

**"I teach, therefore I am?":
Exploring the Teaching Personas of College Professors
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Abstract. This exploratory study sought to identify the existence of a "teaching persona" in college professors. Specifically, an examination of self-reported differences in traits displayed as teachers versus in everyday life was conducted. Also investigated were feelings of job satisfaction and burnout in relation to these differences. Findings suggest that professors see themselves as more extraverted, emotionally stable, caring/supportive, professionally competent, and better communicators as teachers than in their everyday lives. However, adjunct professors lacked distinctiveness in all areas. Social science professors were less open to new experiences as teachers than in their everyday lives, while natural science professors were more open. In a few instances, larger differences between one's teaching persona and everyday life were significantly related to more burnout and less job satisfaction. Being more conscientious, feeling more capable, and perceiving oneself as a better communicator in the teacher-role was associated with more job burnout.

Keywords: personality traits; persona; college professor; emotional labor; teacher burnout

In his 2001 hit song 'I Don't Have To Be Me,' musician Steve Azar describes the freedom he experiences leaving work on a Friday, not having to worry about "being me 'til Monday." He goes on to say "I can do what I wanna do; be who I wanna be" as he basks in his escape. While most college professors are not as likely to "escape" on a Friday and leave all their responsibilities behind until Monday, Azar's sentiments do offer an intriguing perspective on how professors might separate themselves from their roles as academics. Do college professors modify the presentation of their personality and character traits on the job? Do they perform under the guise of a persona that is unlike that of their everyday life? And, if they do, does this help or hinder their work experience?

The present study seeks to explore this idea of teaching personas in the college setting as well as the potential relationship between the use of teaching personas and job satisfaction and feelings of burnout. Although teacher personality, teacher burnout, and the association between the two has been investigated previously, and most recently in meta-analytic form (Kim et al., 2019), the concept of the *teaching persona* is less present in the literature.

Mask Wearing and the Teaching Persona

Psychologist Carl Jung is well known for his ideas on the concept of "mask wearing" or the persona (Hall & Nordby, 1973). In Roman times, the term persona was often used to represent the mask that actors wore in theatrical presentations. Jung

believed that all individuals wear masks and that these masks are social in nature—we wear them during interactions with others to portray our desired personality characteristics. Mask wearing is thought to be an energy drainer as it can create an inner conflict and requires constant management to present, maintain, and adjust (Jung, 1989).

The concept of the persona, Jung's term for the masks we wear, has been applied to teaching. Craig (1994) noted how teachers of all varieties use personas as well how it might be nearly impossible for those in this helping profession *not* to do so. For many, the act of "being the teacher" becomes automatic to the extent that it is easier to identify with the teaching persona than to recognize and develop the genuine self. In fact, Craig (1994) argued that many teachers are not even aware that they are operating through a persona. Like other personas, the teaching persona develops as a result of outside pressures, such as the expectations of administrators, colleagues, students, and even society regarding what it means to "be a teacher."

A small body of literature supports the idea that teachers do "wear masks," though the term persona seems restricted to the Jungian psychology literature. For example, sociologist McKinney (1988) proposed that entertainment should be considered an integral component of quality teaching. She asserted that professors are to some degree performers, acting on a stage, and must put on a show in order to effectively convey their subject matter. In fact, McKinney (1988) suggested that professors "entertain (their) students through impression management techniques" (p. 300). Griggs (2001) supported this idea, drawing parallels between the training techniques used by actors to convey a genuine and believable performance of a character and the way teachers tend to become their own version of the teacher character they wish to portray to their students.

The portrayal of the teacher character, or persona, is likely to be manifested in different forms for different individuals. For some, it may come in the form of trying to *look* like a teacher—from clothing choice to displays of nonverbal communication. The teaching persona may also manifest itself in behaviors. This might be in the form of exuding professional competency in one's discipline, being caring and supportive of students, or managing and communicating with confidence and authority. An interesting proposition is to consider whether the teaching persona can also be revealed in distinctive personality traits. For example, one's teaching persona might be extraverted and conscientious, yet their genuine self might be more reserved and disordered. The current study was inspired by the latter two possibilities—behaviors and personality traits that are distinctive only to one's teaching persona and not necessarily reflective of one's everyday portrayal to the outside world.

Consequences of Mask Wearing

The literature on emotional labor argues that acting on the job, such as one may do when putting on a "teacher mask," can be harmful. Emotional labor is a form of self-regulation in which individuals manage their displays of emotion in the

workplace setting (Hochschild, 1983). For example, it is generally not acceptable for one to display negative emotions, such as irritation and boredom, on the job. However, enthusiasm and cheerfulness, even if not natural emotional responses, are often expected displays. In terms of how these emotions are managed, there are two main strategies that tend to be employed—surface acting and deep acting (Grandey, 2000).

Surface acting is described as faking in "bad faith" as this type of acting is essentially the ultimate faking of emotional displays that govern a work role or job expectation (Grandey, 2000). In contrast, deep acting is described as faking in "good faith" because in this case the individual is trying to be genuine in their expressions (Grandey, 2000). In other words, when engaging in deep acting, individuals will modify their outward emotional display to conform to the expectations of the workplace role (much like surface acting); however, they will also attempt to feel those emotions on the inside. In surface acting, there is no underlying attempt to match the outer display with inner emotions (Grandey, 2003).

Both strategies of the management of emotional displays have been examined as they relate to employee and workplace outcomes. Surface acting, in particular, is related to a number of negative outcomes—emotional exhaustion at work, depression, and job burnout (e.g., Abraham, 1998; Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002; Liu et al., 2008; Morris & Feldman, 1996). Deep acting, on the other hand, is related to more positive outcomes—higher customer service ratings, positivity at work, personal accomplishment, and job efficacy (e.g., Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002; Grandey, 2003; Liu et al., 2010).

Teaching requires emotional labor as teachers often must make a conscious effort to inhibit, generate, and manage their expressions of emotion to align with expectations and beliefs of what it means to "be a teacher" (Yin et al., 2013). Research examining the emotional labor of teaching reports mixed outcomes. For example, Naring et al. (2006) found that surface acting in secondary school teachers was significantly associated with depersonalization at work, a component of job burnout. They also found that the *absence* of emotional labor led to feelings of personal accomplishment at work. Tsang (2011) reviewed nearly 20 studies on the emotional labor of teaching at the elementary and secondary level and reported that while 4 showed that emotional labor strategies lead to negative outcomes, the rest argued that emotional labor does not *always* lead to negative outcomes and, in some cases, may be positive for teachers.

The Present Study

There are some important gaps in the literature, however. First, most of the research on emotional labor in teaching was conducted using teachers who work in the K-12 setting (for the five exceptions to this, see Bellas, 1999; Constanti & Gibbs, 2004; Mahoney et al., 2011; Tunguz, 2016; and Zhang & Zhu, 2008). Second, of those studies that were conducted at the college level, only three (Mahoney, et al., 2011; Tunguz, 2016; Zhang & Zhu, 2008) included quantitative

components, versus relying only on qualitative methods and/or theoretical reviews. As noted by Kim and colleagues (2019), there is a need for research on teacher personality to employ "recognized framework" (p. 163) and "common descriptors" (p. 187), such as those found within empirical scales. The use of these established scales aids in the dissemination, application, and replication of personality research findings, and also can inform educational researchers who may wish to construct comprehensive theories of teacher personality from existing research (Kim et al., 2019). Finally, while the current literature broadly suggests that college professors do "act" in their professional roles, the specific characteristics that define these teaching personas is yet to be examined.

Gaining knowledge in these areas necessarily can contribute to a better understanding of the college professorial domain, specifically as it relates to the teaching role of professors. If, as Griggs (2001) suggests, teaching should be considered a form of acting and most good teachers are, in fact, actors playing a role, then effective teaching at the college-level should be viewed as a role to master and a persona to develop. Further, if the development of a teaching persona was to be encouraged as component of effective teaching practices, it would become imperative to understand the characteristics and traits that should comprise that persona. On the other hand, if this teacher-acting or role playing is harmful, as suggested by the literature on surface acting and emotional labor (Grandey, 2003), effective teaching practices would seek to encourage professors to find ways to balance their self-presentation with authentic and genuine expressions of emotion (possibly through deep acting). At the very least, an awareness of just the existence of the teaching persona (and the potential connection of such a persona to job satisfaction and burnout) may help college professors to become more effective teachers as they learn to mindfully examine their self-presentation in various contexts.

Kim et al. (2019) remark that "the field of teacher personality [research] is expanding, and the potential implications of such research are exciting" (p. 189). In line with this observation, the present study is exploratory in nature with the novel goal of examining the existence of the teaching persona in college professors. Additionally, this study seeks to explore how differences in self-reported "everyday" personas and teaching personas might relate to the overall work experience of college professors. Following below are the specific research questions that guided the present study:

- RQ1: Do college professors have teaching personas that are distinct from their self-reported "everyday" personas, and if so, what traits are most distinctive in teaching personas versus everyday personas?
 - RQ1a: Do distinctive traits in teaching personas vary based on the academic rank, academic discipline, and/or gender of the professor?
- RQ2: Are feelings of job satisfaction and burnout related to differences in the teaching personas versus everyday personas of college professors?

Method

Participants

Participants ($N=71$) were faculty at three teaching-focused post-secondary institutions in the continental United States (two private liberal arts, $n=59$; one public state, $n=12$). The majority of participants indicated their rank as either an assistant ($n=18$; 25.4%), associate ($n=23$; 32.4%), or full ($n=14$; 19.7%) professor, with the remaining 22.5% ($n=16$) reporting rank as either instructors or adjunct faculty. Most (80.3%) participants reported holding a doctorate (e.g., Ph.D. or Ed.D.) as their highest academic credential. Participants reported a mean of 10.5 years of employment at their current institution ($SD = 11.8$ years; range 1-35 years) and 13.9 years of teaching experience at the post-secondary level ($SD = 10.5$; range 1-40 years). A wide range of academic disciplines were represented in the sample (indicated by participants as the discipline in which they felt they "best fit"): humanities ($n=28$; 39.4%), social sciences ($n=18$; 25.4%), natural sciences ($n=12$; 16.9%), professional studies ($n=7$; 11.3%), and formal sciences ($n=5$; 7.0%) ($n=1$ participant reported "other"). There were more female (56.3%) than male (42.3%) participants (1.4% reported gender non-conforming), with non-Hispanic white (81.7%) being the highest represented race/ethnicity. Participants' ages ranged from 28 to 75 years, with mean age of 47 years ($SD = 12$ years)

Procedure

Participants were recruited using both convenience and snowball sampling. Contacts at each of the participating institutions distributed an invitation email from the principal investigator to all faculty at their institution (using institutional email addresses only). The invitation email contained a short description of the purpose/goals of the study (worded as a study to "gather data on the behaviors and personalities of instructors of higher education...both in the classroom and in your everyday life outside of the classroom"), a statement assuring participant anonymity, the IRB approval number from the principal investigator's institution, contact information for the principal investigator, and a Qualtrics web link to access the study. The study questionnaire was made available to all faculty who first completed the informed consent procedure. The study was completed entirely online in a single session and most participants took between 10 and 20 minutes to complete it. Data collection took place for a full academic semester (approximately 4 months). No compensation was provided to study participants.

Participants completed measures concerning basic personality dimensions, specific behavioral traits, and feelings of job satisfaction and burnout. The satisfaction and burnout measure was completed once, while the measures of personality dimensions and specific behavior traits were completed twice by each participant. The first time participants were asked to consider their "teacher-self" – that is, how much they felt each dimension/trait described them in the classroom/lab, in office hours, when conducting research with students, in advising/mentoring roles with students, and any other situations that involved them interacting with students. The second time participants were asked to consider their "everyday-self"—that is,

how much they felt each dimension/trait described them outside of the classroom and outside of working with students (including at home, with friends, in public settings, interacting with strangers, and/or when alone, among other things).

Measures

Basic Personality Dimensions

Participants' basic personality dimensions were measured using the Ten Item Personality Inventory (TIPI), a short-form measure of the Five-Factor Model of personality (Gosling et al., 2003). Participants indicated their strength of agreement/disagreement on a 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*) Likert scale. Responses were scored to create five personality factor subscales. Each subscale contained two items; the two items were summed to create each personality factor subscale with a minimum possible score of 2 and maximum possible score of 14 for each factor.

The five personality factor subscales included extraversion (being social and outgoing; enjoyment of being with people; energized by presence of others), agreeableness (cooperative, kind, and polite; concern for the welfare of others; empathetic), conscientiousness (organized and mindful of details; goal-directed, thoughtful, and prepared), emotional stability (calm and even-tempered; less reactive to stress; able to handle adversity), and openness to new experiences (enjoyment of new things; being imaginative and curious; having an open mind). Each factor was calculated twice, once for the "teacher-self" and once for the "everyday-self."

Specific Behavioral Traits

Participants self-reported how often they engaged in a number of specific behavioral traits using the 28-item Teacher Behavior Checklist (Buskist et al., 2002; Keeley et al., 2006). Participants indicated how often they engaged in a variety of behaviors on a 1 (*never*) to 5 (*always*) Likert scale. When necessary, items in the "everyday-self" version of the measure were modified from their original form to include language generalizable to situations outside of the classroom (e.g., "students" changed to "others"; "teacher" changed to "person"; "in class" removed). Effort was made to ensure that the underlying trait/quality each item was designed to measure was not significantly impacted when modifications were made. Examples of items that were modified (and the modification) include "I have realistic expectations of students/of others," "I effectively manage class time/my own time," and "I strive to be a better teacher/better person."

Responses were scored to create two subscales: a caring and supportive factor and a professional competency and communication factor. The caring and supportive subscale contained 15 items, while the professional competency and communication subscale contained 13 items. Items in each subscale were summed to create the behavioral trait factor score. The minimum possible score for the caring and supportive subscale was 15 and for the professional competency and

communication subscale was 13, while the maximum possible score for the caring and supportive subscale was 75 and for the professional competency and communication subscale was 65. Each subscale was calculated twice, once for the "teacher-self" and once for the "everyday-self."

Job Satisfaction and Burnout

Participants' feelings of job satisfaction and burnout were measured using the 19-item Maslach Burnout Inventory Educators Survey (MBI – ES; Boles et al., 2000). Participants indicated their strength of agreement/disagreement on a 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*) Likert scale. Responses were scored to create three subscales: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment. The emotional exhaustion and personal accomplishment subscales each contained 7 items, while the depersonalization subscale contained 5 items. Items in each subscale were summed to create the specific subscale score. The minimum possible score for the emotional exhaustion and personal accomplishment subscales was 7 and the maximum possible score was 49. The minimum possible score for the depersonalization subscale was 5 and the maximum possible score was 35.

Results

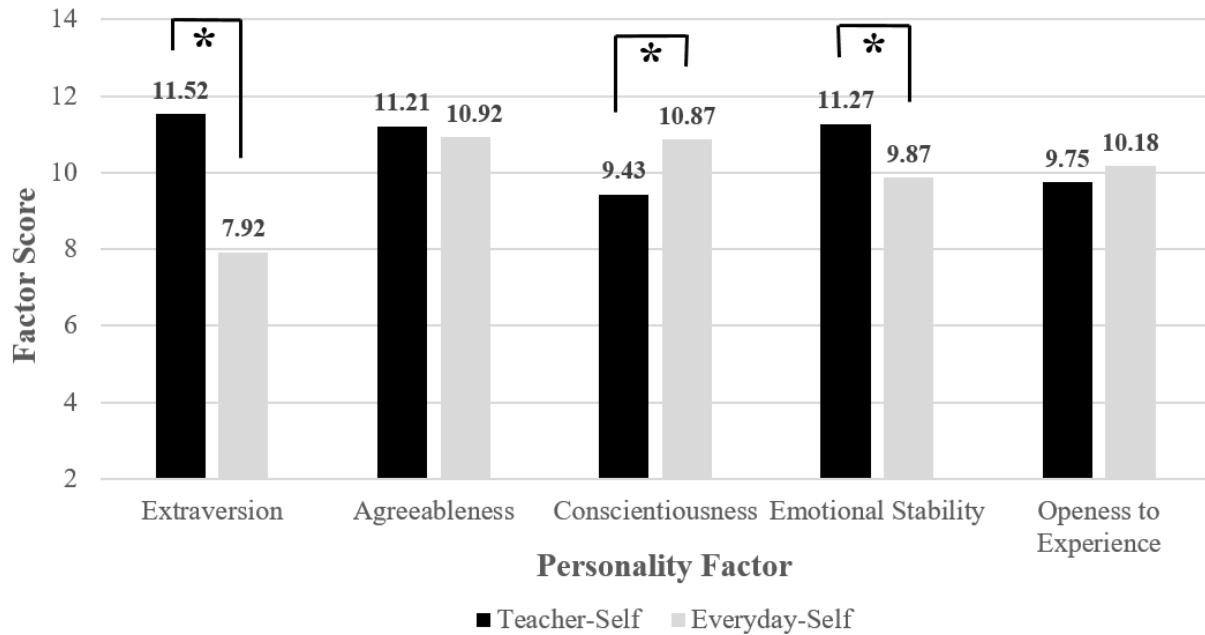
Research Question 1: Do college professors have teaching personas that are distinct from their self-reported "everyday" personas, and if so, what traits are most distinctive in teaching personas versus everyday personas?

Paired samples t-tests were conducted to compare participants' self-reported teaching personas to their everyday personas as operationalized by the five basic personality factors (extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability, openness to new experiences) and the two behavioral trait factors (caring and supportive; professional competency and communication). Means for each paired personality factor are displayed Figure 1 and for each paired behavioral trait factor in Figure 2.

In terms of distinctiveness in personality factors, participants rated their teacher-self as significantly more extraverted ($t(70) = 10.58, p = < .01$, Cohen's $d = 1.25$) and emotionally stable ($t(70) = 4.55, p = < .01$, Cohen's $d = .54$) than their everyday-self, while rating their teacher-self as significantly less conscientious than their everyday-self ($t(70) = -4.01, p = < .01$, Cohen's $d = .47$). There were no significant differences in ratings of agreeableness and openness to new experiences ($p's > .05$). Regarding behavioral trait factors, participants rated their teacher-self as significantly more caring and supportive than their everyday-self ($t(70) = 8.55, p = < .01$, Cohen's $d = 1.02$), and also indicated that their teacher-self was significantly more professionally competent and a better communicator than their everyday-self ($t(70) = 8.71, p = < .01$, Cohen's $d = 1.03$).

Figure 1

Mean Score of Personality Factors for Teacher-Self vs. Everyday-Self



Note. Significant differences denoted with the * symbol (all p 's < .01). The minimum possible score for each factor is 2 and the maximum possible score for each factor is 14.

Figure 2

Mean Score of Behavioral Trait Factors for Teacher-Self vs. Everyday-Self



Note. Significant differences denoted with the * symbol (all p 's < .01). The minimum possible score for the caring and supportive factor is 15 and the maximum possible score is 75, while the minimum possible score for the competency and communication factor is 13 and the maximum possible score is 65.

Research Question 1a: Do distinctive traits in teaching personas vary based on the academic rank, academic discipline, and/or gender of the professor?

Paired samples t-tests were again conducted to compare participants' self-reported teaching personas to their everyday personas as operationalized by the five basic personality factors and the two behavioral trait factors. However, these tests were split according to the academic rank, academic discipline, and gender of the professor (independently) such that deviations from the overall pattern of findings could be examined. Only significant deviations from the overall pattern of findings are reported.

Some deviations from the overall pattern of findings were found when comparing the teaching personas to the everyday personas of professors of different academic ranks. Most notably, there were no significant differences (all p 's $> .05$) in the teaching versus everyday personas of adjunct faculty (across all personality and behavioral trait factors), suggesting that adjunct professors do not portray a distinctive persona in the classroom as teachers. Further, full professors were similarly emotionally stable as teachers and in their everyday lives ($p > .05$) and assistant professors were similarly conscientious as teachers and in their everyday lives ($p > .05$).

There were also deviations from the overall pattern of findings when comparing the teaching persona to the everyday persona of professors from different academic disciplines. Professors from the social sciences were significantly less open to new experiences as teachers than in their everyday lives ($t(17) = -3.21, p = .01$, Cohen's $d = .76$), while natural science professors were significantly more open to new experiences as teachers than in their everyday lives ($t(11) = 2.58, p = .03$, Cohen's $d = .75$). Additionally, natural science professors and professional studies professors were equally conscientious and emotionally stable as teachers and in their everyday lives (p 's $> .05$). No significant deviations in the overall pattern of findings (across all personality and behavioral trait factors) occurred as a function of the gender of the professor.

Research Question 2: Are feelings of job satisfaction and burnout related to differences in the teaching personas versus everyday personas of college professors?

Difference scores were created to quantify the distinctiveness in participants' self-reported teaching personas as compared to their everyday personas for the five basic personality factors (extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability, openness to new experiences) and the two behavioral trait factors (caring and supportive; professional competency and communication). Difference scores were created by subtracting the everyday-self factor from the teacher-self factor such that positive scores represent greater distinction of each factor as the teacher-self, negative scores represent greater distinction of each factor as the everyday-self, and scores close to zero represent a lack of distinction (or similarity) of each factor between the teacher-self and the everyday-self (see Table 1 and Table 2 for difference scores). A correlational analysis was then conducted to assess whether feelings of job satisfaction and burnout were related to how much participants' self-reported teaching and everyday personas differed (i.e., the amount of distinctiveness).

Distinctiveness in conscientiousness was the only personality trait factor to be significantly related to feelings of burnout ($r(71) = .31, p = .01$; Table 3). As represented by the positive correlation coefficient, increases in distinctiveness as one's teacher-self compared to one's everyday-self (i.e., higher difference score for conscientiousness) was related to increases in feelings of burnout in the form of depersonalization. In other words, when participants reported higher levels of conscientiousness in their teacher role than in their everyday life, they also

reported more feelings of burnout. Likewise, when participants reported lower levels of conscientiousness in their teacher role than in their everyday life, they reported less feelings of burnout. Even though the mean difference score for conscientiousness characterized the sample as being more conscientious as their everyday-self than as their teacher-self (i.e., the difference score was a negative value; see Table 1), this analysis provides a more complete view of the manner in which burnout is associated with dissimilarity between the teacher-self and everyday-self in either direction.

Table 1

Personality Factor Difference Scores in Teaching vs. Everyday Personas

Trait	M (SD)	Min.	Max.
Extraversion	3.61 (2.87)	-1.00	10.00
Agreeableness	0.30 (2.11)	-5.00	6.00
Emotional Stability	1.39 (2.58)	-7.00	10.00
Conscientiousness	-1.44 (3.02)	-7.00	6.00
Openness	-0.44 (3.14)	-7.00	7.00

Note. Positive scores represent greater distinction as the teacher-self, negative scores represent greater distinction as the everyday-self, and scores close to zero represent a lack of distinction (or similarity) between the teacher-self and everyday-self.

Table 2

Behavioral Trait Factor Difference Scores in Teaching vs. Everyday Personas

Trait	M (SD)	Min.	Max.
Caring and Supportive	4.32 (4.26)	-5.00	17.00
Competency and Communication	3.87 (3.75)	-7.00	13.00

Note. Positive scores represent greater distinction as the teacher-self, negative scores represent greater distinction as the everyday-self, and scores close to zero represent a lack of distinction (or similarity) between the teacher-self and everyday-self.

To further examine this finding, exploratory analyses compared the burnout-depersonalization scores of participants who reported being more conscientious as their teacher-self versus those who reported being more conscientious as their

everyday-self. The sample was split into two groups using the difference scores of each participant. Participants with positive difference scores were placed in the group that represented more conscientiousness in the teacher role ($n=22$), participants with negative difference scores were placed in the group that represented more conscientiousness in everyday life ($n=35$), and participants with a difference score of 0 ($n=14$) were excluded from this exploratory analysis. There was a statistically significant difference in feelings of burnout between those participants who reported being more conscientious as their teacher-self compared to those who reported being more conscientious as their everyday-self, $t(55) = -2.71$, $p = .01$, Cohen's $d = .73$. Feelings of burnout were significantly higher when participants portrayed themselves as more conscientious in their roles as teachers ($M = 14.91$; $SD = 4.98$) than in their everyday lives ($M = 11.49$; $SD = 4.39$).

Distinctiveness in the professional competency and communication behavioral trait factor was significantly related to feelings of burnout and job satisfaction. Higher levels of professional competency and communication as one's teacher-self compared to one's everyday-self (i.e., more distinctiveness) was related to greater feelings of burnout in the form of emotional exhaustion ($r(71) = .25$, $p = .03$) and decreased feelings of job satisfaction in the form of personal accomplishment ($r(71) = -.27$, $p = .02$). There was no significant relation observed between any other personality or behavioral trait factor and feelings of job satisfaction and burnout (all p 's $> .05$; see Table 3)

Table 3

Correlations among Trait Difference Score Variables and Burnout Sub-Scales

Difference Score Variables	Emotional Exhaustion	Depersonalization	Personal Accomplishment
Extraversion	.09	-.08	-.21
Agreeableness	.13	.22	-.21
Emotional Stability	.18	.01	-.12
Conscientiousness	.17	.31**	-.07
Openness	.01	-.16	-.08
Caring and Supportive	.20	-.14	-.14
Competency/Communication	.25*	.18	-.27*

Note. *Correlation is significant at .05 level; **Correlation is significant at .01 level.

Discussion

The purpose of this exploratory study was to consider the possibility that college professors may perform their duties as teachers under the guise of personas that are unlike that of their everyday lives, while also examining the potential relationship between persona distinctiveness and the overall work experience of professors. While some literature exists to support the notion that teachers and professors "wear masks" and therefore necessarily have distinctive personas, this is

the first study to use a quantitative approach to examine the specific characteristics that may define these teaching personas. This exploratory study adds to the small body of literature on the ways in which college professors manage/display their emotions, act in their roles as teachers, and experience job satisfaction and burnout.

Interpretation of Results

The results of this study suggest that college professors, with the possible exception of adjunct faculty, do have distinctive teaching personas. Overall, professors see themselves as more extraverted and emotionally stable as teachers than in their everyday lives as well as more caring, supportive, competent, and better communicators. However, professors see themselves as equally agreeable and open to new experiences in their everyday lives as in their teacher-selves. Further, professors report being more conscientious in their everyday life than in their teacher role.

Adjunct professors appear to have little distinction between their teacher-selves and their everyday-selves in these particular areas. One way to interpret this difference between full-time faculty members and adjunct faculty is to consider the nature of many adjunct positions. Often, institutions hire adjunct faculty in a temporary role that may include limited time in the classroom (e.g., teaching a single class or working part-time) and limited additional faculty responsibilities (e.g., student advising or college service). Many adjunct faculty members are employed as full-time professionals outside of academia and hired specifically to teach courses in their specialty (e.g., a business lawyer teaching a business law course or a social worker teaching an advanced social work course). Thus, adjunct faculty members may not take on a distinct teaching persona in the classroom because they may not view themselves as teachers and therefore do not see the need to adapt their persona. Another possibility is that adjunct faculty already have a work-related persona (e.g., lawyer-self or social worker-self).

The results examining the association between the teaching persona and feelings of burnout were revealing, yet also inconclusive. In most cases (18 of 21 analyses), there was no significant association found between the different dimensions of burnout examined and the personality and behavioral trait factors. There were three instances, however, in which the use of a teaching persona was related to job burnout. Feeling more capable and perceiving oneself as a better communicator in the teacher-role compared to in everyday life was related to increased feelings of emotional exhaustion and decreased feelings of personal accomplishment. Distinctiveness between one's teacher-self and everyday-self in conscientiousness was related to increased feelings of burnout in the form of depersonalization of students, a finding supported by the work of Naring et al. (2006) where surface acting on the job was found to be related to depersonalization.

The present study did not explore a causal explanation of this particular finding, or *why* the inauthentic display of conscientiousness in particular is associated with depersonalization of students; however, the nature of this personality trait may

help to shed light on this finding. Indeed, conscientiousness is a personality trait that entails being hardworking, detail-orientated, organized, prepared, and wanting to exceed expectations in performance—all behaviors that require a great deal of self-regulation. Individuals who try to “turn on” this trait as teachers, while not necessarily living the rest of their lives in this manner, may feel disconnected or disengaged from their students as a consequence of having to put in the extra effort to “appear” conscientiousness. It is perhaps the case that some professors, in their teacher-role, feel compelled to exude conscientious behaviors. For those who are not conscientious in their everyday lives, this forced display of inauthenticity may lead to feelings of burnout characterized by the depersonalization of students. Future research should seek to test this, and other possible explanations, experimentally so that a fuller understanding of this relationship is possible.

Future research should also continue to explore the correlational findings surrounding feelings of personal accomplishment and emotional exhaustion for possible causal explanations. The results of this study showed that when professors reported *less* distinctiveness between their teacher-self and everyday-self in behaviors representing competency and communication, they also reported more feelings of personal accomplishment, but when they reported *more* distinctiveness, they were more emotionally exhausted. Naring et al. (2006) found that the lack of acting on the job (i.e., being genuine; acting similar in and outside of work) leads to increased feelings of personal accomplishment. Other research mirrors these findings, showing that deep acting (i.e., the attempt to both display and actually feel emotions that are expected in a workplace context) is related to job satisfaction in areas such as personal accomplishment and job efficacy (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002; Grandey, 2003; Liu et al., 2010), while surface acting is related to emotional exhaustion (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002; Morris & Feldman, 1996).

Indeed, these findings tentatively suggest that, at least in certain domains, displaying authenticity when in one’s teaching role may be the better approach. This interpretation naturally lends itself to the issue of what to make of a situation in which professors might perceive their everyday-selves to have traits that are not conducive to effective teaching, such as disorganization or insensitivity. Would trying to be more organized and caring as a teacher be determinantal to job satisfaction and lead to feelings of burnout? While the correlational nature of this study does not definitively allow this question to be answered, the literature on emotional labor does offer some perspective (Grandey, 2000). This literature suggests that if a professor were to genuinely attempt an expression of a particular trait or characteristic, that is to engage in deep acting, then little negative consequences should result. In other words, if professors were to not only display signs of care toward students as their teacher-selves, but also genuinely try to feel a sense of care for the students, then likely job satisfaction would not be at risk and burnout not a concern. If, on the other hand, professors who were to only outwardly express care for their students by simply ‘going through the motions’, that is to engage in surface acting, might experience negative consequences concerning job satisfaction and burnout.

Limitations

As this study was exploratory in nature and based on correlational data, the findings should be interpreted with caution until additional studies replicate and/or extend the results. Though an interpretation of the notable findings has been presented here, care should be taken in extending them too far beyond the original context of this study. The main goal of this study was to consider the possibility that college professors have teaching personas that are distinct from their everyday personalities; indeed, this study provides some evidence to support that possibility. However, several methodological limitations restrict the generalizability of these findings until future studies are conducted.

One limitation concerns how the teaching and everyday personas were operationalized and measured. These personas were operationalized as basic personality dimensions (classified using the Five-Factor Model of personality) and specific behavioral traits (classified using a behavior trait checklist), thus any reported difference between the teacher-self and everyday-self was necessarily limited by the specific dimensions of these scales. Further, while both self-report scales used in this study have demonstrated strength in the general dimensions of reliability and validity (Gosling et al., 2003; Keeley et al., 2006; Landrum & Stowell, 2013), the framework in which participants were asked to consider their personalities and behaviors may have unintentionally biased their responses. For example, self-report measures are limited by the social desirability bias (Krumpal, 2013). Participants in this study specifically may have been unwilling to self-report teacher traits and/or behaviors perceived as "negative," even if they were traits or behaviors that they were aware of engaging in. Similarly, participants may have overexaggerated teacher traits they perceive as "positive" and overreported how often they engage in teacher behaviors perceived as "positive." In addition, wording in several behavior trait checklist items was modified from its original, validated form so that participants could complete it while considering their teacher-self and everyday-self separately. These modified items have not been validated, thus are necessarily a limitation to consider.

The actual act of having participants complete each scale twice as they considered two "versions" of themselves is a limitation. The results of this study hinge on the assumption that participants were able to both honestly and accurately examine their own personality traits and behaviors in two different contexts. However, this approach has not been used elsewhere in the literature, so future research is needed to determine whether this approach is reliable and valid. In terms of reliability, participants could be asked to complete the measures on several different occasions throughout a semester or academic year. Regarding validity, the self-reported personality and behavioral traits could be compared to outside reports of participants' personality and behavioral traits by, for example, colleagues or students (teacher-self) and a spouse/partner or close friends (everyday-self).

An alternative approach to the measurement of persona distinctiveness for future research could be to consider the use of the "Teacher Emotional Labor Strategy Scale" (TELSS; Yin, 2012). This scale measures the amount of emotional labor

teachers feel they experience by examining the components of surface acting, deep acting, and the expression of naturally felt emotions. The measurement of surface acting, specifically, would allow for the quantification of the amount of "acting" one performs as a teacher. Compared to deep acting, higher levels of surface acting would be similar regarding having a greater distinction between the teacher-self and everyday-self. While use of the TELSS has the advantage of being a validated scale, the disadvantage of such an approach would be the loss of the ability to identify which specific traits comprise one's teacher-self versus their everyday-self as the current study did.

Future research should also expand the size and diversity of the study sample. Regarding the size, this study reports the results of analyses conducted with under 100 participants ($N = 71$). The specific focus on examining the experiences of college professors from teaching-focused institutions in this study was intentional; however, recruitment of such participants proved to be challenging. Future researchers might explore alternative avenues for recruitment (e.g., soliciting in teaching listservs, social media groups, and/or at conferences) or expanding recruitment to include college professors from research-focused or more equally balanced (teaching-research) institutions. Regarding diversity, participants for this study were recruited from one of three teaching-focused post-secondary institutions in a similar geographic region of the United States. Thus, diversity was lacking in several demographic and professional/academic domains.

Conclusion

As the results of this study seem to suggest, many college professors do appear to live out Steve Azar's (2001) sentiments regarding not "being [*teacher*] me 'til Monday" in a number of different ways when they leave campus on a Friday. For some professors, it may be that "I teach, therefore I am"; these individuals wear the mask of the teacher, play the part as the teacher, and must go home in order to be their authentic self. For other professors, however, it may be that "I teach, therefore I am...still me"; these individuals are less likely to "act" in the classroom and more likely to express their authentic self to their students. Understanding that each of these mindsets may lead to different outcomes concerning job satisfaction and burnout is an important catalyst for future research seeking to enhance the professional lives of college professors. These preliminary findings are intended to encourage future researchers to continue to explore the teaching personas of college professors, including the implications of such personas in various facets of the higher education domain.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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