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ARTICLE

A test of the Morality-Agency-Communion (MAC) model of respect and liking across positive and negative traits

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Abstract

The Morality-Agency-Communion (MAC) model of respect and liking suggests that traits linked with morality are important for respect and liking; traits related to competence or assertiveness are important for respect and traits related to warmth are important for liking. However, tests of this model have tended not to consider traits related to immorality, incompetence, lack of assertiveness or coldness. This study addressed this issue by utilizing a within-subjects design in which participants were required to rate their respect and liking for individuals with specific trait types across four categories (moral; competence; assertiveness; and warmth) at three levels (positive, negative and neutral). The central tenets of the MAC model were supported for 'positive' traits (morality, competence, assertiveness and warmth). However, for 'negative' traits (immorality, incompetence and lack of assertiveness), individuals were similarly not liked and not respected. Individuals who were cold were respected more than liked. The findings of this study extend the MAC model by indicating that the amount that individuals are respected versus liked depends not only on trait type but also whether a trait is positive or negative.

KEYWORDS

agency, communion, dislike, disrespect, liking, morality, respect

BACKGROUND

To respect another person involves deeply admiring or holding that person in high regard. A person can become respected because of their traits or actions, as well as their achievements, status or simply because they are human (Lalljee et al., 2009). A respected person is often liked but it is not always the case that a

Statement of Contribution

What is already known on this subject?

- The Morality-Agency-Communion (MAC) model of respect and liking (Prestwich et al., 2021) has highlighted the traits and associated actions linked with respect and liking.
- In particular, competence and assertiveness traits are linked more with respect than liking; warmth traits are linked more with liking.
- Moral traits are important for both respect and liking and potentially more for respect.

What does this study adds?

- This study is the first to explicitly test whether the relationships between different types of traits and respect and liking are mirrored for negative equivalents such as immorality and incompetence.
- Cold traits adversely affect liking more than respect; immoral traits adversely affect liking and respect and to a greater degree than other types of negative traits.
- Incompetence and unassertiveness do not mirror the effects of competence and assertiveness as they both similarly affect respect and liking.
- Previous tests of the MAC model were based on student/university staff samples; this study tests the model in a more diverse sample.

person is both respected and liked. As such, respect can be contrasted with liking, which reflects an interest, preference, attraction or fondness for somebody based on their traits and actions (Baryla, 2014). Understanding the bases of respect and liking and what can be done to increase them is important given their role in human relationships (Frei & Shaver, 2002; Hendrick et al., 2010). Understanding the bases of *not* respecting or *dis*liking another person are, however, equally important. Not respecting teachers or parents can hinder learning, not respecting somebody because of their race can contribute to prejudice and lack of respect for others can be a factor in incivility (Shwalb & Shwalb, 2006).

Previous research has suggested that agentic traits, those that help an individual to get ahead by facilitating the pursuit of one's own goals such as being clever or efficient, influence respect more than liking. Conversely, communal traits, those that help an individual to get along with others by facilitating the pursuit of others' goals such as being caring or friendly, have been argued to influence liking more than respect (Montoya & Horton, 2014; Wojciszke et al., 2009; Wortman & Wood, 2011). It is important to note that such traits do not only influence respect or liking. For example, manipulations of warmth have been shown to increase liking and respect but that the impact on liking is greater, while manipulations of competence increase respect and liking but with a greater impact on respect (Oleszkiewicz & Lachowicz-Tabaczek, 2016). This is perhaps, unsurprising, given the close relationship between respect and liking (Cohen et al., 2006).

Despite the inherent appeal of such a parsimonious model that advocates the link between communal traits and liking (more than respect) plus agentic traits and respect (more than liking), the interrelationships between these constructs are likely to be more complex. Research has suggested that agentic traits can be subdivided into competence and assertiveness traits while communal traits can be subdivided into morality and warmth traits (Abele et al., 2016). Importantly, moral-related traits, despite being a form of communal trait, have been argued to play an important role in respect and liking (Hartley et al., 2016; Prestwich et al., 2021).

The Morality-Agency-Communion (MAC) model of respect and liking (Prestwich et al., 2021) highlights the pivotal role of morality in person perception and draws the distinction between morality and other communal (warmth) traits and their differential impacts on respect and liking. The model holds

five major tenets. Specifically, the MAC model proposes that agentic traits (competence and assertiveness) will influence respect more than liking (Tenet 1); communal traits differ in terms of morality (Tenet 2) such that those traits that have a weaker moral component (e.g. sociable and talkative) will influence liking more than respect (Tenet 3) while those communal traits with a stronger moral component (e.g. honest and fair) will at least influence respect as much as liking, if not more (Tenet 4). Moral traits are particularly important for both respect and liking compared with other communal (warmth) traits that are important for liking but less important for respect (Tenet 5).

Across four studies that required participants to rate how much they would respect and like individuals displaying competence, integrity or friendliness (Studies 1 and 2) or a wider range of traits that were related to competence, assertiveness, morality or warmth (Studies 3 and 4), Prestwich et al. (2021) provided support for each of the tenets of the MAC model. However, while the first two studies of Prestwich et al. (2021) considered both positive and negative traits, these studies did not consider unassertive traits and attempted to manipulate only one warmth trait (friendly vs. unfriendly), one moral trait (integrity vs. lack of integrity) and one agentic trait (competent vs. incompetent). It is not known, therefore, whether any effects relate only to these specific traits. Moreover, there was no formal test of whether being unfriendly, incompetent or showing a lack of integrity seemed to lead to lower respect or liking. Studies 3 and 4, that considered a range of traits, tested only positive traits that would increase respect or liking rather than negative traits that might be expected to reduce respect or liking.

Considering positive and negative examples of traits is important; it cannot necessarily be assumed that negative trait types (e.g. being incompetent [competence]; lacking integrity [morality]) have an effect that mirrors that of the positive equivalent. These impacts might be asymmetric such that the impact of a specific negative trait, within certain trait type categories, might be stronger than possessing the equivalent positive trait. Indeed, research provides some support for this possible asymmetry. For instance, it has been argued that one act of being immoral has a disproportionate impact on person judgements compared with a large number of moral acts (negativity bias); this can be reversed for ability (competence) such that one act of being competent can have a disproportionate impact on person judgements compared with a large number of incompetent acts (positivity bias; Skowronski & Carlston, 1987, 1989).

While Prestwich et al. (2021) did not formally test whether being unfriendly, incompetent or showing a lack of integrity lead to lower respect or liking, based on mean scores for respect and liking, being unfriendly may lead to lower liking than respect, showing a lack of integrity may lead to lower levels of respect than liking, while incompetence may affect respect and liking similarly. Related inferences can also be drawn from other studies. In a study that included cold and incompetent vignettes, Oleszkiewicz and Lachowicz-Tabaczek (2016) did not statistically compare levels of respect versus liking for cold or incompetent vignettes. However, the pattern of means suggest that being cold may influence respect and liking equally but that incompetence may adversely influence respect more than liking. In a Q-sort task, Hartley et al. (2016) reported that a number of traits linked with immorality (e.g. disrespectful and unfaithful) resulted in the lowest ratings of respect and liking compared to traits linked with incompetence (e.g. indecisive and dependent) or neither immorality nor incompetence (e.g., needy, anxious and annoying). Taken together, these studies provide at least some evidence that immorality may harm respect and liking a lot, do so at least equally for respect and liking although it could be more detrimental to respect; being cold will be detrimental to both respect and liking and potentially more for liking; being incompetent will be detrimental to both and potentially more for respect. These studies did not test unassertiveness but, on the basis that being assertive increases respect more than liking (Prestwich et al., 2021), being unassertive could lead to lower levels of respect than liking.

The primary aim of this study was to test how well the tenets of the MAC model can be extended to apply to negative traits (categorized as incompetent, unassertive, immoral and cold), as well as positive traits (categorized as competent, assertive, moral and warm). As such, it provides a unique direct test of whether the impact of negative traits on person judgements – in this case, one's respect and liking for the people described – is similar to those previously established in tests of the MAC model for positive traits. Previous tests of the MAC model have been conducted almost exclusively on student (or student

and university staff) samples; thus, a secondary aim was to test how well the MAC model applies to a more diverse sample. To test these aims, participants recruited via an online panel were asked to rate how much they would respect and like individuals who possessed a specific trait belonging to moral, warmth, competence and assertiveness trait types. As well as considering their respect and liking for individuals who possess the positive pole of the trait (e.g. friendly), their respect and liking for individuals who possess the negative (e.g. unfriendly) or neutral (e.g. neither friendly nor unfriendly) levels were also assessed. Neutral levels were used to check that respect and liking were rated equally at 'baseline' and to consider the effect of positive and negative manipulations of each trait type relative to this baseline.

In line with tenets of the MAC model, the following predictions were made about the role of specific types of traits and their differential impact on respect and liking:

Those described as having competent or assertive traits will be respected more than liked (Hypotheses 1a, 1b). Those described as having warm traits will be liked more than respected (Hypothesis 1c). In keeping with both the 'strong' (moral traits will be respected more than liked) and 'weak' (moral traits will be equally respected and liked) versions of the MAC model (Tenet 4) and mixed evidence in support of both forms (Prestwich et al., 2021, Study 4), it was predicted that those described as having moral traits will *not* be liked more than respected (either respected more than liked or equally respected and liked, Hypothesis 1d). Those described as having incompetent or unassertive traits will be liked more than respected (Hypotheses 2a, 2b). Those described as having cold traits will be respected more than liked (Hypothesis 2c). Consistent with Hypothesis 1d, those described as having immoral traits will not be respected more than liked (either liked more than respected or equally respected and liked, Hypothesis 2d).

In addition, the following predictions were made relating to how levels of respect or liking vary across trait types: Those described as having moral traits will be respected more than those described as having warm traits (Hypothesis 1e). Those described as having moral traits will be liked more than those described as competent or assertive (Hypotheses 1f, 1g). Those described as having warm traits will be liked more than those described as competent or assertive (Hypotheses 1h, 1i). Those described as having immoral traits will be respected less than those described as having cold traits (Hypothesis 2e); immoral traits will be liked less than incompetent or unassertive traits (Hypotheses 2f, 2g); cold traits will be liked less than incompetent or unassertive traits (Hypotheses 2h, 2i).

METHOD

The study was pre-registered at AsPredicted (https://aspredicted.org/blind.php?x=RYN_1R5). The study questionnaires, data and accompanying syntax file are available on the Open Science Framework (https://osf.io/nc6y5/?view_only=d835673c1237422caf60c97775c62432). The study received ethics approval from a university ethics committee.

Participants

The target sample size for this study was 139. The sample size was calculated a-priori to ensure 90% power to detect a significant effect at $p < .01$ (one-tailed) using repeated measures *t*-tests based on an effect size of $dz = 0.31$ for each set of traits. The underlying effect size was estimated based on a previous study (Prestwich et al., 2021, Study 4), which indicated that across sets of traits expected to differ in importance for respect and liking (competence, assertiveness and warmth), the smallest effect size was $dz = 0.62$. This prior effect size was halved in anticipation that differences between respect and liking may be smaller for negatively framed traits and also allowed for additional statistical noise from running the study online. One hundred and thirty-nine participants (95 females, 39 males, three non-binary, two other; mean age = 36.89 years, $SD = 10.91$ years; 114 non-students, 22 students, three prefer not to say; ethnicity stated on Prolific: 120 White; 10 Mixed; four Asian; 4

Black; one missing) were subsequently recruited via Prolific, an online participant recruitment site, and completed the study. Due to potential cultural and age-related differences and to ensure that participants could complete the measures, participants were pre-screened via Prolific using filters for age (18–65 years), nationality (British) and fluent languages (English) leaving a sample of 32,410 participants within Prolific who met these eligibility criteria. Participants were paid £3 for taking part.

Design

A 2 (measure type: respect vs. liking) × 3 (trait level: positive vs. negative vs. neutral traits) × 4 (trait type: warmth, morality, assertiveness, competence) within-subjects design was used.

Whether participants completed a block of measures of respect or liking first, as well as whether they responded to positive (e.g., pleasant) or negative (e.g., unpleasant) traits first or second was randomized. Neutral traits were always presented last within each block as their role was intended primarily as a check that these traits were rated neutrally and the hypotheses related to comparisons across the positive and negative traits rather than the neutral traits.

While the terms 'positive' and 'negative' are used for ease, and in most cases, the trait types are clearly positive (moral, competent and warm) or negative (immoral, incompetent and cold), it is acknowledged that being assertive or unassertive fall less conveniently into the categories 'positive' or 'negative'. For the purpose of this study, however, assertive was categorized as positive given it is more likely to increase respect than being unassertive. At the level of specific, individual traits, in most cases, the traits also fall comfortably into positive or negative categories (Table 1). The key exception is the trait pair of being dominant or submissive where being neither was rated more favourably. This trait pair was included given its centrality to assertiveness.[1]

Procedure

The study comprised a single session conducted online. At the beginning, participants read the volunteer information sheet, which stated that the study concerned their views and opinions regarding specific characteristics that individuals possess and, in particular, investigated how each characteristic influences how much they respect or like a person. After completing the consent form, participants were presented with a series of 81 traits and participants were required to indicate how much they would respect and like people who possessed each trait. At the end of the study, participants read the debrief.

Measures

Participants were instructed to rate the extent to which somebody who can be described as having a particular trait would be somebody they would respect (or like) along the scale from 'Somebody I would not respect (like)' (1) to 'Somebody I would very much respect (like)' (7). All positive traits were selected directly or indirectly based on the output of a factor analysis reported by Abele et al. (2016) where traits were separated into relevant categories, as well as ratings of specific traits reported by Abele

[1]The majority (but not all) of the positive traits were pre-rated on favourableness by a Polish sample in a study by Abele and Wojciszke (2007) using a −5 (very negative) to 5 (very positive) scale. Two different Polish words for dominance (dominujący; narzuca swoje z) were used. On the whole, the moral traits ($M = 4.01$; $SD = 0.35$) and competence traits ($M = 3.97$, $SD = 0.26$) were the most highly rated and least variable, followed by the warmth traits ($M = 3.30$, $SD = 0.85$). Assertiveness traits were notably less favourable (and more variable) than the other three trait types ($M = 1.52$, $SD = 2.10$). Few negative traits were pre-rated by Abele and Wojciszke to enable meaningful comparisons of favourability across trait types.

and Wojciszke (2007). While law abiding and integrity were not directly used in these two studies, they are related to several of the traits that were rated in the studies by Abele et al. (2016) and Abele and Wojciszke (2007). Moreover, all of these traits were used in a previous study to reflect the four trait types of morality, warmth, competence and assertiveness (Prestwich et al., 2021). The opposite of the positive traits (e.g. unfriendly for friendly) constituted the negative traits. All neutral traits were phrased in the form 'neither…nor…' (e.g. neither friendly nor unfriendly). Six traits were used to reflect *morality*: just, fair, integrity, law-abiding, honest, truthful; six used for *assertiveness*: self-confident, never gives up easily, takes the lead on group tasks, resolute, determined, dominant; and six were used for *competence*: efficient, capable, clever, effective, knowledgeable, wise. For the category *warmth*, slightly more traits (9) were used given that this was the sole category that was expected to be rated higher for liking than respect: empathetic, friendly, affectionate, caring, sociable, welcoming, pleasant, sympathetic and talkative. Responses within each trait type and level were mean averaged separately for respect and liking.

Statistical methods

A 2 (measure type: respect vs. liking) × 3 (trait level: positive vs. negative vs. neutral traits) × 4 (trait type: warmth; morality; assertiveness; competence) within-subjects ANOVA was used to test the hypotheses. A three-way interaction was predicted such that the effect of trait type on ratings will differ according to trait level and measure type. Repeated measures *t*-tests were conducted to decompose the interaction and compare respect versus liking levels within each trait type (warmth; morality; assertiveness; competence) at positive (for Hypotheses 1a–1d) and negative (for Hypotheses 2a–2d) levels. One-way within-subjects ANOVAs, followed up with Bonferroni post-hoc tests, were conducted to test whether ratings of respect (Hypotheses 1e, 2e) or liking (Hypotheses 1f–1i, 2f–2i) varied across the four trait types when framed positively or negatively. No differences were expected at the neutral level. To test whether specific traits were judged more important for respect than for liking and vice-versa, a series of repeated measures *t*-tests were also conducted. Effect sizes (partial eta-squared [η_p^2] and 90% confidence intervals for ANOVA; effect size *d* and 95% confidence intervals for *t*-tests) are reported.

In line with the pre-registration, participants who responded very quickly (completing the study in <3.5 min, $n = 1$) were excluded. Participants using repeat Prolific IDs or who failed to respond (or respond with random letters) to all of the free-text items assessing demographics (age, gender, nationality, ethnicity and highest educational qualification) were to be excluded. However, neither of these rules applied to any of the participants.

In sensitivity analyses, the main analyses were repeated with outliers removed. Outliers were calculated within each trait type (competence; assertiveness; warmth; and morality) at each level (positive, negative and neutral) by subtracting mean average liking scores from mean average respect scores. The resulting difference scores were z-scored. Participants with z-scores greater than 3.29 in magnitude, irrespective of sign, were removed in these sensitivity analyses. There were nine participants with outlier scores (two for all four neutral categories; one for all four negative categories; one participant was an outlier for two positive categories; warm and moral) and one participant was an outlier for two negative categories (cold and immoral); four participants were outliers on just one outcome (either competence–neutral, assertiveness–neutral, moral–neutral or cold). In these sensitivity analyses, it was planned that, where there were any repeat IP addresses, only the first completed set of responses would be included. However, there were no repeat IP addresses so this criterion was not applied.

RESULTS

In support of the manipulation, there was a significant main effect of trait level, $F(1.68, 230.73) = 802.90$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .85$, CI [.83, .87], indicating that positive traits (marginal mean = 5.70) were rated more

favourably than neutral traits (marginal mean = 3.97) which, in turn, were rated more favourably than negative traits (marginal mean = 2.49; all $p < .001$). In addition, there were significant main effects of trait type, $F(1.84, 252.36) = 88.62$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .39$, CI [.32, .46] (assertiveness > competence > warmth > morality, all $p < .001$), and measure type, $F(1, 137) = 17.06$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .11$, CI [.04, .20] (respect > liking).

There was a significant trait type × trait level interaction, $F(4.04, 553.96) = 221.77$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .62$, CI [.58, .65], suggesting that the manipulation of trait level had the smallest effect on ratings of assertiveness traits, followed by competence then warmth; ratings (respect/liking combined) varied the most across positive/neutral/negative levels for ratings of morality traits. There was a trait type × measure type interaction, $F(2.71, 370.57) = 4.00$, $p = .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .03$, CI [.004, .06], but ratings of respect were higher than liking across all trait types when ignoring trait level. The trait level × measure type interaction, $F(1.89, 259.42) = 3.72$, $p = .03$, $\eta_p^2 = .03$, CI [.002, .06], indicated respect scores were, on average, higher than liking across positive traits only.

Tests of hypotheses

Most importantly, the critical three-way interaction was significant, $F(4.91, 672.48) = 25.99$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .16$, CI [.11, .20].[2] For positive traits (Figure 1), respect scores were higher than liking scores for competence, $t(137) = 5.45$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.46$, CI [.29, .64] (supporting Hypothesis 1a), and assertiveness, $t(137) = 8.02$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.68$, CI [.50, .87] (supporting Hypothesis 1b) traits, while liking scores were higher than respect for warmth traits, $t(137) = -2.42$, $p = .02$, $d = -0.21$, CI [−.38, −.04] (supporting Hypothesis 1c). In support of Hypothesis 1d, respect scores were higher than liking scores for moral traits, $t(137) = 3.68$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.31$, CI [.14, .48].

For negative traits (Figure 2), fewer hypotheses were supported. Cold traits were respected more than liked, $t(137) = 5.02$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.43$, CI [.25, .60] (supporting Hypothesis 2c) and immoral traits

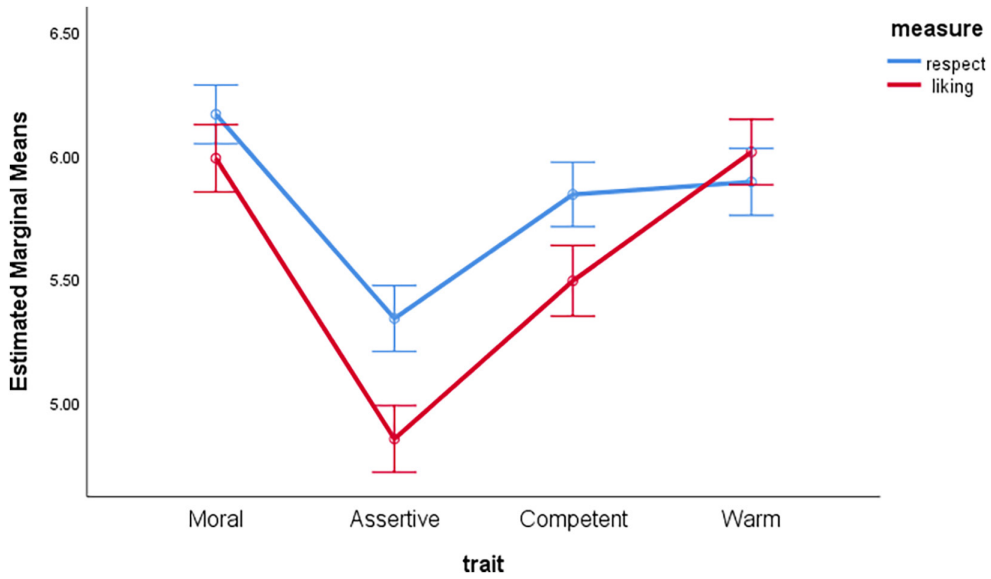

FIGURE 1 Ratings of respect and liking across moral, assertive, competent and warm traits. *Note*: Error bars show 95% confidence intervals.

[2]At the request of a reviewer, this analysis was repeated with the neutral traits removed. In this analysis, the critical three-way interaction remained, $F(2.67, 365.94) = 33.64$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .20$, CI [.14, .25].

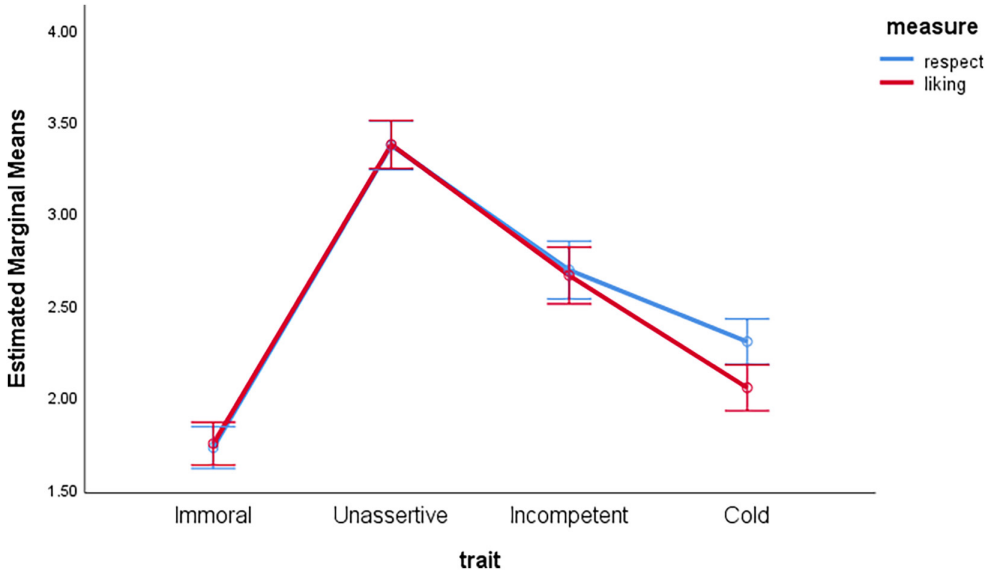

FIGURE 2 Ratings of respect and liking across immoral, unassertive, incompetent and cold traits. *Note*: Error bars show 95% confidence intervals.

were similarly (dis)liked and (dis)respected, $t(137) = -0.53$, $p = .60$, $d = -0.05$, CI [−.21, .12] (supporting Hypothesis 2d). However, traits linked with incompetence, $t(137) = 0.50$, $p = .62$, $d = 0.04$, CI [−.13, .21], or being unassertive, $t(137) = -0.07$, $p = .94$, $d = -0.01$, CI [−.17, .16], were also similarly (dis)respected and (dis)liked (Hypotheses 2a and 2b not supported).

Following up the significant three-way interaction with one-way ANOVAs and Bonferroni post-hoc tests revealed that ratings of respect varied across trait types at positive, $F(2.85, 389.84) = 94.15$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .41$, CI [.34, .46], and negative, $F(2.57, 352.36) = 241.38$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .64$, CI [.59, .67], levels. In relation to the hypotheses, those described as having moral traits were respected more than those described as having warm traits ($p < .001$, supporting Hypothesis 1e) and those described as having immoral traits were respected less than those described as having cold traits ($p < .001$, supporting Hypothesis 2e). In addition, assertiveness traits were least respected ($p < .001$ compared to each of the other trait types), moral traits were also more respected than competence traits ($p < .001$) and there was no difference in respect between warm traits and competence traits ($p = 1$). Furthermore, immoral traits were least respected (all $p < .001$ compared to each of the other negative trait types), unassertive traits were more respected than the other negative traits (all $p < .001$) and incompetent traits were respected more than cold traits ($p < .001$).

Further decomposition of the significant three-way interaction, this time in relation to ratings of liking, revealed that liking varied across trait types at positive, $F(2.66, 364.34) = 179.26$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .57$, CI [.51, .61], and negative, $F(2.69, 368.32) = 248.08$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .64$, CI [.60, .68], levels. Those described as having moral traits were liked more than those described as having competent ($p < .001$, supporting Hypothesis 1f) or assertive ($p < .001$, supporting Hypothesis 1g) traits. Those described as having warm traits were also liked more than those described as having competent ($p < .001$, supporting Hypothesis 1h) or assertive ($p < .001$, supporting Hypothesis 1i) traits. In addition, those with moral traits were similarly liked as those with warm traits ($p = 1$) while those with competent traits were liked more than those with assertive traits ($p < .001$).

Those described as having immoral traits were liked less than those described as having incompetent ($p < .001$, supporting Hypothesis 2f) or unassertive ($p < .001$, supporting Hypothesis 2g) traits. Those described as having cold traits were also liked less than those described as having

incompetent ($p < .001$, supporting Hypothesis 2h) or unassertive ($p < .001$, supporting Hypothesis 2i) traits. In addition, those described as having immoral traits were liked less than those with cold traits ($p < .001$) and those with incompetent traits were liked less than those with unassertive traits ($p < .001$).

Additional analyses

In unregistered analyses, additional *t*-tests were conducted to check that ratings of respect and liking did not differ at neutral levels. While this was the case for assertiveness, $t(137) = 0.00$, $p = 1$, $d = 0$, CI [−.17, .17], competence, $t(137) = 0.32$, $p = .75$, $d = 0.03$, CI [−.14, .19] and morality, $t(137) = 1.28$, $p = .20$, $d = 0.11$, CI [−.06, .28], even at neutral levels respect was higher than liking for warmth-related traits, $t(137) = 1.99$, $p = .049$, $d = 0.17$, CI [.001, .34]. As a result, additional analyses were conducted to test whether these traits increased/decreased respect and liking differentially at positive and negative levels.

2 (trait level: positive vs. neutral) × 2 (measure type: respect vs. liking) within-subjects ANOVAs revealed that respect and liking increased similarly from neutral to positive levels of morality, $F(1, 137) = 1.50$, $p = .22$, $\eta_p^2 = .01$, CI [0, .06]; however, liking increased more than respect from neutral to positive levels of warmth, $F(1, 137) = 8.40$, $p = .004$, $\eta_p^2 = .06$, CI [.01, .13]. As would be expected, respect increased more than liking from neutral to positive levels of competence, $F(1, 137) = 11.46$, $p = .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .08$, CI [.02, .16], and assertiveness, $F(1, 137) = 26.21$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .16$, CI [.08, .25].

Further 2 (trait level: negative vs. neutral) × 2 (measure type: respect vs. liking) within-subjects ANOVAs revealed that respect and liking fell similarly sharply from neutral to negative levels of morality, $F(1, 137) = 1.98$, $p = .16$, $\eta_p^2 = .01$, CI [0, .06]. This was also the case for assertiveness, $F(1, 137) = 0.004$, $p = .95$, $\eta_p^2 = .00003$, CI [0, .0001], and competence, $F(1, 137) = 0.02$, $p = .90$, $\eta_p^2 = .0001$, CI [0, .01]. Respect and liking declined similarly from neutral to negative levels of warmth, $F(1, 137) = 2.27$, $p = .13$, $\eta_p^2 = .02$, CI [0, .07].

Specific traits

At positive levels, all six assertiveness traits, all six competence traits and all six morality traits (albeit some were just significant) were rated higher for respect than liking (Table 1). For warmth traits, five out of nine traits were rated higher for liking than respect (the exceptions were empathetic, caring, sociable, sympathetic).

Aside from being ineffective, which was rated higher for liking than respect, at negative levels, each morality, competence and assertiveness trait was rated similarly for respect and liking. For traits linked with being cold, ratings were lower for liking than respect for six out of nine traits (the exceptions being lacking empathy, cruel and unpleasant).

Sensitivity analyses

In the sensitivity analyses, after removing the nine participants with outlying scores, the critical three-way interaction remained, $F(5.15, 659.09) = 28.23$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .18$, CI [.13, .22]. The follow-up *t*-tests were unaffected, as well, with all significant effects remaining significant and all non-significant results remaining non-significant. The follow-up one-way ANOVAs comparing levels of respect across positive traits, respect across negative traits, liking across positive traits and liking across negative traits were also unaffected with all main effects remaining significant and no notable changes in post-hoc tests (all significant effects remained significant and vice-versa).

TABLE 1 Individual trait-level descriptive statistics ($N = 138$; 1 person excluded due to speed of response, in line with pre-registration).

Trait	Respect	Liking		Respect	Liking		Respect	Liking
Warmth								
Empathetic	6.04 (0.92)	6.04 (0.95)	Lacks empathy	2.11 (1.19)	1.94 (1.18)	Neither	3.94 (1.00)	3.93 (1.20)
Affectionate	5.70 (1.06)	5.87 (1.03)*	Lacks affection (cold)	2.44 (1.18)	2.18 (1.15)**	Neither	4.02 (0.98)	3.88 (1.24)
Caring	6.25 (0.92)	6.28 (0.90)	Cruel	1.25 (0.66)	1.25 (0.70)	Neither	3.62 (1.12)*	3.44 (1.18)
Friendly	5.98 (1.01)	6.22 (0.88)**	Unfriendly	2.28 (1.11)	1.94 (1.02)***	Neither	3.96 (1.08)**	3.67 (1.12)
Sociable	5.38 (1.09)	5.48 (1.13)	Unsociable	3.58 (1.27)	3.09 (1.36)***	Neither	4.34 (0.93)	4.30 (1.12)
Welcoming	6.01 (0.99)	6.17 (0.91)*	Unwelcoming	2.14 (0.98)	1.88 (0.90)***	Neither	3.76 (1.08)	3.63 (1.15)
Sympathetic	6.00 (0.96)	6.07 (0.96)	Unsympathetic	2.01 (1.00)	1.83 (0.88)**	Neither	3.70 (1.06)*	3.48 (1.19)
Talkative	4.83 (1.23)	5.04 (1.22)*	Not talkative	4.00 (1.21)	3.64 (1.43)**	Neither	4.55 (1.18)*	4.34 (1.14)
Pleasant	5.98 (0.95)	6.15 (0.91)*	Unpleasant	1.59 (0.80)	1.53 (0.79)	Neither	3.78 (1.14)**	3.51 (1.20)
Morality								
Just	5.91 (1.10)*	5.71 (1.08)	Unjust	1.86 (1.13)	1.89 (1.07)	Neither	3.74 (1.10)	3.65 (1.20)
Fair	6.47 (0.77)*	6.27 (1.00)	Unfair	1.42 (0.71)	1.40 (0.71)	Neither	3.53 (1.16)	3.49 (1.26)
Law-abiding	5.68 (1.21)*	5.49 (1.23)	Law-breaking	2.10 (1.22)	2.21 (1.26)	Neither	3.75 (1.20)	3.68 (1.35)
Truthful	6.31 (0.89)*	6.17 (0.99)	Untruthful	1.54 (0.82)	1.55 (0.79)	Neither	3.46 (1.26)	3.34 (1.25)
Honest	6.41 (0.82)**	6.23 (0.91)	Dishonest	1.47 (0.79)	1.45 (0.72)	Neither	3.39 (1.23)	3.29 (1.31)
Integrity	6.20 (0.86)*	6.05 (0.90)	Lacks integrity	1.93 (1.04)	1.96 (1.02)	Neither	3.62 (1.12)	3.57 (1.24)
Assertiveness								
Never gives up easily	5.97 (1.00)***	5.25 (1.07)	Gives up easily	2.56 (1.19)	2.74 (1.19)	Neither	4.29 (0.86)	4.40 (1.01)
Leads group tasks	5.13 (1.11)***	4.55 (0.95)	Does not lead	3.92 (1.04)	4.02 (1.08)	Neither	4.44 (1.06)	4.51 (1.20)
Self-confident	5.38 (1.18)*	5.09 (1.16)	Lacks self-confidence	4.20 (1.23)	4.00 (1.25)	Neither	4.47 (1.01)	4.38 (1.23)
Resolute	5.68 (1.05)***	5.22 (1.05)	Half-hearted	2.88 (1.18)	2.85 (1.09)	Neither	4.02 (0.88)	3.91 (1.05)
Determined	5.95 (0.97)***	5.39 (1.11)	Lacks determination	3.12 (1.17)	3.11 (1.15)	Neither	4.20 (0.89)	4.14 (1.12)
Dominant	3.93 (1.39)**	3.62 (1.44)	Submissive	3.53 (1.15)	3.51 (1.17)	Neither	4.41 (1.05)	4.49 (1.17)

TABLE 1 (Continued)

Trait	Respect	Liking		Respect	Liking		Respect	Liking
Competence								
Clever	5.75 (0.98)***	5.41 (1.04)	Stupid	2.88 (1.33)	2.75 (1.29)	Neither	4.39 (0.98)	4.45 (1.14)
Effective	5.70 (0.97)***	5.30 (1.11)	Ineffective	2.62 (1.16)*	2.80 (1.11)	Neither	4.14 (0.91)	4.14 (1.09)
Capable	5.79 (0.93)**	5.50 (1.05)	Incapable	2.94 (1.25)	2.76 (1.21)	Neither	4.11 (0.99)	4.12 (1.16)
Efficient	5.68 (0.99)***	5.33 (0.98)	Inefficient	2.93 (1.13)	2.97 (1.19)	Neither	4.14 (0.96)	4.19 (1.11)
Knowledgeable	5.99 (0.95)***	5.60 (0.97)	Ignorant	2.20 (1.22)	2.05 (1.10)	Neither	4.14 (1.06)*	3.93 (1.19)
Wise	6.14 (0.86)***	5.80 (1.00)	Foolish	2.55 (1.20)	2.61 (1.19)	Neither	4.12 (1.12)	4.09 (1.19)

Note: *$p < .05$ (2-tailed); **$p < .01$ (2-tailed); ***$p < .001$ (two-tailed) for differences between ratings of respect versus liking.

DISCUSSION

The results support the majority of the hypotheses and the core tenets of the MAC model, particularly across positive traits. Some tenets of the MAC model did not hold across unassertive and incompetence-related traits. Competence, assertiveness and moral traits were rated higher for respect than liking (supporting Hypotheses 1a,b,d) while warmth traits were rated higher for liking than respect (supporting Hypothesis 1c). Cold traits were rated higher for respect than liking while there was no difference for immoral traits (supporting Hypotheses 2c and 2d, respectively). It should be noted, however, that respect was also higher than liking at neutral levels of warmth suggesting that, compared to being warm, *not* being warm (either neutral or cold) reduces liking more than respect. Rather than be more disrespected than disliked, incompetent and unassertive traits were rated similarly on the measures of respect and liking (not supporting Hypotheses 2a, 2b). The finding that incompetent traits were similarly disliked and disrespected is broadly in line with the findings from some (Prestwich et al., 2021, Studies 1 and 2) but not all (Oleszkiewicz & Lachowicz-Tabaczek, 2016) studies although such comparator studies did not statistically test differences between respect and liking for incompetent traits.

Across trait types, (im)moral traits were respected more(less) than warm (cold) traits (supporting Hypotheses 1e and 2e); (im)moral traits were liked more(less) than (in)competent and (un)assertive traits (supporting Hypotheses 1f, 1g, 2f, 2g); warm (cold) traits were liked more (less) than (in)competent or (un)assertive traits (supporting Hypotheses 1h, 1i, 2h, 2i).

When looking at specific traits, the majority of traits followed a consistent pattern within each category. For instance, all assertiveness, competence and moral traits were rated higher for respect than liking. The key variations were found in the warm and cold traits that generally have some moral content: empathetic-lacking empathy, caring-cruel, sympathetic and unpleasant. In addition to the five main tenets in the MAC model, Prestwich et al. (2021) tentatively proposed two further tenets, one of which was that increasing morality within warmth traits can improve respect and liking and maybe more so respect (Tenet 6). Prestwich et al. (2021), when comparing warmth traits with higher levels of morality (that included being empathetic, caring, sympathetic and pleasant) against warmth traits with little or no morality component (e.g., affectionate, talkative), found those warmth traits with higher morality scored higher on respect and liking and in one of two sets of traits the increase in respect (from warm/low moral traits to warm/high moral traits) was greater than for liking (no difference for the other set). This is also consistent with previous claims that traits such as caring (Langdon, 2007) and cruel (Hartley et al., 2016), traits not devoid of moral elements, play an important role in respect. This moral sub-component of some warm–cold traits could, in keeping with Tenet 6, explain why some warmth traits are equally respected and liked. Moreover, this moral component of some warm–cold traits may possibly have contributed to the findings in the current study that incompetent traits were respected more than cold traits, competence traits were similarly respected to being warm, and being (un)assertive was (more)less respected than being (cold) warm.

Being 'sociable' was, surprisingly, a trait that was respected as much as liked. It is not known why, in this study, being sociable was a trait that was respected as much as liked. It may be reflective of the older age of the sample. In previous studies focused on student samples (Prestwich et al., 2021), the ages of the participants were such that their level of sociability is highest; Brook and Schmidt (2020) reported that sociability is highest in adulthood between the ages of 17 and 22 but lowest between 26 and 55 (the mean age of the participants in the current study was 37). With lower sociability, those in mid-adulthood may like less/respect more those with high sociability compared with those in earlier adulthood.

Previous research has highlighted the central role of morality on person perceptions (Brambilla & Leach, 2014; Brambilla & Riva, 2017). The findings of the current study provide further support given that respect and liking varied the most as a result of the moral–immoral manipulations compared with the manipulations related to (un)assertiveness, (in)competence and warmth/coldness. Moreover, related research by Brambilla et al. (2011, Study 1) found that while morality traits were more important than sociability (warmth) traits for forming global judgements of individuals, sociability (warmth) traits were also more important than competence traits. This pattern was also supported in the current study with

the manipulation of warmth/coldness having a greater impact on respect and liking than the manipulations of (un)assertiveness and (in)competence.

The increase in evaluations (respect/liking combined) from neutral morality to positive morality (marginal mean difference = 2.5) appears larger than the decrease from neutral to negative morality (marginal mean difference = 1.8). This might contrast with the negativity effect for morality where the impact of an immoral act is greater than the impact of a moral act (Skowronski & Carlston, 1987) and research suggesting bad events have more power than good events (Baumeister et al., 2001; Rozin & Royzman, 2001) and evoke stronger emotional, cognitive and social responses (Taylor, 1991). However, the neutral level of morality was evaluated less favourably than the neutral levels of the other three traits suggesting that the *absence* of morality can be particularly detrimental in itself. Competence (ability) traits have been argued to have a positivity bias (Skowronski & Carlston, 1987). In the current study, however, neutral vs. positive and neutral vs. negative differences were equivalent (both marginal mean difference = 1.5, to 1 decimal place).

The findings support the MAC model (Prestwich et al., 2021) in regard to the impact of different types of positive traits on respect and liking. However, in the current study, across the 'positive' categories of competence, assertiveness and particularly warmth, effect sizes were smaller than those reported by Prestwich et al. (2021) (they were higher, on average, for morality). It is not known whether this is attributable to possible differences in respect and liking across different demographics (e.g. younger, student-sample vs. older, fewer students) or variations in mode (in-person surveys vs. online surveys for participants recruited via Prolific).

Through its extension to consider negative trait types (incompetent, unassertiveness, cold and immorality), the present study and its findings have implications for the MAC model. Tenet 3 (communal traits that have a weaker moral component (i.e. warmth traits such as being sociable or talkative) will influence liking more than respect) could potentially be extended to reflect that cold traits can adversely influence liking more than respect. Tenet 4 (moral traits, such as being honest or fair, will at least influence respect as much as liking, if not more) could be extended such that being immoral will adversely influence respect as much as liking, if not more. Tenet 5 (moral traits are particularly important for both respect and liking compared to other communal (warmth/cold) traits that are important for liking but less important for respect) could be refined, or another tenet added, to reflect the importance of being immoral for hindering respect and liking relative to other trait types. By shedding light on the trait types and, indirectly, the associated actions underpinning respect and liking, as well as those associated with lack of respect and liking, the findings could be used to inform interventions that promote relationships with others as well as to help understand the factors that influence relationship breakdown and incivility (Shwalb & Shwalb, 2006).

A limitation of the current study is that it focused on one trait at a time. While this is useful for internal validity, individuals have a variety of traits and their actions are not always consistent. Further research, therefore, should test the effect of different combinations of traits and consistency of action. For instance, is somebody who is competent and assertive but immoral respected? What about an incompetent, unassertive but moral person?

It has been argued that various characteristics of leaders (e.g. how prototypical they are of the ingroup; the length of reign) can moderate the relationship between respect and its antecedents (Clarke, 2011). Furthermore, there is some evidence to suggest that in some countries or cultures, the relationships between respect and liking are stronger than in others (Cohen et al., 2006). As such, this leaves open the possibility that the MAC model could be further refined in the future to identify particular boundary conditions.

CONCLUSION

The present study extended previous tests of the MAC model by explicitly testing whether the tenets of the MAC model were consistent at the negative poles of traits. In this regard, the tenets held for immoral traits (equally respected and liked and important for both) and cold traits (respected more than liked) but

not incompetence or unassertive traits. Previous tests of the MAC model had been conducted on exclusively student- or student- and university staff-based samples (Prestwich et al., 2021). Consequently, it was not known whether the core tenets of the MAC model applied only to this discrete population. The results from the present study suggest that the core tenets of the MAC model hold within a more diverse British sample: moral traits are respected at least as much as liked and are important for both respect and liking; competence and assertiveness traits are respected more than liked, while warm traits are liked more than respected.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Andrew Prestwich: Conceptualization; data curation; formal analysis; investigation; methodology; project administration; writing – original draft; writing – review and editing.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

There are no conflicts of interest to declare.

OPEN RESEARCH BADGES

This article has earned Open Data, Open Materials and Preregistered Research Design badges. Data, materials and the preregistered design and analysis plan are available at https://osf.io/nc6y5/?view_only=d835673c1237422caf60c97775c62432; https://aspredicted.org/blind.php?x=RYN_1R5.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data and syntax files can be accessed on the Open Science Framework: https://osf.io/nc6y5/?view_only=d835673c1237422caf60c97775c62432.

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