



How *Feminine* is the Female Advantage? Incremental validity of gender traits over leader sex on employees' responses

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ABSTRACT

We address complexities on gender role theory and trait analyses of leadership to explain how sex and gender interrelate to produce asymmetric effects on different leadership outcomes (i.e., positive attitudes vs. evaluations). In three studies across different set-ups, gender traits demonstrated incremental validity over sex on employees' positive attitudes (e.g., satisfaction, loyalty). For evaluations (e.g., perceived effectiveness), gender traits had generally weaker effects and in some cases predicted effectiveness more for stereotypical leaders, in line with role-congruency predictions. Penalties for counter-stereotypical behavior were weaker for female than male actual leaders, pointing to mitigated effects of role congruity prescriptions on female leaders' evaluations. Remarkably, agency did not correlate more strongly than communion with any leadership effect. These findings underscore the relevance of (female *and* male) leaders' communion to improve followers' positive attitudes -but not evaluations- and call for an updated perspective about the complex influences of gender on leadership beyond the oversimplified *female* advantage approach.

Since early “female advantage” proposals over 30 years that women have superior leadership styles than men (Helgesen, 1990; Loden, 1985), the claim that women are better leaders has been gaining momentum both in the popular press (*New York Times*, 2009; *The Daily Mail*, 2010) and academic research (e.g., Carter, Simkins, & Simpson, 2003; Krishnan & Park, 2005). Driven by this assumption, theoretical and empirical progress in this field has undergone substantial development, with a rich body of research demonstrating that female leaders display to a greater extent styles that are associated with performance, such as people orientation, emotional intelligence or transformational leadership (see Eagly, Gartzia, & Carli, 2014, for a review). Paying attention to the value of women in leadership constitutes a substantial contribution for gender equality. Yet, its underlying perspective has not questioned sex differences per se and has generally disregarded more complex ways in which gender influence leadership effectiveness.

A particularly influential precursor of the female advantage is *communion* - a set of stereotypically feminine personality traits that have traditionally been more desirable in women than in men (Bem, 1974; Spence & Helmreich, 1978). This dimension of personality includes traits such as being empathetic, sociable, understanding or caring and is developed during an individual lifetime as a result of gender roles, becoming central to people's (and particularly women's) self-concept and the way they behave in several life dimensions

(Turner, 1987). In the opposite side, *agency* includes traits such as being independent, ambitious or assertive and captures socially desirable traits for men. Given the great relevance of agency and communion for men's and women's identity and behavior (Bem, 1974; Spence, Helmreich, & Stapp, 1974; Wood & Eagly, 2010), their potential influence on leadership is noteworthy. However, a theoretical perspective focused on how gendered traits of leaders influence employees is missing.

In parallel to gender studies, leadership research has long emphasized the “critical role of traits in effective leadership” (Northouse, 2016; p. 20) and has accounted for the importance of personality traits of leaders (Judge, Bono, Illies, & Gerhardt, 2002). However, trait theories have not seriously considered leadership traits from a gender perspective and have failed to delimit an integrative list of gender traits that can be generalized to both male and female leaders, which can bring new understandings to the field. We build on this long-standing scholarship on leadership traits to extend it with gender insights. Addressing this approach is a worthy endeavor if we take into account that even in the most economically developed cultures, men's scores in personality dimensions related to communion such as agreeableness, warmth, openness to feelings, extraversion and conscientiousness continue to be limited compared to those of women (Schmitt, Realo, Voracek & Allik, 2008; Costa, Terracciano & McCrae, 2001). These

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asymmetries are also captured in endorsement of the overarching dimensions of communal and agentic traits (Abele & Wojciszke, 2007), where differences in communion favoring women are still prevalent (Gartzia & van Engen, 2012; Twenge, 1997; Wood & Eagly, 2010).

Following previous research underscoring the relevance of communion in situations where the observed actor (e.g., a leader) and the recipient (e.g., an employee) are mutually connected regardless of sex (Abele & Wojciszke, 2007), we argue that leaders' gender traits will be more important than leader sex in creating positive responses from employees (i.e., satisfaction, trust or loyalty). This approach would shed light on specific uncontested questions within the social role theory perspective (Eagly & Johnson, 1990; Eagly & Karau, 2001): Are sex and gender traits redundant factors in producing positive responses from employees? Is the so-called “female” advantage restricted to endorsement of communal traits? Pursuing a richer understanding of these associations would also shed light on the uncontested association between personality traits and leadership outcomes.

Importantly, leaders do not only need to generate positive responses from employees and make employees feel emotionally attached to them; subjective evaluations about leaders are also important determinants of leadership (Avolio, Walumbwa, & Weber, 2009; Bass, 1990). Indeed, leadership research often relies on supervisors' subjective ratings of the leader's impact on an organization as an indicator of leadership effectiveness (e.g., Bass & Yammarino, 1991; Nilsen & Campbell, 1993). In these broader evaluations, employees should care less about the interpersonal orientation of the leader. For instance, employees perceive a leader as effective when they feel confident that this leader would be effective in meeting job-related needs (Bass & Avolio, 1997). Likewise, employees perceive that leaders are powerful when they believe that leaders have control over resources (Rothman, Wheeler-Smith, Wiesenfeld, & Galinsky, 2014). Consistent with gender-role congruency theory (Eagly, Makhijani, & Klonsky, 1992), we contend that these responses are more likely to be influenced by stereotypical beliefs about leaders and thus sex rather than gender is likely to become a relevant variable of analysis. Consistent with gender-role congruency theory, sex is expected to act as an stimulus variable in a manner that is congruent with gender-role expectations (Eagly et al., 1992; Stewart & McDermott, 2004).

An approach contrasting asymmetric effects of gender and sex on employees' complex range of responses is timely as the leadership literature rarely distinguishes between different types of leadership outcomes (see Hogan, Curphy, & Hogan, 1994 for a comprehensive discussion about categories of leadership effects). Thus, a deeper understanding of how leaders' gendered attributes connect to these dissimilar categories of leadership outcomes can shed light on the long-standing question of how male and female leaders bring different effects to leadership. Previous research underscores how affective, cognitive, and behavioral components of attitudes and evaluations can influence peoples' responses in dissimilar ways (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993; Hogan et al., 1994; Pooper, Mayselless & Castelnuovo, 2000), which can be extended to the different effects that leaders may create in organizations. Yet the gender and leadership literature does not offer a clear understanding of these associations. Responding to these gaps contribute to our current understanding of how sex and gender interrelate to influence effective management.

1. Sex differences in leadership styles and outcomes

During the last decades, claims that women are better leaders than men have become rather popular, often paired with opinions that companies gain economic advantage from hiring women executives. This purported relationship between gender and leadership effectiveness has stimulated interest in the corporate world, where gender constitutes an increasingly valued variable for personnel hiring and training. As evidence of this, several reports developed by consulting firms such as *McKinsey & Company* have repeatedly argued that women

adopt leadership behaviors that are associated with effectiveness more frequently than men and therefore the presence of women in leadership positions boosts companies' competitiveness (e.g., Desvaux & Devillard, 2008). Other claims that there is a female advantage in leadership have also remained popular in the general media and have become widespread to the public interest (e.g., Helgesen, 1990).

The impressive growth of interest in women's contributions to management has also garnered interest by gender research scholars. The attention given to this topic has been somewhat fueled by the growing number of studies confirming the existence of sex differences in a wide range of leadership styles and outcomes (for a review, see Eagly et al., 2014). However, the intersection between gender and leadership stereotypes lead to complex effects that are neither completely positive nor negative in terms of male and female leaders' behavior (Eagly et al., 2014; Eagly & Heilman, 2016). For instance, meta-analytical evidence has shown that sex differences in leadership styles tend to be less gender stereotypic in terms of interpersonal and task orientation in organizational studies (where men and women occupy actual leadership roles) compared to laboratory and assessments studies (i.e., people not selected to occupy leadership roles such as regular samples of employees or students; Eagly & Johnson, 1990). Also, effect sizes for sex differences in leadership styles are generally quite small (Eagly & Karau, 1991). These findings reveal the complexities of the female advantage perspective and point to the need to identify to what extent leaders' sex per se can lead to positive or negative effects in different leadership outcomes.

Notwithstanding certain differences in the styles of male and female leaders, the female “business case” is too often simplified (Eagly, 2016). Consistent with this concern, it has been noted that straightforward assumptions of a female advantage based on the idea that companies have better performance when they have female leaders does not capture the complex reality of gender in management (Eagly et al., 2014). Importantly, the effects of sex have been shown to be at least in part explained by gender-related traits (i.e., communion and agency) in many of these leadership styles (Gartzia & van Engen, 2012; Gartzia & van Knippenberg, 2015; Hackman, Furniss, Hills, & Paterson, 1992; Korabik, 1990; van Engen, 2001). This approach emphasizes the idea that communal features are not restricted to women, alleviating gender stereotypes and implying that not only female but also male leaders can become more “feminine” (i.e., display communal traits) if the necessary conditions are met. To reduce gender stereotypes, the multifaceted effects of sex and gender and particularly the relevance of communal traits on leadership outcomes warrant further consideration.

2. Female or feminine advantage? Incremental validity of gender traits

To some extent, the cumulative emphasis on the existence of a female advantage in leadership qualities arises from the growing interest in the relational and emotional dimensions of leadership and their relationship with female gender roles and values. The nature of work processes has been substantially modified and contemporary definitions of leadership are changing toward a new managerial model in which people management lies at the heart of organizational advancement (Haslam, Reicher, & Platow, 2010). In this new context, the social nature of leadership becomes critical and is highlighted as the key factor that contrasts effective leaders from other forms of high performing individuals (Yukl, 2006; Zaccaro, 2007).

Putting a premium on the relational aspects of leadership is associated much more with femininity-linked than with masculinity-linked roles (Eagly & Johnson, 1990). Indeed, many emerging dimensions of leadership effectiveness (e.g., individualized consideration, ethical, servant or shared leadership) include stereotypically feminine features (Eagly & Carli, 2007) and furthermore clash head-on with stereotypically masculine, agentic features (Gartzia & van Engen, 2012). Such profiles comprise being supportive, collaborative, understanding,

helpful, communicative or empathic. These communal functions of leadership are necessary processes for achieving high organizational and team performance (Avolio et al., 2009) and are markedly associated with stereotypically feminine attributes and functions (Eagly et al., 2014; Gartzia & van Engen, 2012).

Note that we refer to agency and communion as representative gender traits because they comprise two basic dimensions of human behavior that provide representation of socially desirable traits for men and women respectively (Abele & Wojciszke, 2007; Wood & Eagly, 2010). Because the communion-agency distinction is clearly linked to the two fundamental stereotypes of femininity and masculinity, the gender literature has repeatedly underscored the particular, inherently gendered flavor of communal and agentic traits. Indeed, given the strong connections of these dimensions with gender stereotypes, social psychologists have long referred to communal and agentic personality traits as “femininity” and “masculinity” (see Abele, 2003; Eagly & Steffen, 1984; Helgeson, 1994; Spence, Helmreich, & Holahan, 1979). Furthermore, sex differences in the direction of gender stereotypes have traditionally emerged in different evaluations of communion and agency including self-reports (Bem, 1974; Spence et al., 1974; Spence & Buckner, 2000) and perceived traits of others (Gartzia & van Engen, 2012; Kark, Waismel-Manor, & Shamir, 2012; Korabik, 1990; van Engen, 2001).

Note that other dimensions of social perception such as warmth and competence (see Cuddy, Fiske, & Glick, 2008) describe related but different traits than those captured by communion and agency. Although some traits included in the concept of warmth overlap with the stereotypically feminine, communal dimension (e.g., friendly or understanding) others are different in nature (e.g., trustworthy or righteous). In relation to competence, differences are even clearer. Competence refers to skills and talents such as clever, creative, efficient, ingenious or intelligent, which are distinctively different from agency (Cuddy et al., 2008). Importantly, communal and agentic traits better capture the two basic traits of personality that we aim to capture characterized by focus on others' vs. own needs (Abele & Wojciszke, 2007).

If gender traits represent the implicit mechanism why the female advantage happens, they should demonstrate incremental validity over sex on subordinates' responses. In particular, to determine whether gender traits of communion and agency explain unique variance in leadership outcomes beyond the variance that this accounted by leader sex, specific statistical procedures need to be undertaken in which competing variables (e.g., leader sex) are entered first into a regression model followed by a next step in which leader gendered traits are entered as predictors, thus determining if gender traits predict significant and unique variance in the dependent outcome beyond that predicted by leader sex. Because “incremental validity is the most difficult and the most important test to pass” when predicting leadership effects (Antonakis, 2004; p. 174), the confirmation that gender demonstrates incremental validity over sex can be considered a reliable test that a female advantage approach is problematic. This approach is important because a simplistic “female” advantage may actually inflate gender stereotypes and increase the discrimination of women in organizations.

Of the limited studies that have indirectly addressed incremental validity of gender traits over sex in leadership effects, most have focused on leadership styles, rather than employees' responses, suggesting that communion and agency can be relevant predictors of male and female leadership styles beyond sex (see Korabik, 1990). For instance, early studies by Korabik (1982) examined students' self-reports of one's own agency and communion and leadership styles as measured with the LBDQ and found that agency was significantly correlated with initiating structure, whereas communion was significantly related to consideration. Furthermore, gender role orientation was a better predictor of leadership styles than sex. To extend these findings to the workplace, Korabik and Ayman (1987) evaluated male and female middle to upper level managers and found that their self-reported agency was related to

leadership high in initiating structure whereas communion was related to consideration.

These studies were limited to self-reports but more recent studies incorporating employees' assessments of leaders have provided similar findings. Hackman et al. (1992) examined students in first year of management and found a correlation between sex role orientation and leadership styles as measured with the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ; Bass, 1990). Kark et al. (2012) conducted a related study in which 930 Israeli employees were asked to evaluate their managers in relation to gender role orientation (perceived communion and agency) and leadership style as measured with the MLQ. They concluded that androgyny (i.e., a combination of both communal and agentic personality traits) was more strongly related to transformational leadership and followers' identification than other personality dimensions. Their results also showed that communion had generally higher correlations with transformational leadership than agency, both for male and female leaders, and when gendered traits were introduced in a regression analyses, the effect of sex mostly disappeared. In a similar vein, Gartzia and van Engen (2012), examined communion and agency of managers and found that sex differences favoring women in individualized consideration, positive contingent reward and emotional intelligence were at least in part explained by male leaders' lower identification with communal traits.

Whereas these studies provide some evidence that gender traits influence leadership styles, limited empirical research exists looking at the relationship between gender traits and leadership effects on followers. Notwithstanding the fact that what leaders do is important (i.e., leadership styles), the most important challenge of leaders is to generate positive attitudes from employees in order to get results. Many of these relevant outcomes comprise interpersonal and affective components that ultimately capture employees' attachment toward the leader and the organization (Hulin & Judge, 2003; Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). For instance, job satisfaction represents one of the most widely studied job attitudes but it clearly comprises followers' positive reactions toward the leader or the organization, being defined as “a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences” (Locke, 1976; p. 1300).

In this context, leader-follower relationships and the leaders' ability to generate psychological bonds from employees is critical (Avolio et al., 2009; Bass, 1990). Likewise, research has shown the relevance of leaders' ability to be trusted by employees and engender a sense of loyalty to the group and the organization that makes them engage for the benefit of the organization (Chen, Tsui, & Fahr, 2002; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). In many of these leadership functions employees can be generally represented as “concerned recipients” of the leader and thus would display positive or negative attitudes and affective reactions toward the leaders' actions and traits such as trust, loyalty or satisfaction (Bass & Avolio, 1997; Dirks & Ferrin, 2002). Given the interpersonal nature of these responses and the fact that they ultimately capture a positive attitude of the employee toward the leader (see Popper, Mayseless, & Castelnovo, 2000), we refer to this set of leadership outcomes as *positive attitudes*. Note that we use the term attitude because it comprises all affective, cognitive, and behavioral components of potential responses of employees to leaders (Hulin & Judge, 2003; Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996).

Despite the relevance of positive attitudes of employees toward leaders and despite empirical evidence showing that female leaders tend to produce more of these positive responses (for a review, see Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, & van Engen, 2003), research has not been devoted to examining these associations explicitly in relation to gendered traits –agency and communion. This absence is surprising, given the density of research relating broader leader traits and outcomes (see Zaccaro, 2007). Positive responses such as satisfaction, trust and loyalty to the leader have a clearly marked interpersonal component where employees can be represented as recipients of the leader's actions and traits. For instance, employees trust leaders when they feel confident

that this leader would try to treat them fairly (Cook & Wall, 1980; Dirks & Ferrin, 2002). Likewise, satisfaction with the leader comprises beliefs about the extent to which leaders would use methods of leadership that are satisfying for employees (Bass & Avolio, 1997).

In situations in which the observed actor (e.g., a leader) and the recipient (e.g., an employee) are mutually connected the observed actor is likely to be judged in terms of the actor's communion (for a comprehensive review about these effects outside the field of leadership, see Abele & Wojciszke, 2007). From this perspective, sex should not be predictive of these affective outcomes of leadership in the presence of gendered traits of leaders, which would point to a communal boost for both men and women. This trend would confirm previous critics in the field about the relevance of going beyond a sex-difference perspective when examining gender effects (Stewart & McDermott, 2004) and would suggest that gender traits make the most significant, incremental contribution to leadership, thus challenging the “female” advantage approach (Carter et al., 2003; Helgesen, 1990; Krishnan & Park, 2005). It is predicted that:

Hypothesis 1. Leader's gender traits of high communion (low agency) will account for incremental variance in leadership outcomes that reflect follower positive attitudes toward the leader (e.g., trust, loyalty, satisfaction), above and beyond leaders' sex.

3. Multidimensional leadership effects: positive attitudes vs. evaluations

An important issue to consider when examining leadership effectiveness is that the outcomes that leaders can produce on employees vary substantially. For instance, as Judge et al. (2002) put it, considerate leaders that are concerned about relations are more satisfying to followers but not necessarily more effective. Consistent with this approach, there is empirical research showing that cognitive evaluations and affective attraction toward target persons are distinct outcomes and thus differently influenced by various factors such as social comparisons (Herbst, Gaertner, & Insko, 2003) or personal threat (Montoya & Horton, 2004). For instance, the tripartite model of attitudes (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993) differentiates between affective, cognitive, and behavioral attitude components, based on which affective components can be seen as inherently connected to an interpersonal orientation and be determinant in reactions to others.

Note that the key issue here lies in the leadership dimension that is considered. Positive attitudes and responses such as satisfaction, trust and loyalty to the leader have a more marked interpersonal component and thus can be easily conceivable in terms of the specific relationship between the leader and the employee and how these are interdependent (Bass & Avolio, 1997; Cook & Wall, 1980; Dirks & Ferrin, 2002). In these responses, employees can be generally represented as “concerned recipients” of the leader and thus would display reactions toward the leaders' actions based on leaders' interpersonal orientation. For instance, employees only trust leaders who try to treat employees in a fair and sensitive way (Cook & Wall, 1980; Dirks & Ferrin, 2002). Likewise, employees respond more positively about leaders who use methods that are satisfying for them (Bass & Avolio, 1997). Consistent with our predicted incremental validity of gender traits over sex in these attitudinal responses of employees, previous research has shown that in situations in which the observed actor and the recipient are interdependent (e.g., the leader and employee) the observed actor (i.e., the leader) is likely to be judged in terms of communion (Abele & Wojciszke, 2007).

Evaluative perceptions about leaders' effectiveness less directly reflect interpersonal connections between the leader and the employee because such evaluative responses are more clearly detached from the employee's specific needs. For instance, employees perceive a leader as effective when they feel confident that this leader would be competent in meeting job-related needs (Bass & Avolio, 1997). Likewise,

employees perceive that leaders are powerful when they believe that leaders have control over resources (Rothman et al., 2014). In these effectiveness-related evaluations, employees might become more clearly an unconcerned observer than a recipient, resulting in less interest in the extent to which the leader worries about employees (i.e., communion/agency). Although leaders' abilities to respond to organizational goals and be effective can obviously be useful for employees too, note that agency as described in the communion-agency literature only partially captures task orientation in leadership. Agency is represented by traits such as ambitious, competitive, or independent whereas task orientation is represented by leaders' orientation toward specific goal achievements (Bass, 1990; Judge et al., 2002). Drawing from these premises, it is proposed that:

Hypothesis 2. A “feminine” profile with high communion (low agency) will be a stronger positive predictor of positive attitudes of employees toward the leader (e.g., satisfaction, trust, loyalty) than of broader evaluative responses (e.g., perceived effectiveness and perceived power), above and beyond leaders' sex.

4. Communal boost on positive attitudes vs. backlash on evaluations

Our multidimensional model of leadership responses suggests that the processes linking gender to leadership effectiveness have multiple components and cannot be simplified to sex differences in all leadership outcomes. The most important connection between contemporary effective dimensions of leadership and sex differences seems to strive from the association of the former with stereotypically feminine gender roles (communion), so we argued that gender-related dimensions may be more useful than leaders' sex per se to understand gender issues in leadership. Yet, acknowledging the conceptual divergences of sex and gender does not rule out any potential moderating impact of sex in the larger scheme of nomological network. When it comes to evaluative responses, followers might more clearly be influenced by implicit leadership theories and shared beliefs about appropriate leader behaviors and therefore their responses be more clearly affected by those prototypes (Lord, De Vader, & Alliger, 1986). Because gender-role congruent behavior is generally more favorably evaluated (Eagly & Karau, 2001), leadership effects with evaluative components would be more likely to be influenced by role-congruency evaluations.

Effectiveness evaluations are clearly determined by issues of prejudice and discrimination (Eagly et al., 1992; Eagly & Karau, 2001; Rudman & Glick, 2001). Thus, leaders with a highly communal (low agentic) profile should be skilled at sensing and thus responding to their followers' needs and thus be preferred by employees regardless of sex, but not necessarily be seen as more effective at meeting organizational goals. This approach is consistent with the prevalence of masculinity in leadership stereotypes (Koenig, Eagly, Mitchell, & Ristikari, 2011) and the idea that leadership styles associated with a lack of communion (e.g., an authoritative or autocratic style) are rated more unfavorably in terms of negative evaluations when displayed by female supervisors (see Eagly et al., 1992). In other words, evaluative measures of leadership effectiveness might produce a stronger devaluation of leaders' incongruent behavior. Unfortunately, researchers have generally studied each leadership outcomes in isolation without an explicit comparison of their gendered nature.

Implicit in our prediction about asymmetries in the effects of gender in leadership is the assumption that the *backlash* phenomenon (i.e., according to which men and women who violate gender stereotypes systematically receive social and economic penalties; Rudman & Glick, 2001), will only occur in relation to evaluative responses (e.g., perceived effectiveness or perceived power). In relation to the other responses with a positive attitudinal component (e.g., satisfaction or loyalty) communal men should have a feminine advantage too. This prediction is consistent with previous research showing that non-

stereotypical men are more likely to suffer from backlash in relation to evaluative judgements and prejudices (i.e., the extent to which you like or dislike a man) than in relation to actual discrimination (Moss-Racusin, Phelan, & Rudman, 2010). Findings from the Eagly et al.'s (1992) meta-analysis about the evaluations of leaders also suggest that the tendency to favor men over women in leadership evaluations was slightly larger when the outcome variable was for the leader's competence or subjects' satisfaction with the leader rather than perceptions of leadership style. Following this research it is predicted that:

Hypothesis 3. The effect of gender traits will be similar for male and female leaders on generating positive attitudes from employees (H3a). In contrast, leader sex will moderate the effect of gender traits on evaluative outcomes (H3b), such that male leaders will be perceived as less effective than female leaders when displaying high communion (low agency).

5. Summary of studies

The hypotheses were tested in three different studies. The first study examined the predicted effects in a scenario-based experiment in which adults from the general population were asked to indicate the extent to which they would feel comfortable working for a [male/female] communal vs. non-communal leader. For leadership outcomes comprising positive attitudes of employees, we measured expected satisfaction and likelihood to make extra efforts. For evaluations, we measured perceived effectiveness. As an additional indicator of leadership evaluations, participants evaluated perceived *power* of the leader (Rothman et al., 2014). This variable captures the extent to which leaders are perceived as having control of relevant organizational resources, which signals their ability to attain certain key leadership roles and perform managerial functions effectively (Wiesenfeld, Rothman, Wheeler-Smith, & Galinsky, 2011). Study 2 introduced measures of two additional relevant positive attitudes from employees toward the leader: trust and loyalty. Study 2 also introduced variations in our experimental manipulation of gender traits (i.e., contrasting communal and agentic leaders). Finally, Study 3 was implemented with employees from different business settings evaluating their actual male or female leaders. Although the experimental nature of Studies 1 and 2 allowed establishing questions of causality, the fact that the leader-follower relationship was created artificially trades off realism and generalizability to real-life. Study 3 allowed addressing these concerns as well as the examination of leaders' sex, agency and communion as three separate dimensions.

6. Study 1

6.1. Method

6.1.1. Participants and procedure

A paper-and-pencil questionnaire was created and distributed to participants in Spain using one of the following recruitment strategies. First, a snowball sampling procedure was used, whereby 35 undergraduate students in a business administration course passed out one of the two available versions of the questionnaire to a maximum of 6 personal or professional contacts who were older than 18 years of age and employed. In exchange for participation, students were able to participate in preliminary analysis of the data and learn about basic statistical analyses. In order to avoid problems with data collection, students were not penalized or rewarded for the amount of questionnaires completed. 210 questionnaires were distributed among the students, and 160 were returned with completed answers. Additional data were collected at a training activity open to people outside the university whereby 37 people attended and 35 completed the questionnaire. Overall, data were collected from 195 individuals (109 women, 85 men). One participant did not report sex. Respondents'

mean age was 34.09 ($SD = 14.94$). Participants belonged to three main educational backgrounds (15.1% indicated having a technical/engineering background, 38.5% a social/educational background, 33.3% an economic/business background, and the remaining 13.1% indicated belonging to other categories). A between-subjects design was used, with the manipulation of leader communion and sex as the independent variables and leadership evaluations and outcomes as the dependent variables. A 2 (leader sex: male vs. female) \times 2 (leader gender traits: high communion vs. low communion) between-subjects design was therefore implemented.

6.1.2. Materials and measures

6.1.2.1. Gendered traits. Participants were provided with one version of a manipulated scenario, in which they were presented with a brief description of a leader. For the manipulation of sex, we used male and female names respectively (Jon vs. Ana). For gender traits, the description of each leader included an average of seven traits taken from the Personal Attributes Questionnaire (PAQ; Spence & Helmreich, 1978) and the Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI; Bem, 1974; see Appendix 1). For example, leaders were described as low vs. high in communal traits such as being kind, aware of feelings of others or understanding. To maintain a simplified design, agentic traits were not included in our Study 1 manipulation scripts (see Studies 2 and 3).

6.1.2.2. Positive attitudes. We used the subscales of *Satisfaction* and *likelihood* to make *Extra Efforts* from the Multifactorial Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ; Bass & Avolio, 1997). Each dimension was measured with 3 items (sample item for expected satisfaction: "This leader would use methods of leadership which are satisfying"; sample item for likelihood to make extra efforts: "This leader would heighten my desire to succeed"). The coefficient alphas were 0.94 and 0.96 respectively, indicating that reliability was acceptable. The items from both scales formed a coherent scale ($\alpha = 0.97$) and so they were combined for ease of interpretation.

6.1.2.3. Evaluations. To evaluate participants' subjective evaluations of leaders, we used one of the most commonly used scales for perceived leadership effectiveness, namely, the leader *Effectiveness* scale from the Multifactorial Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ; Bass & Avolio, 1997). Participants rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale the extent to which they viewed the leader presented in the scenario as reflecting an effective leader (3 items; sample item: "This leader would be effective in meeting job-related needs"). The coefficient alpha was 0.82, indicating that reliability was acceptable. Participants were also asked to indicate on a scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) to what extent they perceived the leader to have power with five items based on Rothman and cols. (2014; Study 1). An example is "This leader would have control over resources". An appropriate internal consistency rate was found ($\alpha = 0.87$). All the items formed a coherent scale of evaluative outcomes ($\alpha = 0.87$) and so they were combined for ease of interpretation.

6.2. Results

We analyzed gender and sex effects separately for each of the leadership outcomes as well as a combination of these scores for both attitudinal and evaluative outcomes. Because results did not vary substantially, in subsequent analyses we only report the analyses performed with the combined scores (also for Studies 2 and 3). Additionally, we included employee sex as an additional predictor in exploratory analyses, but these resulted in null effects for the interactions of employee sex with our predictors so they were omitted for ease of presentation (also for Studies 2 and 3).

To test **Hypothesis 1**'s prediction that leaders' communion would provide incremental validity over leader sex on attitudinal outcomes, control variables were entered in the first step of a hierarchical

Table 1
Means, standard deviation, and intercorrelations among study variables (Study 1).

	M	s.d.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Participant sex	–	–	1						
2. Participant age	34.09	14.94	–0.13	1					
3. Leader sex	–	–	0.02	0.06	1				
4. Gender traits	–	–	–0.06	0.10	0.05	1			
5. Satisfaction	3.82	1.87	–0.11	0.14	0.08	0.62**	1		
6. Extra effort	3.79	1.82	–0.12	0.17*	0.06	0.63**	0.92**	1	
7. Effectiveness	3.97	1.39	–0.13	0.12	0.03	0.52**	0.89**	0.91**	1
8. Power	4.15	1.05	–0.08	0.09	–0.02	0.14	0.45**	0.45**	0.59**

Note. N = 180; **p < .01; *p < .05; †p < .10; participant sex: 0 = male, 1 = female; leader sex: 0 = male, 1 = female; leader gender: 0 = non-communal, 1 = communal.

regression equation, followed by leaders sex (Step 2), gender traits (Step 3) and finally, the two 2-way interaction term of Gender Traits × Sex (Step 4). Results showed that control variables only accounted for 1% of the variance ($p = .278$) on attitudinal outcomes. Inclusion of the main effect of leader sex did not account for additional variance nor significant main effects, $\beta = 0.33$, $SE = 0.25$, $p = .191$. As expected, however, entry of gender traits in step three accounted for an additional 44% of the variance ($p < .001$). Analysis of the main effects indicated that while gender traits ($\beta = 2.35$, $SE = 0.19$, $p < .001$) were significant predictors of attitudinal outcomes, leader sex was not ($p = .224$). A non-significant change in the variance explained by the addition of the interaction term was observed ($\Delta R^2 = 0.001$, $p = .154$). Means, standard deviations, and correlations are reported in Table 1.

Hypothesis 2 predicted that gender traits would be a stronger positive predictor of attitudinal than evaluative outcomes. To test this, we used path analysis modeling with LISREL 8.8 and maximum likelihood estimates (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 2006). This path analytic technique allows testing the validity of causal inferences for pairs of outcome variables while controlling for the effects of other variables (i.e., leader sex and gender traits). To assess the fit of our path model with the data, we used the following goodness of fit statistics as discussed in the literature (e.g. Bagozzi & Yi, 1988): the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation test (RMSEA), the Norm-Fit Index (NFI), the Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI), and the mean Root Mean Square Residual (RMR) (Fig. 1).

Results revealed significant, positive relationship between gender traits and leadership outcomes ($p < .05$), contrasted to non-significant effects of leader sex (Hypothesis 1). Fig. 2 shows the parameter estimates for the effects of leader characteristics on leadership outcomes. After eliminating non-significant paths to provide the most parsimonious model to the data, analysis of the goodness-of-fit indices showed excellent fit ($\chi^2 = 2.12$, $df = 3$, $CFI = 1.00$, $RMSEA = 0.0$,

$SRMR = 0.03$).

To test **Hypothesis 2**, we compared the relative strength of the path coefficients from gender traits to attitudinal and evaluative outcomes, respectively. Data examples using LISREL path coefficients has shown the appropriateness of comparison of path coefficients when correlations and slopes go parallel and within the same model to derive conclusions on the relative strength of effects (Gierl & Bambauer, 2007). The path coefficient from gender traits to attitudinal outcomes was higher ($\lambda_o = -2.35$) than the path to evaluations ($\lambda_o = -0.79$), lending support to **Hypothesis 2**.

To examine potential moderating effects of leader sex, 2×2 analyses of variance with leader sex and gender traits as independent variables controlling for participants' sex were conducted. In relation to attitudinal responses, results showed that participants anticipated more positive attitudes with the communal ($M = 4.94$, $SD = 1.11$) than non-communal leader ($M = 2.56$, $SD = 1.51$), $F(1, 189) = 156.27$, $p < .001$; Cohen $d = 1.80$; no other effects were significant, thereby confirming **Hypothesis 3a**. In relation to evaluations, results also showed that participants reported more positive evaluations of communal ($M = 4.37$, $SD = 0.95$) than non-communal leaders ($M = 3.58$, $SD = 1.03$), $F(1, 187) = 29.23$, $p < .001$; Cohen $d = 0.80$. This effect was, however, qualified by the significant Leader Gender X Leader Sex interaction effect, $F(1, 187) = 4.35$, $p = .035$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.023$ (see Fig. 2). As predicted, the effect of leader sex favoring women was significant when communion was high $F(1, 105) = 5.34$, $p = .023$, but not when communion was low, $F(1, 83) = 0.008$, $p < .928$. These findings confirm **Hypothesis 3b**.

7. Study 2

Study 2 introduced a more extreme manipulation of gender traits by contrasting communal and agentic traits of leaders. Although agency and communion represent in essence independent dimensions of personality, there is evidence that they are often seen as two different dimensions from the perspective of social judgements (Abele & Wojciszke, 2007; Kaplan & Kaiser, 2003). To capture this view of communion and agency, A 2 (leader sex: male vs. female) × 2 (leader gender: agency vs. communion) design was implemented. Additional measures of followers' attitudinal outcomes (i.e., trust and loyalty) were also used, which allowed for a complementary examination of the way in which gender traits and sex influence leadership effects (Fig. 3).

7.1. Method

7.1.1. Participants and procedure

An online questionnaire was created and distributed to undergraduate students in a statistics course. In exchange for participation, they learned about statistical analyses with survey data. Data were collected from a total of 179 individuals (104 women, 75 men). Respondents' mean age was 22.51 ($SD = 6.75$). A between-subjects design was used, with the manipulation of leader gender traits and sex

$\chi^2 = 2.12$
 $df = 3$
 $CFI = 1.00$
 $NNFI = 1.01$
 $RMSEA = 0.00$ (90% CI [.00
 .11])
 $SRMR = 0.036$

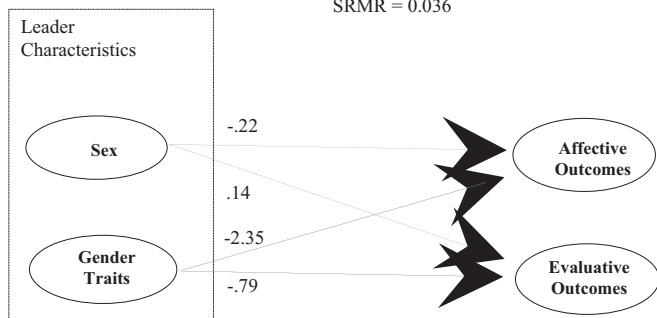


Fig. 1. Path analysis model and results (Study 1).

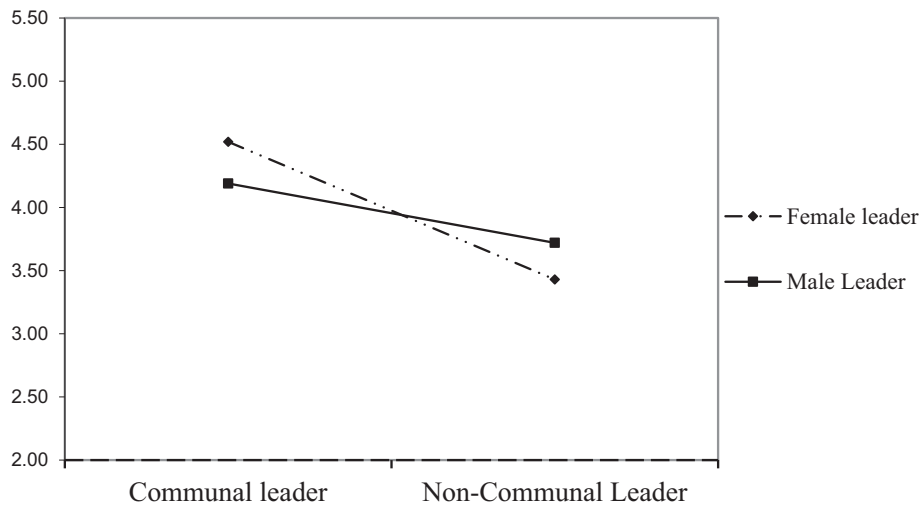


Fig. 2. Evaluative outcomes by experimental condition (Study 1).

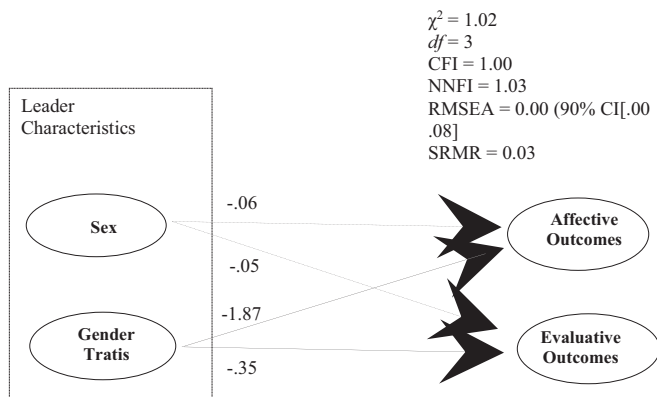


Fig. 3. Path analysis model and results (Study 2).

as the independent variables and leadership evaluations and outcomes as the dependent variables.

7.1.2. Materials and measures

7.1.2.1. Gendered traits. Two scenarios were created for the purposes of the study. Participants were provided with one scenario in which they were presented with a brief description of a leader in terms of either a communal or agentic profile (see Appendix 2). The name clearly differentiated the leader's sex (Jon vs. Ana). The communal male and female leaders were described with communal traits taken from the Personal Attributes Questionnaire (PAQ; Spence & Helmreich, 1978) and the Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI; Bem, 1974), such as being helpful, aware of feelings of others or understanding. The agentic male and female leaders were described with opposed, agentic traits (e.g., they were described as assertive, competitive and independent).

7.1.2.2. Positive attitudes. We used the same subscales of Satisfaction and likelihood to make Extra Efforts from the Multifactorial Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ; Bass & Avolio, 1997) used in Study 1. The coefficient alphas were 0.87 and 0.93 respectively, indicating that reliability was acceptable. In addition, we included trust and loyalty as additional measures of followers' attitudinal reactions to the leaders. Generating followers' trust has repeatedly been viewed as one of the most important leadership functions (for a review, see Dirks & Ferrin, 2002). Likewise, leaders' ability to engender a sense of loyalty to the group and the organization among subordinates makes them engage for the benefit of the supervisor by providing task assistance, obedience,

and sacrifice and is directly associated with enhanced leadership outcomes (Chen et al., 2002). To measure these variables, we used a modified version of the scales of Trust and Loyalty by Cook and Wall (1980), including six items that asked participants to indicate the extent to which they would trust the leader (3 items) and would be loyal to him/her (3 items) on a 5-point Likert-type scale. A sample item for trust is "I feel quite confident that this leader would always try to treat me fairly". A sample item for loyalty is "I would support this leader in almost any emergency". Appropriate internal consistency rates were found for both variables (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.90$ for trust and $\alpha = 0.96$ for loyalty). The items formed a coherent scale ($\alpha = 0.97$) and so they were combined for ease of interpretation.

7.1.2.3. Evaluations. To assess participants' evaluations of leaders, we used the same scale for perceived leadership effectiveness used in Study 1 from the MLQ (Bass & Avolio, 1997). Participants rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale the extent to which they viewed the leader presented in the scenario as reflecting an effective leader (3 items; sample item: "This leader would be effective in meeting job-related needs"). The coefficient alphas was 0.70, indicating that reliability was acceptable. As an additional indicator of leadership evaluations, participants also evaluated perceived power of the leader with the same five items used in Study 1 (Rothman et al., 2014), ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). An appropriate internal consistency rate was found ($\alpha = 0.82$). The eight items formed a coherent scale ($\alpha = 0.79$) and so they were combined.

7.2. Results

A question asking people about the extent to which the leader in the manipulated scenario was perceived as displaying people orientation served as our manipulation check and showed a statistically significant difference, $t(177) = 3.88, p < .001$, between agentic and communal leaders in the expected direction. To test Hypothesis 1's prediction that leaders' communion would demonstrate incremental validity over leader sex, control variables were entered in the first step of a hierarchical regression equation, followed by leaders sex (Step 2), gendered traits (Step 3) and finally, the two 2-way interaction term of Gender Traits \times Sex (Step 4). Regarding attitudinal outcomes, results showed that control variables only accounted for 7% of the variance ($p = .586$). Inclusion of the main effect of leader sex did not account for additional variance nor significant main effects, $\beta = 0.04, SE = 0.22, p = .847$. As expected, however, entry of gender traits in step three accounted for an additional 48% of the variance ($p < .001$). Confirming Hypothesis 1,

Table 2
Means, standard deviation, and intercorrelations among study variables (Study 2).

	<i>M</i>	<i>s.d.</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Participant sex	–	–	1								
2. Participant age	22.5	6.74	–0.12	1							
3. Leader sex	–	–	0.09	–0.07	1						
4. Gender traits	–	–	–0.00	0.02	–0.07	1					
5. Satisfaction	4.05	1.60	–0.05	–0.02	0.03	–0.73**	1				
6. Extra effort	4.21	1.43	–0.12	–0.03	–0.00	–0.61**	0.83**	1			
7. Trust	3.99	1.37	–0.01	0.03	0.06	–0.62**	0.78**	0.79**	1		
8. Loyalty	4.09	1.42	–0.00	–0.05	0.03	–0.63**	0.82**	0.83**	0.86**	1	
9. Effectiveness	4.09	1.05	–0.07	0.04	–0.06	–0.44**	0.76**	0.78**	0.68**	0.76**	1
10. Power	3.96	0.96	–0.06	0.10	–0.05	0.10	0.16**	0.23**	0.16*	0.24**	0.38**

Note. $N = 179$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$; participant sex: 0 = female, 1 = male; leader sex: 0 = female, 1 = male; leader gendered traits: 0 = communal, 1 = agentic.

analysis of the main effects indicated that while gender traits ($\beta = -1.90$, $SE = 0.15$, $p < .001$) were significant predictors of attitudinal outcomes, leader sex was not ($p = .661$). A non-significant change in the variance explained by the addition of the interaction term was observed ($\Delta R^2 = 0.01$, $p = .233$). Means, standard deviations, and correlations are reported in Table 2.

In further inspection of the data, we used path analysis modeling with LISREL 8.8 and maximum likelihood estimates (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 2006) in our two leadership effects: attitudinal and evaluative. Confirming Hypothesis 1, results reveal significant, positive relationship between gender traits and attitudinal outcomes ($p < .05$), contrasted to non-significant effects of leader sex (see Fig. 2). Analysis of the goodness-of-fit indices for our model showed excellent fit ($\chi^2 = 1.03$, $df = 3$, $CFI = 1.00$, $RMSEA = 0.0$, $SRMR = 0.03$). Hypothesis 2 predicted that gender traits would be a stronger positive predictor of attitudinal than evaluative outcomes (i.e., effectiveness). Path coefficients reported in Fig. 2 show that the path coefficient from gender traits to attitudinal outcomes was higher ($\lambda_0 = -1.87$) than the path to evaluations ($\lambda_0 = -0.35$), lending support to Hypothesis 2.

To test Hypothesis 3 that leader sex would only moderate the effect of gendered traits on evaluative outcomes, 2×2 analyses of variance with leader sex and gender traits as independent variables controlling for participants' sex were conducted. As predicted in Hypothesis 3a, no significant moderation effects emerged for attitudinal outcomes. For evaluative outcomes, results showed the above reported effects of gender traits on evaluations $F(1, 171) 6.01$, $p = .003$ but the expected gender-role congruent interaction between leader gender and leader sex failed to emerge, $F(1, 171) = 0.002$, $p < .968$. These findings do not confirm Hypothesis 3b.

8. Study 3

The experimental nature of Studies 1 and 2 served to imply causality in our predictions. Yet, relying on employees' evaluations of scenario-based leaders may limit the generalizability of the results to the more complex world of real work and actual managers. Study 3 therefore relied on a field survey with a sample of employees evaluating their actual managers' communion and agency. Because the data reported in Study 1 and 2 was experimental, the manipulation of male and female leaders' communion and agency would have been problematic with a relatively small sample size. The correlational nature of Study 3 allowed overcoming these limitations and testing the specific separate effects of communion and agency, contributing to a more specific understanding of how gendered traits affect male and female leaders' effects in organizations. Explicit comparisons of the effects of agency and communion suggest that communal traits may account to a greater extent than agentic traits for leadership outcomes (Kirchmeyer, 1996). Yet, the extent to which communion and agency distinctively contribute to male and female leaders' outcomes is still unclear, as well as whether they produce different effects on positive attitudes and evaluations.

8.1. Method

8.1.1. Participants and procedure

A paper-and-pencil questionnaire was created and distributed to participants using a snowball sampling procedure whereby people who voluntarily collaborated in the research were asked to pass out the questionnaire to their personal or professional contacts. Only those who met the following criteria were allowed to participate: be older than 18 years of age, be employed and be under the direct supervision of a manager with whom they regularly interacted. Participants who agreed to collaborate were 125 employed individuals (57 men, 68 women) who were under the direct supervision of either a male (56.8%) or a female (43.2%) manager. Respondents' mean age was 35.89 ($SD = 10.10$), and most of their managers (68%) were placed in a mean age range between 36 and 66 years old. The mean range of number of subordinates was between 11 and 25 and the average time of the employees and their managers working together was 7.65 years ($SD = 6.07$). Participants represented a good variety of organizational backgrounds (25.6% indicated being working at an industrial organization, 32% at a service-providing organization, 17.6% at technology-based companies, 9.6% at banks, 3.2% at social services, 4% at health services, 7.2% at schools and 0.8% indicated working at other types of organizations).

8.1.2. Measures

8.1.2.1. Gendered traits. Communion and agency of leaders were measured with the Personal Attributes Questionnaire (PAQ; Spence & Helmreich, 1978). This is one of the most widely used instruments for the measurement of agentic and communal personality traits. It is made up of 16 items (8 for communion and 8 for agency) for which respondents must indicate in a 5 point Likert scale to what extent they define themselves as possessing several traits. In the present study the scale was adapted such that responses reflected the extent to which followers perceived their leader as communal (e.g., "aware of feelings of others" or "understanding of others") and agentic (e.g., "ambitious" or "competitive"). The coefficient alpha for the two dimensions were 0.90 and 0.71 respectively, indicating that reliability was acceptable.

8.1.2.2. Positive attitudes. To evaluate participants' positive attitudes, we used the same modified version of the scales of Trust and Loyalty by Cook and Wall (1980) used in Study 2. Our measurement of these variables included six items that asked participants to indicate the extent to which they trust their leader (3 items) and were loyal to him/her (3 items) on a 5-point Likert scale. A sample items for trust is "I feel quite confident that my leader will always try to treat me fairly". A sample items for loyalty is "I would support my leader in almost any emergency". Appropriate internal consistency rate were found for both variables (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.89$ for trust and $\alpha = 0.94$ for loyalty). The items formed a coherent scale ($\alpha = 0.94$) and so they were combined.

8.1.2.3. Evaluations. To assess participants' evaluative responses about

leaders, we used the same perceived effectiveness measure as in Studies 1 and 2 from the MLQ (Bass & Avolio, 1997). Participants rated the extent to which they viewed their leaders as effective on a 5-point Likert scale. Internal consistency was appropriate (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.70$). Due to space and time constraints associated with data collection in samples of actual employees, perceived power was not assessed in Study 3.

8.1.2.4. Control variables. Several variables associated with both the characteristics of the follower, the leader and the relationship between them (i.e., participant sex, years of relationship with the leader, number of subordinates and leader age) have been argued to influence followers' perceptions of leaders' behavior (e.g., Organ & Ryan, 1995). Therefore, these variables were controlled for in all analyses.

8.1.3. Assessment of common method influence

Although common method bias has been recently suggested to be less of a concern than is commonly assumed (e.g., Conway & Lance, 2010), we followed several procedural remedies outlined by Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, and Podsakoff (2003) to address the issue of common method bias because our variables were collected from a single source at the same point in time. First, we reduced evaluation apprehension by allowing the respondents' answers to be anonymous and explicitly asking participants to answer questions honestly, assuring them that there were no right or wrong answers. This strategy reduces the potential bias associated with data collection (Podsakoff, McKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). Second, we included a latent factor in our model to examine what influence, if any, common method might present with our findings. To perform this analysis, we examined a model that contained a latent factor upon which all structural constructs were loaded. All relationships in this alternative model were qualitatively similar to those of our hypothesized model. Furthermore, the results of a one-factor solution showed worse fit with the data than alternative models, yielding the following fit indices: a Chi-square of 690 with 112 degrees of freedom, and other goodness-of-fit statistics (CFI = 0.79; IFI = 0.80; TLI = 0.72; RMSEA = 0.16). These findings suggest that common method and source error are unlikely to have had a severe impact on our results.

8.2. Results

Means, standard deviations, and correlations are reported in Table 3. Additionally, comparisons between means obtained by male and female leaders in the study variables are presented in Table 4. To test Hypothesis 1's prediction that leaders' communion would show incremental validity over sex on positive attitudes, control variables were entered in the first step of a hierarchical regression equation, followed by leader sex (Step 2), gender personality traits (Step 3) and finally, the two 2-way interaction terms of Communion \times Leader Sex and Agency \times Leader Sex (Step 4). In order to reduce multicollinearity,

Table 3
Means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations among study variables (Study 3).

	M	s.d.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Participant sex	–	–	–								
2. Leader sex	–	–	–0.09	–							
3. Leader age	3.28	1.26	0.12	0.01	–						
4. Time together	7.65	6.07	0.00	–0.04	0.32**	–					
5. Num. subordinates	3.54	1.60	0.05	–0.11	0.50**	0.24**	–				
6. Communion	3.41	0.77	–0.08	0.36**	–0.08	0.01	0.13	–			
7. Agency	3.47	0.57	–0.09	0.01	0.10	–0.01	0.10	0.22*	–		
8. Trust	3.57	1.00	–0.17	0.15	0.08	–0.03	0.14	0.58**	0.22*	–	
9. Loyalty	3.47	1.00	–0.14	0.17	0.04	–0.01	0.10	0.66**	0.23**	0.81**	–
10. Effectiveness	3.57	0.85	–0.06	0.17	0.09	–0.07	0.16	0.58**	0.47**	0.63**	0.64**

Note. $N = 133$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$; † $p < .10$; participant sex: 0 = female, 1 = male; leader sex: 0 = male, 1 = female; leader age: 1 = 18–25, 2 = 26–35, 3 = 36–45, 4 = 46–55, 5 = 56–65; 6 = > 65; num. subordinates: 1 = 1–3, 2 = 4–6, 3 = 7–10, 4 = 11–25, 5 = 26–50; 6 = 51–100; 7 = 101–250; 8 = > 250.

Table 4
Comparisons between means obtained by male and female leaders in the study variables (Study 3).

	Female leaders		Male leaders		Student <i>t</i>	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	<i>t</i>	Cohen <i>d</i>
Leadership effects						
Trust	3.75	0.90	3.44	1.05	1.71†	0.317
Loyalty	3.67	0.89	3.32	1.06	1.94†	0.357
Perceived effectiveness	3.74	0.82	3.45	0.85	1.91†	0.347
Leader traits						
Communion	3.73	0.70	3.17	0.74	4.28**	0.777
Agency	3.47	0.47	3.46	0.64	0.072	0.017

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, † $p < .10$. Scale endpoint is 5.

each of the study variables was centered prior to computing the interaction terms (Aiken & West, 1991).

Results showed that the control variables only accounted for 4.8% of the variance ($p = .204$). Inclusion of the main effect of leader sex in step two accounted for an additional 2.9% of the variance ($p = .055$). Analysis of the main effects indicated that leaders' sex ($\beta = -0.33$, $SE = 0.17$, $p = .055$) was a marginally significant predictor of attitudinal outcomes. Entry of the main effects of communion and agency in step three accounted for an additional 39.5% of the variance ($p < .001$). Analysis of the main effects showed that while communion ($\beta = 0.84$, $SE = 0.09$, $p < .001$) was a significant predictor, both leader sex and leader agency were not (p 's > 0.20). Finally, a non-significant change in the variance explained by the addition of the two interaction terms was observed ($\Delta R^2 = 0.00$, $p = .757$). These findings support Hypothesis 1.

Regarding evaluative outcomes, results showed similar effects: control variables only accounted for 4.4% of the variance ($p = .243$). Inclusion of the main effect of leader sex in step two accounted for an additional 3.2% of the variance ($p = .045$). Analysis of the main effects indicated that leaders' sex ($\beta = -0.31$, $SE = 0.15$, $p = .045$) was a significant predictor of evaluative outcomes favoring female leaders. Entry of the main effects of communion and agency in step three accounted for an additional 40% of the variance in trust ($p < .001$). In contrast to attitudinal outcomes, analysis of the main effects showed that both communion ($\beta = 0.57$, $SE = 0.08$, $p < .001$) and agency ($\beta = 0.50$, $SE = 0.10$, $p < .001$) were significant predictors of evaluations. Finally, a non-significant change in the variance explained by the addition of the two interaction terms was observed ($\Delta R^2 = 0.00$, $p = .907$). Results for each step are presented in Table 5.

To further test the relationships between gender traits and leadership outcomes in our proposed model, we used path analysis modeling with LISREL 8.8 and maximum likelihood estimates (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 2006). First, a path model was estimated to assess the direct effects of sex, communion and agency. Before looking at the hypotheses

Table 5
Summary of hierarchical regression analysis predicting leadership effects (Study 3).

Predictor	Trust				Loyalty				Effectiveness			
	β	F	R ²	R ² (Δ)	β	F	R ²	R ² (Δ)	β	F	R ²	R ² (Δ)
Leader age	0.05				0.02				0.04			
Num. subordinates	0.14*				0.11				0.16			
Time together	−0.08				−0.04				−0.12			
Participant sex	−0.18*				−0.14				−0.08			
(step 1)		1.85	0.06	0.06		0.97	0.03	0.03		1.38	0.04	0.04
Leader age	0.04				0.00				0.03			
Num. subordinates	0.17				0.14				0.19			
Time together	−0.08				−0.03				−0.11			
Participant sex	−0.16†				−0.13				−0.06			
Leader sex	0.15†				0.18*				0.18*			
(step 2)		2.09	0.08	0.02†		1.55	0.06	0.03*		1.95	0.08	0.03*

Predictor	Trust				Loyalty				Effectiveness			
	β	F	R ²	R ² (Δ)	β	F	R ²	R ² (Δ)	β	F	R ²	R ² (Δ)
Leader age	0.17†				0.15†				0.12			
Num. subordinates	−0.00				−0.06				−0.02			
Time together	−0.09				−0.05				−0.11			
Participant sex	−0.14†				−0.10				−0.01			
Leader sex	−0.08				−0.10				−0.02			
Communion	0.60**				0.70**				0.52**			
Agency	0.06				0.06				0.34**			
(step 3)		10.66	0.39	0.31**		14.93	0.47	0.41**		15.20	0.48	0.40**
Communion * sex	−0.00				0.05				0.02			
Agency * sex	−0.07				−0.05				0.03			
(step 4)		8.27	0.40	0.00		11.51	0.47	0.00		11.69	0.47	0.00

Note. N = 133; **p < .01; *p < .05; †p < .10. Beta coefficients are standardized. participant sex: 0 = female, 1 = male; leader sex: 0 = male, 1 = female.

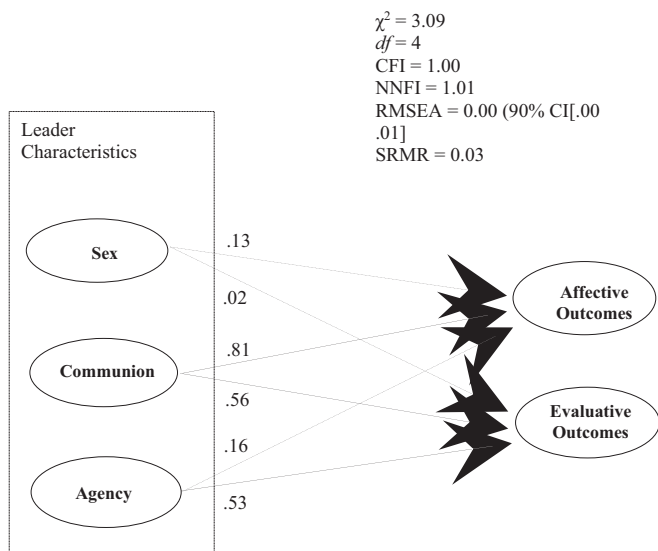


Fig. 4. Path analysis model and results (Study 3).

tests, we assess the global fit indices of the direct effect model. Analysis of the goodness-of-fit indices for our model showed excellent fit ($\chi^2 = 3.09$, $df = 4$, CFI = 1.00, RMSEA = 0.0, SRMR = 0.03). These path models examined the effects of the two gender identity predictors (i.e., communion and agency) on the two leadership effects: outcomes and evaluations (Fig. 4).

Fig. 4 shows the parameter estimates for the effects of leader characteristics on leadership outcomes and evaluations. The results reveal a significant, positive relationship between communion and leadership outcomes ($\beta = 0.81$, $p < .05$) and leadership evaluations ($\beta = 0.56$, $p < .05$), contrasted to non-significant effects of leader sex, which provides additional support for Hypothesis 1.

Hypothesis 2 predicted that gender traits would be stronger positive predictors of attitudinal than evaluative outcomes. Consistent with our prediction, the path coefficient from communion to attitudinal outcomes was higher than the path from communion to evaluations ($\lambda_o = 0.81$ vs. $\lambda_e = 0.56$), lending support to Hypothesis 2. Interestingly, however, effects showed the opposite pattern for agentic traits of the leader: the path coefficient from agency to evaluative outcomes was higher than the path to attitudinal outcomes ($\lambda_o = 0.53$ vs. $\lambda_e = 0.16$). Responding to the question of whether agency and communion would produce different effects, these findings suggest that communion correlates more strongly than agency with attitudinal outcomes, whereas agency has a slightly stronger effect on evaluations.

To test Hypothesis 3 that leader sex would only moderate the effect of gender traits on evaluative outcomes, multi-group causal path analysis was conducted as proposed by Jöreskog and Sörbom (1993). First, we divided our data set into two parts (one for male leaders, and one for female leaders). Then we estimated a multi-group LISREL model restricting all paths to be equal among the two groups. This analysis resulted in the path model described earlier. Next, we estimated the model again relaxing the restriction of equal path estimates from leadership characteristics to evaluations and outcomes. When the drop in chi-square between the two models for one degree of freedom (the difference between both models) is significant, it is concluded that a significant model improvement is reached.

The path coefficients from leadership traits to attitudinal outcomes had a similar size for male and female leaders ($\lambda_{male} = 0.81$ vs. $\lambda_{female} = 0.80$ for communion and $\lambda_{male} = 0.17$ vs. $\lambda_{female} = 0.14$ for agency), providing support for H3a. Contrasting these null effects, the path coefficient from agency to leadership evaluations was slightly lower for male than female leaders ($\lambda_{male} = 0.50$ vs. $\lambda_{female} = 0.61$), indicating that agency scores had slightly stronger effects on leadership evaluations for female leaders. Surprisingly, the path coefficients from communion to leadership evaluations had a similar size regardless of leader sex ($\lambda_{male} = 0.55$ vs. $\lambda_{female} = 0.56$), indicating that

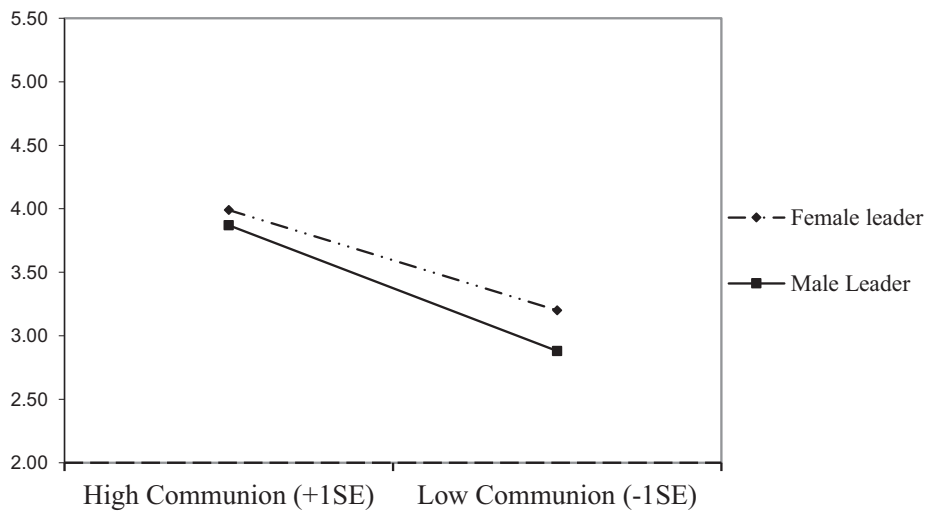


Fig. 5. Evaluative outcomes by leaders' communion (Study 3).

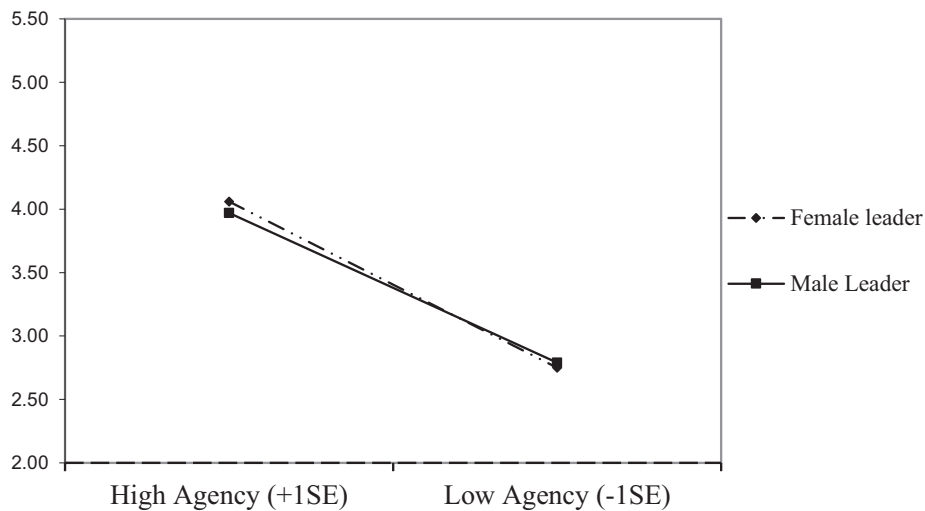


Fig. 6. Evaluative outcomes by leaders' agency (Study 3).

communion produced similar effects on the evaluations of male and female leaders. The chi-square difference between the restricted and the unrestricted model was ($\Delta \chi^2 = 39.6$), which represents a significant model improvement ($p < .001$). Although these findings support Hypothesis 3b, the observed pattern is not consistent with gender-congruity explanations because agentic women were positively evaluated rather than penalized, and communal men were not penalized compared to non-communal men (Figs. 5 and 6).

9. Discussion

This paper sought to identify the extent to which stereotypically feminine/masculine leadership traits (i.e., communion and agency) go above and beyond leaders' sex in predicting relevant leadership effects. The gains in this field of knowledge are important for organizational and management theory and practice, which have often oversimplified the issue of gender in management to sex differences in leadership styles and have disregarded the effects of gendered traits on leadership. Confirming our predictions, followers' perceptions of leaders in terms of communion and agency proved to be a better predictor than sex of relevant leadership outcomes such as trust, loyalty, satisfaction and/or likelihood to make extra efforts. Regarding the relative strength of agency and communion, employees' positive attitudes were more

strongly predicted by leaders' communion than agency. For employees' responses with an evaluative content (e.g., perceived effectiveness of the leader), there were no substantial differences in the predictive strength of agency and communion; however, in Study 1 and 3 leader sex became more salient, moderating the effects of gender traits in the stereotypical direction (better evaluations of performance for stereotypical leaders). Remarkably, penalties for counter-stereotypical behavior were weaker for female than male actual leaders.

The specific relevance of communion confirmed here serves to extend the trait perspective in leadership research (Judge et al., 2002; Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991). Research on the study of leader traits has repeatedly shown that certain personality traits of leaders are associated with leadership effectiveness, including achievement orientation, extraversion, conscientiousness, honesty, integrity, or self-confidence. This standpoint emphasizes that there are a number of traits that are associated with leadership effectiveness and therefore leaders' adoption of such traits is an important mechanism through which they can produce effects on followers (Barrick & Mount, 1991). Research within this perspective has put a strong weight on communion-related characteristics such as sociability (Stogdill, 1948), agreeableness (Hogan et al., 1994) or prosocial influence motivation (House & Aditya, 1997). Despite these analyses, leadership trait research has generally disregarded the complexities of these associations from a gender

perspective. The absence of such an analysis is particularly remarkable in contemporary organizational research, whereby the relevance of stereotypically feminine traits of leaders and their abilities to show female-typed behaviors such as social concern or people orientation becomes critical and lies at the heart of leadership effectiveness for both female and male leaders (Haslam et al., 2010; Zaccaro, 2007).

Of particular interest is also our demonstration that gendered traits have dissimilar effects across leadership effects (i.e., positive attitudes vs. evaluations). A conceptual account focused on the asymmetric effects of gender on these attitudinal vs. evaluative responses of employees reinforces previous efforts to distinguish between different types of leadership effects (e.g., Hogan et al., 1994). This is important because previous research has called for more research that acknowledges such potential differences about categories of leadership outcomes (Bass, 1990; Hogan et al., 1994), extending it with gender insights. As the present findings demonstrate, gendered traits have a clear, distinctive role in producing positive attitudinal responses (e.g., satisfaction or loyalty) on the part of followers for both female and male leaders, which holds an invitation to engage more with gendered dimensions of personality as traits to be considered when selecting and training *both* male and female leaders. We thus encourage that future research continues recognizing the potentially different effects that sex and gender can generate on several leadership outcomes varying in their affective, cognitive, and behavioral components. Because gendered personality traits are influenced by gendered socio-cultural elements and individual experiences and therefore open to change (Spence & Buckner, 2000), they can be a particularly useful set of traits at an applied level in the promotion of more effective leadership styles.

Our findings supporting a feminine advantage approach in relation to generating positive attitudes from employees suggests that communal men would have a “feminine” advantage too, producing more positive responses from employees than other male leaders. This finding allows us to contribute to and contest backlash research suggesting that men and women who violate gender stereotypes systematically receive social and economic penalties (Moss-Racusin et al., 2010; Rudman & Glick, 2001). Contrasting this approach, our perspective suggests that communal male leaders would also enjoy a communal boost when it comes to enhancing employees' positive attitudes, contrasting the more traditional idea that counter-stereotypical profiles result in negative effects (Rudman & Glick, 2001). At an applied level, managers and human resource practitioners may actively create a more feminine profile for both female and male managers by fostering favorable conditions to reduce the current prevalence of gender stereotypes, which may subsequently produce more positive effects on followers.

Notable in the evidence for the feminine –rather than female - advantage that emerged in our studies is that the effect sizes associated with individual differences were generally higher than those effect sizes associated with sex differences in previous research. For instance, in their meta-analysis about sex differences in leadership outcomes, Eagly et al. (2003) showed that the effect size associated with female leaders' higher scores in followers' extra effort, satisfaction and effectiveness were low (mean $d = -0.09$, -0.14 and -0.22 , respectively). In a similar vein, Eagly and Johnson's (1990) meta-analysis about sex differences in leadership styles showed only small effect sizes between male and female leaders (ranging from 0.12 in relation to intervening only when problems have become critical to 0.19 in individualized consideration). The fact that the current results showed substantially greater effect sizes (ranging from 0.80 to 1.80) may be an additional indication that gender traits, relative to sex, produce stronger effects on followers. It also reinforces the idea that the psychology of gender is embedded not in the fixed characteristic of an individual (e.g., sex) but in the more complex social features relating to the effects of being male or female (Stewart & McDermott, 2004).

Concerning the explicit comparison between the effects of communion and agency examined as a research question in Study 3, interestingly, there were no consistent effects that demonstrated the

tendency for agency to correlate more strongly than communion with leadership evaluations. Remarkably, communion was also positively related to perceived effectiveness. Many earlier attempts to demonstrate a relationship between communion and leadership effectiveness failed because a think manager-think male association was strongly prevalent in the definition of successful management (e.g., Schein, Ruediger, Lituchy, & Jiang, 1996). Our findings suggest, however, that communal traits play compared to agency a larger role in leadership than has been previously recognized in the gender literature, probably due to the growing relevance of communal leadership characteristics in contemporary organizations (Koenig et al., 2011). This is consistent with previous work by Kirchmeyer (1996) examining the combined effects of communion and agency on outcomes of group decision-making in a laboratory setting and showing that communion was associated with higher group commitment to the decision than agency.

Notwithstanding the particular relevance of communion, in our studies this dimension seemed to be comparatively more relevant for followers' responses with attitudinal/affective components, compared to broader evaluations about perceived effectiveness. Although these findings provide some light on the extent to which communion and agency distinctively contribute to leadership, there is a need for much more exploration of the specific and interactive effects of communion and agency on leadership effects. Likewise, because experimental studies have demonstrated that people orientation shown by target leaders reduces the extent to which such target leaders are seen as competent in task-related managerial activities (Gartzia & Baniandrés, 2016), future research would benefit from further investigating the specific mutual and/or contrasting associations between agency and communion for male and female leaders. Drawing from the extensive body of research on leadership traits (Judge et al., 2002; Northouse, 2016), future studies can productively complement traits analyses of varied leadership outcomes with these gender insights.

9.1. Moderating effects of sex: backlash or communal boost for all?

Notwithstanding the stronger influence of gender traits (i.e., communion) over leader sex to generate positive attitudes toward the leader, a question that emerged is whether there is any moderating effect of leader sex on specific outcomes of leadership with clearer evaluative components (e.g., perceived effectiveness and power), which we should expect based on role-congruity and backlash research (Eagly & Karau, 2001; Rudman & Glick, 2001). Confirming our expectations, leaders' communion was associated in Study 1 with perceived effectiveness to a greater extent for female than male supervisors – showing a penalty for communal male leaders. Because evaluations of a male target's performance are influenced by gender stereotypes (Rudman & Glick, 2001), and because implicit theories about leadership are consistent with a think manager-think male stereotype (Koenig et al., 2011), communal orientations of male leaders emerged as particularly penalized for perceptions of effectiveness.

These findings suggest that at least in relation to leadership evaluations counter-stereotypical roles seem to be more highly penalized for men. This conclusion is in line with previous research pointing to manhood as a precarious social status whereby traditional masculinity is difficult to be challenged (Vandello & Bosson, 2013). Because communion proved to be critical for male leaders' abilities to promote positive attitudes from employees in our studies, the question of how to alleviate stereotypes about communal men is a key question that both practitioners and researchers face. This challenge is consistent with research showing that male leaders' incorporation of counter-stereotypical, communal traits is a necessary condition for them to display people-oriented leadership styles (Gartzia & van Engen, 2012; Gartzia & van Knippenberg, 2015). Yet, because followers' subjective evaluations of leaders are also relevant for the influence that leaders can have in organizations (Avolio et al., 2009; Bass & Avolio, 1997), male leaders have a particularly critical challenge compared to female leaders when

it comes to simultaneously producing positive attitudes and receiving positive evaluations. Men still take up most of the management positions in organizations, so the challenges of incorporating stereotypically feminine, communal traits on their part seems relevant.

Contrasting penalties toward male leaders' communion, leaders' agency produced in all studies similar effects for female and male supervisors and furthermore slightly favored female leaders' evaluations in our field study with actual employees and managers. These findings challenge some of the foundations of the backlash phenomenon (Moss-Racusin et al., 2010; Rudman & Glick, 2001), according to which men and women who violate gender stereotypes systematically receive social and economic penalties. From our results, communal male leaders would be expected to suffer some discrimination on evaluations but still produce more desirable positive attitudes from followers. Also, agentic female leaders would be actually less effective in engendering positive responses from employees but still be only moderately penalized or even benefited when it comes to overall evaluations of effectiveness. These findings suggest that, for women, the role congruity effect on evaluations (Eagly & Karau, 2001) might have lessened over time.

Because endorsement of agency has been relatively typical of women particularly in organizations (see Twenge, 2001) and because agency is generally valued in the organizational world and management (Koenig et al., 2011), female leaders might more easily recover from negative evaluations resulting from an agentic profile. Yet, our findings introduce a type-of-outcome-paradox for future studies in the field: male and female leaders will encounter the paradox of selecting gender congruent or incongruent leadership profiles depending on the situation and the type of outcome to be developed (i.e., positive attitudes from employees vs. evaluations about effectiveness). When male leaders display counter-stereotypical traits, they get better outcomes but they are seen as less effective. In contrast, when female leaders display counter-stereotypical traits, they get worse outcomes but they are not necessarily seen as less effective as leaders. Future research would benefit from examining these research questions and concerns with larger samples of male and female leaders in different organizational contexts.

9.2. Limitations and future research

One obvious strength of the current design is that, in contrast to previous studies that analyzed the relationships between leadership styles and gender traits using only correlational designs, student samples and single studies (e.g., Hackman et al., 1992; Korabik, 1982), Studies 1 and 2 incorporated experimental manipulations that allowed directly examining the effects of gendered traits on leadership effects. These analyses were combined with an additional field study in which employees were asked about their actual workers, as well as statistical analyses explicitly addressing incremental validity of gender traits over sex. As Bono and McNamara (2011) explain, combining field and experimental research can be a much better way to overcome the limitations of cross-sectional data and to address questions of causality. The findings observed here suggest that the positive effect that a

“feminine” style can bring about for both male and female leaders surpasses its negative effects, at least when it comes to producing positive attitudes from followers. Yet, although referring to a “feminine” perspective may override some of the limitations of a “female” advantage conceptual approach, it may still indirectly reinforce stereotyped associations of women with communion and men with agency. Perhaps other more neutral conceptualizations such as an “androgyny advantage” may be less detrimental for gender equality purposes (see also Eagly et al., 2014; Gartzia & van Engen, 2012; Korabik, 1990).

Finally, note that path coefficients from gender traits to affective outcomes were notably stronger in the experimental –artificially generated– studies compared to the field sample, suggesting that the strength of these associations can vary across contexts (see also Eagly & Johnson, 1990). A possible explanation is that stereotypes were stronger in Study 1 because participants did not know the leaders and only received partial information about them, which may have made stereotypes more salient. Such stereotyped negative leadership evaluations can potentially occur in other organizational situations with little information about a person (such as a job interview) and might reduce the ability of leaders to be seen as a reference, thereby weakening their influence on followers' behavior in such situations. Organizations still constitute male-dominated environments where masculinity-linked characteristics are more valued (Koenig et al., 2011), so both male and female leaders who behave in an overtly stereotypically feminine way in male-dominated industries or in contexts where stereotypes are strong may be generally perceived as less effective, thereby resulting in lower actual effectiveness.

An specificity of the current study is that the samples were drawn from Spain (see Gartzia & López-Zafra, 2014, 2016 for information about its cultural specificities), which limits the generalization of the results to other contexts. This setting, however, has the advantage of extending past findings and theoretical foundations to a cultural sample not heretofore studied. Despite the purported relevance of communion in leadership, effectiveness depends no doubt on the situation (Stogdill, 1948; Yukl, 2006), and thus establishing that communion necessarily results in effectiveness in all contexts may be too simplistic. Whereas it is true that a “feminine” advantage may exist due to the growing importance of communal dimensions of leadership, situational factors may clearly moderate the relevance of communion in predicting positive effects on followers. For instance, there is evidence that agentic leadership styles that provide clear and specific directions are seen as more effective under stressful situations (Schriesheim & Murphy, 1976), indicating that leader communion should be less important in producing follower responses in such situations.

The current findings all in all suggest that a female advantage perspective underscoring the oversimplified fact that women are unique leaders can be limiting. Noticeably, further research is needed to help organizational researchers and decision makers comprehend and manage the complex ways in which gender and leadership interrelate, replacing the female advantage standpoint by a more complex perspective that exhaustively examines the extent to which gender-related variables influence the full multi-component range of leadership effects.

Appendix 1. Manipulation script (Study 1)

[Male/Female Name] is the manager of a relevant company. (S/he) [is/isn't] very kind and generally [likes/doesn't like] to be understanding [and/or] devote self to others. (S/he) [is/isn't] particularly empathetic [and/or] helpful when interacting with subordinates, [and/or] one of (her/his) characteristics [is/isn't] being warm [and/or] aware of followers' feelings.

Appendix 2. Manipulation script (Study 2)

[Male/Female Name]: (S/he) is concerned about employees and listens to employees' personal problems. In his/her daily work, she is empathetic and helpful, also being caring and aware of employees' individual needs. (*Communal condition*)

[Male/Female Name]: (S/he) is decisive and someone who likes to firmly expresses her/his opinions, defending her/his own needs and goals. In his/her daily work, she is ambitious and competitive in his/her manners, also showing independence. (*Agentic condition*)

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