

Beyond surface and deep acting: investigating interaction avoidance in coworkers' daily relationships and its consequences

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ABSTRACT

Research on emotional labour toward coworkers focused on surface acting and deep acting, thereby applying the knowledge on emotional labour in service but neglecting specific features of coworkers' relationships. Addressing this issue, we develop and test a conceptual model in which surface acting and deep acting are complemented by another behavioural strategy toward coworkers: interaction avoidance. We conceptualise emotional labour and interaction avoidance as social exchange responses to negative and positive experiences with coworkers, and exhaustion as a well-being consequence of these responses. We conducted a 10-day diary study ($N = 146$, $n = 986$ days) and found that negative experiences with coworkers predicted avoiding interactions with them the next day. Positive experiences predicted next day's deep acting, and unexpectedly, surface acting toward coworkers. Interaction avoidance was related to evening exhaustion and mediated the relationship between negative experiences and exhaustion the next day. Surface acting was also related to exhaustion in the evening. Our results highlight that employees can use more strategies than surface acting and deep acting, in particular, interaction avoidance when aiming not to show their originally felt emotions to their coworkers. However, avoiding interaction comes with costs, so employees should consider its impact on their well-being.

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Good coworker relationships are critical to organisational success, and experiences with coworkers, whether negative or positive, have meaningful consequences for employees' behaviour and well-being (Chiaburu & Harrison, 2008). Therefore, managing emotions in coworker interactions (i.e. emotional labour toward coworkers; Ozelik, 2013) is an inevitable part of employees' work lives (Gabriel et al., 2020). However, most studies focused on emotional labour in service (Gabriel et al., 2023) which may not fully capture the nuances of

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emotional labour toward coworkers. Coworker relationships hold personal significance as they contribute to one's sense of work identity and productivity (Chiaburu & Harrison, 2008; Miscenko & Day, 2016). Additionally, these relationships involve ongoing, frequent interactions, making taxing situations, such as receiving criticism from coworkers, particularly impactful. Consequently, employees might choose not to display their initially felt emotions to coworkers, leading to an increased need for emotional labour while potentially reducing the desire to interact with coworkers. In this study, we, therefore, suggest taking a wider perspective on emotional labour toward coworkers that considers predictors and behavioural responses specific to coworker relationships.

When studying emotional labour toward coworkers, scholars have mainly used Grandey's (2000) model of emotional labour in service work as a basic conceptualisation. According to the model, the main strategies of emotional labour are surface acting (i.e. suppressing or faking emotional displays; Ozcelik, 2013) and deep acting (i.e. attempting to modify feelings toward the required ones; Neshor Shoshan & Venz, 2022). However, in contrast to service interactions, employees may have more options than surface acting and deep acting when interacting with coworkers. If the goal is to avoid showing true emotions to coworkers, one obvious – and thus potentially overlooked – option is to avoid interactions with them. Interaction avoidance describes behaviours aimed at reducing social interactions, either by actively avoiding others or by refraining from initiating social interactions (e.g. closing the office door; Li et al., 2022).

Going one step further, also the consequences of emotional labour toward coworkers may differ from those in service. For example, deep acting may be particularly useful toward coworkers, because it can elicit positive responses from them (Gabriel et al., 2020; Neshor Shoshan & Venz, 2022). Avoiding interactions with coworkers might have consequences as well. For example, it was found that avoiding coworkers relates to impaired well-being in the long run (Hershcovis et al., 2018).

Aiming to advance research on emotional labour toward coworkers, we integrate social exchange theory (SET; Cropanzano et al., 2017) into emotional labour (Gabriel et al., 2023) and the broader emotion regulation literature (Gross, 2015). We test a conceptual model that (a) proposes negative and positive experiences with coworkers as antecedents of emotional labour toward coworkers, (b) identifies interaction avoidance from coworkers as a behavioural response to experiences with coworkers, and (c) tests well-being consequences of daily emotional labour and interaction avoidance from coworkers (see Figure 1). We specifically look at interpersonal experiences with coworkers as antecedents of next-day emotional labour to emphasise the impact that such experiences might have even after one day (Chiaburu & Harrison, 2008). By testing next-day relationships, we address the theoretical suggestion that interpersonal experiences with coworkers can precede emotional labour toward them (Mitchell & James, 2001).

Our study makes two important contributions. First, we suggest interaction avoidance as an additional response to experiences with coworkers beyond surface acting and deep acting, which may be particularly relevant in the case of coworkers. Because the literature on emotional labour toward coworkers has focused on surface acting and deep acting, it is not clear what happens when employees indicate that they *did neither* engage in surface acting, *nor* deep acting. One possibility is that employees showed true emotions to coworkers (Gabriel et al., 2020). Another possibility is that they were avoiding them (e.g. did not join lunch). Although avoidance was studied previously (Diefendorff

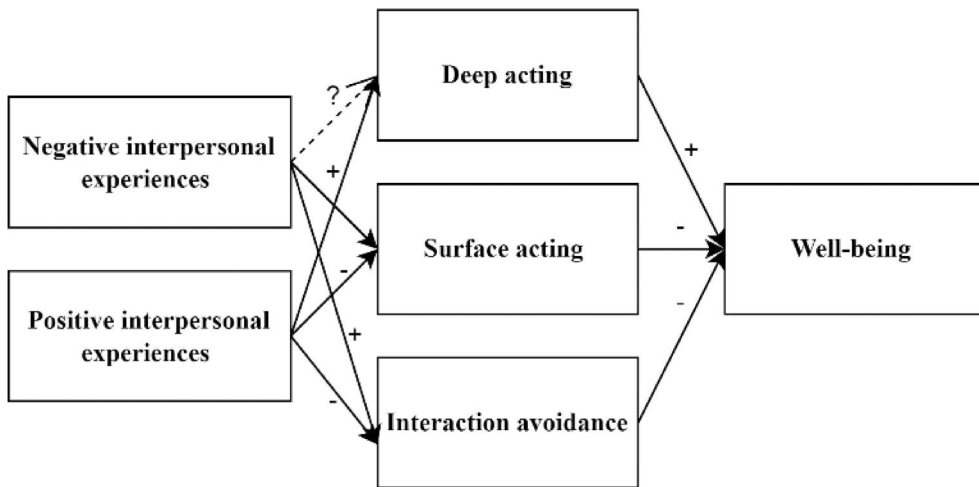


Figure 1. Conceptual model.

Note: The dashed arrow represents a research question.

et al., 2008; Hershcovis et al., 2018), it received insufficient attention. A model of emotional labour toward coworkers that includes interaction avoidance would provide a more comprehensive picture of coworkers' responses to their coworkers, and benefit from considering the consequences of such different responses.

Second, while inner motives and personal resources were suggested as antecedents of emotional labour toward coworkers before (cf. Gabriel et al., 2020; Neshor Shoshan & Venz, 2022), it is highly likely that emotional labour and avoiding interactions with coworkers are affected by previous experiences with them. Drawing from social exchange perspective (Cropanzano et al., 2017) and research on coworkers, we thus add an interpersonal angle to the emotional labour toward coworkers' literature and investigate the notion that "coworker actions predict perceptual, attitudinal, and behavior outcomes" (Chiaburu & Harrison, 2008, p. 1094).

Emotional labour toward coworkers from social exchange perspective

SET (Blau, 1964) suggests that coworkers can treat each other positively or negatively, leading to corresponding responses (Cropanzano et al., 2017). Emotional labour is the "regulation of feelings and expressions to fulfil interpersonal role expectations at work" (Gabriel et al., 2023, p. 7). In coworkers' relationships, such expectations can be to act professionally, or to be kind to coworkers even when not feeling like it (Tschan et al., 2005). These expectations are usually referred to as display rules, which might be explicit in service (e.g. to greet customers; Allen et al., 2010). For coworkers, display rules may be rather implicit and tied to social exchange rules (e.g. when people put effort into you, you put effort in return; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Thus, when focusing on coworkers, a social exchange perspective is needed to capture emotional labour within coworker relationships.¹

Research on coworkers' emotional labour has already started incorporating SET. However, emotional labour was considered the antecedent (Gabriel et al., 2020).

Employees report receiving more emotional support from coworkers when engaging in deep acting (Nesher Shoshan & Venz, 2022), and less support when engaging in surface acting (Becker et al., 2018). In line with SET, which recognises that social behaviours can play the role of both behavioural antecedents and responses (Cropanzano et al., 2017), we propose that emotional labour toward coworkers can be viewed as exchange responses.

Interpersonal experiences as antecedents of emotional labour toward coworkers

Drawing from SET (Cropanzano et al., 2017) and emotional labour literature (Grandey, 2000), we suggest that when employees encounter negative experiences, they tend to engage in surface acting (Gabriel et al., 2023). When they encounter positive experiences, they tend to engage in deep acting (Totterdell & Holman, 2003). In service relationships, evidence indicates that interpersonal antecedents, especially customer mistreatment, predict emotional labour toward customers (Totterdell & Holman, 2003). The proposed causal direction was supported: When customers mistreated employees in an experimentally manipulated service interaction, participants acting in the role of service employees engaged in more surface acting (Gabriel & Diefendorff, 2015; Goldberg & Grandey, 2007). The relation with deep acting is less clear, presumably because mainly negative experiences with customers were tested but deep acting might be a response to pleasant experiences (Totterdell & Holman, 2003).

Interpersonal experiences as antecedents of interaction avoidance from coworkers

According to Gross (1998), situation selection is an emotional regulation strategy that refers to “avoiding certain people, places or activities” (John & Gross, 2007, p. 351). Avoiding interactions with coworkers (e.g. not going to the office kitchen) is a behaviour that can be seen as a type of situation selection at work, as suggested also by Diefendorff et al. (2005). Avoiding coworkers shares with surface acting and deep acting the interpersonal goal of trying not to express one’s initially felt emotions toward coworkers (Bindl et al., 2022; Von Gilsa et al., 2014), and was recognised as a potential (although uncommon) emotion regulation strategy in service interactions (Alabak et al., 2023). Although avoiding coworkers is not emotional labour as it does not involve showing emotions to coworkers at all, it is a relevant behavioural strategy that aims at preventing situations at work where implicit emotional display rules may apply.

Negative interpersonal experiences as antecedents

According to SET (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005), negative interpersonal experiences may trigger negative responses such as active retaliation or not engaging with others (Cropanzano et al., 2017). Meta-analytic evidence on social exchange processes following negative interpersonal experiences supports these ideas (Han et al., 2022). When deciding to avoid interactions, employees must first anticipate that a certain situation would be unpleasant or uncomfortable. Such anticipation is likely based on previous experiences (Li et al., 2022). Accordingly, supervisor aggression was found to predict more interaction avoidance over longer time lags (Nifadkar et al., 2012; Yagil et al., 2011).

According to the reciprocity rule in social exchange theory (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005), if coworkers initiate negative experiences, the receiver should respond the same way. Interaction avoidance might be seen as a way of showing the initiator that a negative experience occurred, which is a sort of feedback in social exchange terms. When coworkers are avoided, they may reflect on the reasons and attribute it to the negative interaction they previously initiated. In addition, although coworkers usually do not exchange tangible resources, they can exchange attention and support. When coworkers are avoided, this attention and support is withheld. Thus, interaction avoidance can be a way to deny exchanging social resources (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005).

From an emotional labour point of view, avoiding coworkers is a way not to show emotions that otherwise would have to be modified with deep acting or faked or suppressed with surface acting. When working together with coworkers can be delayed for a while, interaction avoidance might be chosen because it seems beneficial (e.g. an opportunity to cool down when angry). As mentioned before, we focus on experiences with coworkers as predictors of next-day responses.

Hypothesis 1a: Negative interpersonal experiences with coworkers on day $d-1$ are positively related to interaction avoidance on day d .

However, to interact with coworkers and get along, employees may need to regulate their emotional displays toward coworkers after negative experiences (Bindl et al., 2022). This can be done by engaging in surface acting or deep acting. From a social exchange perspective, and according to the principle of reciprocity, after negative experiences, employees may try to retaliate or not put effort into their coworkers (Cropanzano et al., 2017). We thus expect employees to engage in more surface acting after negative experiences with coworkers. Surface acting is proposed to be “in bad faith”, reflecting the idea that faking emotions has negative social connotations (Groth et al., 2009; Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987). Accordingly, employees may engage in surface acting when caring less about their coworkers but still aiming to obey display rules. Moreover, because surface acting does not require modification of actual emotions (Grandey, 2000), it might seem less effortful (Nesher Shoshan & Venz, 2022), and thus, be the strategy used following negative experiences. Empirical findings show that employees engage in more surface acting immediately after encountering customer mistreatment (Goldberg & Grandey, 2007), or later following abusive supervision (Wang et al., 2022).

Hypothesis 1b: Negative interpersonal experiences with coworkers on day $d-1$ are positively related to surface acting on day d .

Although encountering negative experiences may require regulating the emotional display, deep acting might still be a reasonable response to negative experiences (Kammeyer-Mueller et al., 2013). For example, even when offended, employees may try to modify their emotions (e.g. feel kindness) toward their coworkers before entering the coworkers’ office. Nonetheless, according to social exchange theory, deep acting, which is “going the extra mile” for coworkers, will be less chosen following negative experiences. People will invest less in others who did them harm (Cropanzano et al., 2017). In addition, even if employees want to engage in deep acting following negative experiences, they may lack the energy resources or regulatory capacity to do so (Nesher Shoshan & Venz, 2022). For example, it might be that when aiming to engage in deep acting, the

negative experience from the previous day is too salient. Thus, employees may find it hard to reappraise or change their emotions. However, the empirical evidence regarding deep acting as a consequence of negative experiences is inconclusive (Diefendorff et al., 2019; Totterdel & Holman, 2003), leaving this question unresolved (Grandey & Melloy, 2017). Thus, we postulate a research question:

Research Question 1: Are negative interpersonal experiences with coworkers on day $d-1$ related to deep acting on day d ?

Positive interpersonal experiences as antecedents

People usually avoid negative experiences, but approach positive ones (Tepper et al., 2007). Thus, compared to neutral situations, following positive experiences, employees may decide that an upcoming interaction should *not* be avoided (Li et al., 2022), and show less interaction avoidance than usual. For example, after previously receiving help from coworkers, employees may decide not to close their office doors. This view is supported by social exchange theory, which notes that “in reaction to positive initiating actions, targets will tend to reply in kind by engaging in more positive reciprocating responses and/ or fewer negative reciprocating responses” (Cropanzano et al., 2017, p. 2).

From an emotion regulation perspective, such situations can be seen as situation selection. Following positive experiences, we expect employees to select situations in which they do have contact with their coworkers and not to select situations that include explicitly or implicitly no contact with them (i.e. less interaction avoidance; Gross, 1998).

Hypothesis 2a: Positive interpersonal experiences with coworkers on day $d-1$ are negatively related to interaction avoidance on day d .

Importantly, employees may need to regulate their emotional display even after positive experiences with coworkers. For example, an employee might have had a pleasant meeting with their coworkers, and the next day be annoyed by coworkers’ remarks but does not want to show this feeling to conserve the pleasant atmosphere. In addition, as Diefendorff et al. (2019) mention, “individuals may engage in emotion regulation not only as a way to improve bad situations, but also to make good situations better.” (p. 979).

As a social exchange rule, one should not harm those who did them well (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Surface acting includes faking the emotional display toward others or hiding one’s feelings (Grandey, 2000). Targets of surface acting often experience it as unpleasant (Groth et al., 2009) and react negatively (Becker et al., 2018; Hu & Shi, 2015). Thus, in response to positive experiences, we expect employees to rely less on this option when interacting with coworkers, and engage less in surface acting (Diefendorff et al., 2019).

Hypothesis 2b: Positive interpersonal experiences with coworkers on day $d-1$ are negatively related to surface acting on day d .

After positive experiences with coworkers, employees are supposed to “reward” them based on social exchange rules (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). This idea is in line with emotional labour models (Grandey, 2000; Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987) and has been empirically supported (Nesher Shoshan & Venz, 2022). Specifically, in deep acting, employees aim to change their emotions to more desirable ones before displaying

them to their coworkers. Such a strategy requires planning and modifying emotions and thus has been suggested to be what employees do when they wish to benefit their coworkers (Diefendorff et al., 2019; Gabriel et al., 2020). We expect that in response to positive experiences at work (Totterdell & Holman, 2003), employees will more likely engage in deep acting.

Hypothesis 2c: Positive interpersonal experiences with coworkers on day $d-1$ are positively related to deep acting on day d .

Well-being consequences

In the original emotional labour literature, both surface acting and deep acting toward customers are supposed to have negative well-being consequences because they involve adhering to display rules, engaging in “labour”, and having to change or hide one’s true emotions (Hochschild, 1983). Evidence shows that surface acting toward customers is exhausting (Judge et al., 2009; Zhan et al., 2016). Deep acting toward customers, however, shows no or weak relations with well-being (Hülshager & Schewe, 2011). Thus, research on emotional labour and well-being is still unclear to some extent (Alabak et al., 2020).

According to Gross’ emotion regulation framework (Gross, 1998), interaction avoidance, as a situation selection strategy, might protect well-being (e.g. because one avoids further harm). However, interaction avoidance is not without risk. Although avoiding coworkers may seem a quick and feasible solution, it interrupts the social exchange process (Cropanzano et al., 2017). Without exchanges, there is no option to have positive experiences after negative ones. Moreover, when avoiding coworkers, employees might find themselves alone, thinking about the avoided person and the negative experiences that they encountered (Baranik et al., 2017; Hershcovis et al., 2018). Such engagement, especially after negative experiences, can be exhausting. Paradoxically, employees may need to closely monitor the coworkers they are trying to avoid. For example, when aiming to avoid meeting coworkers in the hallway, employees need to constantly check where those coworkers are (Hershcovis et al., 2018). Empirical evidence from other work contexts (e.g. avoidance as a response to incivility or abusive supervision; Nifadkar et al., 2012; Tepper et al., 2007) supports the suggestion that avoidance relates to impaired well-being.

Hypothesis 3a: Interaction avoidance on day d is positively related to exhaustion at the end of day d .

In line with the general theorisation in the emotional labour literature, we suggest that surface acting toward coworkers is exhausting as employees put effort into adjusting their emotional displays toward the emotion they feel obligated to show (e.g. faking a smile). Moreover, surface acting involves discrepancy, because employees do not change their actual emotion (e.g. they are still annoyed) but just the display of the emotion (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993). Such discrepancy may lead to inauthentic feelings, which are unpleasant and stressful (Brotheridge & Lee, 2003; Hülshager & Schewe, 2011). Adapting Grandey’s (2000) model, studies on coworkers’ emotional labour largely replicated findings regarding surface acting, which predicted exhaustion in several studies (Gabriel et al., 2020; Hu & Shi, 2015; Ozcelik, 2013; Shanock et al., 2013).

Hypothesis 3b: Surface acting on day d is positively related to exhaustion at the end of day d .

Although deep acting involves effort, deep acting toward customers is not exhausting according to current empirical evidence (Hülshager & Schewe, 2011). In coworker relationships, it was theoretically suggested that deep acting might be rewarded by coworkers according to social exchange rules (Becker et al., 2018). Such rewards may compensate for the effort invested in changing one's emotions toward those required (Kammeyer-Mueller et al., 2013). Gabriel et al. (2019) suggested that deep acting toward coworkers "although effortful, can be restorative" (p. 9), and found that deep actors suffered less exhaustion. In a daily diary study, engaging in daily deep acting toward coworkers was related to more emotional support from them. Emotional support might be a strong reward, and indeed, daily deep acting toward coworkers was related to enhanced positive affect (Nesher Shoshan & Venz, 2022). In addition, deep acting toward coworkers might take place in more pleasant situations (Diefendorff et al., 2019) and employees may use more adaptive subtypes of deep acting (e.g. perspective taking; Alabak et al., 2020) when interacting with coworkers.

Hypothesis 3c: Deep acting on day d is negatively related to exhaustion at the end of day d .

Explaining mechanisms

Social exchange plays a role in explaining employee well-being. Specifically, negative experiences at work (e.g. incivility) predict negative well-being consequences (Hershcovis et al., 2020), while positive experiences (e.g. receiving support) predict less burnout (Fernet et al., 2010) and even benefits (e.g. higher positive affect; Nesher Shoshan & Venz, 2022). Social exchange responses act as explaining mechanisms between interpersonal experiences and outcomes such as performance and well-being (Golden & Veiga, 2018; Zhong & Robinson, 2021). In the emotional labour literature, surface acting, enacted as a response to customer mistreatment and conflict, was an explaining mechanism between customer mistreatment and impaired well-being (Adams & Webster, 2013; Nixon et al., 2017).

We identify a social exchange process (Cropanzano et al., 2017) initiated in interpersonal, exchange-triggering experiences with coworkers and moves toward well-being outcomes the next day through emotional labour strategies and interaction avoidance that function as exchange responses. In the case of coworkers, such a process may occur due to the ongoing nature of social exchange, which allows responses to different coworkers at different points in time. Although rather short-lived, such a process highlights the impact that experiences with coworkers might have from day to day (Chiaburu & Harrison, 2008). Thus, we suggest an indirect relationship, in which emotional labour responses and interaction avoidance are the explaining mechanisms between interpersonal experience with coworkers and well-being. Considering the non-definite evidence regarding negative experiences and deep acting, we suggest a research question also here.

Hypothesis 4: Negative experiences with coworkers on day $d-1$ show an indirect positive relation with exhaustion at the end of day d via (a) higher surface acting, and (b) higher interaction avoidance on day d .

Research Question 2: Are negative experiences with coworkers on day $d-1$ indirectly related to exhaustion at the end of day d via deep acting on day d ?

Hypothesis 5: Positive experiences with coworkers on day $d-1$ show an indirect negative relation with exhaustion at the end of day d via (a) lower surface acting, (b) higher deep acting, and (c) lower interaction avoidance on day d .

Method

Procedure and participants

We collected data as part of a larger project on employees' work lives in Germany. Six students helped recruit participants from their personal networks and online platforms (e.g. Facebook) as part of their bachelor's project, supervised by the first and second authors. Participants who completed at least 80% of the surveys could win one of four vouchers from an online retailer worth 50 euros each. The study was a 10-day daily diary study, with a one-time general survey measuring the demographics. Participants answered three daily surveys: in the morning, after work, and before going to bed.

The inclusion criteria were working at least 20 hours a week, all five days of the week (Monday to Friday), not working on shifts, and having regular contact with coworkers. Two hundred and seventy-one people registered for the study. Of them, 222 answered the general survey fully. In the final sample, we included 146 participants who completed the general survey and at least one survey on at least two consecutive working days to ensure a minimum day-to-next-day variance.² Because our focus was on interactions with coworkers, we excluded those days in which participants did not have any contact with their coworkers that day. This procedure resulted in 986 days from 146 participants ($M_{\text{days}} = 6.57$). Of the 146 participants included in our final sample, 64.4% were female, and the mean age was 38.19 ($SD = 12.96$). Participants worked in diverse occupations (e.g. administration, sales, engineering), but mainly in office work, in which it is possible to apply strategies such as interaction avoidance. All of the participants had regular contact with their coworkers, 65.5% indicated that they meet their coworkers several times a day; 20.3% indicated that they meet coworkers once a day; 4.6% indicated that they meet coworkers 3–4 times a week; 6.1% indicated that they meet them 1–2 times a week and only 4.1% indicated that they meet their coworkers less than once a week.

Measures

Participants answered the surveys in German. If a measure was unavailable in German, we translated it with a back-translation approach. Our study variables were assessed in the daily surveys with five-point scales (1 = *not at all* to 5 = *absolutely*). Table 1 shows the means, standard deviations, intraclass correlation coefficients (ICCs), and multilevel correlations among the variables. For reliability, we report level-specific omegas: within-person ω_w and between-person ω_b (Geldhof et al., 2014) that correspond to the reliabilities of previous studies on related constructs (e.g. Neshor Shoshan & Venz, 2022).

Interpersonal experiences with coworkers

We measured positive and negative experiences with coworkers at the end of the workday. Positive experiences were measured with three items derived from Casper et al. (2019). A sample item was "Today, I had positive experiences with others at my

Table 1. Descriptive statistics and intercorrelations of the study variables.

Variable	M	SD _w	SD _b	ICC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1 Neg. exp ^a d-1	1.12	.28	.22	.36	–	–.07	.11*	–.04	.08	.05	–.01	.02	.09*	.07
2 Pos. exp ^b d-1	3.63	.70	.59	.42	–.22*	–	–.00	.06	–.19**	.01	.09*	.14**	.00	.02
3 Surface acting d-1	1.42	.37	.56	.68	.56**	–.12	–	.47**	.09	.10	–.18*	.03	.10	.08
4 Deep acting d-1	1.92	.45	.63	.57	.36*	.13	.52**	–	.04	.02	.00	.12	.04	.06
5 Int. avoidance ^c d-1	1.44	.39	.54	.55	.31	–.19	.53**	.29*	–	.10	–.00	–.10	–.05	.10
6 Morning exhaustion d	1.89	.50	.49	.49	.47*	–.06	.49**	.35*	.17	–	.21**	.11	.07	.49**
7 Surface acting d	1.43	.37	.55	.69	.56*	–.13	.99**	.52**	.54**	.48**	–	.51**	.08	.19**
8 Deep acting d	1.93	.45	.62	.66	.36*	.12	.50**	.99**	.31*	.33	.50**	–	.03	.08
9 Int. avoidance d	1.44	.39	.54	.65	.33	–.21	.49**	.33**	.99**	.20	.57**	.35	–	.12
10 Evening exhaustion d	2.02	.68	.72	.54	.36**	–.01	.40**	.27**	.23*	.91**	.40**	.26*	.24	–

Note: Presented are standard deviations at the within-person level (SD_w) and at the between-person level (SD_b). ICC = intraclass correlation. Correlations below the diagonal are between-person-level correlations (N = 146). Correlations above the diagonal are within-person-level correlations (n = 986 days). The correlations were calculated with Mplus 8.7 to account for the nested data structure. ^aNeg. exp. = negative experiences. ^bPos. exp. = positive experiences. ^cInt. avoidance = interaction avoidance. d-1 = first day, d = next day. *p < .05, **p < .01.

workplace.” ω_w was .71 and ω_b was .89. Negative experiences were measured with four items adapted from Herold and Parsons (1985). A sample item was “Today, my coworkers spoke badly about my work.” ω_w was .85 and ω_b was .95.

Emotional labour and interaction avoidance responses

We assessed surface acting, deep acting, and interaction avoidance at the end of the workday with the instruction: “In the following, we ask about your emotions during your work with your coworkers today.” Specifically, we assessed surface acting and deep acting with the three respective items of the emotional labour scale (ELS; Brotheridge & Lee, 2003). A sample item for surface acting was “Today, I faked the emotions that I should have shown my coworkers.” ω_w was .73 and ω_b was .95. A sample item for deep acting was “Today, I tried to actually feel the feelings I had to show to my coworkers.” ω_w was .56 and ω_b was .72. For interaction avoidance we used six items adopted from the scale proposed by Nifadkar et al. (2012). A sample item was “Today, I tried to stay away from conversations with my coworkers.” ω_w was .82 and ω_b was .94.

Exhaustion

We measured exhaustion twice a day, in the morning survey as a baseline measure, and in the before-bedtime survey as an outcome variable. We instructed the participants to report how they felt “at the moment.” We used three items adapted from the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI; Maslach et al., 2001). A sample item was “I feel emotionally drained.” For the morning survey, ω_w was .90 and ω_b was .98; for the before-bedtime survey, ω_w was .89 and ω_b was .97.

Control variables

We controlled for surface acting, deep acting, and avoiding coworkers on a given day when predicting the next day’s surface acting, deep acting, and avoidance, respectively. Further, we controlled for morning exhaustion of the respective day (cf. Gabriel et al., 2019) when predicting evening exhaustion. We conducted all our analyses also without the control variables, and the results of the hypotheses tests remain unchanged.

Discriminant validity

To test the discriminant validity of our study variables, we conducted a multilevel factor analysis using Mplus 8.7 (Muthén & Muthén, 2017), in which we included the interpersonal variables that are more closely related conceptually and were measured at the same data point. This five-factor model (i.e. positive interpersonal experiences, negative interpersonal experiences, surface acting, deep acting, interaction avoidance) specified on the within-person level and the between-person level simultaneously showed an acceptable fit. $\chi^2 = 601.56$, $df = 286$, $p < .001$, Scaling Correction Factor (SCF) = 1.22, Comparative Fit Index (CFI) = .92, Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) = .90, Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) = .03. This model fits the data better than the best-fitting four-factor model in which surface acting and deep acting load on the same factor, Satorra-Bentler $\Delta\chi^2 = 50.66$, $\Delta df = 8$, $p < .001$. We concluded that our measures represent distinct constructs. Full results are available in Supplemental Materials in the

Open Science Framework: https://osf.io/37yfm/?view_only=cc3b968e5087479baf65e39a26b9928c.

Analysis strategy

We used a multilevel path analysis with mean-adjusted maximum likelihood (MLR) estimation (Preacher et al., 2010) in Mplus 8.7 (Muthén & Muthén, 2017) in which the paths were estimated simultaneously on the within-person and the between-person level. To get unbiased parameters, we used full information maximum likelihood (FIML) estimation to account for missing data (Newman, 2014). Correlations between surface acting and deep acting were allowed. The indirect effects were tested with the Monte Carlo method suggested by Selig and Preacher (2008). We used 20,000 simulations and 95% confidence intervals to obtain the indirect effects.

Results

Multi-level analysis was appropriate, as the ICCs ranged from .48 (deep acting toward coworkers) to .69 (negative experiences with coworkers). We present the results of the multilevel path analysis in Table 2. The fit of the fully tested model was reasonable, $\chi^2 = 186.04$, $df = 60$, $p < .001$, CFI = .90, TLI = .85, RMSEA = .04. Analyses on Hypothesis 1 found a significant positive relationship between negative coworker experiences on day $d-1$ and interaction avoidance on day d as predicted (estimate = .14, $SE = .05$, $p = .01$). However, there was no significant link between negative coworker experiences

Table 2. Results of the multilevel path analysis study.

Variable	Surface acting day d		Deep acting day d		Interaction avoidance day d		Evening exhaustion day d	
	Est.	SE	Est.	SE	Est.	SE	Est.	SE
<i>Within person level</i>								
Neg. exp ^a . $d-1$	.02	.04	.07	.08	.14*	.05		
Pos. exp ^b . $d-1$	.05*	.02	.10**	.03	.00	.02		
Surface acting $d-1$	-.18*	.07						
Deep acting $d-1$			.07	.07				
Int. avoidance ^c $d-1$					-.07	.11		
Morning exhaustion day d							.28**	.09
Surface acting day d							.31**	.11
Deep acting day d							-.05	.09
Int. avoidance day d							.16*	.07
Residual Variances	.13**	.02	.25**	.02	.18**	.02	.43**	.04
<i>Between person level</i>								
Neg. exp $d-1$	.06	.07	.08	.06	.05	.05		
Pos. exp. $d-1$	-.02	.02	.01	.02	-.02	.02		
Surface acting $d-1$	.96**	.04						
Deep acting $d-1$			.93**	.02				
Int. avoidance $d-1$					.87**	.03		
Morning exhaustion day d							1.05**	.13
Surface acting day d							.10	.15
Deep acting day d							.05	.09
Int. avoidance day d							-.03	.11
Residual Variances	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.23**	.07

Note: Reported are the unstandardised estimates from one model that tested all relationships simultaneously. $N_{between} = 146$ persons, $N_{within} = 986$ days. ^aNeg. exp. = negative experiences. ^bPos. exp. = positive experiences. ^cInt. avoidance = interaction avoidance. $d-1$ = first day, d = next day. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .001$.

on day $d-1$ and surface acting on day d (estimate = .02, $SE = .04$, $p = .57$). Regarding Research Question 1, negative coworker experiences on day $d-1$ were not associated with deep acting on day d (estimate = .07, $SE = .08$, $p = .35$).

The analyses concerning Hypothesis 2 showed that positive interpersonal experiences with coworkers on day $d-1$ were not negatively related to interaction avoidance from coworkers on day d ; estimate = .00, $SE = .02$, $p = .85$. However, positive experiences on day $d-1$ were positively related to surface acting on day d ; estimate = .05, $SE = .02$, $p = .04$ (and not negatively related to surface acting as hypothesised); As hypothesised, positive experiences on day $d-1$ were positively related to deep acting on day d ; estimate = .10, $SE = .03$, $p < .01$.

The analyses concerning Hypothesis 3 showed that surface acting on day d was related positively to exhaustion at the end of day d ; estimate = .31, $SE = .12$, $p < .01$, while deep acting was not negatively related to it; estimate = $-.05$, $SE = .09$, $p = .57$. Supporting our hypothesis, interaction avoidance from coworkers on day d was related positively to exhaustion at the end of day d ; estimate = .16, $SE = .07$, $p = .03$.

The analyses concerning Hypothesis 4 showed that there was no indirect effect of surface acting on day d : 95% CI $[-0.022, 0.0416]$ explaining the relationship between negative interpersonal experiences on day $d-1$ and exhaustion on day d as hypothesised. However, there was an indirect effect of interaction avoidance on day d , explaining the relationship between negative experiences on day $d-1$ and exhaustion on day d : 95% CI $[0.0002, 0.0594]$. Concerning Research Question 2, there was no indirect effect of deep acting on day d explaining the relationship between negative interpersonal experiences on day $d-1$ and exhaustion on day d : 95% CI $[-0.0316, 0.0163]$.

The analyses concerning Hypothesis 5 showed no indirect effects of deep acting on day d : 95% CI $[-0.028, 0.0144]$ nor interaction avoidance from coworkers 95% CI $[-0.0095, 0.0119]$, explaining the relationship between positive interpersonal experiences on day $d-1$ and exhaustion at the end of day d as hypothesised. Surprisingly, although the relationship between positive experiences and surface acting was in the opposite direction, surface acting on day d explained the relationship between positive experiences on day $d-1$ and exhaustion at the end of day d : 90% CI $[0.0014, 0.0338]$. We report this finding because the 90% CI is considered meaningful in indirect effects in multilevel models (Preacher et al., 2010).³

Robustness tests

We conducted several robustness tests to increase confidence in our results. The full results are available in the Supplemental Materials. Considering our focus on emotional labour as a social exchange response, we tested the directionality of this relationship with a reversed model in which emotional labour and interaction avoidance on a given day predict next-day negative and positive interpersonal experiences with coworkers when controlling for previous-day negative and positive interpersonal experiences. In the results, all the paths were non-significant except for the path of interaction avoidance from coworkers predicting negative experiences with coworkers on the next day, estimate = .10, $SE = .05$, $p = .04$. Moreover, we tested if next-morning positive and negative affect influence our results (Lennard et al., 2019) and detected no changes in the results of the hypotheses tests when controlling for morning affect.

Additional analysis

Although our focus is on instances in which employees aim not to show their true feelings to coworkers, we empirically tested the consequences of negative and positive experiences with coworkers on next-day genuine behaviour toward coworkers and its well-being consequences (Gabriel et al., 2020, 2023). With genuine behaviour we refer to the display of naturally felt emotions (genuine emotions). We assessed genuine behaviour with one item based on Diefendorff et al. (2005): “How genuine were the emotions that you showed your coworkers at work today?” (1 *not at all* to 5 *very much*). We ran a model in which we added genuine behaviour to our hypothesised relationships. Controlling for genuine behaviour the day before, negative, and positive experiences with coworkers did not predict genuine behaviour the next day (negative experiences: estimate = $-.19$, $SE = .11$, $p = .08$; positive experiences: estimate = $.00$, $SE = .06$, $p = .92$). Genuine behaviour was unrelated to exhaustion (estimate = $-.02$, $SE = .05$, $p = .66$). The results of the hypotheses tests remained unchanged: Negative experiences predicted only avoidance (estimate = $.14$, $SE = .05$, $p < .01$), while positive experiences predicted deep acting (estimate = $.10$, $SE = .03$, $p < .01$), and surface acting (estimate = $.05$, $SE = .02$, $p = .049$). Surface acting (estimate = $.30$, $SE = .12$, $p = .01$) and avoidance (estimate = $.15$, $SE = .07$, $p = .04$), predicted exhaustion in the evening.

In addition, we tested if negative and positive experiences predict immediate emotional labour and avoidance responses (i.e. measured at the same time point). Negative experiences were related negatively to avoidance (estimate = $-.58$, $SE = .10$, $p < .01$) and deep acting (estimate = $-.33$, $SE = .13$, $p = .017$), and unrelated to surface acting (estimate = $.09$, $SE = .13$, $p = .497$). Positive experiences were unrelated to avoidance (estimate = $.07$, $SE = .10$, $p = .458$), surface acting (estimate = $.28$, $SE = .15$, $p = .067$), and deep acting (estimate = $.09$, $SE = .08$, $p = .281$).

Discussion

We joined the paradigm shift in emotional labour (Gabriel et al., 2023): From a focus on surface acting and deep acting in service relationships, to an expanded view that incorporates daily experiences with coworkers and interaction avoidance as an additional potential response. We found that negative experiences predicted next-day interaction avoidance, while positive experiences predicted both enhanced deep acting and surface acting. Both interaction avoidance and surface acting had negative well-being consequences at the end of the day. Interaction avoidance was an explaining mechanism between negative experiences and next-day exhaustion, and surface acting was an explaining mechanism between positive experiences and next-day exhaustion.

Theoretical implications

The first theoretical implication refers to the conceptualisation of emotional labour toward coworkers in the context of SET (Cropanzano et al., 2017). Previous research on coworkers' emotional labour focused on *intrapersonal* predictors (e.g. energy level; Neshor Shoshan & Venz, 2022). However, especially in ongoing coworker relationships, interpersonal experiences may have critical consequences (Chiaburu & Harrison, 2008).

We found that negative experiences were related to enhanced interaction avoidance from coworkers the next day. Thus, when employees do not want to show true emotions to coworkers, they may try to avoid them, supporting our conceptualisation of interaction avoidance as a potential behavioural response.

Referring to positive experiences, we found that positive interpersonal experiences enhanced deep acting as expected (Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987). Surprisingly, positive experiences enhanced surface acting the next day, challenging the traditional “good-bad” dichotomy of emotional labour (Gabriel et al., 2023). It was already suggested that even people who identify with their role (e.g. care strongly for people and therefore chose a profession with many social interactions; Humphrey et al., 2015) may engage in surface acting for positive reasons. For example, employees may want to feel a certain emotion but currently do not. After positive experiences, they may want to feel open and funny when interacting with their coworkers, but actually feel shy and unconfident. Surface acting might be a solution to “fake it till you make it” in such cases. Surface acting has also been suggested as a more adaptive response than showing true emotions in certain circumstances (Humphrey et al., 2015). For example, if the atmosphere yesterday was cheerful, one may feel required to display a positive attitude, despite having just received bad news, feeling tired, or being busy with personal matters. In this regard, timing and available resources might play an important role. With enough available resources, people may engage in deep acting on occasions such as the ones described above. However, there are instances where deep acting is less likely. For example, because of lower energy that day (Hur et al., 2020), or because one must respond quickly to a coworker standing at their door. In those cases, following positive experiences, employees may rely on surface acting to meet display rules (e.g. acting friendly to coworkers).

From an empirical perspective, we add to previous findings (e.g. Gabriel et al., 2020; Neshor Shoshan & Venz, 2022) by broadening the temporal view and separating the predictors from the outcomes with a one-day time lag, considering baseline levels (cf. Gabriel et al., 2019). In further support, our additional analyses showed that the reversed causalities were mostly not significant, emphasising the relevance of emotional labour strategies as social exchange responses. One exception was interaction avoidance which also predicted next-day negative experiences with coworkers, hinting at a potential negative social loop as discussed in SET (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Thus, avoidance triggered by negative experiences might lead coworkers to respond with negative behaviour of their own. This idea remains to be tested in future research. Interestingly, an additional analysis testing the relationship between negative and positive experiences and emotional labour and avoidance responses at the same time point showed different effects. Specifically, most of the originally hypothesised relationships were not significant, but negative experiences were related negatively (and not positively) to avoidance. Considering that emotional labour also precede experiences with coworkers (e.g. coworker support; Neshor Shoshan & Venz, 2022), these results must be interpreted cautiously. With measurement at the same time point, we cannot identify if negative experiences predicted less avoidance, or if people had fewer negative experiences because they were avoiding interactions. Future studies can use separated, yet shorter time lags, to shed light on these questions. To infer causality, an experimental approach, in which negative experiences will be manipulated might be needed.

The second theoretical implication considers our integration of interaction avoidance into emotional labour toward coworkers' literature. In coworker relationships, employees have different behavioural options when aiming not to show their true feelings to coworkers (Gabriel et al., 2020). Accordingly, focusing only on the classic strategies of surface acting and deep acting may be insufficient. Highlighting this point, interaction avoidance was the only examined behaviour that we found as a response to negative experiences with coworkers. Without assessing it, we could have speculated that employees simply forgot about the negative experience the day after. We focused on interaction avoidance because it is feasible for employees (Diefendorff et al., 2019). This does not mean, however, that interaction avoidance is the only strategy that employees can use with their coworkers. Our results open the door for future integration of other strategies (e.g. situation modification; Gross, 1998; see also Alabak et al., 2023). Notably, although genuine behaviour ("non-acting"; Gabriel et al., 2020) was found as the most prevalent behaviour employees use with their coworkers, our additional analysis showed that it is not a response to negative or positive experiences with coworkers, thus, it might be used in more neutral situations.

In an additional analysis, we considered that our interaction avoidance measure (Nifadkar et al., 2012) may have captured two dimensions, i.e. active avoidance and refraining from approaching interactions (cf. Supplemental Materials). While negative experiences predicted both dimensions, positive experiences predicted neither of them (similar to the main results). It makes sense that employees do not actively avoid their coworkers unless something significantly negative has occurred. However, non-approaching behaviours (e.g. not asking for help) can result from other factors, such as a low prosocial tendency on a given day (Gabriel et al., 2019), which we did not consider in this study. Future research can benefit from examining the different dimensions of interaction avoidance and their correlates more closely.

The third theoretical implication concerns the consequences of the different responses. Our findings support the classic emotional labour literature regarding the consequences of surface acting, which was related to more exhaustion (Hülshager & Schewe, 2011). Even more, in line with Gross' (2013, p. 361) notion that "regulatory efforts sometimes backfire," we found an unexpected marginal result, in which surface acting seemed to have a destructive role, turning positive experiences into negative personal outcomes (i.e. enhanced exhaustion the day after). However, because we did not hypothesise this effect, these thoughts remain speculative. Based on our hypotheses, though, we conclude that although surface acting might not be commonly used in relationships with coworkers (Gabriel et al., 2020), it has harmful outcomes when employees do engage in it.

Adding to similar findings about deep acting toward customers (Hülshager & Schewe, 2011), we found no negative well-being consequences of deep acting. Previous studies on emotional labour toward coworkers did find positive well-being consequences of deep acting (e.g. lower exhaustion; Gabriel et al., 2020; daily positive affect; Neshar Shoshan & Venz, 2022). More research is needed to clarify these mixed findings. Finally, supporting our suggestion that avoiding coworkers might paradoxically demand more involvement (e.g. because of monitoring coworkers), we found that interaction avoidance was related to enhanced exhaustion and acted as an explaining mechanism between negative experiences and exhaustion the day after. More research is needed to test when

interaction avoidance may have positive consequences (e.g. relief) as suggested by Gross (1998).

Limitations and future directions

As with any study, our study has limitations. First, we built on SET which implies several exchange partners (Cropanzano et al., 2017), but focused on the individual employee (as commonly done in emotional labour studies, e.g. Sliter et al., 2010). Hence, we do not know what the responses of the exchange partners were nor to whom exactly the response was directed. It can be that a person had a positive experience with one coworker and engaged in emotional labour toward other coworkers the day after. Another option is that after a negative experience, employees try to avoid all their coworkers the following day (e.g. by not joining lunch). Other studies suggested that employees may exchange behaviours toward a range of targets, meaning they may not only respond to the coworkers who initiated the original experience (e.g. Penney & Spector, 2005; Venz & Neshor Shoshan, 2022). However, more research is needed to understand this point. Future studies can, for example, use a dyadic design (Groth et al., 2009) to address both the actions of an initiator coworker and the target coworker's responses. However, employees might have different exchanges with different coworkers (Tang et al., 2022), which may raise other challenges (e.g. if mostly dyads of coworkers with good relationships take part in the study). Moreover, an event reconstruction method (Kahneman et al., 2004) in which employees report on specific episodes with specific coworkers can be a promising direction. Another option is to look at team processes (Becker et al., 2018). It could be particularly interesting to investigate if employees respond differently to similar experiences (e.g. being criticised) with different coworkers within the team, and what consequences these responses have. Methodologically, having only one source might be a risk factor for common source bias (Podsakoff et al., 2012). We minimise this concern with a within-person approach that reduces the threat of between-person confounds. We also separated the times of the investigations and controlled for baseline levels of the outcome variables, which should aid in reducing the threat of bias.

Second, although we aimed toward causality, we still rely on correlational data and cannot fully rule out the existence of confounds. Experimental designs can be a good addition to test responses toward coworkers. One option, for example, could be to use a vignette design (Aguinis & Bradley, 2014) in which negative and positive experiences with coworkers will be manipulated, and participants will report on which response they would choose. As opposed to our approach, however, a vignette study is less realistic and does not assess employees' daily lives. Moreover, although we found almost no support for reversed causalities in our study, theoretically, social exchange processes are reciprocal (Cropanzano et al., 2017) and emotional labour toward coworkers is known to predict coworkers' responses (e.g. Gabriel et al., 2020). Future studies may test a full exchange process.

One should note that there are potentially fewer instances in which employees should regulate their emotions after positive experiences, and in many cases, genuine behaviour could be sufficient. Nonetheless, our findings show that employees do respond with deep acting (and surface acting) also to positive experiences. Future studies can use more

fitting designs, for example, event sampling, or longitudinal studies to capture a wider range of these occasions. It can also potentially be that people display more emotions overall after positive experiences (Langston, 1994). To test this option, researchers need to use measures that focus more strongly on displayed emotions than the current measures of emotional labour.

Third, we only examined one response in addition to surface acting and deep acting. We chose interaction avoidance because it may be frequent in work settings (Diefendorff et al., 2008) and it is an explicit way not to show true feelings. Taking a broader approach, future studies can focus on other strategies as described in Gross' framework (1998). With situation modification (Gross, 1998), for example, employees can aim to modify the negative experience (e.g. solve the problem; Diefendorff et al., 2008), thus not needing to change the emotion displayed toward coworkers. In addition, we offered several explanations for why interaction avoidance may relate to impaired well-being but did not empirically test them. For example, avoiding coworkers might be exhausting because it can invoke negative feelings such as shame or guilt, and destructive behaviours such as rumination. Such explaining mechanisms, as well as other ideas we brought up (e.g. that avoidance paradoxically relates to more monitoring of the other person) are testable, but we did not measure them. Future studies will benefit from investigating mechanisms of the avoidance-exhaustion relationship.

Practical implications

Practically, our findings suggest that initiating positive experiences between coworkers at work may have positive consequences for the emotional labour strategies employees engage in (i.e. deep acting). Although promoting positive experiences might seem intuitive, it is not always simple. One option organisations have is to promote a positive team climate that might be reflected in more positive experiences between coworkers (Cai et al., 2019). Related to emotional labour, a climate of authenticity was shown to buffer the negative well-being consequences of surface acting toward customers (Grandey et al., 2012). Organisations can help enhance such a climate. Organisations can also take an active role in putting resources into initiating opportunities for positive experiences (e.g. by allowing breaks from work in which social interactions can take place; Lyubykh et al., 2022).

It should be considered, however, that promoting positive experiences is not enough, because we found that employees responded also with surface acting to positive experiences with coworkers. Considering that surface acting is exhausting (Hülshager & Schewe, 2011) and that other people may react to it negatively (Groth et al., 2009), a practical step will be to find ways to reduce surface acting. Teaching employees about the risks of surface acting (e.g. in organisational workshops) might assist in achieving this goal. Also, training employees to use strategies that are less risky to their well-being can be beneficial (Denny & Ochsner, 2014). If employees can engage in deep acting when they need to engage in emotional labour, they might reduce their use of surface acting and consequently protect their well-being.

Finally, we suggest organisations and employees pay more attention to the potential costs of interaction avoidance between coworkers (Hershcovis et al., 2018). In particular, the changing work world that includes flexible work times and places (Kossek et al., 2023)

might make the option of interaction avoidance more salient. Concerning the risks of interaction avoidance, avoidance might become an organisational challenge if not handled properly, for example, because of reduced collaboration (Hershcovis et al., 2018). In our findings, employees responded with interaction avoidance to previous-day negative experiences with coworkers and suffered from exhaustion afterward. Educating employees about the risks of avoiding coworkers might be an important step to minimise avoidance.

All in all, we encourage organisations to offer work environments that enhance positive experiences between coworkers and reduce negative ones. Consequently, employees might be able to engage in more beneficial emotional labour strategies, spend more time with their coworkers, protect their well-being, and support organisational success.

Conclusion

We extended research on emotional labour toward coworkers, adding to the known strategies of surface acting and deep acting another strategy that might be especially relevant in coworkers' relationships: interaction avoidance. Drawing on SET, we suggested positive and negative experiences with coworkers as predictors of next-day surface acting, deep acting, and interaction avoidance. We further tested the well-being consequences of enacting those strategies. We found that negative experiences predict interaction avoidance the next day, which is exhausting for employees. Positive experiences predicted deep acting, and surprisingly, also surface acting, which later predicted exhaustion. The study highlights the importance of studying emotional labour in coworker relationships, including more strategies beyond surface acting and deep acting, and questioning traditional assumptions in emotional labour research, for example, that surface acting is always in "bad faith".

Notes

1. Social exchange theory is relatively muted regarding the number of people involved in the exchange and according to some exchange rules, "exchange is not directly transacted from individual to individual." (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005, p. 879). In coworker relationships, employees may exchange with several, not always the same coworkers. With our design, we cannot test if participants respond to the original initiator(s) of the experience. Thus, we are cautious regarding direct exchanges and focus on more general exchange processes.
2. With a stricter exclusion criterion, keeping only $N=92$ participants who met their coworkers at least on three consecutive days, our results fully replicate. For the main analysis, we kept surveys with missing data for a complete estimation as recommended by Newman (2014).
3. To clarify these results, we tested the overall effect of positive experiences $d-1$ on emotional exhaustion in the evening of the next day (d). When controlling for exhaustion in the morning of the same day (d), the relationship was not significant (estimate = .00, $SE = .05$, $p = .88$). Also, the relationship between positive experiences $d-1$ and exhaustion in the evening the next day when accounting for surface acting the next day was not significant (estimate = $-.00$, $SE = .04$, $p = .99$). This pattern hints that there might be a suppression effect, in which the inclusion of surface acting reveals a hidden effect of positive experiences on exhaustion.

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No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Data availability statement

The data from this study is available for interested researchers upon request.

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