

REVISITING RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MACHIAVELLIANISM AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

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ABSTRACT

Previous research on the relationship between Machiavellianism and academic achievement has yielded mixed results. The present study supports the hypothesis of a negative relationship between scores on Mach IV scale and grade point average in a sample of 82 undergraduate students.

The modern concept of Machiavellianism was derived from the ideas of Machiavelli as published in *The Prince* in 1532 (Machiavelli, 1940). Interest in Machiavellianism was revived more recently by conceptualizing it as a personality orientation (Christie & Geis, 1970). A Machiavellian is defined as a person who 'views and manipulates others for his own purpose' (Christie & Geis, 1970, p. 1).

Machiavellianism, theoretically, is a social concept that may apply only to interpersonal relationship. Its relationship with academic achievement has been largely unexplored. Christie and Geis (1970; p. 36-37) believed that Machiavellianism and intellectual abilities were not related to each other. They analyzed data from seven samples and found no evidence of a relationship between intellectual ability and Machiavellianism. This was supported by evidence from other empirical studies. Ames and Kidd (1979) reported a lack of significant relationship between Machiavellianism and grade point. Similarly, Yong (1994) found no evidence of a relationship between grades and Machiavellianism. However, Singer (1964) found that Machiavellianism and grades were positively related to each other with abilities held constant. Kauffmann et al. (1987) found that grade orientation was related to Machiavellianism. Marks and Lindsay (1966), though not measuring academic achievement directly, found that Machiavellianism influenced the relationship between education and occupational attainment. The present study explores this relationship further with an assumption that grade point average (GPA) as an indicator of academic achievement may be influenced to some degree by interpersonal and social skills of a student.

Method

Eighty-two undergraduates students taking Management courses at a medium size university in the Southeastern United States were given the Mach IV scale (Christie and Geis, 1970) and were also asked to indicate their current grade point average (GPA).

Results and Discussion

The results showed a significant negative correlation ($r = -.28, p < .05$) between Machiavellianism and the grade point average (GPA). The Cronbach's Alpha for Mach IV was found to be .68, well within the acceptable range reported in the literature. A plausible explanation for this finding is that those who are high on Machiavellianism may be socially more active and thus easily distracted from the demands of the academic work. Further research may include other possible determinants of academic achievement and

possibly a direct measure of the degree participation of the respondents in social life on campus or outside it.

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