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Relation among Machiavellianism Belief and Goal Orientations in Academic Situations

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Abstract

Problem Statement: one of the most important variables in academic situations is motivation. In new theories on motivation, belief is essential and goal orientations are one of them. Studding the origins of goal orientations stem in social-cognitive theory and Machiavellianism beliefs connected motivation (goals) and cognitions. Goals, specially, approach-performance goals relate to Machiavellianism beliefs. Purpose of Study:The aim of this research is studying the relations among Machiavellianism beliefs and goal orientations. Research Methods: To do the study, a multi-stage cluster sampling method was used and a sample of 600 students from Iranian students, were selected. Students' Achievement Goal Orientations scale (Midgly et al, 1998), and Machiavellianism beliefs scale (Christie & Geis, 1970) were administrated to students as a group. Questionnaires validity and reliability were verified. Findings: The results of Pearson correlation showed that the mutual correlations between all components of Machiavellianism beliefs (truth, pure nature, distrust and dominance) with mastery goals were positive and significant statistically ($p<0.01$) and correlation between some of Machiavellianism beliefs (truth and pure nature) with approach-performance goals were positive and significant statistically ($p<0.01$), but for distrust and dominance with approach-performance goals were negative and not significant statistically. Correlations between some components of Machiavellianism beliefs (truth and pure nature) with avoiding-performance goals were positive and significant statistically ($p<0.01$) but for (distrust and dominance) with avoiding-performance goals were negative and not significant statistically. Conclusions: some of belief are essentials for education and motivation. In these situations, setting goals and context of them sould be considered for moivating students.

Keywords: Goal orientations, Machiavellianism beliefs and university students;

1. Introduction

The term *Machiavellian* originates from the name of Niccolo Machiavelli, in 1513. Machiavelli proposed that others should be regarded as vicious, lazy, and untrustworthy and that a ruler should use cruelty, exploitation, and deceit to maintain power (Walter, Anderson, & Martin, 2005). Christie (1970) proposed that the Machiavellian worldview had three distinct themes. The first theme involves using manipulative strategies such as deceit and

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flattery in interpersonal relations. The second theme involves a cynical perception of others as weak and untrustworthy. The third theme involves in difference toward conventional morality in thought and action (Fehr etal., 1992). Machiavellianism people viewed as interpersonal social competition concerned with gaining the upper hand (Barber, 1994). In one sense, high Machiavellians can be ideologically neutral, have little emotional involvement in interpersonal relationships, and shift commitments when it is to their advantage to do so (Mudrack & Mason, 1995). Most often, subordinates who possess the high Machiavellian trait should be able to manipulate encounters with superiors so that they influence and control work situations for their own ends. McIlwain, (2003) say that Machiavellians tend to win in situations involving emotional involvement more often than low Machiavellians because they have the ability to ignore irrelevant affect in situations and concentrate on winning, whereas low Machiavellians are easily distracted by affect. High Machs are more likely than low Machs to believe that others are manipulatable, to practice manipulation on others, and to succeed in their manipulations (for reviews, see Fehr, Samson, & Paulhus, 1992; Geis, 1978; Wilson, Near, & Miller, 1996).

The underlying principles of the theory of motives claim that people have specific needs and that the fulfillment of these needs drives them to communicate; in other words, people's motives for communicating influence their communicative choices and how they communicate (Rubin, 1979, 1981; Rubin & Rubin, 1992). Thus, motives for communicating are relatively stable traits explaining why one chooses to communicate, which, in turn, influences how one communicates. In effect, motives influence people to communicate interpersonally to reach goals.

1.1. Machiavellianism beliefs and motivational beliefs

Schools and universities situations for communications that have are affecting from Machiavellianism beliefs and goal orientations and generate them. Goals, related processes and type of them have important role in academic, life, and well-being, successful and mental health. Belief, especially goal belief, have important role in forming social relationships and contracts. These goals are affecting from beliefs or personality. Brandtstadter (1999) believed that life goals are affecting type of personality. Goals determine that both what person will and type of behaviours that apply to reaching goals. For these reasons, achievement goals are essential for academic and nonacademic and psychological problems in schools and universities. Achievement goals or goal orientations are related to motivation and learning and cognitions (Pintrich, 1999, 2004, Zimmerman, 1998). Latifeyan and Bashash (2008) research show that life goals are predicted by a combination of Machiavellianism beliefs (truth, pure nature, distrust and dominance). In Liu research (2003), he investigates The Relationship between Machiavellianism and Ethical Computer Self-Efficacy; he found that Machiavellianism and Ethical Computer Self-Efficacy have a poor and negative correlation. Latif (2000) in investigating The Relationship between Pharmacy Students' Locus of Control, Machiavellianism, and Moral Reasoning found that higher levels of moral reasoning were significantly related to "internal" scores on Rotter's internal/external locus of control scale. Both higher levels of moral reasoning and "internal" scores on the locus of control scale were significantly related in the negative direction with Machiavellianism. McHoskey (2000) predicted that MACH would be associated with an emphasis on the extrinsic goal of financial success specifically, and on a control motivational orientation in general. These predictions received support. Additional findings indicate that MACH is positively associated with alienation and antisocial behavior, but inversely associated with social interest and prosaically behavior.

With respect to importance of goals and motivational belief with Machiavellianism beliefs that have cognitive nature, this idea that goals are related to Machiavellianism beliefs, originate from theorical foundations in social-cognitive theory (Bandoura, 1986, 1997, 2001, Pintrich, 2004, Zimmerman, 1998), self-determination theory (Deci, 1995, Deci & reyan, 1985, Deci et al, 1994) and goal orientations theory (Dweck, 2000, Dweck and Leggat, 1988).

2. Method

Participants: Participants were 600 students (girls and boys) from Ferdowsi University of Mashhad in north-western of Iran, using a multistage cluster-sampling method. Their ages were 19 to38 years. This university is a governmental university.

Measurement: To measure the variables, the following paper-pencile inventories were used to the students in groups of 25 to 35: Students Achievement Goal Orientation (Midgley, *et al.*, 1998) with 18 items and Machiavellianism beliefs scale (Christie & Geis, 1970) with 22 items. Alpha coefficients in the final administration of Students Achievement Goal Orientation scale was 0.91 and for subscales were 0.92, 0.87 and 0.92 for mastery, approach and avoiding. Confirmatory factor analysis indexes in the final administration were (RSMA= .048, GFI= .98, χ^2=85.93)for this scale, and (RSMA= .05, GFI= .94, χ^2=366.83, df= 117) for Mach scale. Students response to this scale with Likert-type from 1-5 (1= disagreed perfectly and 5= agreed perfectly). In sum, psychometric indexes of instruments were acceptable in present study. Then we analyzed these data and report in latter section.

3. Results

For testing of proposed hypothesis we computed Pearson correlations and multiple regressions. In the first section reported the means, standard divisions and relations among variables. Table 1 represents the means, standard divisions and Pearson correlations for students Machiavellianism beliefs (truth, pure nature, distrust and dominance) and goal orientations (mastery, approach performance and avoidance performance) components, 2 by 2. As table 1 shows, Pearson correlations between mastery goals and all Machiavellianism beliefs are significant ($p<0.01$). Approach goals are related to truth positively (r= 0/30, p<0/01), to pure nature (r= 0/19, p<0/01), but correlations coefficients among approach goals with distrust and dominance are not significant. Avoiding goals are related to truth positively (r= 0/21, p<0/01), to pure nature (r= 0/11, p<0/01), but correlations coefficients among approach goals with distrust and dominance are not significant.

Table1. Means, Standard divisions and correlations among Machiavellianism beliefs and goal orientations

variables	n	M	SD	Correlation coefficients					
				1	2	3	4	5	6
1-Mastery	600	31.51	8.85						
2-Approach	600	30.07	8.69	.49**					
3-Avoiding	600	26.11	8.60	.27**	.59**				
4-Truth	600	18.79	3.95	.34**	.30**	.21**			
5-Pure nature	600	14.06	3.07	.34**	.19**	.11**	.56**		
6-dominance	600	15.05	4.06	.11**	-.03	-.08	.14**	.15**	
7-distrust	600	13.09	2.95	.18**	-.03	-.05	.08*	.01	.22**

In addition to examining the simple correlation coefficients, the multiple regressions were also examined. Results show that mastery goals is predicted by Machiavellianism beliefs: truth, pure nature, distrust and dominance ($F_{(4,595)}$ =31.78, p<0.001, R^2= 0.17). Regression Coefficients for truth, pure nature and distrust (predictors) were significance statistically (p<0.001) and for dominance was not significance. Also results show that Approach goals are predicted by Machiavellianism beliefs ($F_{(4,595)}$ =16.62, p<0.001, R^2= 0.10). Regression Coefficients for truth was significance statistically (p<0.001) and for pure nature, distrust and dominance not significance. Results show that avoiding goals are predicted by Machiavellianism beliefs ($F_{(4,595)}$ =9.82, p<0.001, R^2= 0.06). Regression Coefficients for truth and dominance (predictors) were significance statistically (p<0.001) and for pure nature and distrust were not significance.

In predicting mastery goals, R square show that 17 percent variance of mastery goals are explained by predictors (truth, pure nature, distrust and dominance) and for predicting approach performance goals, R square shows that 10 percent of approach goals variance are explained by predictors (truth, pure nature, distrust and dominance). In predicting avoiding performance goals, R square show that, 6 percent of avoiding goals variance is explained by predictors (truth, pure nature, distrust and dominance).

4. Discussion

The aim of this research was studying the relations among Machiavellianism beliefs and goal orientations. Results show that mastery goals and all Machiavellianism beliefs are correlated. Approach goals are related to truth and pure nature positively, but not with distrust and dominance. Avoiding goals are related to truth and pure nature positively, but not with distrust and dominance. Results also show that mastery goals are predicted by Machiavellianism beliefs. Regression Coefficients for truth, pure nature and distrust (predictors) were significance statistically and for dominance was not significance. Also results show that Approach goals are predicted by Machiavellianism beliefs. Regression Coefficients for truth was significance statistically and for pure nature, distrust and dominance not significance. Avoiding goals are predicted by Machiavellianism beliefs, Regression Coefficients for truth and dominance (predictors) were significance statistically and for pure nature and distrust were not significance.

Results are same obtained results of latifian and bashash (2008) that life goals correlate to Machiavellianism beliefs. Results fit theory of Christie and Geis, (1970) that Machiavellianism beliefs are effect on goals and social relations that are essential in goal orientations theory. Mastery, approach and avoiding verified based on relations with others. Results show that approach and avoiding goals related to non-Machiavellianism beliefs (truth and pure nature) and does not related to Machiavellianism beliefs (distrust and dominance). In Liu research (2003), he found that Machiavellianism and Ethical Computer Self-Efficacy have a poor and negative correlation. Both self-efficacy and goal orientations are motivational belief.

It means that non-Machiavellianism beliefs (truth and pure nature) are important variables in goals that based on related others (approach and avoiding in contrast with mastery goals) but when social goals or external goals are important, Machiavellianism beliefs (distrust and dominance) are not effective variables. These results fit social-cognitive theory, socio-cultural theory that emphasis on social origins of belief, meaning, cognition and behaviour.

We per posed that future research investigated relations Machiavellianism beliefs with motivation and related processes and beliefs. Machiavellianism beliefs can relate to psychological disorders, especially those have social origins. Machiavellianism beliefs can be usual in special class of job or people, and then comparing their beliefs is important subject.

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