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LEADERS' COMPETENCE AND WARMTH: THEIR RELATIONSHIPS WITH EMPLOYEES' WELL-BEING AND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

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The aim of this work was to investigate competence and warmth — the two basic dimensions of social judgment — as dimensions employees use to evaluate their supervisors. A mediation model was tested in which supervisor's perceived competence and warmth were associated with relevant outcomes (lower burnout, weaker turnover intentions, more frequent citizenship behaviors) through the mediation of affective organizational commitment (AOC). In Study 1, data were collected from employees of a company in the water service sector. In Study 2, participants were financial promoters. In Study 3, the sample included employees from different organizations. As hypothesized, the perception of one's supervisor as competent (Studies 1-3) and warm (Study 3) was related to employees' lower burnout, weaker turnover intentions, more frequent prosocial behaviors through the mediation of AOC. Theoretical and practical implications of findings are discussed.

Key words: Leader competence; Leader warmth; Organizational commitment; Leadership effectiveness; Employees' well-being.

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A review by Cuddy, Glick, and Beninger (2011) has underlined the key role played by warmth and competence in social judgments about individuals and groups. The prominence of these traits relies on the fact they answer critical socio-functional questions about others, which gained increasing importance throughout human evolutionary history (see Fiske, Cuddy, & Glick, 2007), and on their generality across cultures (Cuddy et al., 2009). The perception of warmth versus lacking warmth may indicate whether or not others can be expected to have positive or negative intentions toward us, while the perception of competence versus incompetence

may indicate whether others are skilled or not to achieve their intentions. Thus, warmth and competence perceptions are the basis to develop feelings of trust and commitment toward other people and their goals. In this connection, Wojciszke (2005a, 2005b) found that warmth and competence account for the majority of variance in other people evaluations. Indeed, the key role played by these traits benefits from a long research tradition on person and group perception developed across different fields in psychology.

The path can be traced back to the pioneering studies by Asch (1946) and Bales (1950), the latter concerning small group interactions and emerging leadership. In some ways, the Stereotype Content Model of prejudice proposed by Fiske and colleagues (SCM; Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002; see also Cuddy, Fiske, & Glick, 2007) represents the latest achievement of this research tradition. In the current research, we analyze competence and warmth as perceived leader attributes (see Wojciszke & Abele, 2008), and examine their relationships with major organizational factors like organizational commitment, employees' turnover intentions, and job burnout which is the negative counterpart of employees' well-being.

WARMTH, COMPETENCE, OR BOTH?

Usually, warmth judgments are made more quickly and have a stronger impact on shaping attitudes toward others than competence judgments, the primacy of warmth being explained by the need to distinguish friends from foes. Evidence, moreover, shows that perceived warmth is more easily lost and more difficult to recover than perceived competence, which, in turn, can be faked less easily than warmth (see the review by Cuddy et al., 2011). Sometimes, competence may have greater importance than warmth, for instance in organizational settings, where critical decisions are at play and goals have to be achieved efficiently. Also the correlation between warmth and competence judgments is context-sensitive (Cuddy et al., 2011). In comparative settings, such as personnel selection where two or more candidates are assessed, contrast effects are likely to occur; as a consequence, applicants who are deemed high on competence will not be deemed high on warmth and vice versa (see Kervyn, Yzerbyt, Judd, & Nunes, 2009). Conversely, when single individuals are evaluated, the halo effect tends to occur (Rosenberg, Nelson, & Vivekananthan, 1968). Overall, a negative correlation is predictable in the former context, and a positive in the latter, for instance, when followers evaluate their direct supervisor.

In conclusion, the interplay between warmth and competence evaluations seems to be a relevant research topic for scholars interested in studying organizations. Notably, this research field can be defined as parsimonious (being grounded on only two dimensions) and deeply rooted in socio-psychological research regarding social judgment. With regard to warmth and competence as perceived attributes of leadership, we expect both dimensions to be associated with organizational attitudes and behaviors.

AIMS OF THE STUDIES

The main aim of the current work was to study major outcomes of warmth and competence perceptions pertaining to one's direct supervisor, capitalizing on the results of surveys carried out in organizational settings. In selecting the outcome variables, we focused on citizenship

behaviors (e.g., Organ, 1988), job burnout (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001), and intentions to quit the organization because their relevance is well documented in the field of organizational psychology (for their relationships with leadership, see, e.g., Dirks & Ferrin, 2002). We expected the perception of one's direct supervisor as warm and competent to be associated with affective organizational commitment (AOC; see the three-component model of organizational commitment, Meyer & Allen, 1997). AOC, in turn, should mediate the relationship between warmth and competence perceptions and the outcomes. Mediation was tested using the PROCESS macro proposed by Hayes (Model 4; 2013). To formulate our hypotheses, we relied on to the relevant literature concerning the relationship between perceived leader's attributes and AOC, and between AOC and the outcomes selected.

Warmth and Competence Evaluations Regarding Supervisors and Organizational Commitment

Our predictions were drawn from the field of leadership because — to our knowledge — research regarding the relationship between supervisor warmth and competence and followers' AOC is scant. According to Cuddy et al. (2011), early work on organizational leadership identified warmth-related and competence-related characteristics as essential dimensions of leadership style. Indeed, Bales (1950) proposed the distinction between socio-emotional and task-related leadership, a distinction that parallels competence and warmth. Additionally, the Ohio State leadership studies (Stogdill, 1974) pointed out the importance of two behavioral leadership dimensions: consideration and initiating structure. Consideration refers to leadership behaviors showing support and concern for employees' well-being (warmth); instead, initiating structure refers to leadership behaviors which involve providing directions and clarifying task responsibilities, namely, behaviors expressing and providing competence.

Interestingly, two meta-analytic studies concluded that consideration and initiating structure are positively related to major leadership outcomes, such as followers' job satisfaction, satisfaction with leader, and unit performance (DeRue, Nahrgang, Wellman, & Humphrey, 2011; Judge, Piccolo, & Ilies, 2004). A study by Lambert, Tepper, Carr, Holt, and Barelka (2012) provided further evidence. These authors examined the effects of fit between needed and received consideration and initiating structure on several work-related attitudes, such as trust in one's supervisor, job satisfaction, and affective organizational commitment. Affective commitment (but also trust and job satisfaction) was higher when the consideration and initiating structure provided were closer to the desired levels than when they did not reach the desired levels. However, AOC decreased when initiating structure behaviors exceeded employees' expectations. In summary, the positive effect of supervisor consideration and initiating structure on AOC was strongly corroborated by Lambert et al.'s research, although a surplus of initiating structure was more problematic than a surplus of consideration (for other studies showing that both consideration and initiating structure are related to AOC, see Johnston, Parasuraman, Futrell, & Black, 1990; Lin & Wang, 2012). Thus, as a first research step, we proposed the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1. Both perceived warmth and perceived competence of one's direct supervisor are positively related to employees' affective organizational commitment.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AFFECTIVE ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT AND JOB BURNOUT, CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOR, TURNOVER INTENTIONS

Research has widely demonstrated that organizational commitment benefits organizations. Committed workers are less likely to leave the organization (see Cooper-Hakim & Viswesvaran, 2005; Griffeth, Hom, & Gaertner, 2000; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, & Topolnytsky, 2002), more likely to be good organizational citizens (e.g., Riketta, 2002), and effective performers (e.g., Meyer et al., 2002; Riketta, 2002). It has also been found that these positive outcomes regard in particular affective organizational commitment which reflects involvement and emotional attachment to the organization (Meyer et al., 2002). However, organizational commitment can have positive implications for employees as well. Existing research has consistently evidenced a positive relation between AOC and several indices of well-being, including general health (e.g., Bridger, Kilminster, & Slaven, 2007), job-related well-being (e.g., Epitropaki & Martin, 2005), and life satisfaction (e.g., Lu, Siu, Spector, & Shi, 2009). The negative relationship between AOC and measures of perceived strain and burnout is addressed next.

Affective Organizational Commitment and Burnout

Research has demonstrated that AOC exhibits buffering effects on job-related strain. It is negatively related to psychosomatic symptoms of stress (see Richardsen, Burke, & Martinussen, 2006), job-related tension (Lambert, Hogan, & Griffin, 2008), and burnout (e.g., Falvo, Favara, Di Bernardo, Boccato, & Capozza, 2012; Hakanen, Bakker, & Schaufeli, 2006). The reason for these beneficial effects of affective commitment is that high AOC employees are less vulnerable to workplace stressors, and have a greater access to the resources needed to cope with stressors, such as social support (Glazer & Kruse, 2008; Irving & Coleman, 2003). According to Meyer and Maltin (2010), AOC is associated with lower strain and greater well-being because it results from the satisfaction of basic psychological needs — autonomy, competence, and relatedness (self-determination theory; Ryan & Deci, 2000, 2008; for a review, see Van den Broeck, Ferris, Chang, & Rosen, 2016) — and is closely interconnected with the experience of autonomous regulation of behavior. Research has highlighted that the satisfaction of the three needs and autonomous self-regulation are related to both hedonic and eudaimonic well-being (e.g., Van den Broeck, Vansteenkiste, Witte, Soenens, & Lens, 2010), and lower burnout (Fernet, Austin, Trépanier, & Dussault, 2013).

In our research, we considered two components of burnout as indicators of perceived strain: emotional exhaustion — the primary feature of burnout, corresponding to the perception of being emotionally worn out at work — and cynicism, that is, a detachment feeling from one's job, viewed as insignificant (see Schaufeli, Leiter, Maslach, & Jackson, 1996).[1] We, thus, proposed the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 2a. There is a significant negative relationship between affective organizational commitment and both exhaustion and cynicism.

Hypothesis 2b. Affective organizational commitment mediates the negative relationship between the perception of one's supervisor as competent and warm and the two components of burnout.

Leader's perceived competence and warmth may be conceived as organizational resources leading to need satisfaction, the experience of autonomous self-regulation, and affective commitment, all factors having buffering effects on the stressor-stress relationship. AOC, however, may have beneficial effects also for the organization, being positively related to organizational citizenship behaviors and negatively related to turnover intentions.

Affective Organizational Commitment and Organizational Citizenship Behavior

Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), also called prosocial behavior, is an extra-role dimension of performance; it is undertaken voluntarily and is generally not recognized by the formal structure of rewards. Citizenship behaviors promote the functioning of the organization because they reinforce the system of social relationships (LePine, Erez, & Johnson, 2002; see also Motowidlo & Van Scotter, 1994). Many dimensions of OCB have been conceptualized over the years (see Organ, 1988; Williams & Anderson, 1991). However, according to LePine and colleagues, the several dimensions measure a same underlying construct; in fact, they are closely correlated and show similar relations with major work outcomes. In our studies, we assessed (self-reported) citizenship behaviors directed to single employees or the entire organization.

Citizenship behaviors are explained by social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) which claims that reciprocity is a basic feature of social relationships. Individuals who perceive that the organization has the resources to satisfy their main needs and aspirations are likely to reciprocate with emotional engagement (AOC), which, in turn, promotes extra-role behaviors. The positive relationship between AOC and OCB has been supported by meta-analyses in which both self-ratings and others' ratings of OCBs were considered (see LePine et al., 2002; Meyer et al., 2002; Ng & Feldman, 2011; Organ & Ryan, 1995). In our research, we aimed to replicate this finding; thus, our third hypothesis was the following:

Hypothesis 3a. There is a positive relationship between affective organizational commitment and citizenship behaviors.

Employees are likely to perceive their supervisors' warmth and competence as organizational resources which provide special benefits, such as support in the performance of their job. Employees may reciprocate these benefits developing affective commitment toward their supervisors and the entire organization: these mindsets encourage employees to go beyond their job role (Konovsky & Pugh, 1994). Hence, we formulated the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3b. Affective organizational commitment mediates the positive relationship between the perception of one's supervisor as competent and warm and organizational citizenship behaviors.

We now examine another outcome of AOC which serves the interests of the organization: its negative relationship with employees' real turnover and turnover intentions. It has actually been shown that reduced turnover is a key factor of organizational effectiveness (Harrison, Newman, & Roth, 2006).

Affective Organizational Commitment and Turnover Intentions

Research has consistently documented that organizational commitment is negatively related to turnover intentions and actual turnover (see Griffeth et al., 2000; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Tett & Meyer, 1993). It has also been shown that affective commitment is more strongly associated than the other commitment facets with this outcome (see Meyer et al., 2002). The mindset associated with AOC includes, in fact, the desire to continue one's own affiliation with the organization (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). The negative connection between AOC and intended or real turnover has also been shown by more recent research (e.g., Falvo et al., 2012; Spell, Eby, & Vandenberg, 2014; Trifiletti, Capozza, Pasin, & Falvo, 2009; Vandenberghe & Bentein, 2009), some studies being based on longitudinal designs (e.g., Allen & Rhoades Shanock, 2013). Our aim was to replicate the negative relationship between AOC and turnover intentions revealed in previous research; thus, our next hypothesis was the following:

Hypothesis 4a. There is a negative association between affective organizational commitment and the intentions to leave the organization.

As already mentioned, the perception of one's supervisor as competent and warm is the likely source of feelings of support and of the satisfaction of basic needs (self-determination theory; Ryan & Deci, 2008). In terms of the relational cohesion theory (Yoon & Lawler, 2006), a competent and warm supervisor may provide employees with human capital (knowledge and skills), social capital (a network of social relationships), and cultural capital (shared beliefs regarding the organizational culture). Employees may reciprocate these benefits via affective commitment directed to supervisors and the entire organization; affective commitment, in turn, may curb turnover intentions and actual turnover. Our last hypothesis was thus the following:

Hypothesis 4b. Affective organizational commitment mediates the negative relationship between the perception of one's supervisor as competent and warm and employees' turnover intentions.

THE PRESENT RESEARCH

To test the hypothesized relationships between one's supervisor's attributes of competence and warmth, AOC, and the criterion variables, the mediation model depicted in Figure 1 was evaluated. In the model, supervisor's perceived competence and warmth are the independent variables and AOC is the mediator. The outcomes are exhaustion, cynicism (burnout; Schaufeli et al., 1996), and citizenship behaviors in Study 1; turnover intentions were added in Studies 2 and 3, and reduced professional efficacy (Burnout) in Study 3. The PROCESS macro (Hayes, 2013) was used to test the mediation models.

Three cross-sectional studies were performed in order to test the hypotheses in different organizational contexts in Italy. In Study 1, the survey was conducted in a company in the water service sector (water depuration, aqueduct building). In Study 2, participants were employees of a major Italian banking group, that in the 2000s incorporated banks of other European countries. In Study 3, each participant belonged to a different organization. In all three investigations, data were collected cross-sectionally and using self-report measures. The problem with self-reports is that they can inflate the true relationships between variables because correlations can also de-

pend on same-method (same-source) factors. The reason why we used self-reports is that all the constructs included in our model were private events: perceptions, intentions, and feelings (Conway & Lance, 2010). For OCBs, we preferred to use self-descriptions because other-rater descriptions would have required an identifying variable (e.g., the name of the subordinate and that of the supervisor), which would have compromised respondents' anonymity (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003) and willingness to participate in the studies.

Another factor which can inflate the relationship between variables, when self-report measures are used, is the conceptual overlap in items employed to assess different constructs. In our research, this overlap could involve the measures of AOC and turnover intentions (Studies 2 and 3). In fact, one of the six AOC items used, taken from Meyer, Allen, and Smith (1993), explicitly refers to the will to remain in the organization. Thus, we tested the model, in which turnover intentions were the outcome, both including and excluding this item from the measure of AOC.

Inflation of relationships, when using self-report measures, may also derive from the proximity between the measure of the predictor and that of the dependent variable (Podsakoff et al., 2003). This proximity may lead to responses which are affected by consistency motifs and demand characteristics. To create separation, in our questionnaires, measures were presented according to the order of Figure 1 (i.e., leader traits, AOC, and the outcomes), but short scales of personality variables were introduced between the independent and dependent variables: the proactivity scale by Seibert, Crant, and Kraimer (1999) was inserted between warmth and competence items and the AOC scale; the locomotion scale by Kruglanski et al. (2000) was inserted between AOC and the measures of the outcomes (OCB and burnout, in Study 1; turnover intentions, OCB, and burnout, in Study 2).[2] Regarding construct validity, we employed already evaluated measures. However, we tested the distinction between the dimensions when the construct was articulated in more than one dimension (i.e., leadership, burnout); confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was applied.

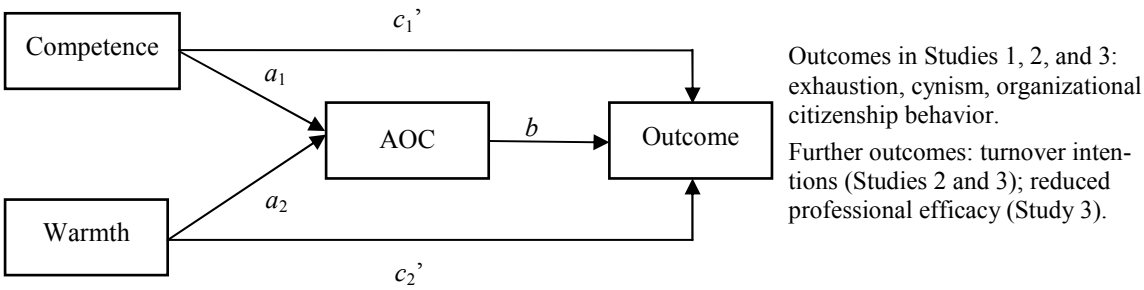

FIGURE 1
Mediation effects of affective organizational commitment in the relationship between one's supervisor's perceived competence and warmth and the outcomes. AOC = affective organizational commitment.

Thus, the general aim of our studies was to investigate in different social contexts the relationship between the perception of one's supervisor as competent and warm and major organizational outcomes, such as employees' well-being, turnover intentions, citizenship behaviors. Our findings may have important practical implications because the SCM has provided a great

deal of studies showing, for instance, what self-presentation strategies to use to project an impression of warmth or competence (Cuddy et al., 2011), thus producing positive organizational outcomes.

STUDY 1

Participants and Procedure

The survey was conducted in a company in the water service sector. Participants were 108 workers: 76 were employed in white-collar positions, 25 in blue-collar positions, and seven did not declare their role. Among participants, men (n = 76) outnumbered women (n = 28) (four missing data); mean age was 41.95 years (SD = 10.06). For organizational tenure, the most frequently chosen responses were: five years or less (n = 73) and more than 20 years (n = 15).

The study questionnaire was distributed to all the workers of the company by the people in charge of staff training. Participants were required to return the completed questionnaire within 20 days; they were invited to introduce it in boxes located in common areas. Respondents were told that the aim of the study was to analyze the effects of organizational climate on employees' well-being. Participation was voluntary and anonymity was guaranteed. A 40% response rate was obtained. All respondents indicated they had an immediate supervisor.

Measures

Consistent with the conceptual model, the survey included six main measures.

Supervisor's perceived competence (six traits, α = .95). Competence of one's direct supervisor was evaluated with the following six traits (Durante, 2008; see also Fiske et al., 2002): capable, competent, efficient, intelligent, self-assured, skillful. Responses were provided on a 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*very much*) scale.

Supervisor's perceived warmth (six traits, α = .96). Warmth was rated according to the following six traits: agreeable, friendly, good-natured, pleasant, sociable, warm — partly taken from Durante (2008). Responses were anchored by *not at all* (1) and *very much* (7).

Affective organizational commitment (six items, α = .84). Affective commitment was measured using the six AOC items included in the organizational commitment scale developed by Meyer et al. (1993). An item was: "This organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me." Responses were provided on a 1 (*definitely false*) to 7 (*definitely true*) scale, with 4 meaning *neither true nor false*. Higher scores indicate stronger affective commitment.

Citizenship behavior (five items, α = .75). We used five items taken from Gellatly, Meyer, and Luchak (2006). Participants were asked to indicate the extent to which they performed the following citizenship behaviors: (a) persisting with enthusiasm and extra effort on the job; (b) volunteering for tasks not formally included in the workload; (c) helping, cooperating with others; (d) following the rules and procedures of the organization; and (e) endorsing and supporting the organization's goals. These five behaviors correspond to the higher-order factors that express the multiplicity of citizenship behaviors (see Borman & Motowidlo, 1993). Responses

were assessed using the relative percentile method; specifically, participants were invited to indicate whether they performed the behavior described by the item *less than the mean of company's employees* (score 1), *like the mean of company's employees* (score 6), *more than the mean of company's employees* (score 11).

Burnout (*exhaustion*, five items, α = .85; *cynicism*, five items, α = .76). To measure these burnout components, we used the Maslach Burnout Inventory-General Survey (MBI-GS; Schaufeli et al., 1996). Five items assessed the perception of emotional exhaustion, for instance: "I feel exhausted by my work"; five items assessed the cynicism dimension, for instance: "I have become more cynical about whether my work contributes anything." Participants were invited to indicate on a 7-point scale how often they experienced the feelings or opinions described by the item (1 = *never*, 2 = *rarely*/*a few times a year or less*, 3 = *occasionally*/*once a month or less*, 4 = *regularly*/*a few times a month*, 5 = *frequently*/*once a week*, 6 = *very frequently*/*a few times a week*, 7 = *daily*). Measures were presented in the order listed in this section and, as already mentioned, the proactivity scale was inserted between the items of competence and warmth and those of AOC, while the locomotion scale was inserted between the items of AOC and those measuring citizenship behaviors.

Analytic Procedures

The main data analyses in the study included mediation modeling. PROCESS (Hayes, 2013) was used; bootstrapping was applied to examine the significance of indirect effects.

Results

Distinction between Leadership Traits and between Burnout Components

To demonstrate the conceptual distinction between the measures of perceived warmth and competence, CFA was applied (LISREL 8.8; Jöreskog & Sörbom, 2007). A two-factor model was tested, with each construct being measured by three indicators, created applying the method of item random assignment to parcels (Little, Cunningham, Shahar, & Widaman, 2002). As goodness-of-fit indices, we used: the χ^2 statistic, the χ^2/df ratio, the comparative fit index (CFI), and SRMR (the standardized root mean square residual). The two-factor model fit the data well; in fact, although χ^2 was significant, $\chi^2(8) = 20.85$, $p \cong .008$, the χ^2/df index was smaller than 3 (Kline, 1998). Furthermore, CFI was greater than .95 (CFI = .99) and SRMR was lower than .06 (SRMR = .054), these values reflecting an excellent fit (for these rules of thumb, see Morin, Marsh, & Nagengast, 2013). In contrast, the fit indices for the unifactor model showed a bad adaptation to data.[3] Interestingly, the correlation between competence and warmth was high ($\phi = .77$, $p < .001$), but significantly lower than 1; the 95% confidence interval, obtained considering two SEs above and two SEs below the estimated correlation, did not include 1: [.69, .85]. Thus, warmth and competence items assessed two distinct constructs.

For the burnout components, the two-factor model showed an excellent fit: $\chi^2(1) = 1.41$, $p = .24$; CFI = 1.00; SRMR = .010 (two parcels were formed for each component). Furthermore,

the correlation between the two factors, significantly lower than 1 ($\phi = .57$, $p < .001$, 95% confidence interval [.41, .73]), indicated that items measured distinct constructs.

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

Means, standard deviations, and correlations between all the constructs used in the study are reported in Appendix (Table A) (for each construct the mean of items was calculated). From the means, it appears that one's direct supervisor was perceived as competent and warm. Furthermore, the mean of AOC was higher — though only slightly — than the scale mid-point, indicating a certain amount of attachment to the organization. Participants also declared that they were more prosocial than the mean of other workers in the organization, and experienced exhaustion and disaffection with work only occasionally. Correlations showed that both competence and warmth were positively related to AOC, which, in turn, was related to all the outcomes, especially to cynicism (negatively). Competence and warmth were not correlated with the outcomes, but, according to the most recent approaches to mediation (e.g., Hayes, 2013), a significant total effect is not a prerequisite when searching for evidence of indirect effects. The lack of a total effect may depend on many different factors, such as the low reliability of the measures used or the presence of multiple indirect effects — some positive and some negative.

Test of Mediation Models

We evaluated the mediation model (Figure 1), for each of the outcomes: exhaustion, cynicism, and OCB. The PROCESS macro was applied, and bootstrapping was used to test the significance of the indirect effects (10,000 resamples). Findings are shown in Table 1. In the "direct and indirect effects" column, the following effects are reported (unstandardized regression coefficients): those of the independent variables (leader's perceived competence and warmth) on the mediator (AOC; a_1 and a_2 in Figure 1), which are the same in all the three models (exhaustion, cynicism, and OCB models); the effects of the independent variables on the outcome after controlling for the mediator (direct effects; c_1' and c_2' in Figure 1); the effect of the mediator on the outcome after controlling for the independent variables (b in Figure 1); and, finally, the indirect effects of the independent variables on the outcome via the mediator ($a_1 \times b$ and $a_2 \times b$, Figure 1). In the "total effect" column, the total effect of the independent variables is reported.

As it appears from Table 1, Hypothesis 1 was only partially confirmed; in fact, only perceived competence of one's supervisor, but not perceived warmth, was positively related to AOC. As expected, AOC was, in turn, negatively related to both components of burnout (Hypothesis 2a), and positively related to organizational citizenship behaviors (Hypothesis 3a), these associations of AOC being significant also when the effects of leadership attributes were controlled. Finally, perceived competence of one's supervisor was negatively related to feelings of exhaustion and cynicism and positively related to citizenship behaviors through the mediation of AOC. In all three cases, the 95% bias-corrected CI did not include zero. The indirect effect was, in contrast, never significant when perceived warmth was at play (see Table 1). Thus, Hypotheses 2b and 3b were supported for perceived competence but not for perceived warmth.

TABLE 1
Direct and indirect effects of supervisor's perceived competence and warmth in Study 1 (N = 108)

		Direct and indirect effects	Total effect	Bias-corrected confidence interval (95%)
Competence to AOC	(a_1)	.25*		
Warmth to AOC	(a_2)	.03		
Competence to exhaustion	(c_1')	.06	–.02	
Warmth to exhaustion	(c_2')	–.09	–.10	
AOC to exhaustion	(b)	–.30**		
Competence to exhaustion via AOC	($a_1 \times b$)	–.08		[–.20, –.01]
Warmth to exhaustion via AOC	($a_2 \times b$)	–.01		[–.09, .07]
Exhaustion R^2 = .11**				
Competence to cynicism	(c_1')	–.05	–.20	
Warmth to cynicism	(c_2')	.10	.08	
AOC to cynicism	(b)	–.58***		
Competence to cynicism via AOC	($a_1 \times b$)	–.15		[–.32, –.01]
Warmth to cynicism via AOC	($a_2 \times b$)	–.02		[–.16, .14]
Cynicism R^2 = .34***				
Competence to OCB	(c_1')	.04	.11	
Warmth to OCB	(c_2')	–.02	–.01	
AOC to OCB	(b)	.28**		
Competence to OCB via AOC	($a_1 \times b$)	.07		[.01, .21]
Warmth to OCB via AOC	($a_2 \times b$)	.01		[–.06, .10]
OCB R^2 = .09*				

Note. Unstandardized regression coefficients are reported. AOC = affective organizational commitment; OCB = organizational citizenship behavior. For a_1, a_2, b, c_1', c_2', see Figure 1.
* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Regarding the effect sizes, the amount of variance of the outcome explained by the model was from small to medium for exhaustion (R^2 = .11, f^2 = .12) and OCB (R^2 = .09, f^2 = .10), and large for cynicism (R^2 = .34, f^2 = .51). As for the indirect effects, PROCESS generates several effect size indicators (Hayes, 2013). We used the completely standardized indirect effect (ab_{cs}), which is not affected by sample size and makes comparisons possible across studies in which different metrics are used. The completely standardized indirect effect for competence was significant across all the outcomes: for exhaustion, ab_{cs} = –.06, 95% bootstrap CI [–.15, –.01]; for cynicism, ab_{cs} = –.12 [–.24, –.01]; and, for OCB, ab_{cs} = .06 [.01, .16].

Discussion

Our findings add new evidence to the already rich literature showing that affective organizational commitment is related to positive outcomes for both employees and the whole or-

ganization. They also show that the perception of one's supervisor as competent, intelligent, and self-assured is related to positive feelings toward the organization, which, in turn, are related to lower burnout and prosocial behaviors. Probably, supervisor competence is regarded as an organizational resource allowing the satisfaction of basic needs, such as the needs for competence and autonomy in the performance of one's job. In addition, supervisor competence may provide workers with human and cultural capitals (relational cohesion theory; Yoon & Lawler, 2006). Probably, workers reciprocate these benefits by developing organizational commitment which leads to citizenship behaviors, and has buffering effects on job-related strain. Using longitudinal or experimental designs, future research should test the mediation role that the satisfaction of basic needs has in the relationship between the attribution of competence to leaders and AOC.

Leader trait theories (see Bass & Bass, 2008) have distinguished between leader traits related to task competence — such as conscientiousness and openness to experience — and leader traits related to interpersonal capacities — such as agreeableness and extraversion (see the Big Five personality traits; Costa & McCrae, 1992). Regarding this distinction, it has been found that leader's conscientiousness (one's supervisor is perceived as dutiful, dependable, and achievement-oriented) is the most effective attribute in predicting group performance, while leader's agreeableness (supervisor is perceived as sympathetic, warm, and cooperative) is the most effective attribute in predicting followers' satisfaction with leader (see DeRue et al., 2011). However, in research, leader traits have been associated with the outcomes (burnout and citizenship behaviors) investigated in our studies more rarely than leader behaviors, such as consideration and initiating structure (see the distinction between trait and behavioral theories of leadership; DeRue et al., 2011).

When considering these two dimensions, we notice that our findings concerning competence replicate the positive relationship between initiating structure (a task-oriented leader behavior) and affective commitment (e.g., Lambert et al., 2012), and between initiating structure and OCBs (Lambert et al., 2012; but see Neubert, Kacmar, Carlson, Chonko, & Roberts, 2008, for a nonsignificant relationship between initiating structure and OCBs).[4] With respect to burnout, it has been found that it is negatively related to leaders' consideration (relation-oriented) behaviors, but, differently from our findings, positively related to initiating structure behaviors (Seltzer & Numerof, 1988). Furthermore, research has shown that job satisfaction — negatively correlated with burnout (see Meyer & Maltin, 2010) — is positively associated with both types of leader behaviors, but more so with consideration than initiating structure (Blickle et al., 2013; the superiority of leaders' relational styles in predicting job satisfaction has also been shown in a meta-analysis reviewing studies on nursing leaders, Cummings et al., 2010). Thus, differently from our findings, only consideration (warmth) behaviors or also consideration behaviors may have beneficial effects on employees' well-being, and the positive effects of consideration also involve OCBs (Lambert et al., 2012) and organizational commitment (Lambert et al., 2012; Lin & Wang, 2012; for the relationship between consideration behaviors — social support — and well-being, see also Barbieri, Dal Corso, Di Sipio, & De Carlo, 2016). Concerning organizational commitment, the only influential leadership style may be leader consideration (Lok, Westwood, & Crawford, 2005).

The different findings could depend on the fact that in the reviewed research the samples used included workers belonging to different organizations and performing different jobs (Study 1 in Lambert et al., 2012; Seltzer & Numerof, 1988), or workers belonging to different organiza-

tions and performing the same job (e.g., Study 2 in Lambert et al., 2012). Instead, our study was conducted in a single organization, where leader competence could be more valued than leader warmth. It should also be born in mind that leader warmth and competence do not fully correspond to leader consideration and initiating structure, respectively; for instance, a supervisor can be perceived as intelligent and competent, but not as engaged in defining roles and maintaining standards of performance (the typical initiating structure behaviors). Thus, to check the findings of Study 1, we replicated the survey in a different organizational context.

STUDY 2

Study 2 was conducted in a major Italian bank. This is an innovative organization which interacts with clients in a novel way. In this case, it is not the client going to the bank, but the bank going to the client. Such a process of approaching clients is accomplished by the figure of the "family banker," a financial promoter who offers support facilitating appropriate financial decisions. The family banker has a personal portfolio of clients and manages business autonomously; he/she is not contractually hired, but works as a freelancer. Their activity requires relational skills and competences in the financial and the banking sectors.

Study 2 was performed on a sample of family bankers. The questionnaire was similar to that of Study 1. Construct validity was evaluated using confirmatory factor analysis, and mediation was tested applying PROCESS and bootstrapping procedures (Hayes, 2013).

Participants and Procedure

Participants were 196 family bankers (171 men, 21 women, 4 missing data). The age groups to which most respondents belonged were 31-40 (39.3%) and 21-30 (33.7%). About half of the participants worked with the bank for 10 years or less, the other half from 11 to more than 20 years. All respondents indicated they had one immediate supervisor.

The questionnaire was distributed by managers during training meetings, and was returned immediately after the meeting. Participation was voluntary and anonymity was guaranteed. Participants were instructed that the aim of the study was to examine the effects of organizational climate on employees' well-being and their behavior.

Measures

To measure *supervisor's perceived competence* and *warmth*, we used the same items of Study 1. Reliability was $\alpha = .92$, for competence, and $\alpha = .95$, for warmth. Regarding *affective organizational commitment* (Meyer et al., 1993), measures were adapted to the specific context, that is, the name of the bank was included in the items, for instance: "I do not feel emotionally attached to [name of the bank]" (reverse scored); reliability was $\alpha = .88$. Two items were used to assess *turnover intentions*, one of them being: "I often think of leaving this bank"; responses were provided on a 1 (*definitely false*) to 7 (*definitely true*) scale, with 4 meaning *neither true*

nor false. Higher scores indicated stronger intentions to leave; correlation was $r = .52$, $p < .001$. For the scale of *citizenship behavior* (Gellatly et al., 2006, see Study 1), reliability was .80. Alphas for *exhaustion* and *cynicism* (Schaufeli et al., 1996) were .84 and .78, respectively.

Measures were presented in the order listed in this section and, to separate the independent variables from the mediator and the mediator from the dependent variables, the proactivity scale was inserted between competence and warmth items and the measure of AOC, while the locomotion scale was inserted between the measure of AOC and that of turnover intentions.

Results

Distinction between Leadership Traits and between Burnout Components

To test the conceptual distinction between the measures of perceived competence and warmth, CFA was applied as in Study 1. The two-factor model showed an excellent fit to data: $\chi^2(8) = 10.51$, $p = .23$; $\chi^2/df = 1.31$; CFI = 1.00; SRMR = .014. Furthermore, the correlation between the two factors was significant ($\phi = .68$, $p < .001$), but lower than 1: the 95% confidence interval was [.64, .72]. Warmth and competence items thus assessed distinct leadership constructs. The unifactor model did not fit the data well (Note 3).

The two-factor model of burnout showed an excellent fit: $\chi^2(1) = 0.71$, $p = .40$; CFI = 1.00; SRMR = .007, with the two factors representing separate constructs: $\phi = .74$, $p < .001$, [.69, .79]. The one-factor model, instead, did not explain the data well (Note 3). Thus, data supported the theoretical distinction between the two burnout components.

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

Means, standard deviations, and correlations between the constructs included in Study 2 are reported in the Appendix (Table B). From the means, it appears that one's direct supervisor was perceived as competent and warm. Affective commitment toward the bank was high and participants considered themselves more prosocial than the mean of family bankers. Regarding burnout, participants only rarely/occasionally experienced emotional exhaustion and disaffection with work. Intentions to leave the bank were low. The correlation between leader traits was rather high, and close to that identified in Study 1. Both traits were significantly correlated with AOC and the outcomes (except for the correlation between warmth and exhaustion). AOC was, in turn, correlated with all the dependent variables, especially with intentions to leave: the focal behavior of this mindset (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001).

Test of Mediation Models

We evaluated the mediation model (Figure 1) for each of the four outcomes: exhaustion, cynicism, OCB, and turnover intentions. PROCESS (Hayes, 2013) was applied, and bootstrapping was used to test the significance of indirect effects (10,000 resamples). As reported in Table 2, only perceived competence of one's direct supervisor was positively related to AOC (Hypothesis 1

TABLE 2
Direct and indirect effects of supervisor's perceived competence and warmth in Study 2 (N = 196)

		Direct and indirect effects	Total effect	Bias-corrected confidence interval (95%)
Competence to AOC	(a_1)	.35***		
Warmth to AOC	(a_2)	.02		
Competence to exhaustion	(c_1')	–.15	–.20*	
Warmth to exhaustion	(c_2')	.00	.00	
AOC to exhaustion	(b)	–.15*		
Competence to exhaustion via AOC	($a_1 \times b$)	–.05		[–.12, –.01]
Warmth to exhaustion via AOC	($a_2 \times b$)	.00		[–.03, .02]
Exhaustion R^2 = .07**				
Competence to cynicism	(c_1')	–.20**	–.34***	
Warmth to cynicism	(c_2')	–.03	–.04	
AOC to cynicism	(b)	–.40***		
Competence to cynicism via AOC	($a_1 \times b$)	–.14		[–.24, –.07]
Warmth to cynicism via AOC	($a_2 \times b$)	–.01		[–.07, .05]
Cynicism R^2 = .33***				
Competence to OCB	(c_1')	–.07	.10	
Warmth to OCB	(c_2')	.09	.10	
AOC to OCB	(b)	.48***		
Competence to OCB via AOC	($a_1 \times b$)	.17		[.08, .29]
Warmth to OCB via AOC	($a_2 \times b$)	.008		[–.06, .08]
OCB R^2 = .20***				
Competence to turnover intentions	(c_1')	.03	–.24*	
Warmth to turnover intentions	(c_2')	–.03	–.04	
AOC to turnover intentions	(b)	–.78***		
Competence to turnover intentions via AOC	($a_1 \times b$)	–.27		[–.44, –.15]
Warmth to turnover intentions via AOC	($a_2 \times b$)	–.01		[–.13, .10]
Turnover intentions R^2 = .48***				

Note. Unstandardized regression coefficients are reported. AOC = affective organizational commitment; OCB = organizational citizenship behavior. For a_1, a_2, b, c_1', c_2', see Figure 1.
* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

was only partially supported); AOC, in turn, was negatively related to turnover intentions and the two facets of burnout, and positively related to prosocial behaviors (Hypotheses 2a, 3a, and 4a were confirmed). In all cases, the mediation effect of AOC in the relationship between competence and the outcome was reliable; in fact, in all cases, the 95% bias-corrected CI did not include zero. No significant effects of perceived warmth were observed (Hypotheses 2b, 3b and 4b

were not confirmed for warmth). Thus, our predictions concerning leader traits were supported for competence but not for warmth.

Regarding effect sizes, the amount of variance of the outcome explained by the model was from small to medium for exhaustion (R^2 = .07, f^2 = .08), medium for OCB (R^2 = .20, f^2 = .25), and large for cynicism (R^2 = .33, f^2 = .49) and turnover intentions (R^2 = .48, f^2 = .92). As to the indirect effect of competence, the completely standardized indirect effect was significant across all the outcomes: for exhaustion, ab_{cs} = –.04, 95% bootstrap CI [–.09, –.01]; for cynicism, ab_{cs} = –.12 [–.19, –.06]; for OCB, ab_{cs} = .11 [.06, .19]; and for turnover intentions, ab_{cs} = –.18 [–.27, –.09].

Finally, to check for the consequences of the conceptual overlap in items measuring different constructs, we replicated the analyses concerning turnover intentions eliminating the AOC item which made reference to the will to remain in the organization ("I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with [name of the bank]"; α for AOC = .86). Findings were fully replicated (R^2 for turnover intentions = .45; AOC's mediation effect in the relationship between competence and turnover intentions = –.25 [–.41, –.13]).

Discussion

Findings of Study 2 replicate those of Study 1: only leader competence showed significant relationships with the other variables, being associated with AOC, prosocial behaviors, reduced burnout, and reduced turnover intentions.[5] Differently from research on leader's behaviors of consideration and initiating structure (e.g., Blickle et al., 2013; Lambert et al., 2012; Seltzer & Numerof, 1988), in this study, warmth (related to consideration) was not associated with AOC and the outcomes. Financial promoters' work requires competence in the financial and banking sectors and a continuous updating in these fields. In a similar context, competent leadership — constantly updating on banking products — may be more influential than leadership favoring interpersonal warmth. Leader warmth may be more effective in workplaces where the transmission of novel competences occurs more rarely, and leadership role is above all that of satisfying the needs for autonomy and relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2008), as it probably happens when nursing leadership is at play (see Cummings et al., 2010).

To establish whether the prevalence of competence over warmth was a consequence of the specific organizations examined or of the cultural stereotype of the effective leader, which is characterized more by agentic (e.g., competent, assertive) than communal (e.g., warm, kind) features (see Eagly & Karau, 2002; Heilman, 2001; Koenig, Eagly, Mitchell, & Ristikari, 2011; for the emotions typically associated with power and status positions, see Brescoll, 2016), we performed a further study. In Study 3, participants were employees from various organizations. Our prediction was that, considering different work contexts, more general findings would be achieved, and both leader competence and leader warmth should be associated with AOC and the outcomes.

STUDY 3

In this survey, students attending research seminars in social psychology were required to recruit people working in different organizations. Each student had to choose six persons,

three males and three females, all belonging to different families and working for different organizations. These persons — individually examined — were required to fill in the research questionnaire. Participation to the survey was voluntary, and anonymity was guaranteed. We collected 252 completed questionnaires; all participants indicated that they had an immediate supervisor.

In Study 3, the questionnaire was similar to those of Study 1 and Study 2. We introduced some minor changes: to replicate findings regarding prosocial behaviors, we used a different measure of OCBs, based on altruism toward individual employees. Further, we tested the burnout hypotheses (2a and 2b) also considering the third component, that is, perceived loss of one's professional efficacy (Schaufeli et al., 1996).

Participants

Respondents were 252 employees: 125 women, 125 men (two missing data); mean age was 37.26 years (*SD* = 12.81). Participants were mostly employed in white-collar (44.8%) or blue-collar (29%) positions; seven were managers. Regarding organizational tenure, the most frequent responses were: five years or less (45.6%) and more than 20 years (17.9%). In about 69% of the organizations, employees were fewer than 200. Each participant belonged to a different organization. Respondents were informed that the aim of the study was to analyze the effects of organizational climate on employees' well-being.

Measures

To assess supervisor's *perceived competence* and *warmth*, we applied the same items used in Studies 1 and 2. Reliability was α = .94, for competence, and α = .95, for warmth. Regarding *affective organizational commitment* (Meyer et al., 1993), we used the following stem sentence: "What is your attitude toward your organization/institution/company?" Participants responded to each item using the 7-step scale anchored by 1 (*definitely false*) and 7 (*definitely true*) (α = .88). Two items were used to assess *turnover intentions* (see Study 2, $r = .78$, $p < .001$); higher scores indicate stronger intentions to leave. *Citizenship behavior* was measured with three altruism statements, taken from Pond, Nacoste, Mohr, and Rodriguez (1997). A sample item was: "I help others who have heavy workloads." On the 7-step scale, higher scores indicated stronger prosocial inclinations (α = .76). Reliabilities for *exhaustion*, *cynicism*, and *perceived reduced efficacy* (burnout) were α = .86, α = .74, and α = .77, respectively. Sample items for reduced efficacy were: "At my work, I feel confident that I am effective at getting things done" (reverse coded), "I can effectively solve the problems that arise in my work" (reverse coded). Measures were presented in the order listed in this section, and, to separate the independent variables from the mediator and the mediator from the outcomes, the scale of self-efficacy (Sherer et al., 1982) was included between the competence and warmth items and those of AOC, while the scale of locomotion was inserted between AOC and the items of intention to leave.

Results

Distinction between Leadership Traits and between Burnout Components

To test the distinction between the measures of perceived competence and perceived warmth, CFA was applied. As in Studies 1 and 2, the two-factor model fit the data well: $\chi^2(8) = 14.94$, $p = .06$; $\chi^2/df = 1.87$; CFI = 1.00; SRMR = .022. Furthermore, the correlation between the two constructs was significant ($\phi = .64$, $p < .001$), but lower than 1 — the 95% confidence interval being [.56, .72]. Warmth and competence were thus distinct leadership constructs. The unifactor model did not fit the data well (data available on request from the corresponding author).

The three-factor model of burnout showed an excellent fit: $\chi^2(6) = 8.44$, $p = .21$; $\chi^2/df = 1.41$; CFI = 1.00; SRMR = .024, with the three factors representing separate constructs; the correlations between exhaustion and cynicism ($\phi = .62$, $p < .001$, [.50, .74]) and that between cynicism and reduced efficacy ($\phi = .31$, $p < .001$, [.15, .47]) were, in fact, significant, but lower than 1. For exhaustion and reduced efficacy, the correlation ($\phi = .10$) was not different from zero. The alternative one-factor model and the three bi-factor models — the latter being obtained from the combination of exhaustion and cynicism, exhaustion and reduced efficacy, cynicism and reduced efficacy in the same factor — did not fit the data well (data available from the corresponding author).

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

Means, standard deviations, and correlations between the constructs are reported in the Appendix (Table C). From the means, it appears that one's direct supervisor was perceived as more competent than warm. Affective organizational commitment was high, and participants were inclined to support and help other employees (OCB). Regarding burnout, respondents only occasionally experienced emotional exhaustion and disaffection with work; perceptions of reduced professional efficacy were occasional to rare. The intentions to leave the organization were rather low. As to the correlations between the constructs, both leader competence and leader warmth were reliably correlated with AOC and the outcomes (only the correlation between competence and OCB was nonsignificant). AOC — the mediator in our model — was correlated with all the outcomes, especially with turnover intentions and cynicism, as found in Study 2.

Test of Mediation Models

The mediation model of Figure 1 was tested for each of the five outcomes: the three components of burnout, OCB, and turnover intentions. PROCESS (Hayes, 2013) was applied, and bootstrapping was used to evaluate the indirect effects (10,000 resamples). From Table 3, it appears that not only supervisor's competence, but also warmth was positively associated with AOC, which, in turn, was negatively associated with all the components of burnout and turnover intentions; AOC, in addition, was positively associated with prosocial behaviors (Hypothesis 1,

TABLE 3
Direct and indirect effects of supervisor's perceived competence and warmth in Study 3 (N = 252)

		Direct and indirect effects	Total effect	Bias-corrected confidence interval (95%)
Competence to AOC	(a_1)	.16*		
Warmth to AOC	(a_2)	.37***		
Competence to exhaustion	(c_1')	–.00	–.04	
Warmth to exhaustion	(c_2')	–.08	–.17*	
AOC to exhaustion	(b)	–.22***		
Competence to exhaustion via AOC	($a_1 \times b$)	–.04		[–.09, –.005]
Warmth to exhaustion via AOC	($a_2 \times b$)	–.08		[–.15, –.03]
Exhaustion R^2 = .10***				
Competence to cynicism	(c_1')	–.13*	–.20**	
Warmth to cynicism	(c_2')	–.01	–.16**	
AOC to cynicism	(b)	–.40***		
Competence to cynicism via AOC	($a_1 \times b$)	–.07		[–.13, –.006]
Warmth to cynicism via AOC	($a_2 \times b$)	–.15		[–.23, –.09]
Cynicism R^2 = .31***				
Competence to RPE	(c_1')	–.12**	–.15**	
Warmth to RPE	(c_2')	.04	–.02	
AOC to RPE	(b)	–.17***		
Competence to RPE via AOC	($a_1 \times b$)	–.03		[–.06, –.004]
Warmth to RPE via AOC	($a_2 \times b$)	–.06		[–.11, –.03]
RPE R^2 = .13***				
Competence to OCB	(c_1')	–.01	.02	
Warmth to OCB	(c_2')	–.01	.07	
AOC to OCB	(b)	.21***		
Competence to OCB via AOC	($a_1 \times b$)	.03		[.004, .08]
Warmth to OCB via AOC	($a_2 \times b$)	.08		[.04, .13]
OCB R^2 = .08***				
Competence to turnover intentions	(c_1')	–.01	–.15	
Warmth to turnover intentions	(c_2')	.01	–.30***	
AOC to turnover intentions	(b)	–.85***		
Competence to turnover intentions via AOC	($a_1 \times b$)	–.14		[–.27, –.01]
Warmth to turnover intentions via AOC	($a_2 \times b$)	–.31		[–.45, –.20]
Turnover intentions R^2 = .47***				

Note. Unstandardized regression coefficients are reported. AOC = affective organizational commitment; OCB = organizational citizenship behavior; RPE = reduced professional efficacy. For a_1, a_2, b, c_1', c_2', see Figure 1.
* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

and Hypotheses 2a, 3a, and 4a were fully supported). The mediation effect of AOC in the relationship between the two leader traits and the outcome was always significant: in all cases, the 95% bias-corrected CI did not include zero (Hypotheses 2b, 3b, and 4b were confirmed). Thus, in this study, the predictions regarding the two leader traits were confirmed for both competence and warmth. Interestingly, findings did not change when participants' gender was introduced in each of the five mediation models as a covariate — competence and warmth were effective leader characteristics for both male and female employees (data are available on request from the corresponding author).

Regarding effect sizes, the amount of variance of the outcome explained by the model was from small to medium for exhaustion (R^2 = .10, f^2 = .11), reduced professional efficacy (R^2 = .13, f^2 = .15), and OCB (R^2 = .08, f^2 = .09), and was large for cynicism (R^2 = .31, f^2 = .45) and turnover intentions (R^2 = .47, f^2 = .89). As to the indirect effects of competence and warmth, the completely standardized indirect effect (ab_{cs}) was significant across all the outcomes.[6]

Finally, we replicated the analyses relative to turnover intentions eliminating the AOC item which made reference to the will to remain in the organization (α for AOC was .87). After controlling for this overlap of measures, the mediation effect of AOC remained significant: for competence, –.14 [–.25, –.02]; for warmth, –.30 [–.43, –.20].

Discussion

Findings of Study 3 thus show that, when a variety of organizations is considered, also leader's warmth — his/her reliability and sociability — is positively associated with employees' attitudes and well-being. Thus, the prevalence of competence over warmth, observed in Studies 1 and 2, did not derive from the representation that leadership is effective if characterized in masculine terms (i.e., more agentic than communal; see Koenig et al., 2011). The prevalence of competence probably derived from the specific characteristics of the organizations examined which required high competence levels from supervisors. It is interesting to note how for males and females alike both competence and warmth were effective leadership attributes.

General Discussion

In the current work, perceived competence and warmth — the basic dimensions of social judgment (see the SCM; Fiske et al., 2002) — have been used as leader attributes. In our studies, we discovered that the perception of one's supervisor as competent, intelligent, capable, and self-assured is linked to key organizational outcomes: lower burnout, more frequent citizenship behaviors (Studies 1-3), and weaker intentions to leave (Studies 2 and 3). These competence/outcome connections are mediated by affective organizational commitment. It is likely that social exchange processes (Blau, 1964) may be at stake. A competent management style may lead to the satisfaction of basic needs (SDT; Ryan & Deci, 2008) and may provide employees with human, social, and cultural capitals (Yoon & Lawler, 2006). Employees reciprocate these benefits identifying with the organization (AOC), not leaving it, and implementing prosocial behaviors. Furthermore, affective commitment, presenting buffering effects, makes workers less

vulnerable to burnout. Future research should test the role that the satisfaction of basic needs (for a first study, see Falvo, Capozza, Di Bernardo, & Manganelli, 2016) and the attainment of human, social, and cultural capitals have in the relationship between the two leader traits and the outcomes.

To evaluate whether our findings are coherent with previous research, we have considered two leadership behaviors — initiating structure and consideration — which are, respectively, associated with traits related to competence and traits related to interpersonal skills (DeRue et al., 2011). Findings of studies based on initiating structure and consideration show that: (a) not only initiating structure but also consideration is positively related to AOC and citizenship behaviors (e.g., Lambert et al., 2012); (b) consideration — but not initiating structure — is negatively related to burnout (Seltzer & Numerof, 1988). As to job satisfaction, which is (negatively) related to burnout (e.g., Myhren, Ekeberg, & Stokland, 2013; Rosales, Labrague, & Rosales, 2013), research has shown that it is better predicted by perceived consideration than by initiating structure (see Blickle et al., 2013; Cummings et al., 2010). Thus, not only task-focused leader behaviors (competence), but also person-focused leader behaviors (warmth) show significant relationships with organizational outcomes (see also the meta-analysis by Ceri-Booms, Curşeu, & Oerlemans, 2017). Results of Study 3 are consistent with these general findings. In Study 3, in fact, we found that not only leader competence but also leader warmth was associated with employees' affective commitment, their attitudes, and well-being. Interestingly, the influential role of warmth in Study 3 is contrary to the position that only leader competence — or mainly leader competence — should be associated with organizational outcomes, due to the cultural stereotype of the effective leader, which is mainly characterized by masculine (agency) attributes (see Koenig et al., 2011).

We believe that the different findings across the different studies are due to the different organizational contexts and the kind of jobs participants held, something that reminds the "situational" or "contingency" leadership perspective (Vroom & Jago, 2007; for the effects of leadership traits across organizations and jobs, see Morgeson & Humphrey, 2008; for the effects of leadership behaviors across types of team, see Ceri-Booms et al., 2017). The duties of a financial promoter, for instance, require a frequent reference to competent and informed supervisors. In Study 3, where the majority of respondents were white-collar and blue-collar employees working in the industry or service sectors, not only a competent but also a warm guidance was associated with positive outcomes. In a study performed in an engineering industry (respondents were metal workers), only leader warmth was related to organizational commitment, while leader competence was fully ineffective (Falvo et al., 2016).[7] Interestingly, in this study, participants were all males, and so were probably their leaders; because of these factors, the authors should have observed a preference for masculine — rather than feminine — leadership, with competence more influential than warmth (see Koenig et al., 2011). The fact that the factory was going through a period of crisis (many accidents were occurring at work) probably led to value a leadership characterized by warm attitudes (for the organizations' tendency to assign leadership positions to women in times of crisis — the glass cliff effect — see Ryan et al., 2016).

But, is it useful to adopt the warmth/competence dichotomy (Stereotype Content Model) in the leadership research, characterized by a proliferation of theories and constructs (see Avolio, 2007)? We think so. First, authors of meta-analyses tend to categorize the different forms of leadership based on tasks or relationships (see Ceri-Booms et al., 2017; Cummings et al., 2010;

DeRue et al., 2011, the last paper also makes reference to change-oriented leaders). Thus, using competence and warmth — or other similar dichotomies, such as agency/communion (see Eagly & Karau, 2002, and the recent model by Abele & Wojciszke, 2014) — means using the superordinate categories that include only partially different concepts of leadership.

Second, research on leader traits is often based on the five factors of personality (Costa & McRae, 1992). However, it has been demonstrated that the Big Five express two higher-order factors, which reflect the basic distinction between being characterized by warmth/communion or competence/agency (Digman, 1997; see also Blackburn, Renwick, Donnelly, & Logan, 2004). Once again, we can conclude that the use of the SCM dichotomy offers a more parsimonious representation of leader attitudes.

Finally, research originated from the SCM has provided findings which can be profitably applied to the leadership domain. It has been found, for instance, that an impression of warmth is more easily lost and more hardly regained than an impression of competence (see Cuddy et al., 2011). Furthermore, research has investigated what behaviors elicit an image of warmth or an image of competence. In this respect, it has been observed that an impression of warmth can be elicited by behaviors of help, or body language, such as smiling or body orientation toward others. An impression of competence can be elicited by assuming "power poses," that is, showing expansive non-verbal behaviors, such as taking up more space, or keeping limbs open (for a review, see Cuddy et al., 2011). Interestingly, the adoption of "power poses" also enhances the feelings of power and one's tolerance for risk (Carney, Cuddy, & Yap, 2015). Thus, leaders can be taught how to manage the impression they convey to followers. Considering an extension of the stereotype content model (the BIAS map; Cuddy et al., 2007), we can also formulate predictions about how leader warmth and competence may shape followers' emotions and behaviors. A combination of warmth and competence could, for instance, elicit admiration, this emotion leading to both active facilitation and readiness in responding to supervisor's requests. Future research should test these emotional and behavioral consequences of leader competence and warmth.

In all three studies, we found that perceived competence and warmth were highly intercorrelated. This result suggests a halo effect (Rosenberg et al., 1968): perceivers use the information about one dimension to make a corresponding — positive or negative — evaluation about the other. As already mentioned, it has been found that the halo effect entails situations involving a single individual; in a comparison between two or more individuals, a negative relationship between warmth and competence is observed (see, e.g., Kervyn et al., 2009). It is likely that, in organizational settings, judgments of warmth and competence about one's supervisor will not involve a comparative context, thus showing a halo and not a contrast effect.

We thus observed that, in certain organizational settings, competence prevails over warmth (Studies 1 and 2); in other settings, warmth prevails over competence (Falvo et al., 2016); when many organizational contexts and jobs are included in the sample (Study 3) both leader competence and leader warmth are associated with positive organizational outcomes. From a practical point of view, organizations should choose supervisors that are both competent and capable of creating positive social relationships. Our research, in fact, shows that leader competence and leader warmth can be unrelated — but never negatively related — to positive organizational outcomes. When supervisors are women, who generally have a harder time than men in evoking respect and admiration from followers, evidence of competence — in addition to

warmth — can be a legitimizing factor of a leadership position, in male-dominated occupations (see Vial, Napier, & Brescoll, 2016).

Regarding limitations, a weakness of our studies is their cross-sectional design, which does not allow a clear temporal ordering of the causal variables. In future research, our mediation model should be tested using longitudinal designs. Future research should also consider other outcomes. Leader's perceived competence could, for instance, mobilize the acceptance of organizational changes, and both leader's perceived competence and leader's perceived warmth could promote employees' work engagement and job satisfaction. Finally, research is needed where leader competence and warmth are associated with objective measures of the outcomes, such as objective measures of performance or absenteeism (see Falco et al., 2013), and physiological measures of work-related stress.

NOTES

1. Perception of loss of one's professional efficacy is the third burnout component.
2. In Study 3, nine items from the self-efficacy scale, elaborated by Sherer et al. (1982; see the Italian adaptation by Pierro, 1997), were used instead of the proactivity scale.
3. Fit indices for the unifactor model, in this analysis and the analysis related to burnout, are available on request from the corresponding author (see also Study 2).
4. In Lambert et al.'s (2012) study, however, only the curvilinear, not the linear, relationship, between initiating structure and OCBs was significant, indicating that, when the initiating structure was high, OCBs decreased.
5. The stronger relationship of leader competence with cynicism than with exhaustion (see also Study 1) is in line with the job-demand/job-resource model of burnout (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007), according to which job resources (e.g., supervisor's support) are mainly related to (lower) cynicism, and job demands (e.g., workload, work-home interference) are mainly related to exhaustion.
6. In all cases the 95% bootstrap confidence interval for ab_{cs} did not include zero.
7. It is worth noting that, in Falvo et al.'s (2016), employees ascribed a similar level of competence and warmth to their supervisor; however, only leader warmth was associated with employees' attitudes and behaviors. This finding weakens a possible interpretation of the influence of leader warmth in Study 3: the effectiveness of warmth could derive from the fact that supervisors were regarded as less warm than competent (see Appendix, Table C), and, thus, from a weaker satisfaction of the need for a supportive guidance. Falvo et al.'s study shows that leader warmth may be effective also when there is not a differential attribution of competence and warmth to leaders. (We thank an anonymous reviewer for having suggested this alternative interpretation of findings in Study 3).

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APPENDIX

Descriptive Statistics and Zero-Order Correlations across the Three Studies

TABLE A
Descriptive statistics and zero-order correlations between the constructs of Study 1 (N = 108)

	M	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Competence	4.97	1.61	(.95)					
2. Warmth	4.63	1.60	.73***	(.96)				
3. AOC	4.31	1.39	.32**	.25**	(.84)			
4. OCB	8.01	1.35	.12	.08	.30**	(.75)		
5. Emotional exhaustion	3.17	1.33	–.11	–.14	–.32**	.01	(.85)	
6. Cynicism	2.72	1.38	–.16	–.08	–.58***	–.29**	.50***	(.76)

Note. AOC = affective organizational commitment; OCB = organizational citizenship behavior. Reliabilities are indicated in parentheses.
** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

TABLE B
Descriptive statistics and zero-order correlations between the constructs of Study 2 (N = 196)

	M	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Competence	5.30	1.18	(.92)						
2. Warmth	5.17	1.45	.62***	(.95)					
3. AOC	5.33	1.27	.34***	.22**	(.88)				
4. OCB	7.82	1.40	.15*	.16*	.44***	(.80)			
5. Emotional exhaustion	2.82	1.15	–.21**	–.14	–.22**	–.21**	(.84)		
6. Cynicism	2.57	1.14	–.38***	–.27***	–.53***	–.31***	.59***	(.78)	
7. Turnover intentions	2.31	1.44	–.23**	–.17*	–.69***	–.40***	.38***	.53***	(.52)

Note. AOC = affective organizational commitment; OCB = organizational citizenship behavior. Reliabilities are indicated in parentheses; for turnover intentions the correlation between the two items is reported.
* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

TABLE C
Descriptive statistics and zero-order correlations between the constructs of Study 3 ($N = 252$)

	M	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Competence	5.17	1.52	(.94)							
2. Warmth	4.37	1.60	.60***	(.95)						
3. AOC	5.60	1.49	.40***	.50***	(.88)					
4. OCB	5.79	1.03	.10	.12*	.29***	(.76)				
5. Emotional exhaustion	3.43	1.34	–.16**	–.22***	–.30***	–.08	(.86)			
6. Cynicism	2.89	1.27	–.35***	–.34***	–.54***	–.22***	.47***	(.74)		
7. Reduced professional efficacy	2.48	0.90	–.27***	–.18**	–.32***	–.36***	.06	.23***	(.77)	
8. Turnover intentions	3.24	1.85	–.28***	–.34***	–.69***	–.17**	.33***	.58***	.21**	(.78)

Note. AOC = affective organizational commitment; OCB = organizational citizenship behavior (altruism). Reliabilities are indicated in parentheses; for turnover intentions the correlation between the two items is reported.
* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.