identifies structural tensions between performance-based accountability and

emotional practice. In performance-oriented policy contexts, teachers' emotional engagement is framed as quantifiable output. Emotional authenticity yields to standardized performative compliance. This accountability paradox forces teachers to constantly negotiate between institutional expectations and genuine emotions, which easily leads to surface acting and emotional exhaustion. Policy discourse imposes clear requirements for teachers' emotional dedication but largely neglects teachers' emotional needs and professional support.

Fourth, policy discourse exerts dual effects on teachers' emotional labor. The institutionalization of emotional labor features both empowerment and discipline. Clear behavioral norms provide teachers with professional protection and clear role boundaries. However, overly refined emotional requirements erode teachers' emotional autonomy and reduce the most humanistic dimension of education into mechanical institutional execution. This persistent tension constitutes a core dilemma in contemporary teacher professional development.

6. Discussion

Based on grounded theory coding results, this study refines the complete governance logic of teachers' emotional labor embedded in U.S. K-12 educational policies. Overall, U.S. educational policies systematically construct teachers' emotional labor through three progressive mechanisms of behavioral standardization, institutional normalization, and performance accountability, transforming implicit and experiential affective practice into a closed-loop governance system that is visible, regulable, and quantifiable. Nevertheless, this institutional governance system contains profound structural paradoxes. Policies rely heavily on teachers' consistent, stable, and authentic emotional labor, yet their technical and accountability-oriented rules continuously undermine the practical conditions for sustaining genuine ethical care, forming an inherent self-eroding contradiction within policy governance. The triangular tension model developed in this study intuitively presents the dynamic structural contradictions among the three core categories and fully demonstrates the core theoretical paradoxes and research innovations of this study. Taking the three core theoretical categories as triangular vertices, the model constructs three interlocked tensions. First, the technical reduction of instrumental emotional labor simplifies holistic affective practice and strips educational care of its inherent ethical connotations. Second, institutional normalization grants emotional labor formal legitimacy while constraining situated and spontaneous caring practices. Third, the quantifiable demands of performance accountability conflict with the fluid and authentic nature of teachers' emotional labor. Jointly driven by these three structural tensions, teachers' emotional labor presents a dual practical state where institutional empowerment coexists with individual emotional repression.

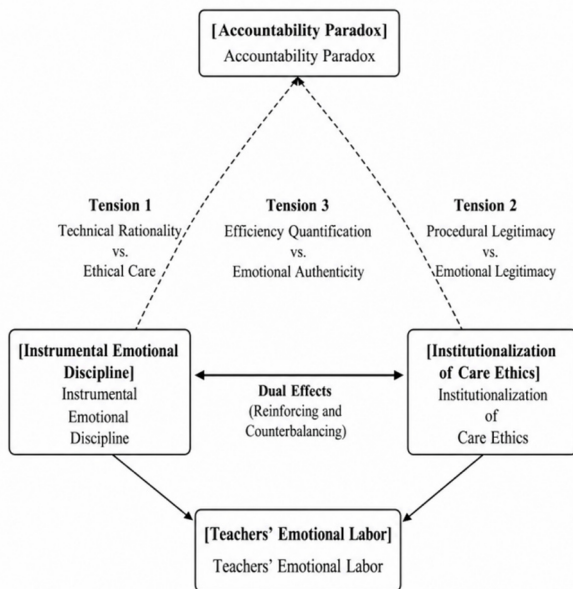


Figure 1. Triangular Tension Model

6.1. Positioning of Emotional Labor within Professional Ethical Frameworks

Coding results show that the NASDTEC Code of Ethics for Educators divides teachers' obligations into five major domains. Its section on responsibilities toward students clearly demands teachers to build and maintain appropriate verbal, physical, emotional and social boundaries to safeguard students' health, safety and well-being [1]. This statement reflects a dual positioning of emotional labor in U.S. policy discourse. Policy frames teachers' emotional practice as both a marker of professional competence and a potential risk area requiring standardized supervision.

Notably, the code states under responsibilities to the profession that educators shall prioritize professional interests over personal interests. This clause carries an implicit logic of emotional discipline. Teachers must subordinate their private emotional experiences to the expectations attached to their professional roles. U.S. professional ethics standards for teachers are defined by one core trait. They set binding minimum behavioral requirements through formal legal provisions. This institutional turn redefines emotional labor. It moves emotional care away from individual moral cultivation and turns it into observable, accountable professional metrics.

At the same time, coding data uncovers persistent friction between written policy and real classroom practice. The rules governing emotional boundaries focus heavily on risk prevention in teacher-student interactions, such as bans on inappropriate physical contact or overly intimate verbal exchanges with students [19]. The documents rarely address teachers' own needs for emotional support. This one-sided model of emotional governance likely worsens emotional exhaustion among practicing teachers. This shift still fails to fully acknowledge teachers' subjective needs as emotional laborers.

6.2. The Institutional Paradox of Emotional Labor

Further categorical analysis reveals a fundamental paradox embedded in the institutionalization of teachers' emotional labor. Under the clause of responsibilities to the education profession, NASDTEC standards require teachers to uphold

professional integrity and report colleagues' inappropriate conduct [19]. This institutional design relies on peer oversight to secure educational quality. Still, once emotional displays fall into the category of reportable misconduct, teachers tend to adopt defensive emotional strategies. They suppress genuine personal feelings to avoid career risks. U.S. professional ethical standards for teachers follow a "prohibit first, permit later" writing logic, which sets behavioral boundaries via negative checklists. This regulatory logic generates two conflicting outcomes for emotional labor. On one side, clear prohibitions build a protective framework for teachers and cut down occupational disputes stemming from deep emotional engagement with students. On the other side, overly detailed behavioral rules erode teachers' autonomy over their own emotions and trap educators in performative compliance.

Coding evidence further proves obvious ambiguity in the definition of appropriate interpersonal relationships within the standards. The documents repeatedly highlight caring for students as a core professional value. Yet they offer no actionable guidance to clarify how much emotional devotion counts as proper conduct, and at what point such devotion crosses the line into inappropriate intimacy. This ambiguous regulatory framework shifts all judgment burdens to individual teachers, who must constantly negotiate their emotional output amid institutional restrictions and students' real needs.

6.3. Implications of U.S. Practices for Research on Chinese Teachers' Emotional Labor

When we examine the above findings within a cross-cultural comparative framework, we can identify distinct paths of emotional labor governance across different educational systems. The rule-based orientation embedded in U.S. professional ethical standards for teachers stands in contrast to the morality-driven orientation centered on teachers' ethical self-cultivation in China. The U.S. model restrains emotional conduct through external formal regulations, while the Chinese model relies on teachers' internal moral consciousness to moderate emotional expression.

The formulation of U.S. teacher ethical standards invites extensive participation from all educational stakeholders. Procedural legitimacy of this kind lays a solid foundation for the validity of rules governing emotional labor. By comparison, frontline teachers have limited input during the drafting of China's professional ethics codes for teachers. Teachers' real emotional experiences and workplace struggles rarely get integrated into official policy discourse, creating a noticeable gap between written standards and on-site teaching practice.

Drawing on the above analysis, this study argues that research on emotional labor should move beyond the binary opposition of individual adaptation and institutional discipline. Scholars need to explore coordinated approaches that balance teachers' emotional subjectivity and institutional professional construction. Three actionable suggestions emerge from this perspective. First, policymakers should incorporate teachers' emotional needs into the development of professional standards and build two-way emotional support systems. Second, researchers should adopt more narrative inquiry methods to capture teachers' lived emotional experiences and their unique meaning-making processes. Third, schools should deliver training on critical emotional

literacy. Such training enables teachers to retain authentic emotions and sound professional judgment even under institutional constraints.

7. Conclusion

This study adopts grounded theory to systematically analyze 52 policy documents including U.S. federal educational laws, state-level policies and professional standards. It explores how teachers' emotional labor is constructed in policy discourse, as well as its internal logic and institutional tensions. This study demonstrates that performance-oriented policy environments place teachers' emotional labor in a dual predicament: institutional legitimacy is formally granted, while the authentic ethical connotations of emotional practice are gradually lost. Striking a balance between institutional regulation and emotional autonomy and achieving coordination between accountability demands and ethical care have become critical agenda for educational policy optimization. By constructing a systematic policy discourse analysis framework for teachers' emotional labor, this study provides empirical evidence and theoretical references for relevant academic discussions and offers a reflective perspective for future educational policy formulation.

Education is essentially a human encounter, in which emotion serves as an indispensable foundational element. Respecting the complexity and ethical nature of teachers' emotional labor and constructing more humanistic policy discourse represents a key symbol of mature educational governance.

This study proposes four directions for future research. First, follow-up studies on policy implementation can be conducted to explore how textual rules concerning teachers' emotional labor are translated into practical school-level practices. Second, cross-national comparative research can be adopted to examine the differentiated policy construction of teachers' emotional labor across diverse institutional and cultural contexts. Third, future studies can adopt mixed-method designs that integrate textual analysis with teacher interviews, so as to build a more comprehensive and multi-dimensional understanding of emotional labor governance. Fourth, researchers can focus on the potential reshaping effects of educational digital transformation on the institutional rules and practical logic of teachers' emotional labor.

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