Differential responses to emotional labor: An examination of the direct and indirect effects of core self-evaluations

Abstract

This paper examines the role of core self-evaluations (CSEs) in the relationships among emotional demands, emotional dissonance and depersonalization. Data were collected from a non-random sample of 423 teachers who worked in primary, secondary, and higher education institutions. Results from structural equation modeling analysis showed that CSEs displayed both direct and indirect effects on depersonalization through employee's perceptions and reactions to emotional labor. Specifically, those individuals with more positive CSEs tended to perceive the emotional aspects of their job as less demanding, thus being less likely to experience emotional dissonance and, in turn, depersonalization.

Keywords

Emotional demands, personality, depersonalization.

INTRODUCTION

The term *emotional labor* was first introduced by Hochschild (1983) to describe occupations in which individuals face high emotional demands, that is, those aspects of the job that require sustained emotional effort. This is the case, for instance, of service workers, social workers, health professionals and teachers. More specifically, the concept of emotional labor refers to the deliberate process of managing feelings and the expression of one's emotions as part of a work role (Ashforth and Humphrey, 1993). Since Hochschild's (1983) seminal work, several studies have focused on understanding the emotional labor process (e.g., Morris and Feldman, 1997; Beal, Trougakos, Weiss, and Green 2006; Bechtoldt, Rohrmann, De Pater, and Beersma, 2011; Gabriel, Daniels, Diefendorff, and Greguras, 2015; Diefendorff, Gabriel, Nolan, and Yang, 2019), to the extent of showing that it plays a key role in explaining individuals' effectiveness and well-being in the workplace (for a review, see Grandey and Melloy, 2017; Humphrey, Ashforth, and Diefendorff, 2015).

Despite the fact that scholarly and practical interest in emotional labor has increased dramatically in recent years, research on this line of inquiry has produced inconclusive results (Chi, Grandey, Diamond, and Krimmel, 2011; Seery and Corrigall, 2009). Thus, on the one hand, most studies have demonstrated that emotional labor is generally related to negative outcomes, including emotional exhaustion or depersonalization (e.g., Nguyen and Stinglhamber, 2018; Yagil and Medler-Liraz, 2017), as individuals are likely to experience emotional dissonance (Kenworthy, Fay, Frame, and Petree, 2014). Yet, on the other hand, recent research has shown that emotional labor may also have beneficial effects, including, for

instance, job satisfaction or commitment (e.g., Aw, Ilies and De Pater, 2019; Isenbarger and Zembylas, 2006), as individuals may experience a deep sense of personal accomplishment (Brotheridge and Grandey, 2002) and feelings of authenticity (Brotheridge and Lee, 2002).

Since employees may have very different experiences in the workplace based on their personal characteristics (Judge, Weiss, Kammeyer-Mueller, and Hulin, 2017), it is possible that some of the inconsistencies noted in the emotional labor literature may be, in fact, explained by individual differences (Grandey and Melloy, 2017; Humphrey *et al*., 2015). However, only a few studies have analyzed the role of, for instance, the big five personality traits (e.g., Chi *et al*., 2011; Kiffin-Petersen, Jordan, and Soutar, 2011) and dispositional affectivity (e.g., Gabriel *et al*., 2015; Kammeyer-Mueller, Rubenstein, Long, Odio, Buckman, Zhang, and Halvorsen-Ganepola, 2013) in such dynamics. These scholarly efforts, though valuable, are insufficient to account for the effects of individual differences (such as personality traits) on the mechanisms through which individuals perceive and experience emotional labor (Dahling and Johnson, 2013).

Thus, this paper bridges this gap between the previous studies to further explore the effects of personality traits in the emotional labor process by exploring the role of core self-evaluations (CSEs), that is to say, a personality trait that reflects individuals' beliefs regarding their worthiness, competence and capabilities (Judge, Erez, Bono and Thoresen, 2003), in the mechanisms through which employees perceive and react to emotional labor. Indeed, since the CSEs represent a higher-order trait that reflects four personality traits that are well established in psychology research (i.e., self-esteem, self-efficacy, internal locus of control and emotional stability), they may serve as an integrative individual-difference variable for explaining the emotional labor process. More specifically, this study examines for the first time the effects of CSEs on the relationships among emotional demands, emotional dissonance and depersonalization. In this context, it is worth noting that emotional dissonance refers to a form of role conflict in which individuals feel forced to display emotions that are inconsistent with their true feelings (Morris and Feldman, 1996). In addition, depersonalization means much more than simply being exhausted to reflect a negative affective state in which the employee experiences a persistent and extreme state of fatigue and tries to prevent further losses of personal resources by detaching themselves emotionally and viewing others as impersonal objects rather than people (Schmidt and Diestel, 2014). This leads individuals to adopt a distant, dehumanized, cynical and indifferent attitude towards work in general and towards the users of their service in particular (Maslach and Leiter, 2016).

This study contributes to the organizational literature by shedding light on the importance of individual differences in explaining employees' differential experiences and reactions to emotional labor and moves forward from past research in at least three ways. First, since studies on the role of the CSEs in the context of emotional labor have only examined their effects on the emotion-regulation strategies used by

individuals when dealing with emotionally demanding situations (such as, surface acting, deep acting and naturally-felt emotions; e.g., Beal *et al*., 2006; Nguyen and Stinglhamber, 2018), this study addresses emotional labor in terms of the emotional requirements of the job (see Lewig and Dollard, 2003). Second, the present research focuses on depersonalization as a potential affective reaction to emotional labor, while existing studies have mostly analyzed its effects on emotional exhaustion (e.g., Gabriel *et al*., 2015; Yagil and Medler-Liraz, 2017). Finally, most studies on emotional labor have predominantly focused on service workers who are exposed to short and routinized customer interactions, like call center agents (see Bechtoldt *et al*., 2011). However, the emotional labor process may be even more complex in highly demanding occupations, in which individuals are required not only to manage their emotions successfully, but also to invest high levels of cognitive energy when performing tasks that are complex in nature (see Pujol-Cols and Lazzaro-Salazar, 2018). In this light, the current study further contributes to advancing our knowledge in the field by investigating the emotional labor process in a sample of teachers who worked in primary, secondary and higher education institutions in Argentina.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

The emotional labor process

The term *emotional labor* refers to the deliberate process of managing the feeling and expression of one's emotions as part of a work role (Hochschild, 1983). As it involves the expression of particular emotions during interpersonal interactions (Ashforth and Humphrey, 1993), it is usually associated with those occupations involving frequent interactions with customers or users (Morris and Feldman, 1996). Individuals in such conditions are expected to adjust their feelings and emotional displays to conform to a set of *emotional rules* while on the job, which reflect various organizational or social expectations that set appropriate ways of feeling and displaying emotions in a given social setting (Hochschild, 1983). In summary, emotional occupations are characterized by: (a) involvement in frequent interactions with the public, (b) employees' management of their emotions, and (c) the monitoring and enforcement of emotional display by the managerial team (see Grandey and Melloy, 2017).

Research on emotional labor has typically been conducted from three main perspectives (for a review, see Grandey and Gabriel, 2015). Early studies have mostly examined emotional labor in terms of *emotion performance*, that is, by focusing on the observable, facial or vocal expressions displayed by employees when performing their work roles (e.g., smiling and eye contact). Other studies have turned their attention to the repertoire of *emotional-regulation strategies* used by individuals to manage their emotions in the workplace. Finally, a third set of studies has conceptualized emotional labor in terms of *emotional*

requirements, that is, by focusing on the demands for emotional displays imposed on the individual by the job. The present study adopts this last approach.

Following the principles of the demand-resource theory (Bakker and Demerouti, 2014), job demands, that is to say, those aspects of the job that require a sustained physical, cognitive or emotional effort, tend to negatively affect individuals' well-being through health impairment processes. From this perspective, the processes involved in regulating one's emotions to conform to emotional rules are highly demanding and are, thus, associated with several physiological and psychological costs. Then, the sustained and chronic exposure to these emotional demands is expected to cause exhaustion and strain, as it may lead to a persistent depletion of energy, which may, therefore, drain individuals' physical and psychological resources (Kenworthy *et al*., 2014). Individuals who are exposed to such levels of chronic, occupational distress are, in turn, more likely to suffer from depersonalization (Maslach and Leiter, 2016).

Even when the effects of emotional demands on depersonalization have been scarcely studied, especially when compared to other dimensions of burnout (such as emotional exhaustion) or even to other affective outcomes (such as job satisfaction; see Aronsson, Theorell, Grape, Hammarström, Hogstedt, Marteinsdottir et al., 2017; Kenworthy *et al*., 2014), based on the rationale presented so far this study proposes that those individuals who perceive emotional situations at work as highly demanding will be more likely to experience depersonalization. In other words:

Hypothesis 1 (H1). Emotional demands will be positively related to depersonalization.

According to Hochschild (1983), for social actors to regulate their emotions and, therefore, avoid becoming *emotional deviants*, they have at least three strategies at their disposal. In this regard, *surface acting* involves the suppression of true feelings and the display of inauthentic emotions that are consistent with social or organizational requirements (e.g., a clerk at a store might have no choice but to smile at a customer that they find annoying or irritant). *Deep acting* involves a proactive change in one's feelings to elicit an authentic emotional display that is consistent with social or organizational expectations (e.g., a teacher interested in building a sense of excitement in a group of students may show a cheerful and enthusiastic demeanor). Finally, individuals might also express *naturally felt emotions* that are consistent with organizational or social expectations.

To explain the effects of, in particular, surface acting on individuals' well-being, scholars have mostly turned to the concept of *emotional dissonance*, a form of role conflict in which individuals feel forced to display emotions that are inconsistent with their true feelings (Morris and Feldman, 1996). From this perspective, emotional dissonance is expected to not only lead to feelings of duplicity and to a state of alienation (Abraham, 1999) but also be experienced as a threat to the true identity of the individual (Jansz and Timmers, 2002). As discussed in Bechtoldt *et al*. (2011), these processes, in turn, are likely to lead to negative outcomes since: (a) expressing fake emotions is highly demanding (also see Karatepe and

Aleshinloye, 2009), (b) suppressing negative emotions increases physiological distress (also see Rohrmann, Hennig, and Netter, 2002), and (c) experiencing inconsistencies between felt and expressed emotions is unpleasant, as individuals strive to behave authentically (also see Van Dijk and Brown, 2006). In this sense, emotional dissonance is likely to be experienced as a highly exhausting, unpleasant and struggling process (Van Dijk and Brown, 2006), which, if persistent over time, may cause depersonalization (Maslach and Leiter, 2016). Although only few studies have empirically examined the effects of emotional dissonance on depersonalization, drawing on the rationale discussed so far, this study hypothesizes that:

Hypothesis 2 (H2). Emotional dissonance will mediate the relationship between emotional demands and depersonalization.

The role of core self-evaluations in emotional labor

Though, as shown in the previous section, numerous studies have demonstrated that emotional labor tends to lead to negative outcomes (e.g. depersonalization) since individuals are likely to experience emotional dissonance, some other studies have shown that emotional labor might also have beneficial effects (e.g., Isenbarger and Zembylas, 2006). Indeed, many employees, even those in occupations that are believed to be difficult or unpleasant, may experience positive states, such as job satisfaction or commitment, when performing emotional work roles (Humphrey *et al.*, 2015). In fact, as explained by Humphrey *et al*. (2015), "many people seek jobs that have high emotional labor demands, and for some of these positions […], people are willing to go through lengthy and expensive educational programs in order to obtain them" (pp. 750).

Chi *et al*. (2011) posited that one reason for the inconsistencies noted in the emotional labor literature (as mentioned above) is the insufficient consideration of individual differences. In fact, despite the growing scholarly and practical interest in this research stream, to date, only few studies have examined the role of individual differences, such as personality traits, in employees' perceptions and reactions to emotional labor. To provide an example, Kiffin-Petersen *et al.* (2011) reported that individuals higher in neuroticism were more likely to use surface acting when managing their emotions at work, which was subsequently found to be positively related to emotional exhaustion. In a similar vein, Kammeyer-Mueller *et al.*'s (2013) meta-analysis showed that the positive and negative affectivity construct was also important to understanding the patterns of effects of emotional labor on individuals' attitudes and outcomes.

Beyond the influence of the big five personality traits and positive/negative affectivity, this study proposes that a more novel construct, named core self-evaluations (CSEs), a personality trait that represents a set of fundamental and unconscious conclusions that individuals have regarding their worthiness, competence, control, and capabilities (Judge, Erez, Bono, and Thoresen, 2003), may also

contribute to explaining the mechanisms underlying the effects of emotional labor. Although most research on CSEs has focused on job satisfaction (e.g., Pujol-Cols and Dabos, 2019), few studies have also explored their effects on depersonalization. For instance, Peng *et al.* (2014) showed that the CSEs may reduce depersonalization by enhancing individuals' affective states, such as their organizational commitment and job satisfaction. Similarly, Li *et al.* (2014) demonstrated that the CSEs may affect depersonalization by conditioning the coping strategies used by employees when facing stressful situations in the workplace.

Drawing on the evidence presented so far, the present study proposes that:

Hypothesis 3 (H3). Core self-evaluations (CSEs) will be negatively related to depersonalization.

In addition to the direct effects of the CSEs, this paper argues that this higher-order personality trait may also exert a significant effect on depersonalization by affecting individuals' perceptions and reactions to emotional labor. Although no previous research has simultaneously examined the relationships proposed in this article, previous literature has suggested at least three mechanisms why the link between CSEs and depersonalization is likely to be mediated by the emotional labor process.

First, since those individuals with more positive CSEs tend to have a clearer career identity and to seek out jobs that are consistent with their personality traits (Hirschi, 2011), they may simply enjoy the emotional aspects of their job rather than experience them as "demands to be faced" (Pujol-Cols and Lazzaro-Salazar, 2018). Second, these individuals are also more prone to experiencing work engagement (Tims and Akkermans, 2017) and, as a result, to get so absorbed in their work role that they simply internalize certain performance-related behaviors, like dealing with emotionally demanding situations, until the point these become natural or instinctive (Kammeyer-Mueller *et al*., 2013). Finally, these individuals are more likely to make greater efforts to change their true emotions to conform to emotional demands (Beal *et al*., 2006; Kiffin-Petersen *et al*., 2011; Kammeyer-Mueller *et al*., 2013). As a result, employees with such positive personality traits are less likely to focus on the most negative, emotional aspects of the job and to perceive them as stressful (Kammeyer-Mueller, Judge, and Scott, 2009).

By perceiving the emotional situations they encounter as less demanding and by engaging in deep acting rather than in surface acting more often, individuals with such positive CSEs may be in a better position to deal with the most challenging emotional demands of their job, thus being less likely to experience emotional dissonance and, as a result, depersonalization. As a result, drawing on the evidence presented in this section, this study hypothesizes that:

Hypothesis 4 (H4). The emotional labor process (i.e., perceptions of emotional demands and feelings of emotional dissonance) will mediate the relationship between CSEs and depersonalization.

METHOD

Participants

Participants were a non-random sample of 423 teachers, aged between 22 and 68 (M = 41.52, SD = 10.76) years old. They worked in primary schools (22.70%), secondary schools (37.83%), and in higher education institutions (39.48%). Most participants were female (82.27%) and participants' average tenure ranged between 1 and 43 years (M = 14.52, SD = 10.31). Regarding their educational level, 60.52% of the respondents had a college degree (in Argentina, this means four or more years of university education), 27.42% had a master's degree, and 12.06% had a Ph.D.

Procedure

The data for this study were collected in educational institutions within the metropolitan area of Buenos Aires. Following approval of the study by the National Scientific and Technical Research Council, Argentina (record #2703/18), potential participants were contacted through a networking approach (see Lazzaro-Salazar, 2019). Eligible participants had to (a) be currently employed in either primary, secondary or higher education institutions, and (b) work for at least 20 hours a week. The online survey included a description of the purposes of the study and a consent form. Access to the online survey was only granted if consent to participate in the study was given by clicking on the 'yes' option of the consent form. Responses to the survey were anonymous.

Variables and instruments

Core self-evaluations. Participants' CSEs were measured using Judge *et al*.'s (2003) Core Self-Evaluations Scale (CSES). It consisted of 12 items (e.g., "I determine what will happen in my life"), with a response scale ranging from 1 (*totally disagree*) to 5 (*totally agree*). The internal consistency was α = .81.

Emotional labor. Emotional labor was examined in terms of emotional requirements (i.e., the job-based requirements for emotional displays with others imposed on the individual by the job; see Grandey and Gabriel, 2015). Following Lewig and Dollard (2003), both qualitative and quantitative components of emotional labor were measured (also see Morris and Feldman, 1997). First, respondents' perceptions of *emotional demands* were examined with two items (e.g., "Overall, is your job emotionally demanding?") taken from the emotional demand sub-scale of the Spanish Psychosocial Risk Questionnaire COPSOQ-ISTAS 21 (Moncada and Llorens, 2004) and two items (e.g., "Do you encounter situations on board that personally affect you?") developed by Bakker, Demerouti and Verbeke (2004). Second, participants' *emotional dissonance* was assessed by asking them "How often are you confronted with the following

situations during your work?" and providing three items (e.g., "Having to show certain feelings to people that do not correspond with the way you feel at that moment") developed by Zapf, Vogt, Seifert, Mertini, and Isic (1999). In all cases, participants were asked to respond on a five-point rating scale ranging from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*always*). The internal consistency estimates of the emotional demand scale and the emotional dissonance scale were $\alpha = .76$ and $\alpha = .77$, respectively.

Depersonalization. Participants' level of depersonalization was examined by using the depersonalization subscale included in the Maslach Burnout Inventory-Educators Survey (MBI-ES; Maslach, Jackson, and Leiter, 1996). This subscale comprised 5 items (e.g., "I feel I treat some students as if they were impersonal objects") and a response scale ranging from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*everyday*). The internal consistency of the depersonalization scale was $\alpha = .75$.

Analysis

A structural equation modeling analysis with observed and latent variables was performed in Amos (22) to test the hypotheses of the study. A partial disaggregation model was used by creating parcels of items, that is to say, an aggregate-level indicator that is calculated as the average score of two or more items. The model included one exogenous latent variable (i.e., CSEs), two endogenous latent variables (i.e., emotional demands and depersonalization), and one endogenous observed variable (i.e., emotional dissonance). The CSEs, emotional demands and depersonalization were entered in the model as latent variables with two indicators. For instance, the CSE latent variable was indicated by two parcels that included six items each. To compare the models, different goodness of fit indices were estimated, including χ^2 (Chi-square), CFI (Comparative Fit Index), GFI (Goodness of Fit Index), NFI (Normed Fit Index (NFI), TLI (Tucker-Lewis Index) and RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation). According Byrne (2001), CFI, GFI, NFI and TLI values greater than .90 and RMSEA values as high as .08 indicate a satisfactory fit.

RESULTS

Descriptive analysis

As shown in Table 1, all of the correlations among the variables of interest were moderate and statistically significant. As expected, the CSEs displayed negative and statistically significant correlations with emotional dissonance and depersonalization. Moreover, emotional demands were found to be positively correlated with emotional dissonance and depersonalization. Finally, emotional dissonance exhibited a non-zero correlation with depersonalization.

Table 1. Means, standard deviations, correlations, and reliability levels

	M	SD	1	2	3	4
1. CSEs	3.44	.62	*.81*			
2. Emotional demands	3.19	.91	-.44	*.76*		
3. Emotional dissonance	2.59	1.06	-.27	.56	*.77*	
4. Depersonalization	2.04	.79	-.29	.38	.39	*.75*

Note. M = Mean, SD = Standard deviation, CSEs = Core self-evaluations. All correlations are statistically significant at the p < .001 level (two tailed). The internal consistency of each scale is reported on the main diagonal in italics.

Common method bias

Harman's one factor test was conducted to examine whether the data were affected by the common method bias. Results revealed that one single factor accounted only for 24.98% of the variance, suggesting that the common method bias did not significantly affect the results (see Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, and Podsakoff, 2003).

Discriminant validity of the scales

To test whether emotional demands and emotional dissonance were indeed distinct constructs, two competing models were compared using structural equation modeling in Amos (22). In the first model, emotional demands and emotional dissonance were entered as two latent variables covarying with each other. In the second model, all the observed variables were hypothesized to load onto the latent construct of emotional demands. The results revealed that the model of emotional demands and emotional dissonance as two distinct but related factors provided good fit to the data: $\chi^2(13, N = 423) = 124.92$, $p < .01$, CFI = .90, GFI = .93. The model with emotional dissonance included under the emotional demand factor provided a poorer fit: $\chi^2(14, N = 423) = 242.52$, $p < .001$, CFI = .79, GFI = .83. The chi-square difference test between models 1 and 2 was significant, $\chi^2(1, N = 423) = 117.6$, $p < .001$, suggesting that the model with emotional demands and emotional dissonance as separate factors provide a better fit to the data, thus demonstrating the discriminant validity of both scales.

Structural equation modeling results

The results of the structural equation modeling analysis indicated that the hypothesized model provided a satisfactory fit to the data: $\chi^2 (9, N = 423) = 33.39$, $p < .01$, CFI = .98, GFI = .98, TLI = .94, NFI = .97, RMSEA = .08 (Figure 1). The results showed that the CSEs were negatively related to emotional demands. Emotional demands, in turn, were a significant predictor of emotional dissonance. Furthermore, emotional dissonance was significantly related to depersonalization. The direct path linking the CSEs to emotional dissonance was not statistically significant, suggesting that the effects of the CSEs on emotional dissonance are fully mediated by individuals' perceptions of emotional demands. Moreover, as expected,

there was a direct effect of the CSEs on depersonalization. These results provided support to H1, H2 and H3.

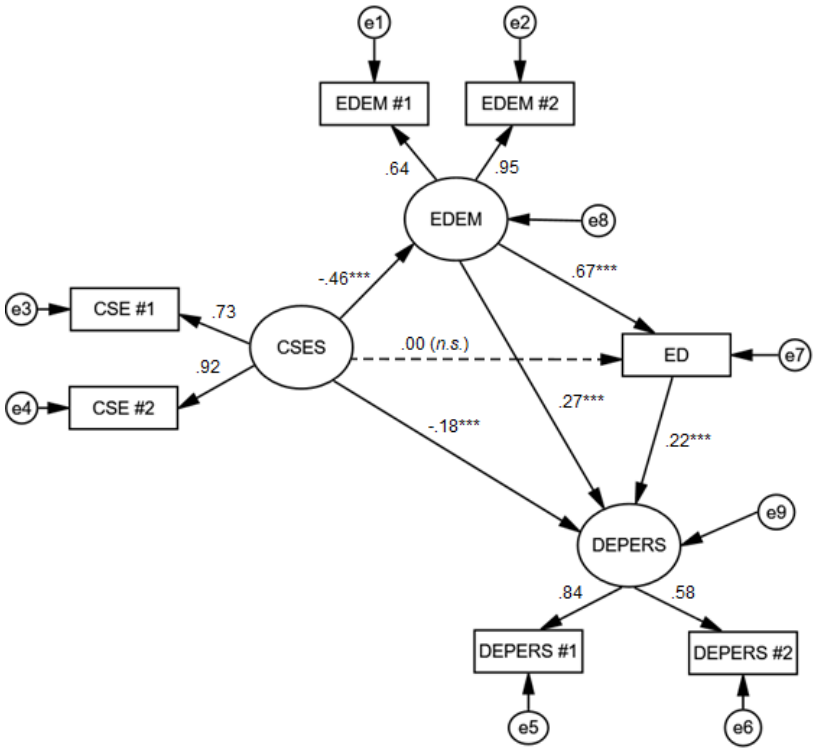

Figure 1. Standardized solution for the hypothesized model

*N = 423. CSES = Core self-evaluations, EDEM = Emotional demands, ED = Emotional dissonance, DEPERS = Depersonalization. All factor loadings are statistically significant at the p < .01 level. Dot lines indicate non-significant paths. *** The path is statistically significant at the p < .01.*

To test whether the overall fit of the hypothesized model could be improved, all of the paths that were non-significant were dropped (Table 2). The results showed that this model provided very similar fit to the data: χ^2 (10, *N* = 423) = 33.39, *p* < .01, CFI = .98, GFI = .98, TLI = .95, NFI = .97, RMSEA = .07. Chi-square differences were used to compare both models. Results revealed that the chi-square difference test was not significant, χ^2(1, *N* = 423) = .002, *n.s.* Thus, the most parsimonious model was accepted. The results of the most parsimonious model indicated that the CSEs were negatively related to emotional demands. Emotional demands, in turn, were a significant predictor of emotional dissonance. Furthermore, emotional dissonance was significantly related to depersonalization. Finally, there was a direct effect of the CSEs on depersonalization.

Besides the hypothesized model, two additional models were tested. First, the indirect effect model, which dropped the direct path from the CSEs to depersonalization (see Table 2), provided an acceptable but relatively poorer fit to the data: χ^2(11, *N* = 423) = 40.97, *p* < .01, CFI = .97, GFI = .97, TLI = .94, NFI = .96, RMSEA = .08. Chi-square differences were used to compare the indirect model with the hypothesized model. Results revealed that the chi-square difference test was significant, χ^2(1, *N* = 423) =

7.58, $p < .01$, indicating that the hypothesized model fitted the data better than the alternative model. Second, the direct effect model, which included only the direct paths from the CSEs, emotional demands, and emotional dissonance to depersonalization (Table 2), exhibited a very poor fit to the data: $\chi^2(12, N = 423) = 329.76$, $p < .01$, CFI = .67, GFI = .83, TLI = .43, NFI = .67, RMSEA = .25. Moreover, the chi-square difference test revealed that the hypothesized model fitted significantly better to the data than the alternative model: $\chi^2(3, N = 423) = 296.37$, $p < .01$.

Table 2. Results of the Structural Equation Modeling Analysis

Model	χ^2	df	CFI	GFI	TLI	NFI	RMSEA
Hypothesized model	33.39	9	.98	.98	.94	.97	.08
Hypothesized model (no insignificant paths)	33.39	10	.98	.98	.95	.97	.07
Indirect effect model	40.97	11	.97	.97	.94	.96	.08
Direct effect model	329.76	12	.67	.83	.43	.67	.25

Note. df = degrees of freedom. Estimation method: maximum likelihood.

H-4 stated that the CSEs would have an impact on depersonalization through the emotional labor process. Following the procedure recommended by MacKinnon (2008), a bootstrap analysis using a maximum likelihood estimation method (1,000 bootstrapped samples) was performed in Amos (22) to test this hypothesis (Table 3). Firstly, the results revealed that the indirect effect of the CSEs on emotional dissonance through emotional demands was significant (standardized estimate = -.31, $p < .01$, $-.43 \leq$ B-CCI $\leq .20$). Further, the indirect effect of emotional demands on depersonalization through emotional dissonance was also significant (standardized estimate = .15, $p < .01$, $.07 \leq$ B-CCI $\leq .26$). Finally, the results of the final bootstrap analysis showed that the sequential mediation effect was also significant (standardized estimate = -.19, $p < .01$, $-.30 \leq$ B-CCI $\leq -.12$). Thus, these results provided support to the hypothesized sequential mediation effect from the CSEs to depersonalization through perceptions of emotional demands and emotional dissonance, supporting H4.

Table 3. Direct, indirect, and total effects of CSEs on depersonalization

	Estimate	Standardized estimate	Test of significance	95% B-CCI	
				Lower bond	Upper bond
Direct effects					
CSEs → DEP	-.29	-.18	.033	-.34	-.02
Indirect effects					
CSEs → EM → ED	-.68	-.31	.002	-.43	-.20
EM → ED → DEP	.18	.15	.001	.07	.26
CSEs → EM → ED → DEP	-.31	-.19	.001	-.30	-.12
Total effects					
CSEs → DEP	-.60	-.37	.002	-.51	-.22

Note. 95% B-CCI = 95% bias-corrected confidence interval. CSEs = Core self-evaluations, EM = Emotional demands, ED = Emotional dissonance, DEP = Depersonalization.

DISCUSSION

The present study contributes to further explore the mechanisms underlying the differential effects of emotional labor on individuals' well-being by shedding light on the role of the CSEs in the relationships among emotional demands, emotional dissonance and depersonalization. On the one hand, the results showed that both quantitative and qualitative components of emotional labor (i.e., emotional demands and emotional dissonance, respectively) were positively related to depersonalization, indicating that increasing emotional labor was associated with higher depersonalization. On the other hand, the CSEs were found to be negatively related to depersonalization, suggesting that those individuals with more positive self-regards were less likely to adopt a negative, cynical, dehumanized, distant and indifferent attitude towards their job. Taken together, these findings not only are consistent with previous research (e.g., Kenworthy *et al*., 2014) but also suggest that future studies should consider both situational antecedents and individual differences when examining the emotional labor process (see Kammeyer-Mueller *et al*., 2013).

Regarding the effects of emotional demands on depersonalization, the findings of this study demonstrated that this relationship is partially mediated by feelings of emotional dissonance. Indeed, the results showed that the persistent exposure to emotional demands is likely to lead to emotional dissonance, which, in turn, may lead to a depersonalized attitude towards the job. This is consistent with previous research that reported that those jobs that require individuals to make a sustained emotional effort tend to cause not only emotional dissonance but also negative outcomes (e.g. Van Dijk and Brown, 2006), as changing one's real feelings and/or displaying inauthentic, socially desirable emotions are costly processes, both psychologically and physiologically, and involve a depletion of energy and valuable personal resources (Bechtoldt *et al*., 2011).

In addition to the direct effects of the CSEs, the present study also demonstrated an indirect effect on depersonalization through the emotional labor process. More specifically, the results showed that those individuals with more positive CSEs tend to perceive the emotional aspects of their job as less demanding (i.e., there is a negative relationship between the CSEs and emotional demands), which reduces individuals' likelihood of experiencing emotional dissonance and, in turn, depersonalization. Thus, the present study makes a substantial contribution to the organizational literature by shedding light on the mechanisms through which the CSEs affect individuals' perceptions and reactions to emotional labor.

Overall, the results suggested that those individuals with more positive CSEs are more likely to make a successful person-environment fit with those occupations that are highly demanding, both cognitively and emotionally, such as the teaching profession studied here. In this sense, individuals with such positive CSEs may simply enjoy the emotional aspects of their job rather than experience them as a burden (Author1 and Author2, 2018). Moreover, since these individuals are more prone to experiencing work

engagement while working (Tims and Akkermans, 2017), they may simply get so absorbed in their work role that they internalize certain performance-related behaviors, like dealing with emotionally demanding situations, until the point they become natural or instinctive (see Kammeyer-Mueller *et al*., 2013). Finally, these individuals are most likely to engage in deep acting more often than in surface acting when facing emotionally demanding situations. These individuals may then be in a better position to perform emotional work roles (Kammeyer-Mueller *et al*., 2009), and they are, as a consequence, less likely to experience emotional dissonance and negative states when exposed to highly emotional situations (Kiffin-Petersen *et al*., 2011).

In addition to these theoretical contributions, the findings of this study have at least two further implications that are worth mentioning, albeit briefly. Firstly, since the CSEs have proven to play a key role in the way individuals perceive and react to emotional labor, organizations may consider including a thorough evaluation of candidates' personality traits when filling in emotionally demanding positions. Secondly, the paper hopes to make a point of the importance of investigating outcomes of emotional labor such as depersonalization to balance scholarly attention towards psychological phenomena related to employees' well-being even when they may have a weaker impact on organizational effectiveness and outcomes.

Finally, in order to explore lines of future research, it is necessary to address some of the limitations of this study. First, this study used cross-sectional data, which means that a causal inference cannot be drawn. Future studies should further test the models proposed in this article by employing a longitudinal design. Second, all of the measures used in this study were self-reported. Since self-report scales may be susceptible to social desirability bias, future research could incorporate other independent measures of the variables of interest (e.g., depersonalization could be measured by combining self-reports, clinical interviews by a therapist and reports from a significant other). Third, this study focused on one of the core dimensions of burnout that was expected to be highly related to emotional labor, that is, depersonalization. In this regard, future studies should adopt a positive psychology approach and examine the personality factors, contextual factors, and interactional dynamics that enable individuals to experience positive states and well-being, such as affective job satisfaction, instead of focusing exclusively on negative phenomena (consider Humphrey *et al.*, 2015). Finally, our model measured emotional labor only in terms of emotional job requirements, specifically in terms of perceptions of emotional demands and feelings of emotional dissonance as mediators. Following Grandey and Gabriel (2015), future research could adopt a more dynamic perspective and explore the interplay among emotional requirements, emotional regulation strategies and emotional performance.

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