

# Manipulative Attitude Among Legal Fraternity An Empirical Study.

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## ABSTRACT

Since the dawn of civilization it has always been a debatable issue in mundane world whether it is the end that justifies means or it is the means that justify ends! Terms such as "selfish" "manipulation" have acquired two sets of meaning in evolutionary biology. The first set refers to any adaptive social behavior that evolves, as illustrated by the following quote from Dawkins and Krebs (1978); "Natural selection favours individuals who successfully manipulate the behavior of other individuals, whether or not this is to the advantage of the manipulated individuals." The second set of meanings uses the same words to refer to behaviors that are specifically exploitative, as opposed to cooperative. Interestingly the terms have also acquired two sets in ethics: teleological ethics versus deontological ethics. Various personas have various take on the issue and consequently Machiavellianism- a sort of manipulative strategy of social conduct that involves manipulating others for personal performance and success- has been seen in various ways by various scholars. Machiavellianism believes in the teleological ethics or consequentialist ethics, theory of morality that derives duty or moral obligation from what is good or desirable as an end to be achieved. Accordingly, Machiavellians do not accept the premise that people should do what they believe in but should instead believe in what they do (Christie and Geis, 1970). Society is divided over the issue. Legal fraternity, too, is a part of the whole world and consequently not untouched by the debate on the effectiveness of Machiavellianism. While the ethicality of Machiavellian personality orientation is debatable; it goes without saying that the orientation is perceived to be highly prevalent among all legal fraternity. It is generally presumed that success in legal profession rests on manipulation and consequently legal fraternity scores very high on Machiavellianism across various categories.

Considering research to be "rising above intuitions, myths and hunches"; the present research is an attempt to critically study Machiavellian personality orientation across various categories among legal fraternity in the age group of 18-50.

Keywords – Personality, Machiavellianism, Teleological Ethics.

### 1. Introduction

Machiavellianism has commonly been defined as the need to develop and defend one's power and success. Machiavelli's perspectives are well known for such generalizations as "the ends justify the means", and that unethical behavior is acceptable, even necessary, if it helps attain goals or protect political position. In other words, Machiavellianism is a sort of manipulative strategy of social conduct that involves manipulating others for personal performance and success. From the 16th century writings of Florentine Niccolo Machiavelli, the notion of Machiavellianism (Mach from now on) has been traditionally linked to a negative personality trait leading the individual to immorality (Collins, 2000). Indeed, Mach personality is usually linked to the development of certain tactics and actions of a manipulative, persuasive and deceitful nature which are used in order to have influence and power on others (Hunt & Chonko,

1984).Machiavellianism has commonly been defined as the need to develop and defend one's power and success (Machiavelli, 1513/1902) and many scholars have adopted the perspective of Machiavelli to examine and understand political dynamics in organizations (Vecchio, 1991; Kumar, 1991; Hochwater, 2000; Harrison, 1998; Harrell-Cook, 1999, Andersson, 2000; Cheng, 1983; Shankar, 1994). According to Christie and Geis (1970) Machiavellians do not accept the premise that people should do what they believe in but should instead believe in what they do. They defined Machiavellianism as "a process by which the manipulator gets more of some kind of reward than he would have gotten without manipulating, while someone else gets less, at least within the immediate context" (Christie and Geis, 1970, p. 106). The above description naturally colors a person having high Machiavellian dimension in grey shed and positions him along with the other pariahs' narcissistic personality and

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psychopaths in the infamous "Dark Triads of Personality." However researchers are not unanimous on the effectiveness or otherwise of Machiavellian personality and some fervently oppose misconstruing them as organizational pariah. Some have even stressed on the presence of such persons for better organizational effectiveness. History of organizational effectiveness and/or failure is an unbiased testimony of their ambivalence nature. Pondering a little deeper it seems germane that Machiavellians cut a wide, swashbuckling figure through the world. At the one end of the manipulating spectrum is the charismatic leader of Machiavellian personality order willing to tackle diverse situations, adept in managing various classes of persons, unperturbed by manipulating subordinates and narcissistic superiors and able to take quick decision. At the far end of the spectrum reside individuals with Machiavellian personality disorder who manipulates to such heights when they don't receive the success they consider their birthright, they put the entire organizational existence at stake to prove their caliber.

This paper has attempted to describe and analyze Machiavellian Personality orientation among legal fraternity in holistic manner.

## 2. Literature Review

The personality construct of Machiavellianism is based on the biography of Machiavelli, a 16th century Italian politician. Although initially stereotyped as perverse, cynic, astute, hypocritical, and always willing to deceive others, nowadays a Machiavellian person is considered to be endowed with practical intelligence, emotional control, and very high achievement motivation, dropping the negative connotation.

Machiavellian orientation among people had always been an interesting and controversial issue and various researchers have examined Machiavellian orientation in various professions and generations across the globe. Do Machiavellian traits help a person in legal field to excel? There can't be a single answer. While some studies have suggested a positive relation between Machiavellian orientation and professional success, the others have shown negative results.

It has been suggested, in a stereotyped way, that high-scoring Machiavellians would prefer a business occupation, whereas helping professions would be less preferred (Skinner, Giokas, & Horstein, 1986). It has also been associated with more basic dimensions of personality, such as psychoticism, extraversion, neuroticism; high achievement need and need for power.

In a sample of undergraduates, McLeod and Genereux (2008) found that MACH traits positively predicted the acceptability of using lies for self-gain, and also the

likelihood of using lies for conflict-avoidance and self-gain. MACH individuals also find emotionally-manipulative behavior to be acceptable, and due to their ability to manipulate the emotions of others, people have rated individuals high in MACH traits to be charming and intelligent (Austin, Farrelly, Black, & Moore, 2007; Wilson et al., 1996).

Robinson and Shaver (1973) reviewed various studies on Machiavellianism. The authors found different degrees of Machiavellianism between generations, which indicate that people are becoming more manipulative and impersonal. Also reviewed, field studies at medical schools reveal that psychiatrists are most Machiavellian and surgeons are least Machiavellian. The explanation offered is that psychiatrists' role involves manipulation per se vs. the surgeon who has as little personal contact with patient as possible.

Miesing and Preble (1985) compared the different business ideologies, including Machiavellianism, and tested them with 487 MBA students. This survey revealed that postgraduates and those with work experience were less Machiavellian in approach, compared to undergraduates and those without work experience. In addition, women compared to men, and those with some religious convictions were found to be less Machiavellian in their dealings.

Gemmill and Heisler (1972) investigated the relationship between Machiavellian orientation and several job-related conditions among 150 managers in a large manufacturing firm in the US. The findings indicate that Machiavellian orientation is positively associated with job strain and perceived opportunity for formal control, and negatively associated with job satisfaction. Machiavellian orientation was not significantly associated with upward mobility.

Siegel (1973) examined the extent to which managers, MBA students, and faculty members exhibit the Machiavellian, manipulative interpersonal behavior and leadership using the Mach scale and Theory X/Theory Y leadership scale. The study found the following ranking of Machiavellian orientation: managers (lowest) and faculty (highest). They found Machiavellianism relates negatively to participative leadership attitudes for both students and managers.

Hegarty and Sims (1978) identified Machiavellianism as one of the personality variables that was a significant covariate in graduate business students' ethics studies. Their findings indicate that individuals identified as Machiavellian-oriented had less ethical behavior than other study participants. This research also investigated the relation between sex and Machiavellian orientation and found that males are more Machiavellian-oriented than females.

Corzine et al. (1999) examined relationships involving Machiavellianism, the career plateau, job satisfaction and salary in a sample of commercial bank officers in the US. Results showed that American bankers had relatively low Machiavellianism scores compared to scores reported for other groups. While a negative relationship between job satisfaction and Machiavellianism was found, there was no association between salary and Machiavellianism. Those who scored high on Machiavellianism were more likely to believe that they had reached a career plateau than were those who scored low.

Topol and Gable (1990) investigated the Machiavellian orientation of discount store executives and the relationship between Machiavellianism, job satisfaction and job success. The study found that discount store managers are no more Machiavellian than other executives, female executives have a higher Machiavellian orientation than their male counterparts, and that executives in higher level management positions are less Machiavellian than those in lower level positions.

Deluga (2001) studied the relationship among American presidential Machiavellianism, charismatic leadership, and rated performance in unidentified profiles describing 39 American presidents. Presidential Machiavellianism was positively connected with charismatic leadership and rated performance. The findings were explained in terms of the similar features of Machiavellianism and charismatic leadership including high levels of expressive behavioral activity, self-confidence, emotional regulation, and the desire to influence others.

From this brief review we find that although there has been considerable research on Machiavellianism in the West, researchers have failed to examine the conceptual equivalence of the concept across cultural boundaries. Against this background, this research attempts to redress the imbalance by assessing the Machiavellian orientation among legal fraternity in India.

### 3. Hypothesis

Review of the research literature offers evidence of differences in the Machiavellian orientation associated with a number of demographic characteristics. In particular, younger individuals are more Machiavellian than older persons (e.g. Hunt and Chonko, 1984; Rawwas and Singhapakdi, 1998; Webster and Harmon, 2002). In addition, educational level and sex have also been significant predictors of Machiavellianism. Among the studies of differences in Machiavellian orientation between males and females (e.g. Chonko, 1982; Gable and Topoi, 1988), most have reported a statistically significant and higher Machiavellian orientation for males. Christie and Geis (1970) noted that less educated people score higher on the Machiavellian scale than better-educated people. Against this background, the following research hypothesis are predicted:

H1: There is no difference in the Mach score of students, practitioners and faculties of law.

H2: There is no difference in the Mach score of Legal fraternity based on gender.

### 4. Methodology

Convenience sampling method was employed to collect the data from the samples. While students and faculties of legal studies were selected from select colleges and university in Uttarakhand; legal practitioners from contacted throughout the state.

Two hundred subjects (80 students, 60 practitioners and 60 faculties) participated in this study. Women constituted 41.5% of the sample, Male constituted 58.5 % of the sample and the mean age of participants was 33.9 years (s.d. = 7.3). Sample unit was legal fraternity comprising of students, practitioners and faculties in the age group of 18-50. Table 1(a) shows the demographic characteristics of the respondents.

Table 1(a). Demographic Results

Category	No. of Respondents	Males	Females	Female as % of total
Students	80	40	40	50
Practitioners	60	42	18	30
Faculties	60	35	25	42.5
Total	200	117	83	41.5

#### A. Measures

Responses on the personality measures described below were made on a five-point scale (1 = strongly disagree; 5=strongly disagree). Items from all personality scales were interspersed in quasi-random fashion throughout a single personality questionnaire booklet.

#### B. Statistical Analysis

*Mach IV* (Christie, 1970b) instrument have been used to measure the manipulative attitude among legal fraternity. The Mach IV is made up of 20 items, 10 indicating high Machiavellianism and 10 indicating the opposite (low Machiavellianism). The items reflect ways of thinking and

opinions about people and things. Participants were requested to rate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the statements on a 5-point Likert-type scale: 1 = *Strongly Disagree*, 2 = *Disagree*, 3 = *Neutral*, 4 = *Agree*, 5 = *Strongly Agree*. Alpha coefficients of .70 to .76 have been reported for the Mach IV Scale by many researchers (Gable & Topol, 1987; Hunt & Chonko, 1984; Zook & Sipps, 1986). Scores across the categories along with descriptive statistics are contained in Table 3.

Using SPSS, an internal consistency analysis was performed to assess the reliability aspect of the Mach IV instrument. The twenty-item Mach IV had acceptable coefficient alpha values 0.745; 0.783 & 0.834 for data of students, practitioners and faculties respectively (Table 1(b)). Nunnally (1978) suggested that, in exploratory research such as this, an alpha value of 0.6 is sufficient. The alpha values found indicated, therefore, that the Mach IV scale is a sufficiently reliable measure.

Table 1(b). Reliability Statistics

Category	Cronbach alpha	N
Students	0.745	20
Faculties	0.834	20
Practitioners	0.783	20

- A. In order to protect participant's anonymity and get more honest answers, participants were not required to give their names while filling the Mach questionnaire, although they were asked to do so if they wanted to know their scores. All the participants were from legal fraternity in the age group of 18-50.
- B. The dependent variable Mach Score was measured on the five-point interval scale, independent variable legal fraternity was categorized in three categories (students, practitioners and faculty), there were independence of observations i.e. there was no relation between the observations in each category or between the categories themselves and there was absence of any outlier.
- C. ANOVA has been used to test category hypothesis and Independent sample t test has been used to test gender hypothesis.

The following assumptions were tested before employing the statistical tests:

- i. Shapiro-wilks test to test the normality of Mach score for each category (students/ practitioners/faculty).
- ii. Levene's test for homoscedasticity (equality of variances).

Results are contained in Tables 2(a) and 2(b)

Table 2(a). Test of Normality

Mach score	Kolmogorov - Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro -Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
No. of Law Students	0.089	80	.200*	0.978	80	0.483
Practitioners	0.089	60	.200*	0.983	60	0.69
Faculties	0.089	60	.200*	0.978	60	0.483

Table 2(b). Test of Homogeneity of Variances : MACH Score

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
2.034	2	197	0.135

D. Table 4 shows the output of the ANOVA analysis and whether we have a statistically significant difference between our group means. We can see that the significance level is 0.000 ( $p = .000$ ), which is below 0.05 and therefore, there is a statistically significant difference in the Mach score between the different categories. However to know which of the specific

categories differed; the Tukey post-hoc test has been employed. Table 5, Multiple Comparisons, shows which categories differed from each other. Table shows that there is a significant difference in Mach score between the students and the faculties ( $p = 0.000$ ), as well as between the lawyers and faculties ( $p = 0.022$ ). However, there were no differences between the students & lawyers ( $p = 0.302$ ).

Regarding gender hypothesis independent sample t test was preferred the result of which is contained in Table 6(a) & 6(b). Table shows that there is a significant difference in Mach score between the female and the male ( $p = 0.024$ ),

The findings can be put in following words:

**Category Hypothesis:**

There was a statistically significant difference between groups as determined by one-way ANOVA ( $F(2,197) = 8.911, p = .000$ ). A Tukey post-hoc test revealed that the Mach score was statistically significantly higher for students ( $62.72 \pm 3.38, p = .000$ ) and practitioners ( $60.54 \pm 4.28, p = .022$ ) compared to the faculties

( $56.60 \pm 4.74$ ). There were no statistically significant differences between the students and practitioners ( $p = .302$ ).

**Gender Hypothesis:**

“An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare mach score for male and female respondents. There was a significant difference in the scores for female ( $M=64.2, SD=8.6$ ) and male ( $M=61.6, SD=8.1$ );  $t(198) = 2.277, p = 0.024$ . These results suggest that gender really does have a significant effect on Machiavellian score. Specifically, the result suggests that female score high on mach orientation than their male counterpart.”

Table 4. ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squares	F	Sig.
Between Groups	962.173	2	481.087	8.911	0
Within Groups	7936.5	197	53.99		
Total	8898.673	199			

Table 5. Tukey Post Hoc Test

(I) category	(J) category	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
S	P	2.180	1.470	.302	-1.30	5.66
	F	6.120*	1.470	.000	2.64	9.60
P	S	-2.180	1.470	.302	-5.66	1.30
	F	3.940*	1.470	.022	.46	7.42
F	S	-6.120*	1.470	.000	-9.60	-2.64
	P	-3.940*	1.470	.022	-7.42	-.46

\*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

S, P & F indicates Students, Practitioners & Faculties respectively.

Table 6(a). Group Statistics

GENDER	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Female	103	64.1553	8.61685	.84904
Male	117	61.5812	8.14125	.75266

Table 6(b). Independent Samples Test

Assumptions	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	.000	.992	2.277	198	.024	2.57414	1.13052	.34600	4.80229
Equal variances not assumed			2.269	210.822	.024	2.57414	1.13462	.33748	4.81080

5. Conclusion

Present day's scenario of legal field (indeed the society as a whole) is characterized by high priority on money, power, authoritarianism and competition and research have suggested that individuals high in mach traits are found to be domineering, controlling, and suspicious of the motives of others- the constituents of power, competition, dominance and authoritarianism! Legal field is also characterized with high competitiveness and zero-sum game. Consequently, in competitive situations regardless of the possibility of success, individuals high in mach traits versus those low in mach traits, prefer a show of strength (e.g., bluffing) instead of sandbagging (e.g., feigning incompetence) their opponent The finding shows that future legal fraternity, represented by students scored very high on the Mach scale. This implies students seemed to be more willing to use social power and influence to accomplish their objectives. This also reflects that lawyers may be becoming more manipulative in their behavior, and more concerned with material issues than with developing a meaningful philosophy of life. Similarly practitioners too have scored high on the scale reflecting the use of manipulative strategies in their profession to prove dominance, show of strength and avoidance of sandbagging. Faculties have score less on mach score that may be construed as the values and morals associated with teaching profession as a whole. This may also reflect the idealistic perspective of the teachers and/or their inclination towards theoretical wisdom.

In contemporary terms high mach score among women may be characterized as having: a) a cynical view of

human nature (e.g., people are weak and untrustworthy), b) lack of affect in interpersonal relationships (e.g., emotional detachment),c) lack of concern with conventional morality (e.g., cooperation as well as lying and defecting in group activities are perfectly acceptable), d) lack of gross psychopathology, and d) focus on realistic and obtainable goals. In a nutshell we may attribute high mach score among female in the legal fraternity as their being much more goal oriented than person-oriented. These results also suggest that female in the legal fraternity are more likely to present themselves to the best of their abilities, which may be linked to their need for dominance in erstwhile male dominated profession to show that they are a force to be reckoned with!

6. Limitations and Future Research

The results of the present study should be viewed with caution because of the limited generalization of studies involving college students, faculties and limited number of practitioners. However, the sample is reflective of the values they carry when they embark on their careers. Further, these values are also reflective of the community in which they live.

Future research should examine the Machiavellianism among different groups to see whether the results of the current study hold. The study however warrants additional studies regarding Machiavellianism and gender in other populations. Other Machiavellian research should investigate female Machiavellian score in male-dominated professions as compared to female Machiavellian traits in female-dominated professions.

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