

A study of Machiavellian Traits in Relation to Risk taking behaviour and Social competence.

Neetoo Kumari
(Psychology)
L.N.M.U. Darbhanga, Bihar

ABSTRACT

The research was conducted to examine the Machiavellian traits in relation to risk taking behaviour and social competence. For this, 250 school students taken purposively from different high schools located in Samastipur district area of Bihar state. Mach IV Scale of Rai and Gupta (1987), Risk Taking Behaviour Questionnaire of Sinha and Arora (2000), Social Competence Scale of Sharma, Shukla and Shukla (1992) and Self-prepared Personal Data Sheet were administered upon research sample. The collected data were analyzed with Correlational and t-test method. The result showed that most people in our societies affected from Machiavellian traits and practices their behaviour connected to their risk - taking and social competence related factors.

INTRODUCTION :

Machiavellianism refers to the strategy of social and political control. This term has been coined after the name of Niccolo Machiavelli (1469-1527), who was an Italian diplomat and political philosopher. Machiavellianism also indicates a strategy of social conduct that involves manipulating others for personal advantage, often to the detriment of people being thus exploited. The concept was introduced by the US psychologists Richard Christie (1918-1992) and Florence L. Geis (1933 -1993) in a book chapter in 1968 and discussed in their edited book studies in Machiavellianism (1970) and it is sometimes interpreted as a personality trait.

Social and Personality psychologists' use the term Machiavellianism to describe a person's tendency to receive and manipulate others for personal gain. A

less technical variant of the term is fawee. The concept is named after Renaissance diplomat and writer Niccolo, Machiavelli who wrote 'II Prince' (The Prince).

Machiavelli's belief is a constant, immutable human nature led him to develop an original view of social conflict as the essence of political behaviour. In all his works political activity is more often marked by emotional, conflict and dynamic or violent change than stasis, co-operation and rigid serial structure. Many important assumptions underline this belief. First, his view of human nature as naturally acquisitive and insatiable in its desires is followed by a second, less explicit, premise about economic life.

Risk taking Behaviour :

Risk taking is any consciously or non-consciously controlled behaviour with a perceived uncertainty about its outcome and/or about its possible benefits or costs for the physical, economic or psycho-social well beings of oneself or others. The concept of risk has been a concern of human beings from the earliest days of recorded history and most likely even before that. Thus, risk taking behaviour is the act or fact of doing something that involves danger activities.

Thus, according to above discussion risk taking refers to the tendency to engage in behaviours that have the potential to be harmful or dangerous, yet, at the same time provide the opportunity for some kind of outcome that can be perceived as positive.

Social competence :

Social competence is the condition of possessing the social, emotional and intellectual skills and behaviours needed to succeed as a member of society.

Social competence refers to the social, emotional and cognitive skills and behaviours that children need for successful social adaptation. Thus, social competence is an elusive concept because the skills and behaviours required for healthy social development vary with the age of the child and with the demands of particular situation.

Several studies has been conducted related to Machiavellian context. The research Rayburn, Hammond and Overby (2004) studied personal and behavioural indicators of the need for power, achievement and affiliation and the ethical,

Machiavellian and political orientation of 178 marketing majors. The findings indicate that for all respondents in the study, those with a high level of academic achievement had a lower need for affiliation, were less political oriented, but more ethically oriented than males.

The Galbraith and Stephenson study (1993) found that no particular decision rule appear to be applied to all or almost all the time by either male or female students. They also found that female students seem to more readily involve different decision rules for different ethical situations while male students exhibit less diversity in their use of ethical decision rules.

The Machiavellian personality type has been researched extensively. Initial research found individuals, who were strong in the Machiavellian disposition to be controlling manipulative and ruthless (Christie and Geis, 1970).

In another study, Synder (1974) found that strong relationship between Machiavellianism and self-monitoring behaviour. Leone (1994) also supported this finding in their research study.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY :

The main objective of the study was to examine the Machiavellian traits, risk taking and self-concept among students.

HYPOTHESES :

- (i) Machiavellianism and risk taking behaviour would be positively associated.
- (ii) Machiavellianism and social competence would be positively associated.
- (iii) Males would more Machiavellianism than females.
- (iv) Upper socio-economic class people would show more Machiavellianism than those of low socio-economic class people.

METHODOLOGY :

(i) Sample :

The sample consists of 250 (125 male and 125 female) school students were taken.

(ii) Sampling Technique :

The purposive sampling technique was adhered during sample selection period.

(iii) Scales :

- (i) Mach IV Scale of Rai and Gupta (1987).
- (ii) Risk Taking Questionnaire of Sinha and Arora (2000).
- (iii) Social Competence Scale of Sharma, Shukla and Shukla(1992)
- (iv) Self Prepared Personal Data Sheet.

ANALYSIS OF DATA :

The obtained data were arranged and analyzed with t-test method.

FINDINGS :**Table no. - i****Relationship between Machiavellianism and Risk Taking :**

S. No.	Variable	N	r	df	p-value
1	Machiavellianism	230	0.74	228	<.01
2	Risk Taking				

Table no. - ii**Relationship between Machiavellianism and Social Competence.**

S.No.	Variable	N	r	df	p-value
1	Machiavellianism	230	0.83	228	<.01
2	Social competence				

Table no. - iii**Comparison of Machiavellianism scores of Male and Female Respondents.**

S.N o.	Group	N	Mean	SD	t-value	p-value	df
1	Male Respondents	114	119.97	9.43	0.43	N.S.	228
2	Female Respondents	116	119.69	10.83			

Table no. - iv

Comparison of Machiavellianism scores of Upper socio-economic and Lower socio-economic Respondents :

S. No.	Group	N	Mean	SD	t-value	p-value	df
1	Respondents of Upper SES Group	125	116.53	9.12	5.77	<.01	228
2	Respondents of Lower SES Group	105	112.64	8.67			

DISCUSSION :

The results contained in Table no. i displayed that Machiavellianism tendency is positively and significantly correlated with respondents risk-taking tendency. In this context results ($r = .83$, $df = 228$, $p = <.01$) was found significant beyond chance.

This result clears that risk-taking and Machiavellianism persons show more or less tendency in similarity. In another words, we can say that Machiavellion persons also try to maipulate and decrease the power of others. They also take decisions without much fear and without insecurity. Thus, this result showed that both types of tendencies correlated with each other. Thus, the hypothesis no. i “Machiavelliasm and risk taking behaviour would be positively associated” formulated in this context was confirmed.

The findings that presented in about table no. ii cleared that Machiavellianism scores and self-concept score were found possitively associated ($r = .83$, $df = 228$, $p = <.01$). The reason behind such findings may be that Machiavelliasm requires greater degree of social competence that understands other person’s motive and behaviour in social activities. Thus, social competence is an essential elements of Machiavellianism. It is the source of exerting control and power over others, That is manipulating others. The hypothesis no-ii “Machiavelliasm and social competence would be positively associated” that formulated earlier for verification was confirmed and supported.

The computed result that given in above table no. iii revealed that there was no significant difference between male and female respondents on Machiavellianism scores. This result shows male and female both respondents showed same tendency in their Machiavellianism character. Thus, this result was not confirmed our earlier made hypothesis no.-iii that “Males would more Machiavellianism than females”.

The reason behind such findings may be that rich people employ different manipulating style to influence poor people for their (rich people) own benefit using even cunning and duplicity method in general behaviour to get ahead and to get their work done. Thus, this result confirmed our hypothesis no. iv that “Upper socio-economic class people would show more Machiavellianism than those of low socio-economic class people.”.

CONCLUSION :

To conclude, it is clear that, today most people in our societies affected from Machiavellian traits and practices their behaviour connected to their risk - taking and social competence related factors.

SUGGESTION :

Keeping is the view of findings of this research work that there should be heterogeneous sample drawn from different sections of society. Beside these, literate, illiterate and adult persons must be include for the study because these persons are backbone of our society.

REFERENCE :

Galbarth, S and Stephenson, H.B (1993) : Decision rules used by male and female business students making ethical value judgments another look. Journal of Business Ethics (JBE), 12, 227-233.

Garrett, H.E. (1996) : Statistics in Psychology and Education, P-363.

Gupta, M.D. (1987) : Role of age and birth order in Machiavellianism Psychological studies, 32, 47 - 50.

Leone, Orte, V (1994) : Concern for self-presentation and self- congruence: Self-Monitoring, Machiavellianism and social constructs. Social Behaviour and Personality, 22, 305-312.

Rayburn, J.Mike, Overby, John and Hammond, Kevin Jan. (2004) : An empirical study of the indicators of the need for power, achievement and affiliation of marketing measures academy `of marketing studies Journal, by J.Mike, Rayburn, Kevin, Hammond, John, Overby.

Synder, M.(1974) : Self-monitoring of expressive behaviour Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 30, 526 - 537.

Peer Reviewed