

Machiavellian Language at Work: The Signs of Machiavellianism in Work-Related Interviews

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Abstract : Machiavellianism is a personality trait based on the exploitation and deception of others. Machiavellian individuals are motivated to gain and to maintain power with the help of their strategic thinking, manipulation tactics, and interpersonal skills. Consequently, Machiavellianism is treated as a personality trait that can affect an individual's career and work-related behavior. The aim of our research is to provide a narrative psychological approach to Machiavellianism in order to get a more comprehensive picture about the attitudes, values, and work-related behaviors of Machiavellian individuals. In this study, semi-structured interviews were made with employees (N=275) about their work-related experiences. Additionally, participants completed questionnaires about their turnover intention and perceived stress. The interviews were examined with narrative psychological content analysis and thematic analyzes. Based on the thematic analysis, mentioning of two topics (recognition at work and control) were associated with Machiavellianism. Scientific narrative psychological content analysis showed a negative association between Machiavellianism and positive emotions. Turnover intention and the magnitude of perceived work-related stress showed a significant positive correlation with Machiavellianism. In this study, qualitative and quantitative methodologies were combined in order to get a deeper insight of Machiavellianism from an organizational psychological perspective. Our research can contribute to a better understanding of this personality trait and provides an excellent basis for further investigations.

Keywords : machiavellianism, narrative psychology, turnover intention, work-related stress

Conference Title : ICOB 2021 : International Conference on Organizational Behavior

Conference Location : Venice, Italy

Conference Dates : April 12-13, 2021