Coworkers Behaving Badly: How Incentivized Reporting and the Dark Triad Influence Responses to Witnessing Workplace Misconduct

Braden Hall, Dr. Will Hart, & Joshua Lambert
Department of Psychology

INTRODUCTION

The Dark Triad
Narcissism: desire for glory, feelings of superiority and entitlement.
Machiavellianism: strategic manipulation, desire for power, and cynicism.
Psychopathy: thrill-seeking, impulsivity, and low levels of empathy.

Skepticism exists regarding whether the constructs are distinguishable. Differentiation is expected to occur when experimental procedures differentiate between strategic and impulsive action.

Workplace Misconduct
Voluntary employee behavior deemed improper or inappropriate for the workplace causing extensive financial, personal, and professional harm. Machiavellianism will relate negatively to reporting overall. As a between-subjects manipulation, participants were randomly assigned to the no-incentive or incentive condition.

Main Hypotheses
1. Machiavellianism will relate negatively to reporting overall. NO
2. Psychopathy will relate negatively to reporting overall. YES
3. Participants will be more likely to report when an incentive is offered (vs. when an incentive is not offered). YES
4. likelihood of reporting when an incentive is offered (vs. when an incentive is not offered) will be enhanced as a function of higher (vs. lower) Machiavellianism. YES

METHODS

N = 454; M age = 19.00; SD age = 1.08; 80.2% female; 83.9% White.
1. Participants read three vignettes of workplace misconduct (stealing company property, alcohol consumption at work, and falsification of employee documents).
As a between-subjects manipulation, participants were randomly assigned to the no-incentive or incentive condition.
2. After each vignette, participants responded the following item (scale below): “How likely would you be to report this misconduct to a supervisor?”
3. Finally, participants completed the Short Dark Triad (SD3). Note: we assessed several other behavioral, moral, and motivational factors: this poster focuses on reporting.

RESULTS

Analytic Technique
We performed a multiple regression analyses in which the likelihood of reporting was regressed on condition (0 = no-incentive, 1 = incentive) and either narcissism, Machiavellianism or psychopathy at Step 1. Respective two-way interactions were added at Step 2. Reporting was also regressed on condition and all Dark Triad constructs simultaneously to determine unique contributions of the constructs (column DT). Effect sizes were reported using semi-partial r (sr) with respective p-values using an alpha of .01 as threshold for significance.

Predicting Reporting from Dark Personality Constructs, Condition, and Their Interactions

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Effects of Machiavellianism and Condition on Reporting

DISCUSSION

• Narcissism related to pursuing goals of superiority through socially acceptable means that could be beneficial to organizations, as narcissistic individuals work to enhance the organization, enhancing themselves by association.
• Machiavellianism demonstrated a unique capacity to adapt behavior in accordance with social cues to pursue the path of greater self-gain, exhibiting a less destructive, and more careful, approach to situations than psychopathy.
• Psychopathy uniquely embodied destructive and antisocial tendencies without much concern for the situation or others, representing a notable risk factor for organizations.
• Beyond practical application and benefits of incentivized reporting to organizations, this research serves as evidence supporting the differentiation of Dark Triad constructs.