Machiavellianism, Competition and Self-Disclosure in Friendship

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Introduction

• Machiavellian men and women employ manipulation tactics in order to achieve their own self-serving goal
• Friendships present opportunities for manipulation and exploitation
• Within friendships self-disclosure reinforces liking and intimacy (Berg & Delerga, 1987)
• Machiavellian individuals often employ less direct strategies such as emotional manipulation and self-disclosure to reduce the risk of detection
• Competition influences the use of self-disclosure in experimental conditions (Jones, Nickel & Schmidt, 1979)

The present study investigated whether competition in friendship influenced Machiavellian individual’s intentional use of self-disclosure

Method

Participants were opportunity sampled from the campus of British University (N = 37), an online University participant pool (N = 129) and a psychology research website (N = 70). Male (N = 65) and female (N = 171) participants were aged 16 – 61 years (M = 21.58, SD = 6.01) and each individual was in a close same-sex friendship at the time of the study.

Participants completed questionnaires containing:
• The Mach IV (Christie & Geis, 1970)
• Self-Disclosure Scale (Wheeless, 1978)
• Amended Interpersonal-Competition Index (Singleton & Vacca, 2007)

Results

Machiavellianism and competition significantly predicted the honesty - accuracy of information revealed by men (F (3,60) = 8.90, p < .001) and women (F (3,167) = 2.99, p < .05). Although the individual predictors were not significant for women.

Machiavellianism and competition predicted female but not male intent to self-disclose (men: F (3,59) = 2.38, p > .05; women: F (3,166) = 3.77, p < .05) and depth of self-disclosure (men: F (3,60) = .28, p > .05; women: F (3,166) = 4.27, p < .01).

Machiavellianism and competition did not predict the amount (men: F (3,59)=1.07, p>.05; women: F (3, 166)= 1.86, p>.05) or positiveness-negativeness (men: F (3, 58) =.27, p>.05; women: F(3,165)=.59, p>.05) of self-disclosure for either gender.

Conclusions

Machiavellian men and women did not reduce the amount of information that they self-disclosed, instead modifying the honesty - accuracy of the information. Machiavellianism and competition predicted intent to self-disclose and depth of information disclosed amongst women only.

References