

PERSONALITY DETERMINANTS OF MANIPULATIVE BEHAVIOR IN THE NEGOTIATION PROCESS

*Maria S. Monich,
Ludmila V. Matveeva*

*Lomonosov Moscow State University
Moscow, Russia*

Negotiations are an inalienable component of human society in the modern world, so studying those personal characteristics of negotiators that influence their choice of negotiating strategy, tactics, and style is relevant and significant. Knowledge of the patterns of a partner's choice of one strategy of behavior or another influences on successful negotiation process and assists in achieving goals. We did research on the connections among level of anxiety, motivation to succeed and to avoid failure, and self-esteem to the level of Machiavellianism. This article discusses the personal characteristics that influence the choice of manipulative tactics of behavior in negotiations.

Keywords: strategy, tactics and styles of negotiation, manipulation, Machiavellianism, anxiety, self-esteem, motivation to achieve success, motivation to avoid failure

Currently in the development of the public mind in Russia old values are changing into new ones. Modern market society is characterized by a lack of stability and is highly competitive. Under these conditions, the number of people who try to manipulate public and individual consciousness will inevitably increase. Quite often, negotiators work out of a desire to achieve their own goals at the expense of the desires of their partners; they have a tendency toward rivalry and an aggressive style of negotiating. However, such negotiators rarely use open threats and blackmail, usually preferring more effective “humane” and covert tactics.

Theory and Practice of the Negotiation Process

Manipulation is a hidden psychological impact aimed at people that forces them to act in accordance with the objectives of the manipulator. Everyone to varying degrees is capable of manipulative behavior, but some people are more prone to it and more able to succeed at it than others.

We start here by determining the place of manipulation in the structure of the negotiation process. Strategy, tactics, and style are the main elements that characterize negotiations. Various authors-researchers of the negotiation process – psychologists, diplomats, social scientists – have explored different ways of understanding and distinguishing the concepts of *strategy*, *tactics*, and *communication style*.

A *strategy* defines the purpose of negotiations and settlement, which are the main foundations for achieving a goal. Dubinin (2006) uses the metaphor of “war” to define strategy. For Mokshantsev (2002) a strategy is the most general, long-term planning for negotiations; it is the planning of the general direction of all the activities oriented toward the achievement of a goal. According to Hasan (2003) strategy is a possible participant in the process of regulating a situation. For Mastenbruk (1993) strategy does not produce the negotiations, but the negotiations are a behavioral strategy. He identifies three strategies for interaction: cooperation, negotiation, and struggle. Talks are the strategy required when different interests are at stake, but the two sides have a degree of interdependence, which will allow the parties to come to an agreement beneficial to both (Mastenbruk, 1993). Manipulation is a behavioral strategy, but usually it manifests itself as a tactic in negotiations.

After a strategy for negotiations has been determined, there is a need to develop *tactics* for their management. Tactics are a technique, method, process, or set of interrelated techniques for implementing the chosen strategy. The objective of the strategy is to identify what should be achieved in the negotiations, and the task of tactics is to determine exactly how to work in coordination with the strategic intentions. Manipulation, as one of many available tactics in the arsenal of negotiator behavior, is a common way to achieve a goal.

Specific tactics include the selection of a particular negotiation *style* in the relationship with a partner. It can be either confrontational or aimed at cooperation. Between these extremes are many possible nu-

ances in the style of the relationship as dictated by the strategic plan, the tactics, the negotiations, and sometimes the personal characteristics of the negotiators. Mastenbruk (1993) distinguishes these possibilities, highlighting four personal negotiating styles: analytical-aggressive, flexible-aggressive, ethical, and sociable. Mokshantsev (2002) examines styles of negotiation within the framework of cooperation and confrontation, highlighting five and two modes, respectively. In the framework of cooperation: trading, partnership, cooperation, reconciliation, and business styles. As part of confrontation: hard and soft styles. Dotsenko (1996) singles out a particular scale of interpersonal relationships, the possibility of placing all human actions along the value axis “relationship to another in regard to values–relationship to another as a means.” At one extreme are partnership and cooperation; at the other, domination and manipulation.

In the psychological literature, the term *manipulation* has three meanings. The first is borrowed completely from technology and is used primarily in engineering psychology and the psychology of work. In the second sense, which is borrowed from etiology, manipulation is understood as “the active movement by animals of components of the environment in space” (Fabri, 1976). The third definition, gleaned from a careful analysis of books dealing with the problem of manipulation, comes from Dotsenko (2003): manipulation is a kind of psychological influence, the skillful execution of which leads to the excitation of intentions in another person that do not coincide with that person’s actual existing desires. Manipulation always has a hidden effect that the victims are not aware of.

It is possible to identify the following essential features of manipulation as specified in the works of many authors (Cialdini, 2009; Dotsenko, 2003; Dubinin, 2006; Mokshantsev, 2002; Shostrom, 2000; and others): secrecy, deception, exploitation, domination, management, control, coercion or the use of force for the manipulation of and contrary to the will of another, self-interest, relationship to another as a means, indirect effect, influence, programming of thoughts.

Most models of manipulation include a few key ideas: concealing one’s real motives and obscuring the fact that one’s real purpose is to train the behavior of the other party. During negotiations, when both the victim and the manipulator may be manipulating the other, each may or may not be aware of the existence of this effect. It is worthwhile to distin-

guish these two phenomena. When one party does not understand that he or she is being manipulative, we call it a psychological game (in the sense of Berne, 2011). When the manipulator knowingly conceals the impact on the opponent, we call it manipulation. The difference between a person playing a psychological game and a manipulator is that manipulators are fully aware of their actions and use techniques and tactics that they have been taught. Those who are playing a game want to get a result; they are focused on the object of their desires. The subconscious self makes a player use these or other maneuvers that can lead to success. Such people are not aware of what they are doing, what levers they use to affect the victim. And, in general, they do not understand how manipulation works. The trick of conscious manipulation is that the activity is completely controlled by consciousness; all the moves are calculated in advance. The manipulator knows what levers to push to get the desired result.

In order to achieve the result it does not matter whether the negotiator deliberately uses manipulation or not. The result is the achievement of the goal; no matter what the combination of moves or the successful combination of circumstances, the goal has been achieved. There are two possible purposes of manipulation. The first option is achieving a result; the manipulator meets the goals. This is a manipulation of means, a way of achieving the goal. This option is used more often in negotiations. The second option is that the manipulation is an end in itself. One manipulates for the emotional component that accompanies the manipulation.

One can learn the techniques and tactics of manipulation, but some people master these techniques better than others. A manipulator's degree of success depends to a large extent on how large an arsenal of tools is available and how flexibly the manipulator uses them. For successful manipulation it is necessary to have a sense of the opponent, to know and understand his or her desires and possibilities, to be able to find words that will "trigger" the manipulation. These qualities can be developed, but still some people are initially inclined toward manipulation and have the ability to manipulate.

There are many reasons for manipulating people: "It is easier." "I like it when someone else does my job." In order to protect oneself from spending time on the manipulative tactics of negotiation behavior, it is necessary to understand whether opponents are prone to manipulation, to understand their inner world.

To analyze the propensity for manipulation, we use the concept of *Machiavellianism*. Machiavellianism is a psychological syndrome based on a combination of interrelated cognitive, motivational, and behavioral characteristics.

The main psychological component of Machiavellianism as a personality trait is the belief that when communicating with others one can and should be manipulative; the specific skills of manipulation are built on an understanding of the psychology of one's partner in a negotiation. Machiavellianism as a personality trait reflects the desire and intention to manipulate other people, hiding one's true intentions.

Shostrom (2000) describes a manipulator as a person who refers to himself and to others as objects, "things" subject to use and control. The modern manipulator is the product of a scientific and market-based approach, in which a person is regarded as a thing about which one needs to know much in order to be able to have an effect on it.

The paradox of modern human-robots consists in the fact that although their work gives them the greatest opportunity for self-development and attaining pleasure in life, they avoid any risks whatsoever of mental agitation or involvement. Manipulators are in fact very disturbing people, fearful of failure. Shostrom (2008), with reference to other authors, provides a list of the reasons for manipulation.

The first reason comes from F. Perls, who posits that the main cause of the phenomenon of manipulation is the eternal inner conflict between the human desire for independence and autonomy, on the one hand, and the desire to find support from the environment on the other. Erich Fromm points out another reason for manipulation. He believes that good relations between people – love and, equally, the gaining of love – are not easy to achieve, so manipulators must be content with a lazy, pathetic alternative: they try desperately to achieve absolute power over others, so that the others will do what they want.

The third reason for manipulation is offered by James Byudzhenal and other existentialists. Risk and uncertainty, they say, surround people on all sides. Aware of the conditions of their existence in the world, their "existential situation," they feel helpless. A passive manipulator uses his or her own helplessness; an active manipulator uses someone else's.

Berne (2011) suggested that people start to play games with each other in order to better manage their emotions and avoid intimacy. Accordingly, the manipulator can be defined as a person who is trying to

avoid intimacy and involvement in relationships with others and therefore interacts with them through pressure. People need to approve of them. Passive manipulators build their lives on this axiom, and therefore in principle they do not want to be honest and frank with others but are always trying by hook or by crook to please them.

Having considered the views of these authors, we can conclude that the major personality factors that determine the propensity for manipulative behavior are high anxiety and the motivation and the desire to avoid failing to gain social approval. With regard to the desire to achieve social approval, it appears that it is a defensive reaction, compensation for undervalued self-esteem. When people think that their “ideal self” does not correspond to notions of their “real self,” they begin to seek social support, social evidence that will help them raise their opinions about themselves.

The important fact is the motivation of a negotiator to achieve success or to avoid failure in the negotiation process. During that process an achieved agreement will be considered a success, but failed negotiations lead perceptions of an unfavorable, bad deal. In the motivation to achieve, there are two trends: achievement and avoidance, “hope for success” and “fear of failure” (Matveeva, Derevyagina, & Garayeva, 2010). A manipulator seeks to avoid failure, an adverse outcome of negotiations.

A major personality factor in manipulation is a high level of anxiety. Anxiety is a fundamental mechanism that helps people to live. Background anxiety is always present in human life and is a mandatory feature of activity. In situations where there is a barrier to the realization of a goal, a person has a sense of anxiety. People with high levels of anxiety are hesitant, fearful, trapped, pedantic; they need to carefully plan their activities. Anxious people have underestimated the level of their pretensions and, as a rule, are dominated by the motivation to avoid failure.

Background of the Study

The purpose of our research was to study the determinants of personal behavior in communication. Our objectives were the identification of such interrelated personal determinants and a psychological analysis of the obtaining of personal relationships. We had four hypotheses:

1. The higher the level of anxiety, the greater the susceptibility to manipulation.
2. The more pronounced the motivation to avoid failure, the higher the predisposition to manipulation.
3. The lower the self-esteem, the higher the tendency to manipulate others.
4. The higher the propensity for manipulation in a conflict situation, the higher the preference for a strategy of competition.

We used five methods: the Russian-language adaptation of the MACH-IV test of Machiavellianism (Christie, Geis, 1970); the motivation for success and fear of failure (EOR) questionnaire (Rean, 1999); the Taylor Manifest Anxiety Scale, a technique for diagnosing the level of anxiety (Taylor, 1953; adaptation: Norakidze, 2002); the self-assessment technique of Budassi (1971); a test to determine the preferred strategy for negotiations (Thomas, 2009; adaptation: Grishina, 2009).

To collect the data we have used the site <http://services.ht-line.ru>, laboratory "Human Technology." For the data we have used SPSS Statistic 16.

Participating in the study were 66 people between the ages of 18 and 27 years. Of these, 33 were women and 33 were men. The respondents were students at Moscow universities; in particular, 41 people were from Lomonosov Moscow State University, including students of the Faculty of Psychology (26).

Results of the Study

Analysis of the results of the study took place in two stages. In the first stage, we identified correlations between susceptibility to being manipulative and the determinants of personal behavior in the group of respondents. In the second stage, we examined the relationship between the preferred strategy for negotiations and the determinants using contingency tables.

We provide in Table 1 general information about the sample. Using these data, we performed a correlation analysis and divided the respondents into groups of those with high, medium, and low Machiavellianism.

Table 1

General Information about the Sample

	Range of values	Range of values in the sample	Mean	Standard deviation	Dispersion
Age	–	18–27	20.62	1.73	2.97
Sex	0–1	0–1	0.5	0.5	0.25
MACH- IV	20–100	33–88	62.08	11.45	131.15
Motivation	0–20	2–19	11.42	4.59	21.08
Anxiety	0–50	5–38	20.52	8.14	66.35
Self-esteem	0–100	5–100	72.28	22.42	502.73
Strategy	5.1	5.1	3.23	1.32	1.75

We were also interested in the preference for negotiating strategy of people with high and low degrees of Machiavellianism. Because the strategies were determined using a nominal scale (i.e., a qualitative difference), the sorting of respondents and the data analysis were performed separately (Table 2).

Table 2

Strategy

Number of people in the group	Rivalry (1)	Cooperation (2)	Compromise (3)	Avoidance (4)	Adaptation (5)
	8	11	21	10	16

Correlation Analysis

The procedure for the correlation analysis was devised with the help of the American version of the program SPSS Statistic 16. Analyzing the results for the 66 respondents produced the correlations shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Correlations

	Age	Sex	Motivation	Anxiety	Self-esteem
MACH-IV	0.309*	0.129	-0.585**	0.752**	0.643**

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Correlation of Machiavellianism and Age. The positive-significance level of 0.05 can be explained intuitively: the older people are, the more they are disappointed with their lives, and the more cynical and arrogant they become. Such people may begin to believe that they have the right to manipulate others. However, because the correlation is significant at the 0.05 level, it is not possible to say this with accuracy. Perhaps this result can be explained by the maturation of people, their personal growth and development. At an older age “the removal of rose-colored glasses” occurs; people become disillusioned with life and begin to relate to others as the means to achieve their goals rather than valuing them as people.

Correlation of Machiavellianism and Motivation. Here there is a strong and significant (at the 0.01 level) negative correlation (Figure 1). In other words, the higher the degree of Machiavellianism, the more the person tries to avoid failure rather than achieve success. Indeed, whether consciously or not we manipulate to achieve success; we always at the

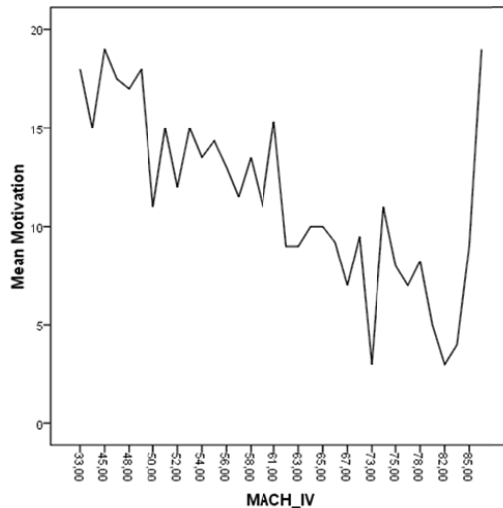


Figure 1. Correlation of Machiavellianism and motivation. The vertical axis is the mean level of motivation; the horizontal axis is the corresponding level of Machiavellianism

beginning prefer to use ethical tactics, acting on our own. When it becomes clear that on our own we do not succeed, we wake up in fear of being beaten, fear of failure, which causes us to move forward using other goals, manipulating other people. This result confirms the hypothesis about the relationship between the propensity for manipulation and motivation to avoid failure.

Correlation of Machiavellianism and Anxiety. As can be seen from Table 3, the tendency to manipulate correlated highly with the level of anxiety. This is a strong positive relationship, significant at the 0.01 level. So the higher the propensity for manipulation, the higher the level of anxiety. Manipulators are domineering, aggressive, and conceited. They are characterized by the presence of internal conflicts. In situations where a barrier arises on the way to realizing a goal and the manipulator has a conflict between the desire to achieve the goal and a lack of resources for doing so, he or she has a sense of anxiety. These results support the selection hypothesis. This correlation is clearly seen in Figure 2.

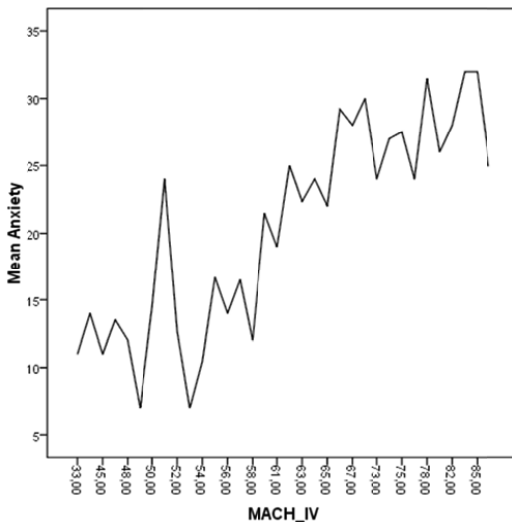


Figure 2. Correlation of Machiavellianism and anxiety. The vertical axis is the mean anxiety level; the horizontal axis is the corresponding level of Machiavellianism

Correlation of Machiavellianism and Self-Esteem. Our hypothesis regarding self-esteem is refuted by the significant positive correlation at the 0.01 level of Machiavellianism and self-esteem. We had assumed that manipulators would be characterized by low self-esteem; however, the results indicate the opposite: the higher the tendency to manipulate, the higher a person's self-esteem. Perhaps high self-esteem triggers a protective compensatory mechanism. Manipulators, who have high ambitions, strive to achieve their goals by any means. Lacking sufficient resources to achieve a goal, they actively use people, loading on them the work that they do not have the time or energy to do. However, having achieved the goal, they attribute the success to their personal merits and not to the merits of the people who succumbed to their manipulation; this mechanism leads to an increase in their own self-esteem, and, in our view, it may explain the dependence that develops. In addition, the raw data show that out of 23 people with high levels of Machiavellianism in 13 self-esteem equaled more than 91 points, indicating an inadequate level of self-esteem. This relationship is shown in Figure 3.

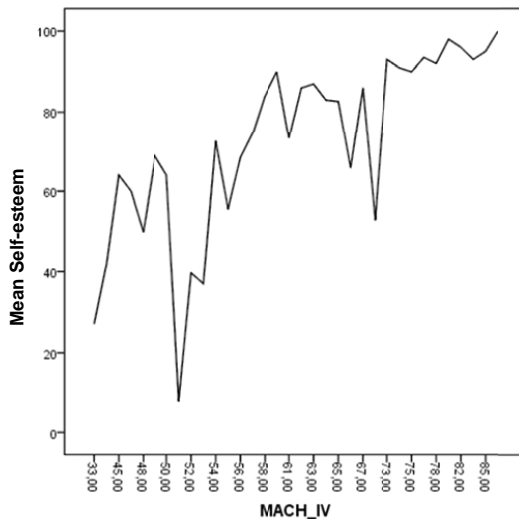


Figure 3. Correlation of Machiavellianism and self-esteem. The vertical axis is the mean self-esteem level; the horizontal axis is the corresponding level of Machiavellianism

Correlation of Motivation, Anxiety, and Self-Esteem. Other discoveries were revealed in our study of correlations (Table 4).

Table 4

Correlations among the Determinants of Adverse Events

	Anxiety	Self-esteem		Self-esteem
Motivation	-0.639**	-0.313*	Anxiety	0.406**

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Correlation of anxiety and motivation. Anxious people tend to have a strong motivation to avoid failure. Success is associated with the expectation of the basic emotion of joy from the attained results, and avoidance of failure is associated with the fear of defeat. Very anxious people are dominated by such fear. Indeed, Table 4 shows that the level of motivation is significant at the 0.01 level and is negatively correlated with the level of anxiety – that is, the higher the anxiety, the lower the motivation to succeed and therefore the higher the motivation to avoid failure, as shown in Figure 4.

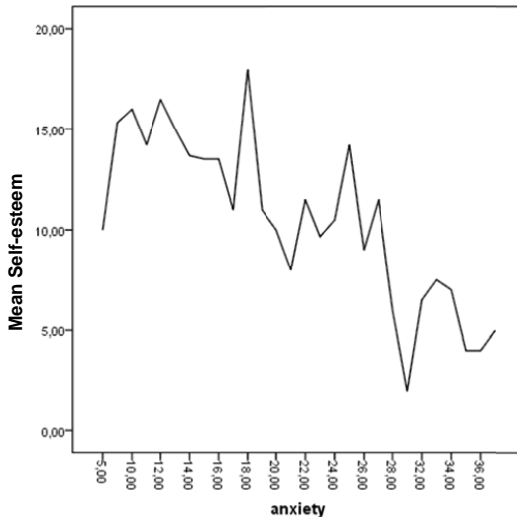


Figure 4. Correlation of anxiety and motivation. The vertical axis shows the mean motivation level; the horizontal axis shows the level of anxiety

Correlation of anxiety and self-esteem. Also, the level of anxiety was significantly positively correlated at the 0.01 level with self-esteem. In other words, the higher the level of anxiety, the higher the self-esteem (Figure 5). Anxiety and self-esteem are likely to play a role in a third factor: success and responsibility. Leaders who are domineering and authoritarian people are more successful than their subordinates and have higher self-esteem; they are also more anxious because they bear a greater burden of responsibility for making important decisions.

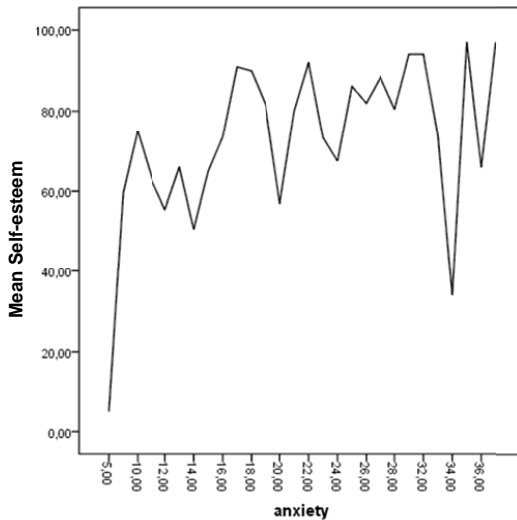


Figure 5. Dependence of anxiety and self-esteem. The vertical axis is the self-esteem mean; the horizontal axis is the corresponding value of the level of anxiety

In this respect it is interesting to draw a parallel with experiments on rats (Helder, Desor, & Toniolo, 1995). The researchers placed six rats in a cage equipped so that it was necessary to cross a pool to get to a bowl of food. It was found that by the end of the first day of the experiment the rats were divided by roles: two rats were exploiters; two were the exploited; one was autonomous; and one was a scapegoat. The exploiters forced the exploited to swim to get food for them; the autonomous rat swam for a meal for itself; and the scapegoat ate the crumbs that remained after the

meal. Of interest is the fact that when the scientists examined the brains of the rats, they found that most of the molecules of stress were in the exploiters. These rats were afraid that they would cease to be obeyed. We know of no such experiments on humans, but we're sure that authoritarian leaders also experience a lot of stress that is associated not only with the weight of responsibility but also with the fear of losing power (that is, they are motivated by the avoidance of failure).

Correlation of motivation and self-esteem. The negative correlation between the level of motivation and self-esteem was significant at the 0.05 level. The higher the level of self-esteem, the more pronounced the motivation to avoid failure (Figure 6). In our view, this too is a kind of defensive reaction. The higher a person's self-esteem, the less incentive for him or her to be motivated to succeed. Such a person considers himself or herself already to be a substantial person and begins to be afraid of losing that status both in his or her own eyes and in the eyes of others (this is the motivation to avoid failure).

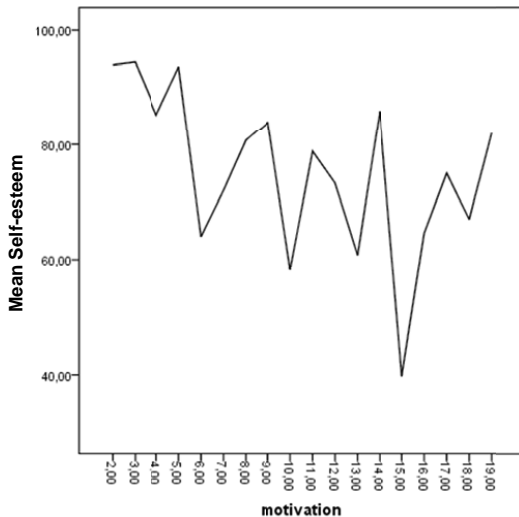


Figure 6. Dependence of self-esteem and motivation. The vertical axis shows the self-esteem mean; the horizontal axis shows the corresponding level of motivation

Preferred Strategy

We divided the subjects into three groups based on the severity of Machiavellianism. The first group included 20 people with scores ranging from 33 to 55 (low degree of Machiavellianism); the second group contained 23 people with scores ranging from 56 to 65 (average expressiveness); the third consisted of 23 people with scores from 66 to 88 (high expressiveness). The analysis was done with the help of contingency tables. The results are shown in Table 5.

Table 5

Relationship Between Level of Machiavellianism and Preferred Strategy

	Rivalry (1)	Cooperation (2)	Compromise (3)	Avoidance (4)	Adaptation (5)
Low level of Machiavellianism (1)	5%	30%	50%	10%	5%
Average level of Machiavellianism (2)	13%	13%	26.1%	26.1%	21.7%
High level of Machiavellianism (3)	17.4%	8.7%	21.7%	8.7%	43.5%

The results show that 50% of the respondents with low Machiavellianism preferred a strategy of compromise. This finding is quite logical. Respondents in this group were polite, truthful, and trusting people. In a dispute, they would tend to seek suiting themselves and their partners.

People with a low level of Machiavellianism are usually shy, friendly, and compliant; they are focused on long-term cooperation. In a conflict situation they are likely to be afraid to offend their partners or to provoke a serious quarrel, so they prefer a strategy of compromise (50% of respondents) or cooperation (30% of respondents).

Respondents with an average level of Machiavellianism preferred a strategy of compromise (26.1%) or a strategy of avoidance (26.1%) in conflict situations. Such people know how to manipulate to get the results they need, using their business acumen; they know as well how to communicate with others, so they prefer to find compromises and mutual concessions. They gain the partial satisfaction of their interests in return for the partial achievement of satisfaction by the other party.

This group of respondents also preferred a strategy of avoidance. This strategy is used when the subject of a controversy does not affect the direct interests of the parties. The situation can be resolved by itself; the relationship does not have to be spoiled.

The most interesting results are in the third group, those with a high level of Machiavellianism. It was expected that they would prefer a strategy of competition, but only 17.4% of them did. The highest percentage of these respondents preferred the strategy of adaptation (43.5%). This strategy implies concessions to the opposite side in the achievement of its interests, right up to their complete satisfaction, and the rejection of one’s own interests and a willingness to sacrifice them. At first glance, this is very strange behavior for a robot who wants to achieve a goal, come what may. However, in our opinion, it can be attributed to the strategic cunning of the manipulator. Such behavior has a hidden effect; manipulators try to hide their actions from the other side. They know that the partner is the instrument of their desires, so they first establish a “victim” through friendship and then later instill in him or her their intentions.

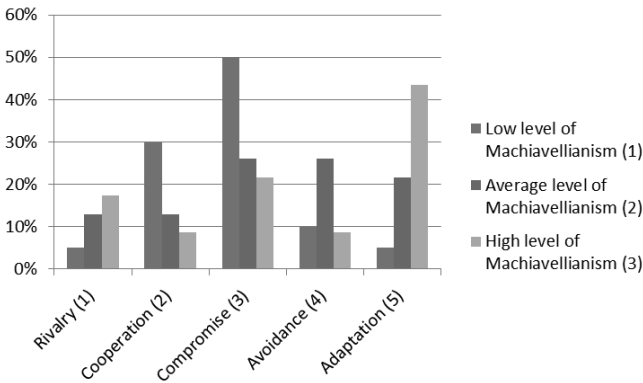


Figure 7. Strategy behavior. The horizontal behavioral strategies are (1) rivalry, (2) cooperation, (3) compromise, (4) avoidance, (5) adaptation. The first column in each behavior-strategy group shows the results for those with low levels of Machiavellianism; the second column, those with an average level; the third column, those with a high level. The vertical axis is the percentage of respondents with different levels of Machiavellianism preferring a given strategy

At the same time, this behavior may reflect the specific nature of the sample: young people, students, are just beginning to understand life, have recently gone to work; in these situations it is simply vital to be able to adapt to any situation. In any case, this result is not exact because it does not meet the minimum acceptable level of significance of 0.05. The results are graphically illustrated in Figure 7.

Conclusions

As a result of our study and taking into account the goals, the tests taken, and the hypotheses formulated, we can reach several conclusions.

First, the older people are the more they tend to manipulate others and to think that they have a right to do so. This result can possibly be explained by the experience of growing up and by personal growth and development. At this age level the “rose-colored glasses” are off, and a person may be disillusioned with life and regard others as a means for achieving goals rather than valuing them as people.

Second, the higher the degree of Machiavellianism, the more a person tries to avoid failure rather than to achieve success. Indeed, consciously or not, when manipulating to achieve success, such people always prefer to use ethical tactics first, acting on their own. Fear of being beaten appears along with the fear of failure when it is clear that they will not succeed. They then start to manipulate others in order to achieve their own goals.

Third, the more a person tends to manipulate, the higher the level of anxiety. Manipulators are domineering, aggressive, and conceited. They are characterized by the presence of internal conflicts. If they face difficulty and experience a conflict between the desire to achieve a goal and a lack of resources to do so, they become anxious.

Four, we had assumed that the manipulators would be characterized by low self-esteem. However, the results indicate the opposite: the higher the tendency to manipulate, the higher the self-esteem. This finding requires further research. Perhaps a protective compensatory mechanism operates in such situations. Manipulators seek to achieve their goals by any means but do not have sufficient resources to do so, so they actively exploit other people. Having achieved a goal, they attribute their success to their personal merits and not to the merits of the people who suc-

cumbed to their manipulation; this practice leads to an increase in their own self-esteem.

Five, we determined the relationship between the degree of Machiavellianism and the preferred strategy of behavior in conflict situations. Respondents with a low tendency to manipulate preferred the strategy of compromise (50% of cases); respondents with an average level of Machiavellianism preferred a strategy of compromise (26.1%) or a strategy of avoidance (26.1%); and respondents with a high propensity for manipulation preferred a strategy of adaptation (43.5% of cases).

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