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Communication Correlates of Perceived Machiavellianism of Supervisors: Communication Orientations and Outcomes

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This paper reports the development of the Perceived Supervisor Machiavellian Measure (PSMM) for use in the organizational communication context. Data were drawn from full-time employees who were part-time graduate students in a corporate and organizational communication program. Employees' perceptions of supervisor Machiavellianism were negatively related to employees' perceptions of supervisor credibility (competence, caring, and trustworthiness), employees' attitudes toward the supervisor, employee motivation, and employee job satisfaction. Supervisors' perceived communication behaviors (nonverbal immediacy, responsiveness, and assertiveness) accounted for a significant amount of variance in perceived supervisor Machiavellianism. The results support a general model of supervisor behavior and provide a foundation for future research in organizational communication.

Keywords: Supervisor Influence; Machiavellianism; Superior-Subordinate Interpersonal Relationships; Supervisor Characteristics; Supervisor-Subordinate Communication; Supervisor Effectiveness

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One truism in the study of human interaction is that individuals across a wide array of communication contexts attempt to influence others. According to Pandey and Singh (1986), "influence attempts may involve manipulative and strategic behaviors aimed at gaining maximum benefits at the least cost to the self" (pp. 287–288). Studies of compliance gaining tactics in the field of communication have been extensive (Boster & Stiff, 1984; Cody & McLaughlin, 1980; Cody, Woelfel, & Jordan, 1983; DeTurk, 1985; Dillard & Burgoon, 1985; Kearney, Plax, Richmond, & McCroskey, 1985; O'Hair & Cody, 1987; Roloff & Barnicott, 1978). Kipnis, Schmidt, and Wilkinson (1980) note that most research within the organizational environment has focused on the ways supervisors influence subordinates, particularly the tactics they use to increase employee productivity and morale.

Much of the previous research on Machiavellianism has focused on the behavior and effectiveness of highly Machiavellian individuals in a wide variety of contexts. There is general agreement that these individuals are more effective in their influence attempts and enjoy influencing others. Less agreement is associated with how these individuals might communicate differently from those who have moderate or low levels of Machiavellianism. Some scholars believe that the higher Machiavellians' communication behavior is not much different from that of others, but some data suggest they may tend to focus a higher percentage of their communication efforts on times when decisions are to be made. Confounding this research and its interpretation is the general stereotyping of higher-level Machiavellians as morally deficient and not to be trusted. This stereotype persists despite of a lack of substantial evidence that morality and Machiavellian traits are correlated at all, either positively or negatively. As a result, students (and others) are cautioned to watch out for the "high Machs" they may encounter. Yet, many, if not most, of the leaders (both positive and negative) in sectors of our society (business, politics, religion, teachers, etc.) clearly exhibit characteristics attributed to high levels of Machiavellianism. Simply put, short of getting a person to complete a personality measure (honestly), there is no highly reliable and valid technique for identifying the "high Machs" in our midst. Although the present study did not identify such characteristics, it served to identify some the ways that subordinates in organizations actually do attribute Machiavellianism levels to their supervisors.

Review of the Literature and Research Questions

Machiavellianism

Since the publication in 1970 of the landmark book by psychologists Richard Christie and Florence Geis, *Studies in Machiavellianism*, discussions concerning the personality variable labeled "Machiavellianism" have appeared in articles in communication journals as well as books devoted to interpersonal and persuasive communication. Niccolo Machiavelli (1469–1527), the Italian philosopher, would likely appreciate the depth and breadth of the application of his famous writings, *The Prince* and *The Discourses* (1513/1966) in contemporary social scientific research. Machiavelli emphasized the

need for maintaining a public appearance of virtue while practicing whatever means necessary to achieve one's ends (Geis & Moon, 1981). Machiavelli's early writings, as well as the seminal work of Christie and his associates (Christie & Geis, 1970), have spawned literally hundreds of studies relating to an examination of behavior and strategies associated with deception in interpersonal relationships. Vleeming (1979) notes that "behavior on this dimension ranges from a cool detachment, i.e., the high Machiavellian, to high involvement with people, i.e., the low Machiavellian" (p. 295). From the results of more than thirty independent studies, Christie and Geis (1970) concluded that "high Machs manipulate more, win more, are persuaded less, persuade others more, and otherwise differ significantly from low Machs as predicted in situations in which subjects interact face to face with others, when the situation provides latitude for improvisation and in situations in which affective involvement with details irrelevant with winning distracts low Machs" (p. 312).

As both young and older adults, high Machiavellians, more skilled at manipulation, achieve higher academic grades in school (Burgoon, 1971; Marks & Lindsay, 1966; Singer, 1964), have greater levels of occupational prestige (Sewell & Hauser, 1975), earn larger incomes (Turner & Martinez, 1977), are chosen and identified as leaders (Christie & Geis, 1970), receive more positive ratings of leadership and performance (Deluga, 2001), and appear to be more socially attractive (Cherulnik, Way, Ames, & Hutto, 1981) than are low Machiavellians. If there is a downside to being highly Machiavellian, it is manifested in greater self-reports of loneliness (Bell & Daly, 1985) and experiencing social rejection (Wilson, Near, & Miller, 1998). Although their deceptive skills work for the short run, the detached and calculating style of high Machiavellians, including their manipulative strategies employed, can lead to negative interpretations by others (McHoskey, Worzel, & Szyarto, 1998).

Researchers have examined the close relationship between Machiavellianism and ingratiation in interpersonal interactions (Appelbaum & Hughes, 1998; Pandey & Rastogi, 1979). Jones (1964) generally defines "ingratiation" as motivated behavior directed toward the goal of eliciting increased attraction from another person to obtain a specific benefit. High Machiavellians use ingratiation tactics, including strategic self-presentation, to enhance their attractiveness and influence their supervisors (Appelbaum & Hughes, 1998). High Machiavellians also reportedly engage more in praise and agreement with target audiences in comparison to low Machiavellians (Pandey & Rastogi, 1979).

Applications of Machiavellianism to the Organizational Environment

Ingratiation, closely related to Machiavellianism, represents "a broad set of assertive strategies, purposely used to gain the approval of others who control rewards" (Strutton, Pelton, & Lumpkin, 1995, p. 35). In the workplace, Machiavellian supervisors, particularly those who are well-seasoned veterans, are fully aware that a degree of manipulation is often necessary to survive within a competitive organization and business world. High Machiavellians attempt to achieve their interpersonal goals, but the best Machiavellians probably are not recognized by others as being

Machiavellians. Ricks and Fraedrich (1999) discovered that those managers who possess high Machiavellian traits are more productive than those who exhibit less pronounced Machiavellian tendencies. Machiavellian managers may also engage in aggressive, exploiting, and devious behavior to achieve personal and organizational goals (Calhoon, 1969). When employees perceive that a supervisor is manipulating them in any way, the supervisor may come across as less credible (less trustworthy, less caring, and less competent); how much less, though, remains to be determined. Thus, the following research question seemed warranted:

> RQ1:   To what extent is perceived supervisor Machiavellianism related to employees' perceptions of supervisor credibility?

Although supervisors are not inherently manipulative, they do enact social behavior that enables them to both manage employees' behavior and enhance organizational outcomes. This social influence in the workplace requires a certain degree of planning. Machiavellianism, therefore, is presumably related to effective supervisor behavior in the workplace. Recent research conducted in the organizational environment has shown Machiavellianism to be positively related to assertiveness but negatively related to responsiveness (Walter, Anderson, & Martin, 2005). In the workplace, high Mach supervisors are likely to be strategically assertive in their efforts to maintain an advantage during workplace meetings, when defending their own beliefs, and when striving to ensure employee productivity. Such high Mach supervisors could also be less responsive as they are less distracted by affect and emotion in their interactions and less concerned with social approval (Martin, Anderson, & Thweatt, 1998; Martin & Rubin, 1994). High Machiavellians have a tendency to think first and then act, whereas low Machiavellians act first and then adjust cognitions later (Christie & Geis, 1970), which suggests an inverse relationship with supervisor Machiavellianism and supervisor responsiveness.

Christie and Geis (1970) suggest that high Machiavellians are more likely than low Machiavellians to take an instrumentalist or rational view of others. High Machiavellians are more concerned with maximizing personal gains in social interactions than they are in developing relationships. Extant research has also revealed that participants who engage in sanctioned, prepared lies exhibit higher affirmative head-nodding rates and lower body adaptor rates than truth-tellers (O'Hair, Cody, & McLaughlin, 1981). Thus, high Machiavellians are more likely to be interpersonally detached and less immediate with their subordinates. This set of findings and their implications led to the following research question:

> RQ2:   To what extent is perceived supervisor Machiavellianism related to nonverbal immediacy, assertiveness, and responsiveness?

Social Power

To influence their subordinates, supervisors must utilize power. A significant amount of research on aspects of power has relied on French and Raven's (1959) early conceptualization of the five bases (legitimate, coercive, reward, referent, and expert).

Organizational power clearly involves an interdependent relationship between supervisor and subordinate and is, as McShane and Von Glinow (2003) assert, "ultimately a perception" (p. 356). Influence derives from the capacity of one person to influence another in this relationship only so long as the other perceives as having something of value to him or her. Hirokawa, Mickey, and Miura (1991) develop this idea further in maintaining that when supervisor legitimacy is low, compliance-gaining tactics must necessarily be more direct and polite to allow the supervisor to "save face" (p. 434). Prosocial power or influence is often a consequence of messages that communicate friendliness and liking, whereas antisocial influence is a product of messages that entail some form of psychological force or punishing activity (Marwell & Schmitt, 1967). Johnson (1992) examined the perceptual effects associated with supervisors' use of a prosocial versus antisocial compliance-gaining tactics in the organizational setting. The results of the study indicated that supervisors wanting to exert influence via prosocial compliance-gaining tactics are viewed as more communicatively competent than a supervisor who resorts to antisocial tactics to elicit compliance from subordinates.

Studies of Machiavellianism have explored the extent to which individuals employ communication strategies to control their various environments. High Machiavellians exert more personal control over their environment and take greater personal risks than low Machiavellians (Rim, 1966). In one study, Roloff and Barnicott (1978) observed that high Machiavellians were significantly more active in compliance-gaining settings than were the low Machiavellians. High Machiavellians showed a greater likelihood of using a wider variety of the compliance-gaining techniques, particularly prosocial and psychological force techniques, for both the short term and long term in non-interpersonal relationships. The question of interest, then, is to what extent do Machiavellianism and perceived power interact to determine the strategies supervisors select? The following research question reflected this concern:

RQ3: To what extent is perceived supervisor Machiavellianism related to employees' perceptions of supervisor use of power?

Several elements in the organizational environment have been studied as outcomes of organizational communication. Because of their apparent importance in organizations, three outcome variables were chosen for study: employee attitudes toward supervisors, employee motivation, and employee job satisfaction. The final research question was posed:

RQ4: To what extent is perceived supervisor Machiavellianism related to employees' reports of their general attitude toward their supervisors, their motivation to work with their supervisors, and their job satisfaction?

Method

Participants

Participants were 114 employees employed in a wide variety of organizations in three states, including for-profit and non-profit service, state government, private small business, and the federal government. Nineteen of the participants were full-time

employees who were enrolled in graduate classes in corporate and organizational communication. These participants completed the research instruments (previously approved by the University's Institutional Review Board) at the beginning of their class before any instruction in the course had begun, as did twelve other students in these classes (who were not full-time employees whose data were not included in this study). After the data were collected, all students underwent debriefing and received invitations to serve as research assistants for the collection of additional data. Participation was voluntary. There was no reward for participating for either the assistants or the other participants.

Each of the research assistants distributed questionnaires and return envelopes according to the following instructions:

1. collect data from two people employed at a higher level in the organization than their own, two people employed at a lower level, and one at the same level
2. balance the sex of the participants (3 males and 2 females if the assistant was female, 2 males and 3 females if the assistant was male
3. have each participant place the questionnaire in the return envelope and seal it (all of the return envelopes were coded with the code number of the assistant (1–19).

The assistants were also instructed to provide the participants with only the information they had received prior to completing the questionnaire. However, after the data had been collected, the assistants were encouraged to debrief the participants they had contacted.

Measurement

Supervisor Machiavellianism

The operationalization of the Machiavellian construct has come under the scrutiny of scholars who suggest that a major social desirability bias exists and that low reliability is inherent in the respective measurement efforts (Marks & Lindsay, 1966; Schultz, 1993; Shea & Beatty, 1983; Teven, forthcoming). The Machiavellian orientation also is a multi-faceted trait rather than a unidimensional one (Ahmed & Stewart, 1981). The current authors' view is that the Machiavellian orientation measured by self report instruments may have serious validity issues. As a result, the current study utilized an "other-report" of Machiavellianism, specifically in respect to employees' perceptions of their immediate supervisors. Although the best Machiavellian managers may not engage in observable behavior that would indicate clearly their manipulative intent to subordinates, these same employees can certainly observe the benefits or results that their supervisors bring to their departments, whether directly benefitting them or not. This notion, in conjunction with an effort to address the social desirability issue related to self-reports, led to the adoption of an other-report of Machiavellianism for the present study. Therefore, the resulting measure indexed two perceptions of the supervisor. The first was how employees perceived their immediate supervisors dealing with those above them, and the second, how those same employees' perceived their supervisors dealing with the respondents.

The Machiavellianism Scale (Mudrack & Mason, 1995) is a self-report instrument composed of ten items. Respondents rate on a seven-point scale how each item applies to them. The responses range from *strongly agree* (7) to *strongly disagree* (1). This scale was reworded to be an other-report (Perceived Supervisor Machiavellianism Measure; PSMM) of how a subordinate sees a supervisor dealing with her/him or with the people above the supervisor. Cronbach's alpha for this scale was .96 for supervisor/subordinate relationships and .91 for supervisor/upper level relationships. Although it seemed likely that supervisors might be perceived as behaving differently with their own supervisors than with their subordinates (the two measures were separated widely on the questionnaire—one near the beginning and one at the end), this did not occur in the present study. The means were not significantly different from each other, and the two PSMM scores revealed a correlation of .87, which suggests high test-retest reliability for the scale as a single measure.

Nonverbal immediacy

The Nonverbal Immediacy Scale—Observer Report (NIS-O) served as the measure of subordinates' perceptions of supervisor nonverbal immediacy (Richmond, McCroskey, & Johnson, 2003). Respondents rated on a five-point scale how each item applied to their supervisor. The responses could range from *never* (1) to *very often* (5). Cronbach's alpha for the NIS-O for this study was .93.

Socio-communicative style (SCS)

The Assertiveness-Responsiveness Measure (Richmond & McCroskey, 1990) was the index of socio-communicative style of the supervisors. Ten items in this instrument relate to assertiveness, and ten items relate to responsiveness. In the study, employees referenced "the way your supervisor communicates with you at work" to estimate the supervisor's SCS. The responses for each scale could range from *always true* (7) to *never true* (1). Cronbach's alpha for the assertiveness items was .92 and for responsiveness it was .96.

Supervisor credibility

Teven and McCroskey's (1997) measure of source credibility was used to assess employees' perceptions of supervisor credibility. The instrument consists of eighteen, seven-step semantic differential items, six each for the competence, caring, and trustworthiness dimensions. In the present study, the estimated reliabilties of these scales was as follows: competence, alpha = .88; caring, alpha = .95; trustworthiness, alpha = .91.

Perceived supervisor power

The Relative Power Measure (RPM; McCroskey & Richmond, 1983) was an additional instrument in which participants responded to five items to estimate the percentage of total power usage that stems from each of the five power bases

(legitimate, coercive, reward, referent, and expert), with the requirement that the total equals 100 percent. Previous research indicated a test-retest reliability above .80 for each of the power bases (McCroskey & Richmond, 1983; Richmond & McCroskey, 1984).

Attitude toward supervisor

The Generalized Attitude Scale (McCroskey, 1966) was the measure of subordinates' attitudes toward their supervisors. This scale is a six-item, bipolar adjective scale designed to measure general attitudes. The items included: good-bad, negative-positive, fair-unfair, worthless-valuable, wrong-right, and beneficial-harmful. Cronbach's alpha for the scale in this study was .95.

Employee job satisfaction

In this study, the Generalized Belief Measure (GBM; McCroskey & Richmond, 1989) was the measure of subordinates' job satisfaction. This five-item, bipolar adjective scale taps into beliefs in a variety of domains. The general statement in this study to which the participants responded was, "I am very satisfied with my job." The items for the measure include true-false, right-wrong, no-yes, disagree-agree, and correct-incorrect. Cronbach's alpha for the scale as used in this study was .97.

Employee motivation

Subordinates indicated their levels of motivation in response to five, bi-polar, seven-step scales modeled in line with an instrument (Richmond, 1990) previously developed. The adjectival pairs were: motivated-unmotivated, excited-bored, uninterested-interested, involved-uninvolved, and dreading it-looking forward to it. Cronbach's alpha for the scale was .94.

Data Analyses

Preliminary assessment of the findings involved computation of the means, standard deviations, and reliabilities for all of the measures. These descriptive data appear in Table 1. Answering the research questions required the calculation of simple and multiple correlations. Because the research questions each involved relationships of two or more variables with two or more other variables, canonical correlations were also deemed appropriate to analyze the data. Alpha was set at .01 for all tests of significance.

Results

The simple correlations among all the variables studied in this study appear in Table 2. The authors refer to perceptions of Machiavellianism that relate to the supervisors

Table 1 Statistics for All Measures

Measure	Mean	SD	Reliability	Range
Machiavellianism				
Mach A (with subordinates)	30.63	16.58	.96	10–70
Mach B (those above him/her)	29.52	12.96	.91	10–68
Supervisor communication behaviors				
Nonverbal immediacy	88.26	15.20	.93	33–122
Supervisor assertiveness	52.82	12.40	.92	20–70
Supervisor responsiveness	49.75	13.07	.96	11–70
Source credibility				
Competence	34.13	7.01	.88	11–42
Caring	30.26	9.21	.95	6–42
Trustworthiness	33.65	8.01	.91	6–28
Power bases				
Legitimate power	23.70	27.12	N/A	0–95
Reward power	14.52	16.59	N/A	0–80
Coercive power	8.19	14.16	N/A	0–90
Referent power	21.24	19.98	N/A	0–90
Expert power	32.49	24.43	N/A	0–90
Employee outcomes				
Attitude toward supervisor	32.78	8.74	.95	6–42
Subordinate job satisfaction	26.55	8.27	.97	5–35
Subordinate motivation	25.73	7.93	.94	5–35

communicating with their subordinates as Mach A, and those that relate to supervisors' communication with people above them as Mach B.

The first research question concerned the relationship between employees' perceptions of Machiavellianism and credibility of the supervisor. The correlations of Mach A with competence, caring, and trustworthiness were all significant at the .001 level. They were −.43, −.74, and −.76, respectively. The corresponding correlations of Mach B were similar, −.46, −.68, and −.67, respectively.

A canonical correlation analysis involving the two Machiavellianism scores and the three credibility scores yielded one significant canonical variate. The adjusted canonical correlation was .80 ($F = 25.08$, df = 6/214, $p < .0001$, $\eta^2 = .64$). Mach A and B correlated with the variate at −.99 and −.89, respectively. Competence correlated with the variate at .54, caring at .93, and trust at .96. All of the studied variables were substantially associated with the canonical variate, although competence was somewhat less strongly related than the other variables. The data indicate that perceptions of supervisor Machiavellianism are strongly associated with lower perceived supervisor credibility.

The second research question addressed the relationship between employees' perceptions of Machiavellianism and perceptions of the communicative behaviors

Table 2 Correlations between Variables

	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
1. Mach A	.87	.35	.14	.65	.74	.76	.43	.45	.19	.23	-.14	-.37	.68	.61	.49
2. Mach B	—	.30	.13	.61	.68	.67	.46	.43	.20	.26	-.17	-.36	.63	.60	.48
3. NVI		—	.21	.67	.66	.53	.41	.39	.32	.11	.10	.11	.55	.46	.38
4. Assert			—	.09	.05	.22	.43	.01	.03	-.01	-.08	.11	.25	.23	.06
5. Respon				—	.88	.74	.51	.49	.14	.13	.18	.32	.74	.67	.45
6. Caring					—	.81	.58	.53	.20	-.19	.22	.35	.82	.80	.51
7. Trust						—	.64	.45	.10	-.25	.18	.42	.81	.70	.47
8. Comp							—	.42	.08	-.23	.02	.51	.71	.62	.38
9. Legit								—	.27	.04	.40	.52	.58	.52	.23
10. Reward									—	.10	.35	.44	.17	.11	.15
11. Coercive										—	.15	.33	.17	.11	.21
12. Referent											—	.12	.23	.21	.11
13. Expert												—	.41	.40	.15
14. ATS													—	.85	.46
15. Motiv														—	.53
16. Job sat															—

All correlations significant at the .05 level at least, unless specified.
— not statistically significant.

of their supervisors (nonverbal immediacy, assertiveness, and responsiveness). The correlations of Mach A with nonverbal immediacy ($r = -.35$) and responsiveness ($r = -.65$) were both statistically significant ($p < .001$), but the one with assertiveness ($r = .14$) was not. The correlations of Mach B with nonverbal immediacy ($r = -.31$) and responsiveness ($r = -.61$) were both statistically significant ($p < .001$) but, as with Mach A, the correlation with assertiveness ($r = .13$) was not.

The canonical correlation analysis with the two Machiavellianism scores and the three communication behaviors yielded one significant canonical variate. The adjusted canonical correlation was .69 ($F = 13.94$, df $= 6/214$, $p < .0001$, $\eta^2 = .51$). Mach A and B correlated with their variate at .99 and .92, respectively. Nonverbal immediacy correlated with their variate at $-.49$, assertiveness at .21, and responsiveness at $-.95$. All of the variables were substantially associated with the canonical variate except assertiveness. The data indicate that subordinates' perceptions of supervisor Machiavellianism are strongly associated with lower perceived nonverbal immediacy and responsiveness but have only a small non-significant positive association with assertiveness.

Research Question 3 focused on the extent to which employees' perceptions of supervisor power use and perceived Machiavellianism are related. The correlations of Mach A with legitimate power ($r = .45$), coercive power ($r = .23$), and expert power ($r = -.37$) were all statistically significant ($p < .01$). The correlations of Mach B with legitimate power ($r = .44$), coercive power ($r = .26$), and expert power ($r = -.36$) were also all statistically significant ($p < .01$). Correlations for both Mach A and Mach B with reward and referent power were not statistically significant.

The canonical correlation analysis with the two Machiavellianism scores and five power type scores yielded one significant canonical variate. The adjusted canonical correlations was .52 ($F = 4.52$, df $= 10/214$, $p < .0001$, $\eta^2 = .68$). Mach A and B correlated with their variate at .96 and .98, respectively. Legitimate power correlated with the variate at .84, expert power at $-.70$, coercive power at .47, reward power at $-.37$, and referent power at $-.30$. These findings support the view that subordinates' perceptions of supervisor Machiavellianism are strongly and positively related to legitimate and coercive powers and show a strong, negative relationship with expert power. Reward and referent power were also modestly and negatively related to perceived Machiavellianism.

The fourth research question dealt with the relationship between perceptions of supervisors' Machiavellian tendencies and employee-centered outcomes, specifically, employees' attitudes toward their supervisors, their motivation to work with their supervisors, and their job satisfaction. The correlations of Mach A with attitude toward supervisor, motivation, and job satisfaction were, respectively, $-.68$, $-.61$, and .49. Those for Mach B were, respectively, $-.63$, $-.60$, and $-.48$.

The canonical correlation analysis with the two Machiavellianism scores and three employee outcome variables yielded one significant canonical variate. The adjusted canonical correlation was .71 ($F = 15.69$, df $= 6/214$, $p < .0001$, $\eta^2 = .48$). Mach A and B correlated with the variate at $-.99$ and $-.93$. Attitude toward supervisor

correlated with the variate at .96, motivation to work with the supervisor at .87, and job satisfaction at .70. The data indicate that subordinates' perceptions of supervisor Machiavellianism are negatively and strongly associated with lower scores related to the employee outcomes studied.

Discussion

The primary purpose of this research was to explore the relationships between employees' perceptions of supervisor Machiavellianism and specific types of supervisor communicative behaviors, use of power, perceived credibility, and related employee outcomes. The participants for this study were individuals with extended experience in a wide variety of organizations, including for-profit and non-profit service, state government, private small business, and the federal government. The investigation revealed that supervisor temperament, specifically Machiavellian tendencies, is manifested in communication behaviors that is observable by employees. This study focused on four essential components of this underlying organizational model: perceived supervisor Machiavellianism, the supervisors' verbal and nonverbal communicative behavior and use of power, employees' evaluations of the supervisor, and employee-centered outcomes.

The model begins with the Machiavellian tendencies of supervisors. Machiavellian supervisors display different types of communication behavior and operate from a variety of power bases. The same communicative behavior and power moves influence employees' perceptions of supervisor credibility, employee satisfaction, and motivation. Each of the components of this model introduces substantial variability into the organizational communication process.

The first research question concerned the relationship between employees' perceptions of Machiavellianism and the credibility of the supervisor. The correlations of Mach A and B with competence, caring, and trustworthiness were all statistically significant. The strong, negative correlations suggest that the more that the employees perceived their supervisor as being Machiavellian, the more likely they perceived her or him to be less competent, less caring, and less trustworthy. It is difficult to have a positive influence on one's employees, particularly the ability to increase employee productivity and morale, when employees perceive a supervisor as low in credibility. Both Mach A and Mach B were strongly correlated—almost isomorphic, in fact. Interestingly, employees appeared to see no distinction between the perceived Machiavellian tendencies of their supervisors in how they dealt with the employees directly or with how those same supervisors dealt with those above them.

The second research question explored the extent to which perceived supervisor Machiavellianism related to nonverbal immediacy, assertiveness, and responsiveness. Supervisor Machiavellianism (A & B) were moderately associated with perceived nonverbal immediacy and strongly associated with responsiveness, but had only a small, non-significant positive association with assertiveness. This suggests that high Machiavellians are no more likely to be assertive in their communication than are low Machiavellians.

The third research question focused on the extent to which employees' perceptions of supervisor power and perceived Machiavellianism were related. Machiavellianism (A & B) were significantly related to perceived use of legitimate power, coercive power, and expert power. The correlations between both Mach A and Mach B with reward power and referent were not statistically significant. Employees' perceptions of supervisor Machiavellianism were positively and strongly related to legitimate and coercive powers, whereas they were negatively and strongly related to perceptions of expert power. Reward power was moderately and negatively related to perceived supervisor Machiavellianism. The relationship of referent power to supervisor Machiavellianism was also moderate, but negative.

The final research question dealt with the relationship between perceived supervisor Machiavellianism and employee-centered outcomes (attitudes toward supervisor, motivation to work with the supervisor, and job satisfaction). Mach A showed a significant, negative association with attitude toward supervisor, motivation, and job satisfaction. Employees' perceptions of supervisor Machiavellianism were predictive of lower scores for the employee outcomes.

Implications

Extant research suggests that high Machs can be very effective within organizations (Appelbaum & Hughes, 1998; Pandey & Rastogi, 1979, Ricks & Fraedrich, 1999). However, the current study contend that the best Machs are probably are not recognized as being highly Machiavellian. The results reported here clearly suggest that the more supervisors are perceived to be "high Mach," the more negative their impact on how subordinates react to them. In everyday interactions, people in organizations observe and attribute meaning to the behavior of others. Given the strong *negative* relationships between Machiavellianism, nonverbal immediacy, and responsiveness, non-immediate and/or non-responsive individuals—whether they be management or otherwise—who are in fact low Machs may well be seen by colleagues and subordinates as high Machs. In turn, the warm, immediate/responsive "con artists" may well be seen as low Machs (i.e., transparent). These perceptions, although potentially erroneous, have serious, even dangerous implications for one's standing within an organization. There is no validation that these perceptions are actually related to real Machiavellians' behavior, but they may be what real people use to spot con artists. Our results suggest that supervisors who are seen as being highly Machiavellian, even though they may not be, are likely to be highly ineffective.

Directions for Future Research

Future experimental research should be conducted to manipulate actual supervisor Machiavellian behavior (high and low) to assess what perceptions are indeed obtained. The goal of these investigations should be to get real high Machs and real low Machs to engage in the same kind of task and see how observers see their communication, how they evaluate them, and what specific attributions are made.

The perceived supervisor Machiavellianism measure (PSMM), as generated for this study, may be employed in future investigations with substantial confidence in its validity and reliability to measure perceived Machiavellianism. However, it is important to avoid treating scores on this measure as measuring actual Machiavellianism. It would appear that in this case, what is perceived and what actually exists may be substantially different phenomena.

This study revealed that perceived Machiavellianism is associated with supervisor communication behavior, use of power, and source credibility, as well as important subordinate outcomes in organizations. Other variables related to organizational communication also are in need of investigation in conjunction with supervisor Machiavellianism, such as perceived supervisor dominance, managerial style, supervisor affinity-seeking, employee socialization, employee turnover, retention, advancement, and organizational change.

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