People are rewarded for how they behave, but what do middle managers get for their behavior at work? In this article, we draw upon socioanalytic and role theories to linking competencies, personality, and organizational rewards among a sample of middle managers. The goals of this study were (a) to identify a motive-based competency structure and (b) to understand the antecedents and consequences of these motive-based dimensions. We found that a three-factor structure formed by “achievement,” “power,” and “affiliation” fit our data well. Each of the three dimensions showed a distinct pattern of personality correlates. Power was found to have the strongest impact on organizational rewards. Our results further suggested that personality impacts organizational rewards mainly through the motive-based dimensions. Theoretical and practical contributions are discussed.

Since the pioneering work of Stogdill (1948), Katz (1955), and Mann (1965) on competencies, a burgeoning literature in the 1980s and 1990s has gone on to identify an array of competencies linked to managerial success and effective performance (e.g., Boyatzis, 1982; du Gay, Salaman, & Rees, 1996; Lawler, 1994; Mansfield, 1996; McCall & Lombardo, 1983; McLagan, 1996; Mirabile, 1997; Posner & Kouzes, 1988; Spencer & Spencer, 1993). However, even if competency-driven applications have been applauded by many organizations, some authors have complained about the unbalanced relationship between the abundance of competency models used in organizational settings and the paucity of empirical research studies that have been conducted to support them (Laber & O’Connor, 2000; Maurer, Wrenn, Pierce, Tross, & Collins, 2003; Rogelberg, 2000). Within the field, systematic research on how competencies can be grouped into higher order dimensions is considered to be crucial for the development of a meaningful structure at work, and scholars are turning attention to theorize and empirically investigate on this issue (e.g., Borman & Brush, 1993; Campbell, McCloy, Oppler, & Sager, 1993; Shipper & Davy, 2002; Tornow & Pinto, 1976).
Bartram’s (2005) work in this area offers one of the most comprehensive classifications on how competency dimensions can be summarized using a wide sample of job types and organizations. He suggested that certain psychological attributes help to explain the individual differences in the manifestation of these competency dimensions. These attributes can be motivational in some areas (e.g., entrepreneurial behavior), relate to cognitive ability in others (e.g., analyses and interpretation behaviors), and are driven by personality traits in yet others (e.g., attention to detail). The most widely studied of these psychological attributes is personality, and the literature has contributed to the understanding of personality–competencies linkages. However, scholars are considering people’s motives to obtain new insights into how people’s intentions are meaningfully and consistently translated into work behaviors (R. Hogan & Shelton, 1998) and to investigate how personality affects performance outcomes mainly through motivational mechanisms (Barrick, Mount, & Judge, 2001; Judge, Bono, Ilies, & Gerhardt, 2002). Our objective in this article is to propose a motivational model of competencies and to empirically test the relationships among motive-based competency dimensions, personality traits, and organizational rewards for a sample of middle managers (we use the terms organizational rewards and job performance outcomes interchangeably).

In fact, the generalizability of the results across occupational groups in the competency literature is open to further investigation. Previous studies on competencies have used a myriad of occupational groups (e.g., police officers, truck drivers, shop floor staff, brokers, managers, first-line managers, and soldiers). In addition, even if some relationships between personality and leadership behaviors are consistent across occupational groups, scholars have begun to question whether studying particular populations can help to establish more meaningful patterns (e.g., Bartram, 2005; Judge et al., 2002). One occupational group that is particularly relevant to the field of leadership is middle managers. Middle managers comprise more than half of the workforce (Morison, Erickson, & Dychtwald, 2006) and, although organizations are recognizing the importance of developing them (e.g., Morison et al., 2006; Vicere, 1998), they are often not well understood (e.g., Huy, 2001). This gap should be considered a high priority in the leadership research agenda. For that reason, we choose to investigate middle managers in the present study.

Competency assessments of middle managers are often made using 360-degree feedback instruments (Conger & Toegel, 2003; Day, 2001). However, the use of these instruments is not free of controversy (e.g., Scullen, Mount, & Goff, 2000; Scullen, Mount, & Judge, 2003). A growing number of recent studies have addressed how raters from different perspectives may rate differently while using 360-degree feedback instruments. Although researchers have indicated that few differences exist across factor structures and perspectives (Conway, 2000; J. Hogan & Holland, 2003; Oh & Berry, 2009; Scullen et al., 2000; Scullen et al., 2003), scholars have started to issue warnings about rater’s idiosyncratic effects. A possible solution to this problem is to adopt a multirater perspective (e.g., Conway, 2000; Oh & Berry, 2009). We propose that still another option is to obtain the negotiated competency scores across the sources once they have completed the 360-degree questionnaires. In fact, much has been said about the importance of feedback and communication processes to the effective implementation of 360-degree questionnaires in organizations (Conger & Xin, 2000). However, no studies have yet included these processes in individuals’ competency profiles on a systematic basis. Thus, instead of using self-evaluations and/or others’ evaluations of competencies, we chose to build competency “consensus” scores. The consensus scores are negotiated evaluations of the work behaviors between the incumbent and his or her supervisor and other work colleagues.
To advance the research and practice on competencies at work, our objective in this article is to examine a motive-based approach to linking competencies, personality, and organizational rewards among a sample of middle managers with consensus scores of competencies. More specifically, this article has four aims: (a) to test whether a motive-based structure effectively groups the social competencies among middle managers, (2) to assess the relationships among motive-based competency dimensions and personality traits, (3) to assess the predictive power of motive-based competency dimensions on two types of organizational rewards (i.e., popularity among colleagues and organizational status), and finally, (4) to test the whole two-step model with structural equations with organizational rewards as the dependent variables and personality and competencies as distal and proximal antecedents, respectively.

By doing so, we help to extend the existing knowledge on the antecedents and consequences of motive-based competency dimensions among middle managers. Our results help to determine what middle managers receive for their work behavior. Our findings address the need to complement the predictions made by motivational approaches (e.g., Hogan & Shelton, 1998) with middle management role theories to understand how middle managers are rewarded in organizations. This study constitutes the first attempt to empirically test a two-step model that includes the two types of organizational rewards proposed in Hogan and Shelton’s (1998) motivational theory as dependent variables and personality and motive-based competencies as distal and proximal antecedents, respectively. Our results also help to develop new insights into personality–competencies linkages and to support the discriminant validity of competencies over personality for middle managers. For practitioners, obtaining insights about a conceptual framework of competency modeling based on motivations can guide organizational selection and developmental efforts.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Although the meaning of the term competency is still subject to debate (Shippman et al., 2000), for the purposes of this study, we adopted the definition proposed by Bartram, Robertson, and Callinan (2002), which states that competencies are “sets of behaviours that are instrumental in the delivery of desired results or outcomes” (p. 7). Competencies conceptualized in such a way are “something that people actually do and can be observed” (Campbell et al., 1993, p. 40). People are rewarded for their competencies (Hogan & Shelton, 1998; Spencer & Spencer, 1993), which in turn are influenced by some personal antecedents (Bartram, 2005).

As mentioned in the introduction, some of these antecedents are motivational. Since White’s (1959) influential study advocating that competencies should be placed within a motivational domain, numerous scholars have traced the connection between motives and competencies (e.g., Atkinson, 1964; Bandura, 1997; McClelland, 1985; McClelland & Boyatzis, 1982; Spencer & Spencer, 1993). The term motive captures what a person wants and, in the process, plans, anticipates, and enjoys (Winter, Stewart, John, Klohnen, & Duncan, 1998). Motives lead to preferences in job behaviors, and such preferences may lead to the manifestation of a number of competencies that influence the agendas in which managers want to participate. Therefore, motives can predict work-related behavioral patterns and can explain the consequences of these patterns in the form of work outcomes (Boyatzis & Sala, 2004). Recently, scholars in the leadership field have revisited...
this idea of linking leaders’ motives and competencies (Barrick et al., 2001; J. Hogan & Holland, 2003; Kark & Van Dijk, 2007; Kehr, 2004; Lord & Brown, 2004).

Particularly relevant to this study is J. Hogan and Holland’s (2003) proposal to operationalize work motives. These scholars operationalized work motives as the sets of behaviors that reflect them. For example, they proposed that the behavior of helping a coworker finish his or her work before a deadline reflects an individual’s affiliation motive. This alignment of motives and behaviors is consistent with the evidence from past research, which stated that the same content dimensions and descriptors underlie personal preferences and behaviors (e.g., Campbell, 1990; Chaplin, John, & Goldberg, 1988). Thus, behaviors can be reliably classified in terms of the degree to which they reflect people’s motives. Therefore, in proposing a taxonomy of motive-based competencies, we focus on middle managers’ work behaviors and classify these behaviors as if they have motives that underlie them (as suggested by J. Hogan & Holland, 2003).

It is also important to note that our objective in this article was not to provide a comprehensive map of competencies (see Bartram, 2005; Borman & Brush, 1993, for this purpose). We chose to base our study on social competencies that can be classified into motive-based dimensions for theoretical and practical reasons. From a theoretical standpoint, we followed the perspective of previous scholars and studied work-related motivational constructs to understand job performance (e.g., Barrick et al., 2001; J. Hogan & Holland, 2003; R. Hogan & Shelton, 1998; Judge et al., 2002; Spencer & Spencer, 1993). From a practical standpoint, we obtained our data during a training program for middle managers, which primary objective was to help their development. Prior scholars have claimed that social competencies are trainable (Boyatzis, 1982; J. Hogan & Holland, 2003). Therefore, even if we recognize that other competency dimensions, such as technical expertise, analytical thinking, or conceptual capacity, play a role in professional success, we decided to put them aside because they are tied to more innate psychological attributes (e.g., general cognitive ability; Bartram, 2005) and may be more difficult to inform middle managers’ developmental efforts.

A Motive-Based Structure of Competencies

McClelland, Atkinson, Clark, and Lowell (1953) postulated that three motives exist: “affiliation” (i.e., the desire to create, maintain, and use positive social relationships with other people; Boyatzis, 1973), “power” (i.e., the desire to have an impact on others through influence, discussion, persuasion, or aggression), and “achievement” (i.e., the desire to do things better and to achieve excellent standards; McClelland, 1975). More recently, Barrick et al. (2001) and Judge et al. (2002) also proposed the adoption of a similar three-factor structure to investigate the mechanisms through which personality and performance relate to each other. Managerial frameworks that focus on how managers develop are also in accordance with the three motives structure just presented (e.g., Boyatzis & McKee, 2005; McCauley, Lombardo, & Usher, 1999).

A promising body of research within the motivational literature is the socioanalytic theory (R. Hogan & Shelton, 1998), which proposes that two primary motives drive work behavior: the desire to “get along” and the desire to “get ahead.” “Getting along” means feeling liked and supported by one’s colleagues, whereas “getting ahead” refers to gaining power and control over resources. If a person is successful at getting along with others, he or she is considered by others to be a good team player, an organizational citizen, and a service provider (Moon, 2001; Mount,
Barrick, & Stewart, 1998). If a person is successful at getting ahead, he or she is described as someone who achieves results, provides leadership, communicates a vision, and motivates others (Conway, 2000). McClelland’s three motives structure can be classified into the two dimensions described by J. Hogan and Holland (2003): (a) “affiliation” falls into the category of “getting along” with the other members of the group, and (b) “power” and “achievement” fall into the “getting ahead” dimension, with the former being related to personal surgedy and the influential component of the getting ahead dimension and the latter being related to the need to achieve results and perform.

We also used the taxonomies of job performance identified in previous studies (Bartram, 2005; Borman & Brush, 1993; Conway, 2000) to check whether these taxonomies were aligned with a three-motive-based structure. A structure aligned with the three motive-based dimensions (i.e., achievement, affiliation, and power) can be repeatedly observed in the aforementioned taxonomies of job performance. For example, three of the eight competency dimensions identified by Bartram (2005), which are conceptualized as having motivational correlates, also are aligned with the proposed three-factor structure: “supporting and cooperating” relates to the need for affiliation, “leading and deciding” reflects the need for power, and “enterprising and performing” reflects the need for achievement. Thus, we propose a three-factor, motive-based competency taxonomy to organize the social competencies of a sample of middle managers. We propose the following hypothesis:

H1: A three motive-based factor structure will serve to group middle managers’ social competencies.

Motive-Based Competency Dimensions and Personality Traits

The discriminant validity of social competencies and personality has been challenged and requires closer inspection (e.g., Davies, Stankov, & Roberts, 1998; Schulte, Ree, & Caretta, 2004). Personality traits are personal preferences for or tendencies to engage in certain types of behavior (Azjen, 2005). Individuals can choose to activate their preferences at specific moments. The extent to which personal preferences are actually translated into actual behavior depends, at least in part, on how structured or regulated the situation is (Judge et al., 2002). For example, unstructured and relatively unregulated situations allow dispositional forces to be more powerful (House, Shane, & Herold, 1996).

With respect to the specific aspects of our sample, role theory (Ashforth, 2001; Biddle, 1979) refers to middle management as a structured and formally defined role that includes concrete behavioral expectations. This role can be learned and performed by a wide range of individuals regardless of their personal preferences. Therefore, we propose that individuals occupying a middle management role will work to incorporate certain prescribed behavioral expectations into their repertoire of behaviors even if these expectations are not aligned with their personal preferences. For example, at some point in a scientist’s professional career, he or she may be offered the opportunity to pursue a managerial career. The scientist may feel that the only way to progress in the organization is to stop focusing on his or her scientific work and to embrace managerial responsibilities. Thus, even if the person loves being a scientist and does not particularly value managerial duties, he or she may accept the offer. To succeed in the new role, the person needs to display behaviors, such as networking or team management, that do not fit his or
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her initial preferences. Thus, numerous situational contingencies can influence individuals’ decisions to behave in a manner aligned with or against their preferences. Therefore, we believe that the translation of personal preferences into actual behavior in organizations is far from perfect. Even if we expect some relationships between personality traits and motive-based competency dimensions to emerge, as shown in previous studies (e.g., Conway, 2000; R. Hogan, Rybicki, & Borman, 1998), we propose that the relationships between personality traits and competencies will only be moderate, as a sign of discriminant validity. We therefore propose the following hypothesis:

H2: The relationship between personality traits and motive-based competency dimensions will be moderate, which indicates discriminant validity between both constructs.

Next, we focus on the expected relationship between personality traits and competencies. Previous scholars have found that two of the Big Five personality traits are more closely related to leadership (Judge et al., 2002): Conscientiousness and Extraversion. We expect that these two traits will have higher correlations with the motive-based competency dimensions than the other three traits (i.e., Neuroticism, Agreeableness, and Openness to Experience). We hypothesize next on how motive-based competency dimensions and personality traits relate to each other.

Conscientiousness

Individuals who are high on Conscientiousness are described as careful, thorough, detail-oriented, organized, and responsible (Barrick & Mount, 1991). This dimension is often related to tenacity, hard work (Barrick & Mount, 1991), and ambition (J. Hogan & Holland, 2003). According to this definition, conscientious managers are likely to manifest competencies that fall into the achievement (because they are responsible and work hard to achieve their goals) and the power (because they are ambitious and select challenging objectives) competency dimensions. However, it is also true that middle managers are required to work in teams and get their work done through others in order to be successful in their role (Charan, Drotter, & Noel, 2001). Therefore, their goals are frequently based on group performance, and they may feel the need to collaborate with others in order to fulfill their goals and personal agendas. Evidence from previous studies support this view and has shown that conscientious managers are perceived as good team players by their colleagues because they are predictable in their behavior and work to accomplish team goals (Digman, 1997; Hough, 1992). Therefore, managers who are highly conscientious and want to accomplish their goals will also be likely to manifest affiliation competencies. In sum, on one side, conscientious managers are tenacious and hard workers, therefore displaying achievement and power competencies, and on the other side, they need to collaborate and be affiliative with others to succeed in their role. We therefore expect Conscientiousness to be related to the three motive-based dimensions.

Extraversion

Extraverted individuals are seen as sociable, talkative, and generally comfortable with others (Barrick & Mount, 1991). In addition to the sociability component, Extraversion has also been related to ambition and initiative (e.g., Gough, 1990). We expect this personality trait to be positively related to the affiliation (because of the sociability component of extroversion) and the
power and achievement (which reflect the ambition component of this trait) motive-based competency dimensions. We therefore propose that Extraversion is going to be related to the three motive-based competency dimensions.

**Neuroticism**

Neuroticism represents the tendency to exhibit poor emotional adjustments and experience negative effects, such as anxiety, insecurity, and hostility (Judge et al., 2002). Scholars have often hypothesized that Neuroticism is negatively related to leadership behavior. However, Neuroticism has failed to emerge as a significant predictor of leadership, which scholars have explained by pointing to its high average correlation with other traits (Ones, Viswesvaran, & Reiss, 1996). Previous researchers have also proposed that Neuroticism may not have a linear relationship with performance (Barrick & Mount, 1991). This latter explanation suggests that as long as the individual possesses a sufficient ability to emotionally adjust to his or her circumstances, the predictive value of any differences is minimized. Therefore, we expect Neuroticism to be negatively but not significantly related to the motive-based competency dimensions.

**Agreeableness**

Agreeableness is often described as likeability and social desirability (Barrick & Mount, 1991; Digman, 1997). Individuals who are highly agreeable are seen as courteous to others, tolerant, and less inclined toward conflict (Barrick & Mount, 1991). Holding a middle management position often involves considerable interpersonal interactions and a service orientation (Charan et al., 2001). Highly agreeable people will be sensitive to others and, therefore, work more effectively in social groups (i.e., positive relationship with affiliation), whereas people low on Agreeableness may be willing to address conflicts and face opposition to more effectively achieve their goals through others (i.e., negative relationship with power). In line with previous findings (e.g., Bartram, 2005; J. Hogan & Holland, 2003; Oh & Berry, 2009), we expect this personality trait to be positively related to the affiliation motive-based dimension and negatively related to the power one.

**Openness to Experience**

Openness to Experience has emerged as a correlate to leadership but is also considered to be the most controversial and least understood personality trait (Judge et al., 2002). Barrick and Mount (1991) found it to be a valid predictor of training performance and hypothesized that individuals high on Openness to Experience (i.e., intelligent, curious, and broad-minded) are more likely to have a positive attitude toward learning experiences. Therefore, they suggested that this trait may identify the individuals that are most likely to benefit from training but not necessarily be star performers. With regard to its relationships with the motive-based dimensions, because individuals high on this trait tend to be imaginative, nonconformist, unconventional, and autonomous (Judge et al., 2002), they may have new initiatives more often and end up finding new ways to meet their goals. Therefore, we expect this trait to be positively related to the achievement and power motive-based competency dimensions. Accordingly, we propose the following hypotheses:
H3: Conscientiousness and Extroversion will be more related to competency dimensions than Openness to Experience, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism.
H4a: Conscientiousness will relate positively to all motive-based competency dimensions.
H4b: Extraversion will relate positively to all motive-based dimensions.
H4c: Neuroticism will relate negatively (but not significantly) to all motive-based competency dimensions.
H4d: Agreeableness will relate positively to affiliation and negatively to power.
H4e: Openness to Experience will relate positively to the achievement and power motive-based dimensions.

Motivate-Based Competency Dimensions and Organizational Rewards

Numerous studies have related competencies to job performance outcomes (e.g., Shipper & Davy, 2002). A vast majority of these studies have assessed job performance with a single criterion: the supervisor’s recognition of a person’s job accomplishments. Scholars have claimed that if one considers the different facets of organizational rewards, one may develop new insights into how personality dimensions, competencies, and organizational rewards relate to each other.

Motowidlo, Borman, and Schmit (1997) distinguished between contextual and task types of performance, which, in socioanalytic terms, could be interpreted as being connected with the getting along and getting ahead motives, respectively. R. Hogan and Shelton (1998) claimed that work behavior that reflects people’s getting along and/or getting ahead motives will serve to maximize different types of organizational rewards. In particular, the researchers proposed that the getting along motive will predict one’s popularity among his or her colleagues and that the getting ahead motive will serve to predict the achievement of organizational status. Therefore, in accordance with the socioanalytic approach, we hypothesized that displaying competencies that conform to the affiliation dimension (i.e., the desire to get along with others) will predict one’s popularity among one’s colleagues at work and that showing competencies linked to the achievement and power dimensions (i.e., the desire to get ahead over other members of the group) will predict one’s ability to rise in professional status.

However, to complement our predictions and theorize about how competencies are translated into organizational rewards for middle managers, we also draw upon role theory (e.g., Ashforth, 2001; Biddle, 1979). With respect to the characteristics of our sample, the main challenge for middle managers is to complete their work through others (Charan et al., 2001; Hill, 1992). The competencies most cited in the literature at the heart of middle management’s responsibilities are related to the power motivational construct and include the ability of influencing without authority, visioning, and displaying inspirational communication skills (e.g., Boyatzis & McClelland, 1982; Huy, 2001; Ibarra & Hunter, 2007).

Organizations often explicitly state that these power-related behaviors are related to successful performance in middle management roles. We propose that if power-related behaviors are shown, middle managers will be judged more positively and rewarded in terms of promotions, pay, and status. In addition, they will also be liked because they will meet people’s expectations and be predictable and respected in their role. Therefore, in accordance with role theory (Biddle, 1979), we expect that, beyond organizational status, the power motive-based dimension will also serve to predict other organizational rewards for middle managers, including their level of popularity among colleagues. This discussion suggests the following:
H5a: The affiliation motive-based competency dimension will predict middle managers’ popularity among their work colleagues.
H5b: The achievement motive-based competency dimension will predict middle managers’ organizational status.
H5c: The power motive-based competency dimensions will predict middle managers’ popularity among colleagues and the achievement of organizational status.

Two-Step Structural Model: Linking Personality, Competency Dimensions, and Rewards

Spencer and Spencer’s (1993) causal flow model stated that personal characteristics predict job performance outcomes through competencies. R. Hogan and Shelton (1998) proposed that motives organize the constructs that explain these relationships. Recent meta-analyses have found that personality traits relate to both competencies and organizational rewards, such as promotions, salary levels, and turnovers (Barrick et al., 2001; Bartram, 2005; Judge et al., 2002). Judge and colleagues (Barrick et al., 2001; Judge et al., 2002) claimed that these findings support the relevance of personality traits in leadership research. In light of their results, the argument that motivational constructs mediate the personality–organizational rewards relationships seems to be reasonable (Barrick et al., 2001; Judge et al., 2002), as the researchers showed that the extent of the relationship between personality traits and competencies is considerably greater than that of the relationship between personality traits and organizational rewards.

Building on this reasoning, we propose a model that includes organizational status and popularity among colleagues as the dependent variables and personal traits and competency dimensions as the distal and proximal antecedents, respectively. Thus, personality will indirectly relate to status and popularity through the competency dimensions, whereas the competency dimensions will directly relate to them. Van Iddekinge, Ferris, and Heffner (2009) suggested that given the complexities of leader behavior and the myriad of individual differences that are likely to influence leadership performance, it is more reasonable to expect partial rather than full mediation between distal antecedents and performance outcomes. Therefore, we expect the following:

H6: The effects of personality on middle managers’ popularity and organizational status will be partially mediated by their motive-based dimensions.

METHODS

Participants

We recruited the participants for the study from three Spanish medium-sized public companies. As part of a developmental program for middle managers, we invited 223 individuals to participate in an information session to assess their competencies. All of them agreed to be included in the study. Of the participants, 220 reported their genders (i.e., 110 women and 110 men), and 212 reported their ages ($M = 35.93, SD = 9.92$). We obtained additional data on personality traits and job performance outcomes (i.e., popularity and rewards) from 100 participants.
who voluntarily chose to participate in the individual coaching sessions offered as part of a development program.

Instruments

*Motive-Based Competency Dimensions*

We used the Emotional Competency Inventory (ECI-2) to measure the participants’ competencies (Boyatzis & Sala, 2004). The ECI-2 version of the questionnaire has 72 items that form 18 competencies with response categories based on the frequency of demonstration or observation. Participants indicated the extent to which each item was shown in the work context on a 5-point scale. The original ECI-2 is in English, but we used a Spanish-language version based on a double-blinded translation process.

The model of 18 competencies of the ECI-2 reflects two domains of competencies: awareness and management competencies. Awareness competencies refer to a great extent to self-reflections or behavioral dispositions. Management competencies express more concrete behaviors that are manifested in daily work situations (Boyatzis, Goleman, & Rhee, 2000). Because we were interested in actual work behavior, we based our study on the 14 management competencies. Therefore, we exclude emotional self-awareness, accurate self-assessment, organizational awareness, and self-confidence from our analyses.

We used the conceptualization of motive-based competency dimensions, as outlined in the introduction, to classify the 14 managerial competencies of the model in terms of the degree to which they reflect efforts to display achievement, power, and affiliation motives, as suggested by J. Hogan and Holland (2003). Two subject matter experts reviewed the competencies definitions and separately categorized them. The classification was based on the absolute level of rater agreement that require both raters to agree. Two competencies were deleted from subsequent analyses because the raters did not agree on which motive-based dimensions the competencies should be grouped into (i.e., emotional self-control and empathy).

Thus, the three motive-based dimensions were formed by 12 competencies. The achievement motive-based dimension included the competencies that are mainly related to getting things performed, doing whatever it takes to meet the objectives, and reaching standards of excellence (achievement orientation, initiative, persistence/optimism, and change catalyst). The affiliation dimension included the competencies mainly related to creating, maintaining, and using positive social relationships with other people at work (service orientation, adaptability, teamwork, collaboration, and transparency). The power dimension included the competencies mainly related to having an impact on others (influence, inspirational leadership, developing others, and conflict management).

*Big Five Personality Traits*

We measured personality with the NEO Five Factor Inventory (NEO-FFI), which is a shortened version of the Revised NEO Personality Inventory (Costa & McCrae, 1992). This test provides a quick and general measure of the five domains of adult personality: Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness to Experience, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness. Each domain
consists of 12 items. The 60 items are rated on a 5-point scale. The Spanish version of the NEO-FFI was provided by Ediciones TEA (http://www.teaediciones.com).

**Popularity Among Colleagues**

Similar to other scholars, we used peer nominations as a proxy for job performance outcomes (e.g., Boyatzis, 1982; Lewin & Zwany, 1976). The participants received an envelope containing a nominations form with the following instruction: “If you were to create and run your own company with a number of people from this organization, which individuals would you take with you (without a maximum or a minimum number)?” The respondents received explicit instructions to choose people not because they were friends but because of their good work. Once the nominations form was completed, it was placed in a closed envelope. This procedure was anonymous, and we assured the participants that the process was confidential. The nominations were categorical, ordinal judgments of people in an organizational setting. We calculated the nomination score per participant as the percentage of the number of nominations for him or her divided by the total number of people who received the envelopes and participated in the nominations process.

**Organizational Status**

We computed a composite score for the status by accounting for the organizational level of the participants, the number of direct reports, the number of promotions in the previous five years, and salaries. We standardized this score per organization and then standardized the results across all three organizations to obtain the organizational-level measure used in this study.

**Collection Procedure**

The organizations in this study committed to providing feedback and facilitating communication between the participants and their immediate supervisors to trigger the participants’ developmental processes. The participants attended an information session and were asked to complete the competency questionnaire via the intranet. In total, 223 participants rated themselves on the ECI-2. In addition, we assessed all of the participants with the questionnaires filled out by other observers (e.g., supervisors, colleagues, and subordinates). All of the participants were assessed by their immediate supervisors and could voluntarily choose other observers from their professional environments for additional assessments.

To obtain the consensus scores, we asked the participants to attend a session in which the two versions of the ECI-2 (self-assessment and others’ assessments) were visualized and discussed with other people who had worked with the participants on a daily basis. The two people in charge of this session were the participant and his or her immediate supervisor. We explicitly told the participants that the questionnaire findings were for personal use only and would not impact their organizations’ policies, such as pay, performance evaluations, or career planning. The participants could change the default profile discussion partner if a reasonable case could be made for doing so (e.g., they had worked together for a short period) and if the participants could invite other people from the organization to the discussion. The objective of this session was to obtain a “consensus profile” of the items included in the instrument. The participants and their
supervisors were required to reach an agreement on the competency items. The resulting profile was used as the basis for our study.

Testing Procedure

Structural equations models with LISREL provide various global diagnostic indices. We used the normal theory weighted least squares chi-square, the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), and the comparative fit index (CFI). Browne and Cudeck (1992) suggested that RMSEA values less than .05 indicate a close fit between the model and the data and that RMSEA values less than .08 indicate a reasonable fit. Bentler (1990) suggested that CFI values lower than .95 indicate a poor adjustment. However, scholars have reported that some fit indices behave poorly (e.g., Beauducel & Wittman, 2005; Fan & Sivo, 2005; Marsh, Hau, & Wen, 2004). In addition, researchers have suggested that chi-squared and other global fit indices do not account for the power of the statistical tests and that these indices are influenced by model characteristics that have nothing to do with the model misspecifications (e.g., Saris, Satorra, & Sörbom, 1987; Saris, Satorra, & Van der Veld, 2009). Thus, large misspecifications remain undetected, and small misspecifications can lead to the rejection of a model. Saris et al. (2009) suggested that testing for misspecifications of the models by considering the power of the tests is essential to obtaining accurate coefficients in structural equations models.

Because providing the standard global fit indices of structural models is a standard procedure, we did so, but we used the standardized RMR (SRMR), the expected parameter change indicators and the estimates of the modification indexes provided by LISREL. In addition, we concentrated on detecting misspecifications with the program Judgment Rule Aid (JRule; Saris et al., 2009). JRule is a program that judges whether one or more zero-assumed parameters in the structural model are misspecified with the modification index as a test statistic that accounts for the power of the test.

RESULTS

A Motive-Based Structure of Competencies

We followed a three-step procedure while analyzing the structure of competencies. First, we ran a preliminary analysis before testing the higher order competency structure to assess the quality of the items on the competency questionnaire. Second, we estimated the reliability and correlations of the competencies corrected for measurement errors. Finally, we tested the motive-based structure.

Preliminary Analyses: Item Quality

We adjusted the first-order models (competencies) and modified them by deleting invalid items (Coenders, Batista-Foguet, & Saris, 2005). We ran a confirmatory factor analysis without restricting the relationships between the items and the factors (competencies), except for identification restrictions. We analyzed the quality of the items as follows: (a) the items with loadings lower
than .40 on the corresponding competency were deleted because of poor quality, and (b) the items with loadings higher than .40 on another competency that was not theoretically appropriate were deleted because of theoretical invalidity. The results suggested that 36 out of 48 items met the quality requirements.

**Means, Standard Deviations, Reliabilities, and Correlations of Competencies**

We calculated the unweighted summated scales for 12 competencies. Table 1 shows their means, standard deviations, correlations, and reliability coefficients. We calculated the reliability of the competencies with the $\Omega$ coefficient, as suggested by Carmines and Zeller (1979) and McDonald (1999). Alpha is a lower bound for the reliability of the multi-item scales, whereas the omega coefficient is the closest estimate to the true reliability of the measure (Carmines & Zeller, 1979).

The reliability values ranged from .61 (conflict management) to .78 (adaptability and optimism). The correlations among the competencies ranged from .11 (between conflict management and optimism) to .69 (between inspirational leadership and achievement orientation).

**Structure of Competencies**

In the previous section, we analyzed the measurement models of the competencies. In this section, we concentrate on the structure of the competencies into higher order motive-based dimensions. Following Anderson and Gerbing’s (1988) recommendation, we assessed the measurement model before looking for structural relationships among the variables. We used the obtained estimates of the competencies’ reliabilities to correct the covariance matrix for measurement errors. The three-factor measurement model was fitted to the data, and an alternative one-factor nested model was used to assess the discriminant validity of the constructs (Brooke, Russell, & Price, 1988). First, we examined the three-factor structure to assess whether our variables have different underlying constructs. Next, a measurement model specifying perfect correlation among the variables was assessed to test for discriminability. We calculated the CFI difference between the two nested models (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988) and the sequential chi-squared difference (James, Mulaik, & Brett, 1982) to determine the discriminant validity of the three motive-based factors. Model differences in the CFI exceeding .01 indicate that practical differences exist in the nested models (Widaman, 1985). Alternatively, an insignificant chi-squared difference value indicates acceptance of the less constrained model (James et al., 1982). Table 2 reports the results of the confirmatory factor analysis comparing the three- and one-factor measurement models.

We first tested the structure composed of the 12 personal and interpersonal competencies grouped by the three (achievement, affiliation, and power) motive-based dimensions. The fit statistics were as follows: $\chi^2(51) = 133.38, p < .01$; RMSEA = .085, SRMR = .057, and CFI = .97. We used JRule to detect any misspecifications and found that one correlated error, which had to be introduced between the change catalyst and conflict management competencies, turned out to be highly significant ($27$ with a $t$ value of 5.15). We introduced the specification in the model. We estimated the model again and found the following fit statistics: $\chi^2(50) = 99.48, p < .10$; RMSEA = .066, SRMR = .048, and CFI = .98. The original baseline measurement model fits our data well, and no further misspecifications were suggested by JRule.
### TABLE 1

Means, Standard Deviations, Intercorrelations, and Reliabilities

| Variables                      | M   | SD  | 1    | 2    | 3    | 4    | 5    | 6    | 7    | 8    | 9    | 10   | 11   | 12   | 13   | 14   | 15   |
|--------------------------------|-----|-----|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| 1 Adaptability                 | 15.78 | 1.60 | .78  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| 2 Initiative                  | 11.40 | 1.63 | .59**| .69  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| 3 Optimism                    | 11.98 | 1.46 | .49**| .60**| .78  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| 4 Achievement Orientation     | 7.44  | 1.09 | .58**| .67**| .53**| .69  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| 5 Transparency                | 16.67 | 1.71 | .44**| .31**| .21**| .37**| .76  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| 6 Service Orientation         | 8.24  | 1.00 | .60**| .55**| .39**| .52**| .50**| .69  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| 7 Change Catalyst             | 7.07  | 1.30 | .35**| .58**| .40**| .57**| .12  | .35**| .71  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| 8 Developing Others           | 6.73  | 1.39 | .33**| .36**| .22**| .41**| .28**| .43**| .36**| .69  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| 9 Conflict Management         | 8.90  | 1.82 | .21**| .31**| .10  | .33**| .18**| .22**| .50**| .29**| .61  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| 10 Influence                  | 10.61 | 1.66 | .53**| .58**| .49**| .55**| .35**| .53**| .43**| .45**| .36**| .69  |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| 11 Inspirational Leadership   | 14.35 | 2.16 | .61**| .67**| .59**| .69**| .39**| .56**| .51**| .57**| .33**| .69**| .74  |      |      |      |      |      |
| 12 Teamwork                   | 12.40 | 1.30 | .48**| .50**| .45**| .53**| .43**| .47**| .39**| .25**| .25**| .45**| .50**| .66  |      |      |      |      |
| 13 Achievement                | 37.90 | 4.49 | .61**| .89**| .79**| .82**| .31**| .55**| .77**| .40**| .37**| .63**| .75**| .56**| .84  |      |      |      |
| 14 Power                      | 40.59 | 5.41 | .56**| .64**| .48**| .66**| .40**| .57**| .60**| .72**| .65**| .82**| .87**| .49**| .72**| .80  |      |      |
| 15 Affiliation                | 53.09 | 4.40 | .81**| .61**| .48**| .62**| .79**| .78**| .36**| .40**| .27**| .59**| .65**| .75**| .63**| .63**| .77  |      |

*Note. N = 223. Composite reliabilities are on the diagonal.
*p ≤ .05. **p ≤ .01.
### TABLE 2
Confirmatory Factor Analyses Comparing the Fit of the Baseline Versus a Single-Factor Measurement Model With and Without Correcting for Misspecifications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fit Indexes for Nested Sequence of Measurement Models</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Original Model</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\chi^2$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Baseline measurement model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Single-factor model</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. $n = 223$. CFI = comparative fit index.
Then we tested the single-factor model. The fit statistics for the one-factor model that was also corrected for misspecifications were the following: $\chi^2(53) = 178.85, p < .01$; RMSEA = .100, SRMR = .058, and CFI = .96. Therefore, combining the three motive-based dimensions into a single factor reduced the model fit. These results support using the three-factor structure of the motive-based approach to classify the personal and interpersonal competencies used in this study, as stated in H1.1

The next several sections study the relationships among the motive-based competency dimensions, personality traits, and job performance outcomes. In total, 100 participants have complete data and, therefore, serve as the basis for the analyses in the following sections. We performed chi-square tests on the motive-based dimensions to ensure that the results for the 100 participants with complete information were comparable with those of the rest of the participants, who only completed the ECI-2. No significant differences were found across the two groups.

**Motive-Based Dimensions of Competencies and Personality Traits**

We examined the personality traits assessed through the NEO-FFI questionnaire. According to the authors of the questionnaire, the short version of the NEO does not include subscales within each of the five personality traits that it measures (Costa & McCrae, 1992). Consequently, in theory, only five factors should appear. We calculated the composite reliabilities with the $\Omega_1$ coefficient with the following values: Neuroticism (.73), Extroversion (.85), Openness to Experience (.82), Agreeableness (.66), and Conscientiousness (.81). Means, standard deviations, and Pearson correlations among the motive-based dimensions, personality traits, and job performance outcomes are reported in Table 3.

On average, the correlations among the competency dimensions and the Extraversion (.28) and Conscientiousness (.33) personality traits were higher than the correlations among the competency dimensions and the other three personality traits (Agreeableness $= .08$, Neuroticism $= .10$, and Openness to Experience $= .23$). This finding supports H3, which suggested that Extraversion and Conscientiousness have higher correlations with the motive-based dimensions than the other personality traits.

We found significant correlations at a .01 level (two-tailed) between Extraversion and achievement (.36), affiliation (.28), and power (.33); between Openness to Experience and achievement (.28) and power (.34); and between Conscientiousness and achievement (.27), affiliation (.26), and power (.31). These correlations suggest that the motive-based competency dimensions and personality traits are only moderately correlated with one another. To further assess the distinctiveness of personality and motive-based competency dimensions, we ran regression analyses with LISREL, with personality traits as predictors of the motive-based dimensions corrected

---

1Before moving on with our analyses and because there are no previous studies based on “consensus” scores, we looked for the consistency of the competency structure across the sources (i.e., supervisor, self and consensus ratings) by assessing the measurement equivalence of the models. Following Conway’s (2000) strategy, we ran a confirmatory factor analysis across the sources to check whether the same model fits each source’s data. The results suggested that the three-factor structure of consensus ratings fits the supervisor and self-ratings as well. To support the use of the consensus scores, we also assessed the factor correlations for each source. The supervisors’ factor correlations averaged .71, whereas the self correlations averaged .62, and the consensus correlations averaged .66, which suggests that the supervisors did not distinguish as well as consensus scores among the different ratings factors (in accordance with the halo effect reported in previous studies; Cooper, 1981).
for measurement error. Table 4 shows the true (operational) validity coefficients (correlations corrected for measurement error) and the $R^2$ coefficients. The overall $R^2$ ranged from .24 (affiliation) to .49 (power). Altogether, these results support H2, which proposes that the relationships between personality traits and competency dimensions are moderate and, thus, signals discriminant validity between the two constructs.

We use the true (operational) validities reported in Table 4 to explore the relationships between the personality traits and the motive-based dimensions, as proposed in H4a to H4e. The operational (true) validities of the personality traits for the motive-based dimensions showed that Extraversion ($r_c = .41$), Openness to Experience ($r_c = .32$), and Conscientiousness ($r_c = .31$) were significantly related to the achievement dimensions. Extraversion ($r_c = .39$), Openness to Experience ($r_c = .40$), Agreeableness ($r_c = -.24$), and Conscientiousness ($r_c = .38$) were significantly related to power. Finally, Extraversion ($r_c = .32$) and Conscientiousness ($r_c = .30$) were significantly related to affiliation.
The analysis of the operational (true) validities supports H4a to H4e to a great extent. In accordance with H4a, Conscientiousness showed positive significant relationships with all three competency dimensions. Extraversion also showed significant relationships with all of the motive-based dimensions, as proposed by H4b. As predicted in H4c, Neuroticism did not have any significant relationships with the competency dimensions. The positive relationship between Neuroticism and affiliation suggests that people who are emotionally unstable may need more psychological support and, as a result, may show more collaborative work behavior (Barrick & Mount, 1991). As suggested in H4d, Agreeableness had a negative effect on the power dimension. Contrary to our expectations, Agreeableness had a nonsignificant negative relationship with affiliation. One possible explanation for this result is that being assertive and collaborative are not necessarily in conflict with one another. In addition, being able to stand for one’s opinions in front of the rest of the group members does not prevent one from establishing collaborative relationships at work. The positive significant relationships between Openness to Experience and the achievement and power motive-based dimensions support H4e.

Motive-Based Competency Dimensions as Predictors of Organizational Rewards

We analyzed the relationships between the motive-based dimensions and the dependent variables (popularity and status) while accounting for the unreliability of the measures. If the correlations between the independent variables are high, as is the case in this study, assessing their predictive power through a structural model that includes all of them simultaneously may not be appropriate (Oh & Berry, 2009). One strategy to assess the predictive power of each predictor on the dependent variables is to evaluate the set of independent variables (Farrar & Glauber, 1967) and to select the motive-based dimensions with significant explanatory power on popularity and organizational status. We followed this strategy and ran four sequential regressions with LISREL to explore H5a to H5c.

The results of the regression models are shown in Table 5. Thus, we progressively introduced the motive-based dimensions as independent variables in the regression models (Models 2–4) to predict popularity and status, controlling for personality. If a motive-based dimension had explanatory power over the dependent variables in a model, we kept it for the subsequent regression model. Otherwise, we dropped it to avoid misleading effects due to the high correlation between our variables (see Farrar & Glauber, 1967).

Model 1 had personality traits as predictors of the two job performance outcomes. The adjusted \( R \) coefficient for both popularity and status is .47. In the next model (Model 2), we introduced affiliation as an independent variable. The standardized regression coefficients showed that affiliation had only a significant effect on popularity (.38). The adjusted \( R \) coefficient increased to .57 in that case, which supports H5a. Next, we introduced achievement as an independent variable in Model 3. The results showed that achievement did not have any explanatory power on either of the two dependent variables (i.e., the \( R \) coefficients using personality traits and the achievement dimension were not significantly higher than the estimated \( R \) of Model 2 for explaining the dependent variables). Thus, H5b, which proposed that achievement is a predictor of status, was not supported. Finally, we introduced power in Model 4. This dimension had significant effects on both job outcomes (.57 on popularity and .28 on status). The \( R \) change when power was included led to a significant increase (.66 on popularity and .53 on status). This finding supports H5c,
which states that power will predict the two outcome variables used in this study. It is important to note that, when accounting for power, affiliation was no longer a significant predictor of popularity among colleagues.

Aligned with role theory, these results suggest that power-related behaviors, such as influencing and inspiring others, result in rewards both in terms of popularity and status, as hypothesized. Therefore, assuming that motive-based competency dimensions directly translate into organizational rewards, as suggested by the socioanalytic theory (e.g., R. Hogan & Shelton, 1998), may be problematic. Our results speak for the need to adopt a motivational approach in combination with role theories that are more closely connected to the specific occupations under investigation.

### The Two-Step Structural Model: Exploring the Links Between Personality and Organizational Rewards Through Motive-Based Dimensions

To explore whether the effects of personality on popularity and status are partially mediated through the motive-based competency dimensions, as suggested by H6, we followed a two-step strategy. First, we determined the direct and indirect effects of personality on popularity and status using regressions with the variables corrected for measurement error through LISREL. Next, we tested the complete two-step structural model specifying the significant direct effects of personality on the outcome variables found on the previous step.

To determine the direct and indirect effects of personality traits on popularity and status, we compared two regression models (see Table 6 with the regression analyses): one with personality traits as predictors (Model 1 in Table 6) and the other with all of the variables at the same time (personality traits and motive-based competency dimensions; Model 2 in Table 6). The standardized regression coefficients in Model 1 relate to the total effects of the personality traits on the dependent variables, and the standardized coefficients of the personality traits in Model 2

---

**Table 5**

Regression Analyses of Each Motive-Based Dimension as Predictor of Organizational Rewards Controlling for Personality Traits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Control/Antecedents</th>
<th>Popularity</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1) (2) (3) (4)</td>
<td>(1) (2) (3) (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neuroticism</td>
<td>−.46* −.50* −.50* −.39*</td>
<td>−.30* −.32* −.29* −.27*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extraversion</td>
<td>−.09 −.25* −.24* −.33*</td>
<td>−.04 −.10 −.06 −.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Openness to Experience</td>
<td>.01 .06 −.06 −.09</td>
<td>.02 .03 .01 −.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreeableness</td>
<td>−.26* −.19* −.20* −.01</td>
<td>−.21 −.19 −.19 −.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conscientiousness</td>
<td>.09 −.05 −.04 −.16</td>
<td>.32* .27* .30* .21*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affiliation</td>
<td>.38* .37* .08</td>
<td>.13 .07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievement</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.57* .28*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power</td>
<td>.47</td>
<td>.57 .47 .49 .48 .53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. $n = 100.$

*p < .05.
TABLE 6

Direct and Indirect Effects of Personality Traits on Popularity and Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Control/Antecedents</th>
<th>Popularity (1) Total Effects</th>
<th>(2) Direct Effects</th>
<th>Indirect Effects (1)–(2)</th>
<th>Status (1) Total Effects</th>
<th>(2) Direct Effects</th>
<th>Indirect Effects (1)–(2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neuroticism</td>
<td>−.46*</td>
<td>−.42*</td>
<td>−.04</td>
<td>−.30*</td>
<td>−.28*</td>
<td>−.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extraversion</td>
<td>−.09</td>
<td>−.31*</td>
<td>.22*</td>
<td>−.04</td>
<td>−.13</td>
<td>.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Openness to Experience</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>−.07</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>−.03</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreeableness</td>
<td>−.26*</td>
<td>−.02</td>
<td>−.24*</td>
<td>−.21</td>
<td>−.09</td>
<td>−.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conscientiousness</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>−.07</td>
<td>.32*</td>
<td>.21*</td>
<td>.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affiliation</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.02</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievement</td>
<td>−.18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>−10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power</td>
<td>.63*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.33*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. n = 100.
*p < .05.

represent their direct effects on them. Thus, we computed the indirect effects by subtracting the direct effects (in Model 2) from the total effects (in Model 1).

As shown in Table 6, Neuroticism and Extraversion had significant direct effects on popularity. Neuroticism had a negative direct effect on popularity (−.42), and this trait had a negligible indirect effect through the motive-based dimensions (−.04). Extraversion had a negative direct effect (−.31) and a positive indirect one (.22) on popularity. Neuroticism and Conscientiousness had significant direct effects on status. Neuroticism had a large negative direct effect (−.28) and a small indirect effect (−.02) on status as well, whereas Conscientiousness had positive direct and indirect effects on status (.21 and .11, respectively).

Once we identified the significant direct effects of personality on the outcome variables, we ran the complete two-step structural model using LISREL. As proposed in Hypothesis 6, we first considered a model where the personality traits were distal antecedents and the motive-based dimensions were proximal antecedents of popularity and status. The fit statistics of the two-step model were the following: $\chi^2(10) = 40.34, p = .00;$ RMSEA = .18, SRMR = .08, and CFI = .90. Then, we adjusted this model by introducing the direct effects of personality on the outcome variables just described and compared the goodness of fit indices of the two models. We added the direct effects of Extraversion and Neuroticism on popularity and of Neuroticism and Conscientiousness on status. As a result of specifying these effects, the fit statistics of the adjusted complete two-step model were significantly better than those of the original model: $\chi^2(6) = 7.48, p = .28; \text{RMSEA} = .05, \text{SRMR} = .03, \text{and CFI} = 1.00.$

Thus, these results suggest that some distal antecedents both directly and indirectly affect job performance outcomes. These findings are in agreement with H6, which supports the partial mediation of competencies between personality and job performance outcomes. Several conclusions can be drawn from these results. First, with regard to the effects of personality on job performance outcomes, we found that (the lack of) Neuroticism and Extraversion had significant direct effects on popularity and that (the lack of) Neuroticism and Conscientiousness had the same
effects on status. Agreeableness and Openness to Experience indirectly relate to both organizational rewards through the motive-based competency dimensions. Second, all of the personality traits with the exception of Openness to Experience can be used to significantly predict rewards for middle managers (directly and/or indirectly through motive-based competency dimensions). Third, the direct and indirect effects of Extraversion on popularity had opposite signs, which could indicate that the manifestation of this personality trait without the appropriate management behaviors can actually harm one’s popularity among colleagues. Fourth, the large direct effects and small indirect ones of Neuroticism on the outcome variables suggest that this trait may be more proximal than we hypothesized. Fifth, power is the only motive-based dimension that had explanatory power on popularity and status when all of the personality traits are accounted for and all of the motive-based dimensions are included in the model.

DISCUSSION

Our results indicate that a structure positing social competencies within a motive-based domain (formed by achievement, affiliation, and power motive-based dimensions) was empirically corroborated with structural equations models among a sample of middle managers. The construct and discriminant validity of the structural model supported treating these competency sets as three distinct constructs. This study was undertaken to test the relationships among motive-based competency dimensions, personality traits, and job performance outcomes by adopting a motivational approach. This investigation also draws upon role theory (Ashforth, 2001; Biddle, 1979) to complement predictions made by motivational theories on how motive-based competency dimensions affect different work rewards (i.e., organizational status and popularity among peers) for middle managers. Based on role theory, we propose that certain competencies lie at the heart of success for middle managers, and our results showed that middle managers are rewarded both in terms of status and popularity if they manifest these core competencies. Our results also provided evidence regarding the discriminant validity between motive-based dimensions and personality traits and set the grounds for understanding how personality characteristics relate to work behavior and organizational rewards for middle managers.

We now return to our original question: What do middle managers receive for their work? How do competencies contribute to the managers’ abilities to obtain organizational rewards? Affiliation showed a significant effect on popularity, but this effect turned to be nonsignificant when we also accounted for power. Of interest, achievement did not have any significant effects on the dependent variables. These results indicate that the rewards (i.e., popularity and status) are not related to the mere consecution of individual targets. One possible explanation for this finding is that, although achievement is crucial for managers in the early stages of their careers, by the time they become middle managers, other dimensions have a much more important impact and overtake achievement in predicting performance (McClelland & Boyatzis, 1982). Altogether, these results challenge the prediction made by the socioanalytic theory, stating that an individual’s motive of getting along predicts his or her popularity among colleagues, and the motive of getting ahead translates into the achievement of organizational status.

In addition, power-related behaviors, such as inspiring others and showing influence in interpersonal relationships, may be much more important to middle managers aiming to realize all types of performance-based rewards. Our results suggest that power-related competencies were...
the strongest predictors of the two job performance outcomes: popularity and status. The significant effects of power on both types of rewards (i.e., status and popularity) also partly contradict the predictions made by the socioanalytic theory (R. Hogan & Shelton, 1998). According to that theory, one might expect power-related behaviors to result in the achievement of status but not necessarily in higher popularity among one’s colleagues. Altogether, our research offers an important theoretical contribution by linking the socioanalytic approach to role theory, which considers the specific characteristics of the occupational groups under investigation, to understand work performance and make better predictions.

Regarding the relationships between personality and motive-based dimensions, we found that Extraversion and Conscientiousness were the most robust Big Five predictors of the three motive-based dimensions. Barrick and Mount (1991) found that these two traits were also significantly linked to overall job performance. Extraversion, Conscientiousness, and Openness to Experience were related to the getting ahead competency dimensions (achievement and power), whereas Neuroticism and Agreeableness were negatively related to these dimensions (the latter was found to be significantly related to power). These results suggest that not being too worried about impulse restraint and conscience (J. Hogan & Holland, 2003) and being confident (Stogdill, 1948) during social interactions may actually help managers to obtain results and accomplish their own goals and agendas. The positive association with Openness to Experience, which is in agreement with the idea of being curious and eager to learn (Barrick & Mount, 1991), may actually help managers to take initiatives and provide inspirational vision. Extraversion and Conscientiousness were significantly related to affiliation. Of interest, we did not find that Neuroticism was negatively related to affiliation and found that Agreeableness had a negative relationship with this motive-based dimension. One possible explanation for this is that the need for affiliation is related to social anxiety (McClelland, 1985), thus people displaying affiliation competencies may be driven more by fear of others than by Agreeableness.

Limitations of the Study and Future Research

This study was conducted in three Spanish organizations. One can argue that the findings are culture specific. Thus, additional cross-cultural studies are needed to further explore the structure and relationships of motive-based competency dimensions with personality traits and job performance outcomes.

In addition, consensus scores were used to run our empirical analyses. Although the literature found that communication and feedback processes should be part of 360-degree evaluations, no scholars have yet attempted to understand how these processes may alter the competency profiles of managers. We propose that consensus scores of competencies will be more reliable than self-scores and will be less sensitive to the halo effect than supervisor scores. Further analyzing the relationships among self-evaluations, others’ evaluations, and consensus evaluations may provide insights for the managerial performance literature and should be considered in future research.

Personal and interpersonal managerial competencies are only a part of managerial performance. Even if prior scholars have asserted that these competencies are the most relevant to the so-called new vision of management (du Gay et al., 1996), the use of a model of personal and interpersonal managerial competencies can be somewhat restrictive for scholars trying to understand managerial performance. Other instruments that may capture additional managerial competencies should be considered in future research.
Prior researchers have shown that the Big Five framework of personality relates to leadership and/or managerial performance (Judge et al., 2002; Barrick & Mount, 1991). However, some researchers have criticized the Big Five model for oversimplifying personality. In particular, when discussing the usefulness of studying the various facets of the five personality traits, Judge et al. (2002) suggested that distinguishing the sociability and ambition components of Extraversion can shed light on the correlates of job performance. Therefore, using more comprehensive personality models that account for these personality facets may serve to blend the relationships with work-related competencies in more subtle ways.

Proposing a structure for classifying competencies within a motive-based framework may benefit from actually measuring motives (using, e.g., the Thematic Apperception Test) and assessing their relationships with motive-based competency dimensions. For example, it would be interesting to study if the need for affiliation (measured by the Thematic Apperception Test) relates to affiliation competencies because people are driven by a positive need to collaborate with others or by a need to reduce anxiety driven by a fear of others. Future research can further explore these relationships. Another important question is to clarify how different motivation theories relate to each other. Future research can, for example, assess how the socioanalytic and McClelland’s motivation theories relate to each other.

Practical Implications

This research responds to past calls for research that tests the models of leadership performance (e.g., Borman, Hanson, Oppler, Pulakus, & White, 1991; Chan & Drasgow, 2001; Connelly et al., 2000; Van Iddekinge et al., 2009). We conducted a field study with a sample of middle managers. Developing and testing a meaningful taxonomy of social competencies and its relationships with personality and organizational rewards has numerous practical implications.

A meaningful motive-based competency taxonomy can serve as platform for selection-, training-, development-, and performance-related HR policies. It provides a common structure across jobs, occupational groups, and organizational levels while focusing on personal and interpersonal competencies. A competency taxonomy also creates a unified behavior-based language that clarifies how leadership is defined within an organization.

Previous studies have argued that individuals predisposed to developing more relationship-oriented skills tend to not develop more results-oriented competencies, whereas those predisposed to developing results-oriented competencies develop relationship-oriented skills as a secondary mode of management (Ayman, Chemers, & Fiedler, 1995). Thus, grouping skills within a motive-based structure may help to explore how leaders high on one, two, or three dimensions may be more effective in their performances and how their developmental priorities differ. By classifying work-related competencies into three motive-based dimensions, we can better understand why particular patterns of job behaviors exist. Moreover, by comparing competency assessments with measures of potential and motivations on the same constructs (using motivational tests as the predictors), practitioners can better identify those areas in which people would most benefit from learning opportunities and developmental experiences.

Although previous studies have investigated competencies in organizational settings, this study is the first to examine consensus scores to refine competency profiles through communication and feedback processes. Selecting a structured feedback session to obtain a consensus among competency profiles can be beneficial to organizations for the following reasons. First,
the 360-degree questionnaire provides a unified language for discussing work behaviors across the different levels of an organization and serves to mitigate the anxiety of using unstructured ways of handling feedback and communication processes in organizations. Second, the discussion conducted to derive the consensus profile also serves to bring feedback and communication to the forefront such that a special emphasis is placed on development rather than on performance evaluation. Third, knowing that the scores are going to be discussed in a session may enhance one’s capacity for reflection while completing the competency questionnaire. We assumed that consensus ratings may be less susceptible to the halo effect that has been found to characterize supervisors’ scores (Cooper, 1981). Fourth, we believe that the resulting consensus profile reflects a more precise image of the participants’ self-images during their social interactions because this profile combines different pieces of information on how people behave and are perceived at work. Finally, the process in which participants and observers are engaged may help to make sense of their job performances in terms of their motives and, therefore, help to align job competencies within the predictor domain, as predicted by socioanalytic theory.

Finally, our research offers valuable practical insights for combining the study of individual preferences with organizational behavioral requirements in predicting and developing middle managers’ performances. Our results suggest that regardless of personal preferences, power-related behaviors are a basic piece of middle managers’ performance assessments and, therefore, can constitute a powerful guide to their developmental efforts. These behaviors are ingrained in the definition of the middle management role, and people will be judged (and rewarded) with this definition in mind. Explicitly showing that these behaviors will guide reward decisions (e.g., promotions and pay) can serve to clarify the role of a middle manager and thereby generate transparency regarding the promotion and reward policies in place and acceptance thereof.

REFERENCES


