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Marketing and Machiavellianism

Critics often attack marketing as being manipulative and unethical, or "Machiavellian" in nature. Are these critics correct? Is marketing Machiavellian? This article presents the results of a research project designed to explore this question, using a sample of over 1,000 marketers.

NICCOLO Machiavelli. Was he a political satirist, a patriot, or the first modern political scientist? Although historians continue to debate how best to characterize this sixteenth century Florentine writer (Jensen 1960), few dispute the impact of his two most famous works: *The Prince* (Machiavelli 1513) and *Discourses on the First Ten Books of Titus Livius* (Machiavelli 1531). Indeed, interpretations of these works have resulted in the label *Machiavellian* becoming a negative epithet, indicating at least an amoral (if not immoral) way of manipulating others to accomplish one's objectives. Although Machiavelli wrote for political leaders in sixteenth century Italy, many analysts believe that his ideas are applicable to modern business managers. Calhoon's (1969) views are typical:

A definition of the twentieth century Machiavellian administrator is one who employs aggressive, ma-

nipulative, exploiting, and devious moves in order to achieve personal and organizational objectives. These moves are undertaken according to perceived feasibility with secondary consideration (what is necessary under the circumstances) to the feelings, needs, and/or "rights" of others. Not that Machiavellianism is "right" or even particularly "bright," but it exists in today's leadership and needs to be recognized as such (p. 211).

Some writers openly advocate Machiavellian tactics for the top executive who wishes to stay in power. For example, McMurry (1973) recommends that "an executive-politician must: use caution in taking counsel . . . avoid too close superior-subordinate relationships . . . not hesitate to be ruthless when expedient . . . limit what is to be communicated . . . learn never to place too much dependence on a subordinate unless it is clearly in the latter's personal advantage to be loyal . . . and give outward evidence of status, power, and material success" (pp. 144-145). Entire treatises apply Machiavellian tactics to management (Jay 1969) and some (controversial) MBA courses specifically teach Machiavellian techniques (*Business Week* 1975).

This paper explores the question "To what extent is marketing Machiavellian?" The question arises because the twin themes of *manipulative* and *unethical* seem to underlie both the concept of Machiavellianism and, also, many of the historical criticisms lev-

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eled at marketing activities. For example, Cox, Goodman, and Fichandler (1965, pp. 198–241) categorize many of the criticisms of marketing under the labels of “unfair” and “abusive.” They believe marketing is often considered unfair because farmers do not get their “fair share” of the consumer’s food dollar. Marketing is often considered abusive because it is filled with “hucksters, cheats, and frauds” who unethically manipulate consumers into purchasing products they do not really need or want.

Concerning specific marketing activities, Moyer and Hutt (1978) observe that critics claim that “planned obsolescence” is unfair (p. 77), that advertising is deceptive and manipulative (p. 102), and that the practice of charging higher prices to ghetto consumers is both unethical and widespread (p. 138). Similarly, Greyser and Bauer (1966) identify three major streams of criticisms of advertising: advertising is wasteful, advertising manipulates consumers by propaganda and persuasion, and advertising is unethical. Concerning these criticisms of advertising, Aaker and Day (1982) conclude that “a number of studies have found that 35–40% of the public believe that advertising—especially television advertising—is seriously misleading” (p. 11).

Perceptions of manipulation and questionable ethics also underlie consumerism. Hermann (1982) identifies three causes for the rise of the consumer movement: dangerous and unreliable products, changing conceptions of the social responsibilities of business, and dishonest practices by a fringe of the business community. Finally, Murphy and Lacznia (1981) report that “The function within business firms most often charged with ethical abuse is marketing” (p. 251).

Clearly, the charges historically leveled suggest that critics perceive marketing to be Machiavellian (manipulative and unethical) in nature. This conclusion is consistent with the findings reported by Dubinsky (1978) that students often associate sales careers with descriptors such as “insincerity, deceit, high pressure” and phrases like “forces people to buy unwanted goods” (p. 8). It is also consistent with the findings of Beisel and Fugate (1981) concerning the scores of students who major in marketing on the “faith in people” questionnaire, which attempts to measure an individual’s degree of confidence in the trustworthiness, honesty, goodness, generosity, and brotherliness of other people. Not only did Beisel and Fugate find that marketing majors scored 11th among 12 occupational choices (nursing majors had the highest and pre-med the lowest), but also that marketing majors showed a “willingness to use manipulative means to succeed” (p. 172).

Are critics correct? Is marketing Machiavellian? This article presents the results of a research project designed to explore this question, using a sample of

over 1,000 marketers. Specifically, the study addressed three research questions: Are marketers more Machiavellian than other members of society? Are some kinds of marketers more Machiavellian than others? Is Machiavellianism related to success in marketing?

Over the last two decades a large body of literature has developed treating Machiavellianism as a personality trait. Almost all the studies use the Machiavellianism scale originally developed by Christie and Geis and reported in their book, *Studies in Machiavellianism* (1970). Since the research reported here also relied on the Machiavellianism scale, a discussion of its development and how it has been used in a variety of research settings is appropriate.

Development of the Machiavellianism Scale

Christie and Geis developed the scale after observing that the personal beliefs of many leaders who control the behavior of others through manipulative means seemed to coincide with the statements of Machiavelli in *The Prince* and the *Discourses*. That is, they observed that many leaders have the following characteristics: a relative lack of affect in interpersonal relationships, a lack of concern with conventional morality, a lack of gross psychopathology, and a lack of ideological commitment. To Christie and Geis (p. 3–4), these characteristics of a manipulative leadership style were precisely the characteristics advocated by Machiavelli. They decided to develop a formal scale to measure Machiavellianism.

Twenty items formed the final Machiavellianism scale (reproduced in Appendix A). To minimize response bias, 10 items were keyed to endorse Machiavellian statements and 10 keyed in the opposite direction. The primary criterion used to select the final items was the item-total discriminatory power. Christie and Geis report a mean item-total correlation for the items of 0.38 and mean split-half reliability for the total scale of 0.79. The final scale, referred to as Mach IV, contains nine statements categorized as “Machiavellian tactics.” For example, “the best way to handle people is to tell them what they want to hear.” An additional nine items have to do with “views of human nature.” For example, “it is hard to get ahead without cutting corners here and there.” The final two items were categorized as “abstract morality.” For example, “all in all, it is better to be humble and honest than important and dishonest.”

In their 1970 work Christie and Geis reported the results of 38 studies using the Machiavellianism scale. They analyzed these studies with regard to how “high Machs” (those who score high on the scale) differ in their behavior and characteristics from “low Machs” (those who score low on the Machiavellianism scale).

Their general conclusion was "high Machs manipulate more, win more, are persuaded less, persuade others more, and otherwise differ significantly from low Machs." These differences occur in situations in which "subjects interact face to face with others, when the situation provides latitude for improvisation, . . . and in situations in which affective involvement with details irrelevant to winning distracts low Machs" (p. 312). A recent review by Vleeming (1979) examines 34 additional articles on Machiavellianism which have appeared since 1970. Vleeming concludes "generally the results of the 34 articles reviewed here are in accordance with the ideas postulated by Christie and Geis" (p. 294).

Machiavellianism as a Personality Construct

Since 1970 there have been over 200 published research projects that have used the Machiavellianism scale. Our purpose is not to review these projects; rather, we will briefly review only those studies that are particularly relevant to the research questions addressed in this study.

Machiavellianism and Manipulation

Manipulative behavior is one of the most common variables examined in Machiavellian experiments. Christie and Geis (1970) define successful manipulation as "a process by which the manipulator gets more of some kind of reward than he would have gotten without manipulating, and someone else gets less, at least within the immediate context" (p. 106). Christie and Geis review four experiments where manipulation was an identified variable. A consistent pattern emerged: high Machs were able to "win" through manipulation as predicted, but only in certain kinds of situations. When high Machs are placed in situations where they are face to face with low Machs and where there are opportunities for manipulation, high Machs will control the structure of the situation and win. In these situations low Machs will have a tendency to get emotionally involved with the personal feelings of others and, consequently, lose (p. 312).

In his review article, Vleeming (1979) evaluated 11 research projects conducted since 1970 on the subject of manipulation. The subjects involved several different populations: students, faculty, parents, Japanese children, and male employees, among others. The experimental situations included theft, bluffing, bargaining, ingratiation, and cheating. Vleeming's review corroborated the earlier findings by Christie and Geis that subjects who score high on the Machiavellianism scale will both *attempt* to manipulate more and be *successful in doing so*.

Machiavellianism and Ethics

Concerning the ethical dimension of behavior, high Machs show very little concern for conventional morality. As Christie and Geis point out, this is almost definitional when one examines many of the items in the Machiavellianism scale. Many of the experiments on Machiavellianism specifically measure the extent to which subjects will engage in unethical practices, such as lying and cheating. Christie and Geis review the results of the experiments and conclude:

Low Machs, though opposed to dishonesty in principle, can be persuaded to cheat or lie given a strong, personal, and repeated inducement, especially in a face-to-face situation in which they have little time to reflect but must act, either accepting the other's wishes or rejecting them; in these situations external "rational" justifications had little effect on their decisions. In contrast, *high Machs*, although not opposed to dishonesty in principle, will cheat less if the "rational" incentives are low or the costs (such as the probability of getting caught) are high (1970, p. 298).

Hegarty and Sims (1978) examined unethical decision behavior in a business context. The subjects were 120 graduate business students who made a series of decisions on whether or not to pay kickbacks. Subjects were given rational incentives for unethical behavior. Machiavellianism was found to be a significant covariate of unethical behavior. A recent study by Geis and Moon (1981) explored the issue of whether high Machs can lie more convincingly than low Machs. Subjects were videotaped denying the knowledge of a theft. Half the subjects had been directly implicated in the theft and the other half made a truthful denial. As predicted, high Machs who were lying were believed more often than low Machs who were lying, as judged by impartial viewers examining videotapes.

In conclusion, people who score high on the Machiavellianism scale are likely to win more often in situations where they can manipulate the behaviors of others. Also, high Machs show a disdain for conventional morality and are more likely to engage in unethical behavior when their rational self-interest is involved. These research findings led us to our first question: *Are marketers more Machiavellian than other members of society?*

The available research would suggest that the preceding question might be answered affirmatively. As previously discussed, marketing activities are often viewed as being manipulative and of questionable ethics. Further, Machiavellian people seem to be drawn to occupations where manipulation can make a difference. For example, Christie and Geis (1970, p. 346) reported on the results of 11 studies of medical schools. They found that "invariably, potential psychiatrists made the highest Mach score; potential surgeons scored at or near the bottom of the distribution." They explain this finding by pointing out that manipulative

skills would be much more important for success in psychiatry than in surgery. Also, a study by Werthheim, Widom, and Wortzel (1978) found that several personality dimensions were related to the career choices of students. In particular, students who were majoring in business and law scored significantly higher on the Machiavellianism scale than did students majoring in social work.

Machiavellianism and Personal Characteristics

Our second research question asks: *Are some kinds of marketers more Machiavellian than others?* Most of the studies conducted to date indicate that Machiavellianism is only minimally related to traditional demographic variables (Christie and Geis 1970, p. 316). Nevertheless, almost all studies show that age is related to Machiavellianism: younger people are more Machiavellian than older people. For example, the norm study on 1,782 college students conducted by Christie and Geis showed significantly higher scores on Machiavellianism than the scores in their nationwide norm study on 1,477 adults. Also, the scores on the college student sample were higher than the scores of the subset of college educated adults in the adult sample (p. 315).

Among the other demographic variables, education and sex have been found to be significant predictors of Machiavellianism. Women generally score lower on the Machiavellianism scale (p. 317) and less educated adults normally score higher. However, Christie and Geis explain the negative correlation between education and Machiavellianism as a result of less educated adults being more willing to admit socially undesirable things about themselves on a questionnaire. When social desirability was held constant, the correlations between Machiavellianism and education change from $-.26$ to $+.02$ (p. 317).

The present study examined age, sex, and education, as well as several situation-specific variables. Given the findings of Werthheim, Widom, and Wortzel (1978) that students majoring in business and law were more Machiavellian than students majoring in social work, one might expect that marketers who had majored in business as undergraduates would be more Machiavellian than marketers who majored in the social sciences or humanities. This would also be consistent with the findings of Siegel (1973) who studied MBA students, business managers, and faculty. MBAs were found to be significantly higher in Machiavellianism than managers in general. Interestingly, they found business faculty members to be the most Machiavellian of all!

Heisler and Gemmill (1977) have suggested that people high in Machiavellianism would be more attracted to small corporations than large corporations because there would be greater opportunity for face-

to-face interaction and opportunity for improvisation in smaller firms. This would suggest that in our study, as the size of the firm increases, the number of marketers who are high in Machiavellianism should decrease.

Finally, some kinds of marketing jobs might disproportionately attract persons high in Machiavellianism. In particular, one might expect that persons in sales positions would be higher in Machiavellianism than those in positions such as market research. For example, Christie and Geis (1970) suggest that "the high-pressure salesman is enshrined in folklore along with the carnival pitch man as the epitome of manipulation" (p. 355). They further suggest that "salesmen for the *Encyclopedia Britannica* who prey upon professors with small children are highly Machiavellian." However, the results of four small, nonrandom samples of salespeople revealed mean Machiavellianism scores below the population as a whole. Christie and Geis rationalized these findings by suggesting that "the Machiavellian salesmen were so successful that they were promoted to more responsible positions" (p. 356).

Machiavellianism and Success

The final research question asks: *Is Machiavellianism related to success in marketing?* The underlying issue is whether the admitted success of high Machs to win by manipulating others in laboratory settings can be transferred to socioeconomic success in the real world. The research results so far have been mixed.

The early research of Christie and Geis on the national norm sample of adults showed no relationship between Machiavellianism and socioeconomic success, as measured by an index of "upward social mobility" (1970, p. 354). A second study by Turnbull (1976) on 201 college student salespeople showed no relationships between Machiavellianism and two measures of sales success. Similarly, on a sample of 99 adult males, Touhey (1973) found no relationship between Machiavellianism and social mobility. However, for men with *above average intelligence*, Touhey found a significant positive relationship between Machiavellianism and social mobility. Furthermore, for men of *below average intelligence* he found a significant negative relationship.

The preceding findings prompted Turner and Martinez (1977) to re-examine the original Christie and Geis data. Their results differed for men and women in the sample. For *men* with above average educations, they found a significant positive relationship between Machiavellianism and occupational attainment, and for men with below average educations, they found a significant negative relationship. For *women* they "found Machiavellianism to have a substantial facilitative effect upon women's occupational attainment, and we found no support for the interac-

tion [between education and Machiavellianism] hypothesis" (p. 334).

Although only suggestive, the findings reported in the preceding paragraph gave direction to the present study. If the laboratory studies on "winning" have external validity, one would expect success in marketing to be positively related to Machiavellianism, particularly for women and for men with above average educations.

Method

Data Collection

To the question, *Is marketing Machiavellian?*, a self-administered questionnaire was sent to 4,282 marketing practitioners. These represented a systematic sample of one out of every four marketing practitioners in the American Marketing Association. Educator and student members were excluded from the sample. A total of 1,076 usable questionnaires were returned, for a response rate of 25.1%.

Table 1 presents the characteristics of the respondents in this study. A direct comparison between our study and the American Marketing Association membership survey (1982) was not possible due to coding differences on many of the items. On items coded similarly (i.e., educational level, age, sex, income), the two samples are very similar. The AMA membership survey had slightly more representation in the manufacturing and service industries, and slightly less representation in the "other industries" category. Some differences also existed in the job titles reported in the two studies. However, these discrepancies are probably due to variations in coding procedures.

Measures

Machiavellianism. The Mach IV scale developed by Christie and Geis (1970) was used in this study (Appendix A). A Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .76 was obtained for the scale. This compares favorably with the .79 split-half reliability coefficient reported by Christie and Geis (1970, p. 16).

For the Mach IV and all other scale items, respondents were asked to respond in a Likert format: (1) strongly agree, (2) agree, (3) slightly agree, (4) neither agree nor disagree, (5) slightly disagree, (6) disagree, (7) strongly disagree.

Satisfaction. Several measures of job satisfaction were used in this research. The first measure consisted of an index of job satisfaction, shown in Appendix B. Seven of the items were developed by the authors from pretest responses and focused on various elements of the respondents' jobs. Also, seven items were selected from the Job Characteristics Inventory (Sims, Szilagyi, and Keller 1976). An alpha coefficient of

.89 was obtained for the total satisfaction scale. When the 14 satisfaction items were factor analyzed, the following four-factor solution resulted: (1) satisfaction with information, (2) satisfaction with variety and freedom, (3) satisfaction with ability to complete tasks, and (4) satisfaction with pay and security. Alpha coefficients for each of the four factors were .93, .88, .80, and .56, respectively. These four factors were also used as separate measures of job satisfaction.

The sixth measure was a single item, global assessment of satisfaction: "In general, I am satisfied with my job." The seventh measure of satisfaction also consisted of a single item, designed to assess career satisfaction: "If I had it to do over again, I would choose a career outside the marketing area."

Success. Two measures of success were used in this study, income and job title. Respondents were asked to check one of eleven categories, ranging from under \$10,000 to over \$100,000, in increments of \$10,000 (see Table 1). The second measure of success was each respondent's job title. Job titles ranged from junior analyst to president (see Table 1).

Results

Are Marketers Machiavellian?

The distribution of scores for marketers on the Machiavellianism scale was remarkably symmetrical. The mean score for the sample was 85.7 (including the constant of 20), and the median score was 85.3, with a skewness coefficient of 0.4. Scores ranged from a minimum of 48.0 to a maximum of 123.0 with a standard deviation of 13.2. The standard deviation is in line with standard deviations reported in previous research.

Two national norm studies have been conducted using the Machiavellianism scale. The first study was conducted on a sample of 1,782 college students. The second was on a representative sample of 1,477 non-institutionalized adults within the United States obtained through the National Public Opinion Research Center. The mean scores of these two studies, as well as the scores of several small-sample studies, are reported in Table 2. As expected, Table 2 shows that the mean score for marketers (85.7) was significantly lower ($p < .01$) than the mean score (90.7) for students. Historically, adults score lower on the Machiavellianism scale than do students. On the other hand, the score of 85.7 for marketers is within 1.2 scale points of the mean score of 84.5 for the adult norm study.

Unfortunately, Christie and Geis do not report a standard deviation for their adult norm study (Christie and Geis 1970, p. 315). This is because they were forced to use a short ten-item version of the scale (with

TABLE 1
Characteristics of Sample

Characteristic		Characteristic	
Activity of organization:		Educational level of sample:	
1. Manufacturing	29 ^a	1. No college degree	3
a. consumer products	14	2. Bachelor's degree	39
b. industrial/institutional products	15	3. Master's degree	53
2. Services	29	4. Doctorate	5
a. market research	14		100
b. advertising	10	Major field of study:	
c. consulting	5	1. General business	20
3. Finance, insurance, real estate	10	2. Business marketing	24
4. Other	31	3. Business accounting	1
5. No answer	1	4. Business management	2
	100	5. Business statistics	2
		6. Business finance	1
		7. Engineering	8
		8. Other technical (e.g., physics)	9
		9. Social sciences	15
		10. Humanities	10
		11. Other (e.g., education)	8
			100
Job title:		Income:	
1. Other; junior analyst, sales representative, trainee	7	1. less than \$10,000	1
2. District manager/director, analyst	18	2. \$10,000 to \$19,999	7
3. Division manager/director, product manager	16	3. \$20,000 to \$29,999	21
4. Corporate manager/director	29	4. \$30,000 to \$39,999	25
5. Vice president	18	5. \$40,000 to \$49,999	17
6. President, owner	11	6. \$50,000 to \$59,999	10
7. No answer	1	7. \$60,000 to \$69,999	7
	100	8. \$70,000 to \$79,999	4
		9. \$80,000 to \$89,999	3
		10. \$90,000 to \$99,999	1
		11. \$100,000 or more	4
			100
Career emphasis:		Age:	
1. Marketing management	37	20-29	18
2. Sales	7	30-39	40
3. Marketing research	41	40-49	22
4. Advertising	7	50-59	16
5. Staff positions	8	60 or more	4
	100		100
Size of firm worked for (number of employees):		Median age (years)	37
1	2	Sex:	
2 to 9	7	Male	70
10 to 19	5	Female	30
20 to 49	7		100
50 to 99	5	Marital status:	
100 to 249	11	Married	72
250 to 499	9	Single	28
500 to 999	10		100
1000 or more	44		
	100		

^aNumbers in table are percentages unless otherwise noted.

five scale points instead of seven) in the national norm study. In any event, even if the difference of 1.2 scale points between the two samples was *statistically* significant, it would not have *practical* significance. Re-

calling that the Machiavellianism scale is a summated scale, a difference of 1.2 total scale points over 20 items would represent only a difference of 0.06 on each individual item in the scale. Few researchers would

TABLE 2
Machiavellian Scores of Different Populations

	Mean ^a	S.D.	n	Reference
160				
110				
←	108.13	12.9	105 male employees	Touhey (1973)
100				
←	99.6	12.6	122 purchasing managers	Chonko (1982)
←	90.7	14.3	1,782 students	Christie and Geis (1970)
90				
←	88.7	14.5	211 community college teachers	Hollon (1975)
←	85.7	13.2	1,076 marketing professionals	the present research
←	84.5	n.a. ^b	1,477 adults	Christie and Geis (1970)
←	82.1	14.1	183 student teachers	Biggers (1978)
80				
←	80.0	15.6	149 managers	Gemmill and Heisler (1972)
←	73.3	11.0	52 school superintendents	Volp and Willower (1977)
70				
40				

^aFollowing Christie and Geis (1970), a constant of 20 has been added to all scores. Therefore, the total score at the theoretical neutral point is 100 (4.0×20 items + 20). The maximum score is 160 (7.0×20 items + 20), and the minimum score is 40 (1.0×20 items + 20).

^bThis sample received only half the items on a five-point scale instead of a seven-point scale. Respondents' scores were converted by Christie and Geis to the full length (20 item) Mach IV Scale. Estimates of what the standard deviation would have been had the respondents taken the full scale were slightly higher than for the student sample (Christie and Geis 1970).

claim that Likert-type items have such fine discriminating power.

How do marketers compare with other specific groups in our society? Table 2 shows the mean scores reported in other studies for several different populations. Although the mean score for marketers is significantly different from the other studies, the temptation to claim that marketers are either "more" or "less" Machiavellian than these other groups should be avoided. Unfortunately for our purposes, all of these other studies used relatively small convenience samples. The studies were primarily laboratory experiments used to test specific behavioral hypotheses and, therefore, representativeness of their samples to some external population was not a major concern of the researchers.

Machiavellianism and Personal Characteristics

Although the results shown in Table 2 indicate that marketers are no more Machiavellian than other members of society, there are obviously some marketers who score very high on the Mach IV scale. No absolute cut-off points exist to distinguish high Machs

from low Machs. However, it is worth noting that over 10% of all marketers in our sample scored in excess of 100 on the scale. Scores of this magnitude in the literature on Machiavellianism are generally considered to be very high. Similarly, approximately 10% of our sample scored below 70, a relatively "low" score. Obviously, some kinds of marketers are much more Machiavellian than others. Our second research question focuses on the characteristics distinguishing high Machs from low Machs in marketing.

Table 3 shows the results of a multiple regression with Machiavellianism as the dependent measure and several characteristics of marketers as independent variables. The independent variables are displayed in the order in which they entered a preliminary stepwise regression. In many respects the regression results are consistent with previous studies on Machiavellianism. For example, the low R^2 (0.07) is consistent with the conclusion of Christie and Geis (1970, p. 316) that demographic-type variables usually explain only a small percentage of the variance in Machiavellianism scores. Similarly, consistent with all of the past research, there was a strong relationship between age and Machia-

TABLE 3
Regressions: Characteristics Related to Machiavellianism*

Independent Variable	Simple Correlation	Standardized Regression Coefficient	t
Age	-.20 ^a	-.16	4.90 ^a
Marital status	.16 ^a	.09	2.86 ^a
Business major	-.07 ^b	-.04	0.81
Sex	.16 ^a	.09	2.44 ^b
Social science major	.11 ^a	-.08	1.92
Education	.03	.03	0.80
Marketing research positions	.04	-.02	0.45
Size of firm	.03	.02	0.55
Advertising positions	.01	.02	0.48
Humanities major	.04	.02	0.60
Technical major	-.02	.02	0.44
Sales positions	-.01	.03	0.08
Marketing management positions	-.05 ^b	.03	0.05
Constant	63.0		
R ²	.07		
F	6.31 ^a		

*summated score on Mach IV scale as dependent variable.

^asignificant at the .01 level.

^bsignificant at the .05 level.

vellianism. Younger marketers are more Machiavellian than older marketers, and singles are more Machiavellian than marrieds. Nevertheless, several of our findings directly contradict either the research findings of previous writers or their speculations.

Sex was a significant predictor of Machiavellianism: women were more Machiavellian than men. This finding is inconsistent with most studies, which generally show women to score lower in Machiavellianism than men. The regression results also show, contrary to the findings of Werthiem, Widom, and Wortzel (1978), that marketers who majored as undergraduates in business administration are not more Machiavellian than marketers who majored in other areas. Similarly, contrary to previous research and speculation, neither education nor size of firm was a significant predictor of Machiavellianism. That is, marketers who are more highly educated are not more Machiavellian and neither are those who work for smaller companies. Finally, there were no significant differences relating to the kinds of jobs that marketers hold. Marketers in sales and advertising positions were not more Machiavellian than marketers in marketing research or staff positions. Taken in toto the results suggest that marketers who are high in Machiavellianism have a tendency to be younger, single, and female.

Machiavellianism and Success

Our third research question asks *Is Machiavellianism related to success in marketing?* Consistent with previous research, this study employed two measures as

indicators of success, job title and income level. Table 4 displays the multiple regression results with income and job title as dependent variables and age, sex, education, and Machiavellianism as independent variables. Since previous research has found the relationship between Machiavellianism and success to be different for men and women, we also conducted separate analyses for male respondents and female respondents.

Income as dependent variable. The simple correlations between income and each independent variable for the total sample show a relatively strong positive relationship (0.43) between income and age and a weaker positive relationship (0.09) between income and education. Both relationships were expected. Similarly, with such a small variance in educational level (97% of our sample had at least a bachelor's degree), one would not expect a very strong relationship between years of education and level of income. The simple correlations also show a strong negative relationship (-0.33) between sex and income and a relatively strong negative relationship (-0.15) between Machiavellianism and income. That is, the simple correlations suggest that women marketers earn less than their male counterparts and that respondents who are more Machiavellian have lower incomes.

The multiple regression results reported in Table 4 show that the negative relationship between Machiavellianism and income for the total sample is probably spurious. When age, sex, and education are entered as control variables in the regression, Machiavellianism ceases to become a significant predic-

TABLE 4
Regressions: Machiavellianism and Marketing Success

Characteristic	Income as Dependent Variable									Title as Dependent Variable								
	Total Sample			Males			Females			Total Sample			Males			Females		
	r ^a	b ^b	t ^c	r	b	t	r	b	t	r	b	t	r	b	t	r	b	t
Age	.43 ^d	.37	12.8 ^d	.39 ^d	.39	11.1 ^d	.35 ^d	.35	6.3 ^e	.37 ^d	.32	10.6 ^d	.34 ^d	.33	9.1 ^d	.28 ^d	.37	6.6 ^d
Sex	-.33 ^d	-.22	7.5 ^d							-.22 ^d	-.14	4.7 ^e						
Education	.09 ^d	.06	2.2 ^e	.05 ^e	.08	2.2 ^e	0	.02	0.5	-.05 ^e	-.06	2.1 ^e	-.12 ^d	-.06	1.8	-.11 ^d	-.09	1.6
Machiavellianism	-.15 ^d	-.04	1.5	-.11 ^d	-.06	1.6	-.08 ^e	-.01	0.2	-.14 ^d	-.04	1.5	-.08 ^e	-.05	1.5	-.10 ^e	-.02	0.4
Constant		2.38			0.93			1.27			3.61			3.86			4.63	
R ²		.25			.16			.12			.16			.12			.15	
F		80.9 ^d			45.7 ^d			13.9 ^d			48.1 ^d			32.7 ^d			17.3 ^d	

^ar = simple correlation coefficients.
^bb = standardized regression coefficients.
^ct = t value for regression coefficients.
^dsignificant at the .01 level.
^esignificant at the .05 level.

tor of income. As previously discussed, there is a strong negative correlation between Machiavellianism and age. When income is controlled for age, the relationship between Machiavellianism and income almost vanishes entirely. Since it is unlikely that Machiavellianism "causes" people to grow older, the regression results strongly suggest that the simple correlation between Machiavellianism and income is spurious.

Since previous research has found that Machiavellianism is strongly related to success for females, Table 4 also shows the regression results for women and men treated separately. Both the simple correlations and the regression results show similar patterns for both males and females. Again, there are strong positive correlations between age and income, and negative correlations between Machiavellianism and income. Nevertheless, the regression results suggest

that the negative relationships between Machiavellianism and income for both samples are spurious.

Job title as dependent variable. The same pattern emerges when job title, rather than income, is used as an indicator of success in marketing. Table 4 shows positive correlations between age and job title for the total sample and for the male/female splits. Likewise, there are negative correlations between Machiavellianism and job title in all three cases. However, once again the regression results show that the simple correlations between Machiavellianism and job title are probably spurious. *All six regressions consistently indicate that there is no relationship between Machiavellianism and success in marketing.*

Satisfaction as dependent variable. Even though Machiavellianism is not related to success in market-

TABLE 5
Regressions: Machiavellianism and Job Satisfaction

Characteristic	Index of Total Satisfaction ^a			Satisfaction with Information ^a			Satisfaction with Job Closure ^a			Satisfaction with Variety ^a			Satisfaction with Pay ^a			General Satisfaction ^b			Satisfaction with Career ^c		
	r ^d	b ^e	t ^f	r	b	t	r	b	t	r	b	t	r	b	t	r	b	t	r	b	t
Income	.24 ^f	.22	6.5 ^g	.14 ^f	.14	4.0 ^g	.09 ^f	.05	1.5	.22 ^f	.19	5.6 ^g	.23 ^f	.25	7.4 ^f	.20 ^f	.19	5.5 ^g	.12 ^f	.14	4.1 ^g
Age	.13 ^f	-.06	0.1	.05 ^g	-.03	1.1	.11 ^f	.07	2.0	.15 ^f	.03	1.0	.09 ^f	-.05	1.4	.13 ^f	.13	.04	.03	-.07	2.0
Sex	-.05 ^g	-.003	1.7	-.02	.03	0.9	-.001	.05	1.6	-.07 ^g	.01	0.5	-.01	.08	2.5	-.03	.06	1.9	-.02	.03	0.9
Education	-.06 ^g	-.05	2.2	-.002	-.008	0.3	-.06 ^g	-.05	1.4	-.06 ^g	-.06	2.3	-.09 ^f	-.09	3.1	-.05 ^g	-.05	1.8	-.10 ^f	-.10	3.3
Machiavellianism	.27	.25	8.2 ^f	.16	.15	4.9 ^g	.18	.17	5.3 ^g	.23	.20	6.4 ^g	.26 ^f	.25	8.2 ^f	.28 ^f	.26	8.5 ^f	.21	.21	6.8 ^f
Constant		22.20			10.2			2.9			6.71			2.3			0.81			-0.51	
R ²		.12			.04			.05			.10			.13			.11			.07	
F		28.2 ^f			8.86 ^f			9.80 ^f			21.7 ^f			29.4 ^f			25.9 ^f			15.4	

^aSee appendix B for measures.
^b"In general, I am satisfied with my job."
^c"If I had it to do over again, I would choose a career outside the marketing area."
^dr = simple correlation coefficients.
^eb = standardized regression coefficients.
^fsignificant at the .01 level.
^gsignificant at the .05 level.
^ht = t value for regression coefficients.

ing, it could still be related to job satisfaction. That is, it could be the case that marketers high in Machiavellianism are more satisfied with performing the kinds of tasks required in marketing positions. To explore this issue we gathered data on seven measures of satisfaction: an index of job satisfaction, a global measure of job satisfaction, a measure of satisfaction with marketing as a career, and satisfaction with information, job closure, variety, and pay.

Table 5 displays the results of the multiple regressions with the seven measures of satisfaction as dependent variables and income, age, sex, education, and Machiavellianism as independent variables. There is a relatively strong negative correlation between Machiavellianism and each of the seven measures of satisfaction. In each case marketers who are more Machiavellian are less satisfied with their jobs in general and with marketing as a career. When income, age, sex, and education are entered into the regression equations as control variables, the relationship between Machiavellianism and each of the seven satisfaction measures continues to be statistically significant. Somewhat surprisingly, Machiavellianism explained more of the variance in each of the seven measures of satisfaction than did income. We also ran regressions with satisfaction as the dependent variable and the additional variables listed in Table 3 as control variables. In each case, not only did the negative relationship between Machiavellianism and satisfaction remain statistically significant, but also Machiavellianism was the single best predictor of satisfaction in marketing.

Discussion

The generalizability of survey research is always a legitimate concern. In this case our sample population consisted of practitioner members of the American Marketing Association. The quality of the sample drawn from this population suggests that our findings reasonably portray the characteristics of this population. However, to what extent is the American Marketing Association representative of the total universe of marketers in our society? Unquestionably, the AMA is more representative of the universe of marketers than other professional associations, since other professional associations related to marketing tend to be narrower in scope. Examples are the American Association of Advertising Agencies and the national associations representing wholesalers and purchasing agents. Nevertheless, people who join the American Marketing Association are more likely to view marketing as a *profession* than “just a job.” Therefore, the AMA membership probably overrepresents marketing management and underrepresents those on the lower rungs of the marketing employment ladder.

To what extent are our findings biased as a result of our sample overrepresenting professional marketers? A priori one might expect that a group of marketers who considered marketing to be a profession would likely be more ethical and less Machiavellian than the universe of marketers. On the other hand, past research has consistently found that professionals systematically score higher in Machiavellianism than the public at large (Christie and Geis 1970, p. 355). Furthermore, as one of our colleagues pointed out, joining an association such as the American Marketing Association may be precisely the kind of behavior a Machiavellian would engage in. A professional association is an excellent way to “make contacts,” an activity which would certainly be perceived as important by someone high in Machiavellianism. Therefore, although our findings should probably be generalized only to the universe of professional marketers, there is no reason to believe that our findings are systematically biased either higher or lower for the universe of marketers.

Consistent with past research, our study found a strong negative correlation between age and Machiavellianism. Christie and Geis attributed the negative correlation to a “generation gap” where “each recent generation in the United States is socialized to become more Machiavellian, and lower mean scores among older adults reflect a clinging to values common when they were growing to maturity” (1970, p. 316). It is worth noting that the Christie and Geis norm studies on adults and students were conducted in 1963 and 1964, respectively. The mean age for our sample of marketers was 39.4, suggesting that our average respondent was a college student at the very time the norm study on college students was undertaken. If each generation in America is becoming more Machiavellian, why did we not find the scores of present day marketers reflecting the scores of students of two decades ago? At the very least, our findings suggest that the relationship between age and Machiavellianism should be reexamined and point out the desirability of new national norm studies.

Our finding that Machiavellianism is not related to success in marketing does not necessarily refute the findings of Turner and Martinez (1977) that Machiavellianism is positively related to success for males with “high” education. First of all, Turner and Martinez considered high education to be a high school education and above. In contrast, 97% of our sample was college educated. Furthermore, Turner and Martinez used a short form version of the Machiavellianism scale with only five scale points and relied on income estimates provided by spouses. The reliability of their income and Machiavellianism measurements would therefore be less than ours. Finally, the Turner and Martinez sample was, of course, a probability

sample of noninstitutionalized adults in the United States, while our sample was restricted to marketers. These differences suggest that our findings on success and Machiavellianism do not directly refute Turner and Martinez.

Almost all past research has found women scoring lower than men on the Machiavellianism scale. Our opposite finding could result from self-selection. Women who are low in Machiavellianism may perceive that they would not be successful in marketing and, therefore, may not seek out positions in marketing. Alternatively, women who are low in Machiavellianism could be perceived by prospective employers as having little potential for success in marketing and might not be hired. In either case, our data suggest both perceptions would be wrong: women marketers who are high in Machiavellianism are no more successful than their low Machiavellian counterparts.

Conclusion

Is marketing Machiavellian? Although it is customary in academic research to report all findings as merely suggestive, the results of this study appear to be clear, consistent, and compelling. The only way that the marketing profession can be considered Machiavellian is if our entire society is Machiavellian. Rather than admit that marketing is not Machiavellian, some social critics would probably condemn American society as a whole. We do not share this deprecatory view.

Marketing has its share of Machiavellians—no more, no less. Further, marketers high in Machiavellianism are not disproportionately located in any particular marketing occupation (such as sales). Most importantly, there appears to be no evidence that one has to be Machiavellian to succeed in marketing. In fact, people who are high in Machiavellianism seem to be less satisfied with their marketing careers than those who are low in Machiavellianism.

The findings of this study suggest numerous opportunities for additional research. The identification of factors causing some marketers to be more Machiavellian than others would seem to be a particularly worthy research project. Why are younger marketers more Machiavellian than their older counterparts? Why are single marketers more Machiavellian than those who are married? Why are women marketers more Machiavellian than men? This study has isolated some correlates of Machiavellianism but not the underlying causal factors.

From a managerial perspective, the most important conclusions of this research are that younger marketers are more Machiavellian than older marketers and that Machiavellianism is unrelated to success in marketing. What kinds of organizational structures encourage or discourage the development of Machia-

vellianism among employees? Our study suggests that training programs for new employees should include sections specifically designed to foster the realization that one does not have to be Machiavellian to succeed in marketing. This suggestion is consistent with the recommendation by Murphy and Lacznia (1981) that firms adopt ethical seminars to encourage ethical behavior by their employees.

The final implication of this study is institutional in character and recognizes the fact that marketing has historically been a much maligned vocation/profession. Critics have charged it with being Machiavellian, and not all these critics are outside the discipline. Many of our marketing colleagues were absolutely astounded (and somewhat disbelieving) that we did not find marketers to be disproportionately Machiavellian. Several years ago, Farmer (1967) posed a famous question, "Would you want your daughter to marry a marketing man?" A decade later he revised the question to, "Would you want your son to marry a marketing lady?" (Farmer 1977) Our study implies that the answer to both questions is *yes* and that it may be time for the marketing discipline to engage in less self-flagellation and more self-promotion.

Appendix A: The Mach IV Scale^a

Item	Classification ^b
1. The best way to handle people is to tell them what they want to hear	tactics*
2. When you ask someone to do something for you, it is best to give the real reasons for wanting it, rather than giving reasons which might carry more weight ..	tactics
3. Anyone who completely trusts anyone else is asking for trouble	tactics*
4. It is hard to get ahead without cutting corners here and there ...	views*
5. Honesty is the best policy in all cases	tactics
6. It is safest to assume that all people have a vicious streak, and it will come out when they are given a chance	views*
7. Never tell anyone the real reason you did something unless it is useful to do so	tactics*
8. One should take action only when sure it is morally right	tactics
9. It is wise to flatter important people	tactics*
10. All in all, it is better to be humble and honest than important and dishonest	morality

11. Barnum was very wrong when he said there's a sucker born every minute	views
12. People suffering from incurable diseases should have the choice of being put painlessly to death ..	morality*
13. It is possible to be good in all respects	tactics
14. Most people are basically good and kind.....	views
15. There is no excuse for lying to someone else.....	tactics
16. Most men forget more easily the death of their father than the loss of their property	views*
17. Most people who get ahead in the world lead clean, moral lives	views
18. Generally speaking, men won't work hard unless they're forced to do so	views*
19. The biggest difference between most criminals and other people is that criminals are stupid enough to get caught	views*
20. Most men are brave	views

*Christie and Geis (1970, p. 17-18).

^bThe classification of items was developed by Christie and Geis (1970). Tactic items are concerned with the nature of the person's interpersonal tactics. Views items are concerned with an individual's views of human nature. Morality items are concerned with abstract or generalized morality.

*These items were reverse scored in the present study. High total scores (disagreement with statements) were then interpreted as a high Machiavellian orientation, and low total scores (agreement with statements) were interpreted as a low Machiavellian orientation.

Satisfaction with variety^b

5. I am satisfied with the variety of activities my job offers .....	.13	.82	.07	.17
6. I am satisfied with the freedom I have to do what I want on my job	.17	.59	.45	.14
7. I am satisfied with the opportunities my job provides me to interact with others .....	.18	.48	.32	.22
8. There is enough variety in my job .....	.11	.75	.02	.12
9. I have enough freedom to do what I want in my job .....	.17	.62	.46	.12
10. My job has enough opportunity for independent thought and action.....	.20	.62	.47	.06

Satisfaction with closure^b

11. I am satisfied with the opportunities my job gives me to complete tasks from beginning to end.....	.17	.21	.76	.11
12. My job has enough opportunity to complete the work I start .....	.12	.10	.71	.12

Satisfaction with pay^b

13. I am satisfied with the pay I receive for my job .....	.17	.14	.05	.51
14. I am satisfied with the security my job provides me .....	.10	.11	.15	.66

*Varimax rotation. R² for each of the four factors, is 41.0, 13.5, 8.5, and 7.8, respectively.

^bItems 1-14 are combined to form the index of total satisfaction.

Appendix B: Factor Analysis of Satisfaction Items

	Factor Loadings ^a			
	1	2	3	4
Satisfaction with information^b				
1. I am satisfied with the information I receive from my superior about my job performance...	.87	.19	.13	.22
2. I receive enough information from my supervisor about my job performance .....	.88	.14	.15	.13
3. I receive enough feedback from my supervisor on how well I'm doing .....	.92	.09	.11	.12
4. There is enough opportunity in my job to find out how I am doing65	.29	.31	.15

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