

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

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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. Misconduct is most effectively reduced through formal reporting of offenses by coworkers. Dark Triad constructs are expected to differentiate when deciding whether to report witnessed situations of misconduct.

Main Hypotheses

#	Hypothesis	Support
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.

- 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.
- After each vignette, participants responded the following item (scale below): "How likely would you be to report this misconduct to a supervisor?"
- Finally, participants completed the Short Dark Triad (SD3). Note: we assessed several other behavioral, moral, and motivational factors: this poster focuses on reporting.



RESULTS

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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.

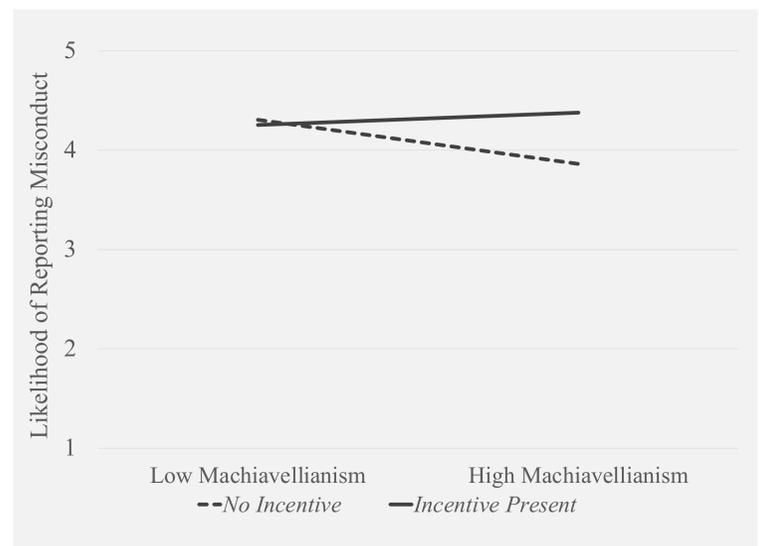
Results

Machiavellianism was non-significantly negatively associated with reporting, inconsistent with H1. However, consistent with H4, the effect of Machiavellianism was qualified by a two-way interaction. At low Machiavellianism, there was no effect of condition on reporting ($sr = -.02, p = .611$); however, at high Machiavellianism, reporting was more likely in the incentive condition ($sr = .23, p < .001$). Consistent with H2, psychopathy was negatively related to reporting. And, finally, condition was positively related to reporting, consistent with H3.

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

Reporting	NARC		MACH		PSYCH		DT	
	sr	p	sr	p	sr	p	sr	p
Step 1								
Narcissism	.09	.052					.16	< .001
Machiavellianism			-.11	.017			-.03	.455
Psychopathy					-.21	< .001	-.20	< .001
Condition	.15	< .001	.15	.001	.14	.002	.14	.002
Step 2								
Narcissism*Condition	-.01	.759					-.07	.103
Machiavellianism*Condition			.18	< .001			.19	< .001
Psychopathy*Condition					.068	.136	-.02	.672

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.