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The Moderating Effect of Organizational Culture on the Relationship between Bullying and Machiavellianism

Ahmet Cezmi Savas *
Eurasian Society of Educational Research, TURKEY

Abstract: Workplace bullying is unwanted and unwarranted and has negative consequences for the victim, his colleagues and the whole organization. With the present study, we aim to clarify the interactive effects of workplace bullying from the victims' perception and organizational culture on the teachers 'Machiavellianism which is a personality syndrome aiming the realization of one's own profits with every possible means. The sample consisted of 103 teachers working in different schools in Gaziantep, Turkey. Data was analyzed by the hierarchical multiple linear regression method at SPSS 22 and ModGraph-I was used at moderating tests. The results showed that being bullied was not a significant predictor of Machiavellianism. However, organizational culture significantly and positively predicted Machiavellianism, and the main effect of being bullied on Machiavellianism was qualified by the interaction: "higher Machiavellianism was associated with higher workplace bullying under conditions of higher organizational culture." Organizational culture operated as an exacerbation under conditions of workplace bullying.

Introduction

The world is undergoing gigantic improvements in science and technology today; however, unfortunately we face, read or even experience violent and aggressive behaviour in our daily lives. Although science is improving, our social and psychological well-being is getting worse. Especially, at schools which are thought to be the most important organizations to change and lead the future of the world, not just pupils but also teachers as adults are exposed to various bullying behaviour. At the same time, we seem to lose all the values related to being a human being. In addition, the number of Machiavellian individuals seems to increase each day. In that context, it is also inevitable to assess the role of school culture on the relation between bullying and Machiavellian behaviour.

Workplace Bullying

Workplace bullying is unwarranted and unwanted and has negative consequences for the victims, their colleagues and the entire organization. However, employees are frequently exposed to bullying behaviour by their managers, or colleagues. According to Leymann (1996), workplace bullying is described as being the target of bullying behaviour systematically and unethically by an individual or a group of people at work. According to various researchers (Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf and Cooper 2003; Demir & Cavus, 2009 ; Vartia, 2001), it is a long-lasting situation in which an individual is isolated, disturbed, molested, affected negatively or prevented from working by a group of people deliberately and systematically. Einarsen, Hoel and Notelears (2009) define bullying as being the victim of violent aggressive behaviour towards one's own colleagues or mangers. In the literature, this phenomenon, 'workplace bullying' is also commonly defined as 'mobbing'. Mobbing or workplace bullying is a continuous occurrence in which someone is exposed to long lasting offensive behaviour by his managers or colleagues (Einarsen, Hoel & Notelaers, 2009).

In the literature, the organizational causes of bullying behaviour are given as follows; the change in the nature of the work, organizational culture, maladministration, competitive environment, dissatisfaction due to a heavy workload, monotonous work environment, organizational size, reconstruction or downsizing of the organization, low ethical

* **Correspondence:**
Ahmet Cezmi Savas, Eurasian Society of Educational Research, Gaziantep, TURKEY. ✉ cezmisavas@gmail.com

standards of the organization, insufficient leadership, pursuit of perfection, absence of managers' emotional intelligence and not learning from previous experiences (Cobanoglu, 2005; Bayrak Kok, 2006; Gokce, 2006). Regarding the consequences of workplace bullying, Vartia (2003) explains that bully victims experience work dissatisfaction, stress, psychosomatic disorders, depression, insomnia and have reluctance to work.

There are two main personality characteristics of bully behaviour or mobbing in the literature, the first of these is the 'social incompetency model' (in this model it is underlined that children usually show bullying and aggressive behaviour towards others due to the lack of their social skills). 'Machiavellianism' is considered to be the second cause of bullying behaviour (Menesini et al., 2003; Bayrak Kok, 2006). Many organizations nowadays feel the need to change the culture of the organization and try to develop company policies to protect their employees from bullying (Cowie, Naylor, Rivers, Smith and Pereira, 2002).

Machiavellianism

Machiavellianism is a concept from the book 'The Prince' by the Italian politician Niccola Machiavelli. In his book, he states the iconic sentence 'the ends justify the means'. For a Machiavelist, the only thing which is important is to achieve the required objectives by any means (Geis & Moon, 1981; Demirtas & Bickes, 2014).

Ang and Leong (2000) describe Machiavellianism as a personality trait manipulating others on any occasion to get one's own profit. Machiavellianism might be also defined as a quantitative personality in the literature. Anyone can have these manipulative behaviours to some degree, but some individuals are more willing or more capable than others (Wilson, Near, and Miller, 1996). Based on Nicola Machiavelli and his book 'The Prince', Christie and Geis, (1970) developed Mach IV scale to reveal individuals' manipulative, self-seeking and deceitful behaviour. As a result, they found out that the individuals with high Machiavellianism violate ethical rules more frequently than the low Machs.

It is stated in the literature that high Machiavelists tend to show more mischievous behaviour and tend to ignore others to maximize their own profit (Dahling et al. 2009; Gunnthorsdottir et al. 2002). For that reason, getting high profits is more dominant with high Machiavelists (Demirtas & Bickes, 2014). High Machiavelists have a more of a traditional way of right and wrong perception contrary to the way of low Machs who value moral behaviour in their relations (Ergun, 2009). Machiavallian individuals undervalue social and moral rules and tend to use the people around themselves for their own profit so these people might behave unethically to gain power and status (Kanten, Yesiltas & Arslan, 2015). They also keep the knowledge for themselves (Yildiz, 2013).

School Culture

Organizational culture is usually described as a set of values, norms and beliefs shared among the individuals of an organization, which has an important effect on their choices and behaviour – the ways things are carried out. Recently, there has been an increase in the research of organizational culture (Barbars, 2015). Organizational culture is a concept including an organization's experiences, expectations, philosophy and values which hold the institution together. It is based on shared attitudes, beliefs and written and unwritten rules that have been developed over the years and which are all important for the organization (Celik, 2000; Terzi, 2005; Ozdemir, 2012; Sisman, 2014).

Schools are a kind of open institutions which both affect their environment and are affected by their environment itself. Although there is not a clear and consistent definition of school culture, the term has been commonly used synonymously with different concepts, such as "climate," "ethos," and "saga" (Deal, 1993). School culture includes the norms, values, beliefs, ceremonies, rituals, traditions and myths shared by the members of the school community (Stolp and Smith, 1994).

The Relationship Between the Workplace Bullying and Machiavellianism and School Culture

Even though we know that bullying has occurred frequently in schools, it has recently started to be studied as a topic of research in academic fields. There have been studies about the causes and consequences of bullying (Smith, Morita, Junger-Tas, Olweus, Catalano & Slee, 1999) among school children. It is also agreed that being bullied leads to high neuroticism and high psychotism (Mynard and Joseph, 1997) and bully victims have problems in being accepted by peers or colleagues, they may also lack the abilities to solve their own problems (Andreou, 2001). However, the literature lacks the school culture in which bullying is embedded and its effect on teachers. It is unfortunately very common to be exposed to bullying behaviour in school cultures by different individuals, and this leads to unwanted consequences both for the teachers and the whole school. School culture might increase aggressive attitudes if these attitudes are considered to be motivating teachers, and if impudent and aggressive behaviour are tolerated by managers and colleagues. (Pilch & Turska, 2015). It has also been indicated, in the literature, that teachers face at least one of the forms of bullying behaviour in their schools (Aksu & Balci, 2009; Blase & Blase, 2002; Cemaloglu, 2007).

According to researchers (Bowling & Beehr, 2006; Matthiesen & Einarsen, 2010; Pilch & Turska, 2015) the organizational factors, which are considered to be affecting the existence of bullying behavior, are a chaotic work environment, less control over work, role and interpersonal conflicts, changes at work, undue pressure due to work, devastating style of leadership, low moral standards and culture and climate of the organization.

Machiavellian behaviour have, unfortunately, rarely been investigated related to bully/victim relationship. The limited research has done about the relationship between Machiavellianism and bully attitudes are usually with school pupils especially adolescents. However, it is widely known that teachers are also exposed to bullying behaviour. Machiavellianism is regarded as a personality syndrome which is highly manipulative in interpersonal relations (O'Fallon & Butterfield, 2005). Sutton and Keogh (2000) and Andreou (2000) indicate that bullies show more Machiavellian behaviour than ~~and bully/victims~~, but in these studies, Machiavellianism was treated as a single construct.

For that purpose, we posed three questions;

1) Does being bullied by others predict Machiavellianism?
2) Does the organizational culture predict Machiavellianism?
3) Do the interactive effects of being bullied and organizational culture predict Machiavellianism?

Method

Research Design

In this study, a correlational design was used to investigate the interactive effects of organizational culture and workplace bullying on Machiavellianism. A correlational study determines whether or not two variables are correlated, and, if there is a correlation, we can learn the exact degree (Field, 2009).

Study Group

The domain of the study consisted of primary, secondary and high schools in Gaziantep, Turkey in 2015-2016 academic year. While 54. 4% of the teachers participating in this study were male (*n*=56), 45, 6% were female (*n*=47). 68.9% of the participants were married (*n*=71), whereas 31, 1% of them were single (*n*=32). 66% of the participants had a bachelor degree (n=68) and 34% of them had a master degree (n=35). The most frequent age range of the participants was 31-40 years (*n*=70) with a percentage of 68. On the other hand, the most frequent seniority range of the participants was 11 and up years (*n*=42) with a percentage of 40.7.

Research Instruments and Procedure

The data of this study was obtained through a scale which has a five-point Likert-type. The points of the scale used in the study were given as "1= I don't agree at all", "2= I don't agree", "3= I agree partially", "4= I agree" and "5= I agree exactly".

The instrument used in the study was composed of three parts ، a workplace bullying Questionnaire *(Negative Acts Questionnaire)*, which was developed by Einarsen and Raknes (1997) and shortened by Einarsen and Hoel (2001) was used in this study. There were 22 items in the questionnaire. The questionnaire was translated in to Turkish by Aydin and Ocel (2009). The Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Coefficient was .89 for the total instrument. *School culture scale*; developed by Glaser, Zamanou and Hacker (1987), translated into Turkish by Kaya (2009) and adapted into Turkish by Demirtas and Ekmekyapar (2012) was used as the research instrument. There were 19 items and 5 main dimensions in the questionnaire; climate, collaboration, supervision and communication. The Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Coefficient was .91 for the total instrument. *Machiavellianism scale (Mach IV)* suggested by Christie and Geis (1970) has been used to test the Machiavellianism level of teachers. The questionnaire consisted of 20 items, ten of which were reverse items. The Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Coefficient was .56 for the whole instrument.

Data Analysis

Statistical analysis of data was carried out with the packet programme of SPSS 22. The data has been analyzed by using multiple regression analyses. In the study model, to test the interactive effects of bullying and school culture on teachers' Machiavellianism, in the first step, demographic variables such as gender, age, seniority and educational level were taken under control. Baron and Kenny's (1986) procedure was used to calculate z-scores. According to Baron and Kenny (1986), the significance the interactive effects was sufficient to test the effect of moderating variable.

Results

Table 1. Descriptive statistics and Correlation matrix of the variables in the study

Variables	$\overline{\text{X}}$	SD	Std. Err.	1	2	3
1. Workplace Bullying	1,499	,409	,040	1		
2. School Culture	3,534	,598	,059	-,476**	1	
3. Machiavellianism	3,015	,502	,049	-,156	,306**	1

*p<.05, **p<.01

There was a negative correlation between the school culture and workplace bullying, *r* = .47, p < .001, with an R^2 = .22. There remained a statistically significant correlation between the school culture and Machiavellianism, *r* =

.30, $p = <.001$, with a $R^2 = .09$. There was not a significant correlation between workplace bullying and Machiavellianism $p < .001$. It was seen that the school culture has the highest mean ($\overline{X} = 3,534$) whereas the bullying had the lowest mean ($\overline{X} = 1,499$), and the mean of Machiavellianism was ($\overline{X} = 3,015$).

The moderating effect of school culture on the relations between workplace bullying and machiavellianism was given at Table 2.

Table 2.Testing Moderator Effects Using Hierarchical Multiple Regression

	Independent variables	B	Std. Err.	β	t	p	F
1. step	(Constant)	3,621	,573		6,318	,000	,566
	Gender (dummy coded)	,064	,107	,064	,601	,549	
	Education (dummy coded)	-,010	,112	-,009	-,089	,930	
	Age	-,023	,022	-,244	-1,057	,293	
	Seniority	,015	,021	,165	,722	,472	
2. step	(Constant)	3,703	,572		6,477	,000	,926
	Gender (dummy coded)	,038	,108	,038	,354	,724	
	Education (dummy coded)	,000	,112	,000	,003	,998	
	Age	-,026	,022	-,272	-1,186	,238	
	Seniority	,017	,021	,185	,816	,417	
	Zscore (WPB)	-,078	,051	-,155	-1,528	,130	
3. step	(Constant)	3,666	,552		6,640	,000	2,180
	Gender (dummy coded)	,087	,105	,087	,828	,410	
	Education (dummy coded)	,033	,108	,031	,303	,762	
	Age	-,029	,021	-,299	-1,349	,181	
	Seniority	,027	,021	,284	1,280	,204	
	Zscore (WPB)	,002	,056	,004	,035	,972	
	Zscore (SC)	,164	,058	,326**	2,848	,005	
4. step	(Constant)	3,721	,539		6,900	,000	2,789
	Gender (dummy coded)	,120	,104	,119	1,156	,251	
	Education (dummy coded)	,047	,106	,044	,443	,659	
	Age	-,029	,021	-,297	-1,374	,173	
	Seniority	,024	,020	,259	1,194	,235	
	Zscore (WPB)	,063	,061	,126	1,044	,299	
	Zscore (SC)	,180	,057	,358**	3,181	,002	
	Interaction of WPB and SC	,122	,051	,252*	2,406	,018	

Dependent variable: Machiavellianism
$\Delta R^2 = .170$*, *p< .05, **p<.01, ***p<.001
Note: WPB: Work place bullying, SC: Scholl culture

As a result of multiple regression analyses, it had been found that demographic variables such as gender, age, seniority and educational level did not predict teachers' Machiavellianism. There was also no main effect of workplace bullying on Machiavellianism, β= .12, R^2= .01, $p = .29$. Machiavellianism was not predicted by being bullied. It was found that organizational culture significantly and positively predicted Machiavellianism, β= .35, R^2= .12, $p< .001$. The most important finding was that the interaction of being bullied and organizational culture was a significant predictor of Machiavellianism, β = .25, R^2= .06, p< .001.
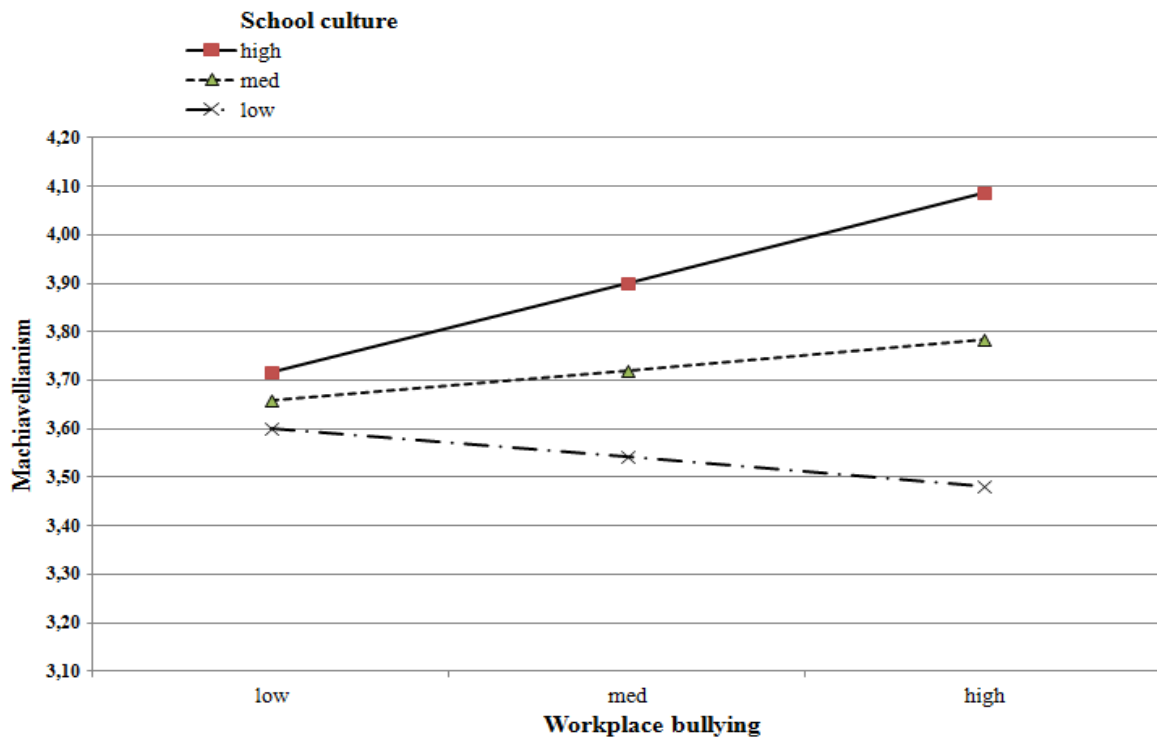
Figure 1. Interaction between workplace bullying and school culture in predicting Machiavellianism

Organizational culture was conceptualized as a moderator of the relation between workplace bullying and the level of Machiavellianism. Being bullied increased Machiavellianism more in highly cultured organizations than organizations with a low culture. Being bullied was especially positively related to Machiavellianism among teachers working at schools sharing a high organizational culture ($p < .001$).

The association between being bullied and organizational culture was significantly different between the three groups. Machiavellianism was more strongly associated with schools where the organizational culture was high. In organizations where the organizational culture was low, being bullied did not increase the level of Machiavellianism. On the contrary, it decreased the Machiavellianism level ($p < .001$).

Organizational culture operated as an exacerbation under conditions of being bullied. An exacerbation was a moderating variable that showed an increase in the association between a negative independent variable and a negative dependent variable (Jose, 2008).

Discussion and Conclusions

The findings of this study have showed that there was no main effect of workplace bullying on Machiavellianism. Similarly, Sutton and Keogh (2000) in their study with children showed that victims of bullying behaviour were similar to the ones who were not bullied with respect to Machiavellianism. Also, Braginsky (1970) and Kaukiainen et al. (1999) states that Machiavellianism results from indirect bullying, such as being left out or suffering from rumors or gossip. Therefore, the result of this study was consistent with these previous studies since it has been found out that there was no direct relation between being bullied and Machiavellianism, but only the interaction of bullying and organizational culture was related to teacher Machiavellianism.

Ojha (2007) states that the loving and permissive behaviour of parents were negatively related to their children's Machiavellian orientation in his study carried out with college students. He stresses that Machiavellian orientation does not develop in children when they get the loving attention of their parents. Moreover, Kraut and Price (1976) states that a child's Machiavellian behaviour and ideas are learned and became consistent later in his life. The findings of the present study might be relevant in that context, since it is assumed that people are not born with Machiavellian behaviour, but we learn to be Machiavellian later in our lives through our own experiences. Omari (2007), in his study related to Machiavellianism and the culture of the organization, emphasizes that organizational culture has an important effect in establishing which behaviour is acceptable or unacceptable in an institution. The findings of this study similarly have shown that Machiavellianism is related to perceptions of the school culture shared by teachers. In this context, teacher Machiavellianism might be a result of organizational culture to some degree. It might be argued that a new teacher learns to be manipulative after he starts work at a school where the culture is commonly shared by the group members. As soon as the teacher gets in to the organization, his identity, which might be different initially, becomes firm while trying to adapt to the organization and being able to survive in that school culture and to affect other community members (Banka and Orlowski, 2012; Tuohy, 1999). In that context, it might be meaningful to

conclude that teachers get Machiavellian behaviour in their organizations where culture is highly shared by its members.

There have been also studies on the effect of Machiavellianism on organizational life (Mentes Pekdemir & Turan, 2015; Zettler & Solga, 2013; Robbins & Judge, 2013). Most of this research focuses on workers who have high Machiavellianism since Machiavellist people tend to show more manipulative and unethical behaviour, and they tend to be more pragmatic, cynical, and their actions might have several negative consequences for the whole organization. The high Machs tend to show more unethical behaviours than the individuals with low Machiavellianism (Mentes Pekdemir & Turan, 2015). The literature about Machiavellianism also gives various organizational factors that might be likely to increase unethical behaviour (Tang & Chen, 2008). With this study, it has been found out that Machiavellianism is strongly associated with schools where the organizational culture is high. In organizations where the organizational culture is low, being bullied does not increase the level of Machiavellianism. On the contrary, it decreases Machiavellianism. Therefore, we believe that it would be feasible for the researchers to focus on organizational factors that affect the Machiavellian behaviour.

The results show that organizational culture operated as a moderator under conditions of being bullied. The association between being bullied and organizational culture was significantly different among the three groups (where the school culture was considered high, medium and low). Machiavellianism was strongly related to schools where the organizational culture was high. In organizations where the organizational culture was low, workplace bullying did not increase the level of Machiavellian behaviour. On the contrary, the Machiavellianism level decreased to some degree. This result is quite consistent with Archer's (1999) study in which he concludes that bullying behaviour especially shows up in organizations sharing a well-established culture and traditions such as the army, hospitals, security forces etc. Kuscu (2011) in his study regarding the relation between organizational culture and bullying, has discovered that there's a low but significant relation between bullying and organizational culture. He concludes that organizational culture might be a factor influencing bully behaviours. As a result of the interaction between organizational culture and workplace bullying, the victims might tend to show more manipulative behaviour. Conditions or culture of a school might increase the manifestation of Machiavellianism, but it is difficult to say if it is the main source of Machiavellianism.

Limitations

The study sample may not be representative of all school cultures in Turkey. Therefore, it is not easy to reach certain conclusions about bullying behavior and Machiavellism of teachers in Turkey based on the data in this study. Conditions or culture of a school might increase the manifestation of Machiavellianism, but it is difficult to say it is the main source of Machiavellianism. Further research is needed before drawing definite conclusions.

Another limitation of this study is the use of self-reports, on being the victim of bullying behavior, since it is possible that teachers might have underreported their involvement in this kind of behaviours. As a result, further research regarding the effect organizational culture on relation between workplace bullying and Machiavellianism is needed to eliminate the shortcomings of this study.

A qualitative study regarding the effect of organizational culture and bullying beahaviour on teacher Machiavalism could be beneficial to understand whether the teachers acquire Machiavallian behaviour in their organizations.

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