



A Hypothetical Machiavellian-Type Evaluation System in Education: Contrasting and Reversing the Key Principles of Total Quality Management

Keramida Konstantia*

Phd, Msc, Principal of 2th High School Exedorou, Thessaloniki, Greece

***Corresponding Author:** Keramida Konstantia, Phd, Msc, Principal of 2th High School Exedorou, Thessaloniki, Greece.

Abstract: *The present study examines the inherently opposing concepts of Machiavellianism and Total Quality Management (TQM) through a structured comparative and analytical framework. By investigating the fundamental divergences between these two paradigms, the research proposes a hypothetical counterexample: the design of a Machiavellian-type evaluation system within an educational institution. Machiavellianism, grounded in principles of manipulation, strategic control, and utilitarian leadership, is critically contrasted with the ethos of TQM, which prioritizes continuous improvement, collaborative processes, transparency, and stakeholder satisfaction.*

The distinct contribution of this study lies in its methodological innovation, wherein the contrast between Machiavellianism and TQM is not merely outlined, but systematically deconstructed to reveal the theoretical and practical implications for educational leadership and management. Drawing upon a thorough review of both Greek and international literature, the study elucidates the defining characteristics of each paradigm and explores their potential manifestations within the context of educational evaluation systems.

Furthermore, the construction of the counterexample serves as a reflective mechanism, facilitating critical engagement with the risks associated with adopting authoritarian and manipulative leadership practices in settings that require ethical governance, participatory decision-making, and a commitment to quality assurance. Finally, the study advances recommendations for further research, emphasizing the necessity of continued investigation into leadership models that support sustainable, ethical, and effective educational administration. Through this approach, the research contributes meaningfully to the broader scholarly discourse on organizational behavior and leadership theory in education.

Keywords: *Machiavellianism, Total Quality Management, Educational Leadership, Evaluation Systems, Management Theory, Counterexample, Organizational Behavior.*

1. INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary era, it is widely recognized that, for organizations and businesses to ensure their survival, it is imperative to offer high-quality services that are consistently aligned with customer satisfaction. Any organization or enterprise that fails to adapt to the continuously evolving needs of its clientele, or that is unable to meet their expectations through the provision of quality services, is likely to be surpassed and displaced by its competitors. Consequently, organizations increasingly strive to organize their management structures in a manner that adheres to the principles of Total Quality Management (TQM). Within the scope of the present study, the work of Niccolò Machiavelli is also examined through the perspective of management theory. Machiavelli's writings have been the subject of extensive scholarly investigation, as they are often regarded as a foundational manual for modern management practices. The primary aim of this study is the development of a hypothetical counterexample: a Machiavellian-type evaluation system applied within an educational institution, constructed by contrasting and inverting the fundamental principles of the Total Quality framework to the greatest extent possible. Accordingly, it is deemed necessary to deconstruct the overarching purpose into its constituent elements and analyze each independently.

More specifically, the objectives of this research are: to define the concepts of Machiavellianism and Total Quality Management; to document their principal characteristics; to propose a structure for a

Machiavellian-type evaluation system in the educational context; and to delineate the study's conclusions. Furthermore, the study offers suggestions for future research and investigation.

The first part of the study is devoted to establishing the theoretical framework, addressing both Machiavellianism and Total Quality Management within the educational sector, drawing on both Greek and international scholarly literature.

In particular, the first section of the theoretical framework provides a conceptual analysis of the term "Machiavellianism" and offers a detailed presentation of the attributes typically associated with Machiavellian leaders. This section also thoroughly records the distinct characteristics of Machiavellian individuals. Subsequently, the second section addresses the concept of "Total Quality Management," offering an in-depth discussion of its guiding principles. Special attention is given to the 14 Points of W. Edwards Deming, as adapted for the management of educational institutions.

The second part of the study is dedicated to presenting the counterexample: the design of a Machiavellian-type evaluation system within an educational unit. This construction necessitates the deliberate opposition and inversion of the core principles of the Total Quality framework. Moreover, this section presents the conclusions derived from the study and outlines proposals for future research endeavors. The review of the relevant literature reveals that Machiavellianism and Total Quality Management are inherently opposing concepts. Therefore, the originality of the present study lies in its methodological approach of analyzing and contrasting these two paradigms, thereby contributing to the formation of the proposed counterexample.

2. MACHIAVELLIANISM

2.1. Definition

The term "Machiavellianism" originates from Niccolò Machiavelli. Machiavelli (1469–1527) was born and died in Florence. He was a political theorist, historian, and philosopher who served in the chancery of the Florentine Republic. A descendant of an old noble family, he entered public service at a young age, assuming a position in the administration of the Florentine Republic, specifically within the First Chancery, following the expulsion of the Medici family from power. Notably, in 1513, Machiavelli composed a treatise entitled *The Prince* in an effort to advise the restored Medici ruler on effective methods for exercising and maintaining political authority (Zervas, 2015, p. 10; Karabanos, 2016, pp. 17–18; Korkotidou, 2018, pp. 8–9).

Machiavelli's work has been subject to both positive and negative interpretations, as it significantly challenged traditional political and ethical doctrines of the time. Machiavellianism became associated with hypocrisy, apathy, ruthlessness, criminal behavior, and other negative aspects of political reality. The critical reception of his work was largely unfavorable due to the way Machiavellianism was interpreted; however, despite the negative critiques, Machiavelli's theories have never lost their influence. They have consistently remained at the center of intellectual and political discourse, precisely because of the controversy surrounding his political philosophy (Zervas, 2015, p. 10; Karabanos, 2016, pp. 17–18; Korkotidou, 2018, pp. 8–9).

Specifically, "Machiavellianism" refers to a political doctrine whereby the ruler exercises power by any means necessary, unconstrained by moral considerations, to maintain authority. Machiavelli asserted in *The Prince* that "a ruler must know how to fight by means of both law and force; the former being appropriate to men, the latter to beasts. Since the first method often proves insufficient, it becomes necessary to resort to the second." Thus, according to Machiavelli, anyone aspiring to leadership must be adept at employing both humane and brutal tactics. He emphasized that an individual's utility to society, a business, or a group constitutes the cornerstone of authority. Consequently, in Machiavellian thought, utilitarianism supersedes moral restraint, legitimizing even unethical or harsh actions if they serve to advance the ruler's objectives (Korkotidou, 2018, pp. 8–9; Macaulay et al., 2003, pp. 1–12; Bruschi, 2020, p. 110).

2.2. The Machiavellian Leader and Personality Traits

Machiavellianism places significant emphasis on self-interest and manipulation (Williams, 1995, pp. 36–49; Shahibudin, 2016, pp. 1–5; Pillai & Muncherji, 2019, pp. 61–64). Individuals who exhibit a high degree of Machiavellian characteristics are often perceived as intelligent and attractive. According to

Zervas (2015) and Karabanos (2016), it can be concluded that personalities marked by high levels of Machiavellianism are characterized as unemotional, nonconformist, detached from moral norms and standards, capable of manipulation, and emotionally distanced, with a strong focus on achieving personal goals.

It is worth noting that individuals with pronounced Machiavellian traits are often highly skilled negotiators and frequently occupy positions of leadership. In the context of this study, an attempt is made to provide examples from various domains of professional reality to illustrate the behavioral tendencies of individuals with strong Machiavellian personality traits (Jones et al., 2009, pp. 93–108; Zymarakos, 2018, pp. 27–29; Schippers et al., 2019, pp. 1–12):

1. **Economic Opportunism:** In enterprises where one of the partners exhibits strong Machiavellian characteristics, it has been observed that they prioritize personal profit over the collective interests of their partners.
2. **Distancing:** Within organizations, individuals with high Machiavellian traits tend to distance themselves from groups they have previously manipulated or exploited, aiming to avoid potential retaliation.
3. **Exploitation:** Individuals displaying high levels of Machiavellianism may opportunistically exploit others through deceitful means.
4. **Tactical Influence:** Such individuals often devise strategic plans to build networks and alliances intended to secure the favor of influential groups or individuals, and they do not hesitate to resort to intimidation, blackmail, or scandalous disclosures.
5. **Professional Satisfaction:** Studies have shown that Machiavellian leaders can hinder the job satisfaction of their subordinates, resulting in a negative dynamic between Machiavellian leadership and employee satisfaction.
6. **Career Choices:** Individuals with pronounced Machiavellian traits tend to gravitate toward professions related to law and management, while typically avoiding careers in the arts or those associated with social service.

2.3. Specific Traits of a Machiavellian Individual

According to Zervas (2015), Karabanos (2016), Korkotidou (2018), and Mantis (2020), Machiavelli viewed life as a continuous war, devoid of mercy and moral rules. Specifically, some of the main characteristics commonly associated with Machiavellian individuals include:

1. They tend to seek revenge and frequently engage in lying, even towards close acquaintances.
2. They consistently conceal the true purposes and deeper motivations behind their actions.
3. They manipulate, deceive, and exploit others to achieve their own goals.
4. They often exhibit a negative correlation with work performance.
5. They pursue success through the use of political mechanisms.
6. They are adept at forming conspiracies and excel in environments characterized by corruption and collusion.
7. They are less hardworking and more inclined toward cunning and scheming behavior.
8. They act as demagogues, often mastering the art of persuasion.
9. They are particularly effective in navigating public bureaucratic positions.
10. They are not constrained by societal, corporate, or organizational principles and norms; they lack ethical boundaries.
11. They display cold and cynical reactions, firmly believing that "the end justifies the means."
12. They are frequently risk-takers and opportunists.
13. They demonstrate harshness and ruthlessness toward their opponents.
14. They are deeply driven by a desire to attain and maintain power.

15. Once in power, they do not hesitate to preserve it through the use of violence (both psychological and physical) and by fostering an atmosphere of fear.
16. They present themselves as virtuous and morally upright, although this is largely a facade.
17. They tend to score high in emotional intelligence, enabling them to manipulate others with ease.
18. They are brutally realistic and pragmatic in their worldview.

3. TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT (TQM)

3.1. Definition

According to the study by Gerochristou (2012) regarding Total Quality Management (hereinafter TQM), it is important to note that it represents the modern implementation of the concept of quality. The objective of TQM is to improve both the quality and effectiveness of an enterprise or organization. It is a new approach to management that requires the participation of the entire human capital of the organization, involving all departments, employees, and activities at every level. TQM is a management system with strategic perspectives and goals aimed at, on one hand, customer satisfaction and, on the other, the continuous improvement of the organization's production processes. To achieve customer satisfaction, techniques are utilized to identify customer needs, design specifications that the product must meet, control the process and the product to ensure compliance with those specifications, and employ methods that guarantee timely delivery and customer service and support. This management system involves employees across all levels, from top management to the last worker, since isolated efforts to solve specific problems would not be successful.

A core element of TQM is the necessity for collective effort and contribution from all involved parties. The system requires the integration of all organizational functions, including sales, marketing, production, and services. The key components leading to the successful implementation of TQM are effective training, the practical application of new knowledge, the enthusiastic participation of top management, and their commitment to upholding the principles and objectives of TQM.

3.2. Principles of Tqm

TQM, as a management system, is comprised of several principles whose implementation is critical to its success. These principles are as follows (Gerochristou, 2012, pp. 11-13):

a. Formulation of Vision and Mission

The existence of a vision within an organization, accompanied by clear objectives, a strong sense of mission, and the development of a strategy translated into specific policies, is essential for the effective operation of organizations and the successful implementation of TQM.

b. Management Commitment to Tqm Philosophy

Implementing TQM requires a shift in employee mindsets and organizational practices. Therefore, the active involvement of management is crucial; it must ensure the application of TQM principles, promote the development of a quality culture, secure open communication among stakeholders, and pursue employee empowerment.

c. Customer Focus

The main goal of TQM is to satisfy customer expectations. This involves two preliminary phases: identifying customer needs and measuring the level of customer satisfaction. Practices associated with this principle include promoting direct contact with customers, gathering information about consumer preferences and expectations, and disseminating this information throughout the organization.

d. Commitment and Active Participation of All Personnel

Engaging all employees requires collaboration among different levels of staff and is based on the belief that employees can contribute significantly when given the opportunity. Moreover, cooperation among departments is crucial, as individual departments may prioritize their own immediate goals to the detriment of overall organizational success. TQM encourages teamwork to foster a sense of shared responsibility and trust. Participation in decision-making acts as a motivational factor, enhancing employee productivity and enthusiasm.

e. Education and Training of Personnel

To enable personnel to participate in decision-making, continuous education and training are prerequisites. Employees must be provided with ongoing development opportunities and encouraged to engage in autonomous learning and growth.

f. Continuous Improvement of Processes and Quality

Under TQM, the organization commits to the continuous monitoring and constant re-evaluation of technical and administrative processes. These efforts aim to identify ways to operate more effectively and to meet customer expectations, which are constantly evolving. As a result, the organization must continually adapt to new conditions.

3.3. Deming's 14 Points

According to the study by Gerochristou (2012), Deming is considered the founder of Total Quality Management (TQM) and played a major role in the transition from traditional management to modern management practices. His philosophy of continuous quality improvement is encapsulated in the "14 Points for Management." Deming believed that human resources are the essence and driving force behind system improvement, and that management is always responsible for any failure. He regarded quality as a fundamental element in businesses, organizations, education, and in all aspects of life.

It is worth noting that Deming's philosophy initially found application in the industrial sector and later expanded into other areas such as education and healthcare. In its early application to education, it was limited to the administrative side of the school system. Subsequently, it became widely accepted that Deming's philosophy could also be applied within the classroom, as the teacher exercises management within this environment. Teaching staff are responsible not only for classroom management but also for promoting learning. Deming asserted that solving small or large problems was not sufficient; rather, what was required was a radical transformation of the Western management model for businesses and organizations. With the aim of transforming corporate culture, he outlined 14 points that he deemed essential for those interested in managing this transformation.

Deming's 14 points were adapted appropriately to be applicable to educational management and are as follows:

- **Point 1:** There must be consistency and continuity in stating the organization's purpose, focusing on the continuous improvement of students and teaching, so that graduates are prepared to meet the challenges of international competition.
- **Point 2:** Adoption of the new philosophy by the administration.
- **Point 3:** Educational quality must be built from the beginning, with a concurrent reduction in the reliance on examinations to achieve it.
- **Point 4:** Ensuring quality at the lowest possible cost. Teachers should collaborate to help students develop skills essential for future survival.
- **Point 5:** Continuous improvement of the provided educational services.
- **Point 6:** Establishment of training programs for all educators.
- **Point 7:** Capable and effective leadership.
- **Point 8:** Elimination of fear within the organization.
- **Point 9:** Removal of barriers between departments and promotion of teamwork.
- **Point 10:** Avoidance of setting unreasonable demands and targets for students without providing improved methods.
- **Point 11:** Elimination of work standards and arbitrary numerical goals.
- **Point 12:** Internal motivation of students, encouraging them to take pride in their work.
- **Point 13:** Implementation of continuous education programs and encouragement of employees' self-improvement.

- **Point 14:** Adoption and application of the new philosophy is the responsibility of all participants in the educational process.

All of the aforementioned points are ineffective if management does not embrace the new philosophy and commit to achieving the continuous improvement and transformation of the organization.

4. MACHIAVELLIAN COUNTEREXAMPLE

Point 1. There should be Consistency and Continuity in Stating the Organization's Purpose, Which should be focused on the Continuous Improvement of Students and Teaching, So that Graduates can Meet the Challenges of International Competition.

A Machiavellian counterexample in relation to this point could be the presence of an educational organization that equates the quality of teaching solely with achieving high exam scores. In this example, administrative bodies or staff are instructed to focus exclusively on promoting students' performance in exams and tests, regardless of their actual understanding or application of the knowledge and skills they acquire (Rehman et al., 2021, 79-85). In such a framework, teachers or students may face pressure to achieve high grades without considering their actual learning or engagement. This pressure could lead to a climate where learning is assessed solely based on exam performance, ignoring the real goal of education, which is to encourage the comprehensive development of students.

Point 2. Adoption of the New Philosophy by the Administration.

A Machiavellian counterexample for the adoption of a new philosophy by the administration could be the imposition of a new philosophy that promotes the interests or priorities of the administration without considering the needs or opinions of teachers, students, or other staff members (Shahibudin, 2016, 1-5, Rehman et al., 2018, 84-85). In this example, the administration may impose a new policy or philosophy that serves only its own interests, ignoring the contributions or needs of other members of the educational community. This could involve adopting a policy that promotes increasing the working hours of teachers without corresponding increases in resources or remuneration. It could also focus on adopting an approach aimed solely at increasing power or enhancing the institution's public image, disregarding the real quality of education or the need for continuous educational improvement (Cosans & Reina, 2017, 275-278).

Point 3. Educational Quality Must Be Built from the Beginning, With a Concurrent Reduction in the use of Exams to Achieve It. Not Just Final Inspections, But Quality Control at Every Stage.

A Machiavellian counterexample to this point could involve the reinforcement of the use of exams without making any real effort to improve the quality of education. In this example, the administration insists on increasing the use of exams as the sole criterion for assessing the educational process. Intense practice in exams and studying would be promoted to achieve high performance in them, regardless of actual understanding or application of knowledge. This would lead to a restricted educational process, where teachers are forced to focus on exam-oriented material, neglecting the broader need for creative thinking, understanding of concepts, and application of knowledge in practice.

Another Machiavellian counterexample for educational quality, which presents self-reports and false assurances of quality, is one where the administration of an educational institution chooses to create an impressive process of quality control and evaluation. Machiavellian administrators make public statements about the importance of quality and quality control, but in reality, the process they follow is aimed at creating an impression and diverting attention from potential real issues. Instead of focusing on real educational quality, the administration chooses to allocate resources to a system that does not reflect real improvement. This creates a false image of concern for quality, but does not bring about actual changes or improvements in the educational process or students' learning experience.

Point 4. Ensuring Quality at the Lowest Possible Cost. Teachers Should Collaborate to Help Students Develop the Skills Needed to Survive in the Future.

A Machiavellian example for this point could involve downgrading the quality of education in order to save money or serve other interests. For example, the administration may impose budget cuts at the educational institution's expense, at the cost of educational resources or tools. This could lead to a lack of important resources for teachers or students, negatively affecting the learning process. Teachers might be forced to work with fewer resources or limited teaching tools, reducing the quality of education

they provide (Graham, 1996, p. 67-69, Rehman et al., 2018, 84-85). Moreover, instead of focusing on developing students' skills, pressure for lower expenses could lead to the weakening of educational programs that require additional resources, such as those that promote creativity, collaboration, or practical skills. This would negatively affect students' preparation for future challenges (Pillai & Muncherji, 2019, 61-64).

Point 5. Continuous Improvement of the Provided Educational Services.

A Machiavellian counterexample for this point could involve the presence of a "superficial improvement" policy, which is not genuinely oriented toward improving the quality of education but is aimed at shaping public impressions of progress. In this example, the administration or responsible parties may promote various "improvements" without actually investing in the educational process. These improvements might be purely superficial, such as changes in the appearance of teaching spaces or the organization of events and activities that are not directly related to the quality of teaching or students' development. The administration may focus on measures that give the impression of improvement without addressing the real needs or providing actual changes to the quality of education and student development.

Point 6. Establishing Monitoring of Educational Programs by all Educators.

In a Machiavellian example, the monitoring of educational programs by all educators could be used as a tool of control and pressure instead of being aimed at continuous improvement (Liyanagamage et al., 2022, p. 665). In this example, the monitoring of educational programs could be used as a tool to create a sense of surveillance and pressure on teachers, rather than as a means of collaboration and development. Specifically, the monitoring could be carried out in a way that focuses on more stringent evaluation and criticism of educational programs, rather than providing constructive feedback to develop and improve teaching. This could create an atmosphere of fear and insecurity among educators, encouraging compliance rather than creativity and self-improvement.

Point 7. Capable and Effective Leadership.

A Machiavellian-style counterexample for Point 7 could involve a management that uses the concept of "capable and effective leadership" to impose its authority without considering the needs and opinions of teachers. In this example, the administration may use the idea of "capable and effective leadership" to exercise its power arbitrarily, without transparency or participation from teachers. Instead of promoting collaboration and communication with the staff, the administration adopts a policy that focuses on control and authority, without emphasizing the creation of a cooperative climate and open communication (Davis, 2023, 1808-1810).

This type of leadership could focus on exerting pressure on teachers, rather than encouraging development and innovation that might arise from the ideas and suggestions of the staff to improve education and promote student advancement (Graham, 1996, pp. 67-69; Liyanagamage et al., 2022, p. 665). A Machiavellian-style example of "Capable and Effective Leadership" in an educational unit could involve excessive focus on the image of the administrators, instead of focusing on their actual leadership abilities and their impact on the quality of education (Emilda & Vijayalakshmi, 2017, pp. 6970-6975).

In such an example, the administration would focus primarily on projecting an image of capable and effective leadership for the administrators, regardless of their actual leadership performance. There might be a policy that rewards adherence to the official line of the administration, rather than encouraging diversity of ideas and approaches. In this case, administrators would be encouraged to maintain an image of success and effectiveness, possibly through superficial achievements, without genuinely addressing the results in terms of teaching quality or student development. Moreover, the administration might overlook or ignore potential problems or deficiencies in leadership that could negatively affect the educational unit.

Point 8. Removal of Fear.

A Machiavellian-style counterexample for "Removal of Fear" in an educational unit could be the use of fear as a means of controlling and subjugating teachers, rather than fostering an environment where free expression of ideas and open discussion are encouraged (Erkutlu et al., 2019, pp. 325-327; Hammali et al., 2022, pp. 278-279). In such an example, the administration may use the fear of unwanted

consequences, such as job loss or salary reductions, or as a means of pressuring teachers to enforce specific decisions or policies that serve the interests of the administration, rather than encouraging independent thought and initiative (Rehman et al., 2018, pp. 84-85; Liyanagamage et al., 2022, pp. 664-666). Teachers may feel threatened and insecure about expressing opposing ideas or questioning administrative decisions due to the fear of social or professional repercussions. This would surely lead to the formation of a climate of tension and exclusion of teachers who disagree with the official line of the administration.

Point 9. Elimination of Barriers between Departments and Establishment of Teamwork.

A Machiavellian-style counterexample for the elimination of barriers between departments and the establishment of teamwork could be the promotion of teamwork to serve hidden objectives or maintain control by the administration. A school or educational unit may promote teamwork as a means of problem-solving or fostering community. However, the true goal may be to enforce a uniform way of thinking and decision-making that serves the interests of the administration. In reality, teamwork could be used as a means of controlling the thoughts and opinions of teachers and students, disregarding individual approaches or personal needs. Moreover, a climate may be created in which collaboration between departments or students is utilized as a means of pressure or control, rather than promoting genuine development and the diversity of ideas.

Point 10. Avoidance of Unreasonable Proposals and Goals Requiring New Levels of Student Performance without Providing Better Methods.

A Machiavellian-style counterexample for avoiding the use of unreasonable proposals and goals in education could be the imposition of excessively stringent or demanding goals for students without providing the necessary resources or appropriate methods for achieving them.

An educational unit may set high-performance goals for students but fail to provide the proper resources or support to achieve them. This could create a sense of pressure and anxiety among students, as they may not have the educational support or preparation necessary to meet these goals. At the same time, the administration or educational leaders may project the image that high goals are being achieved, without the actual preparation or support required by students.

Point 11. Dismantling Work Standards and Arbitrary Numerical Goals.

A Machiavellian-style counterexample for dismantling work standards and arbitrary numerical goals could involve promoting a reward system that focuses solely on quantity, rather than quality or the real value of education. An educational unit may prioritize the quantity of work or results (e.g., the number of students passing exams) as the main criterion for rewards, ignoring the quality of the educational process and the real educational value provided to students. This could lead to arbitrary goals for teachers, forcing them to focus on quantity or measurable outcomes rather than caring about the actual educational value and preparation of students for the future.

Point 12. Internal Motivation of Students, Making Them Proud Of Their Work and Rewarding the Workforce.

A Machiavellian-style counterexample for internal motivation of students and rewarding the workforce could involve selecting a reward system that promotes competition and creates a pressured environment. The administration or teachers may choose to implement a reward system based solely on academic performance and the number of successes in exams. Students who achieve high grades or stand out in exams are heavily rewarded, while lower scores may result in exclusion from privileged activities or rewards. This system encourages excessive competition, as students compete against each other for the highest grades. This situation could lead to stressful conditions, destroying collaboration and solidarity among students. At the same time, the pressure to succeed in exams may distract from real understanding of the subjects and creative thinking.

Point 13. Implementation of Ongoing Training Programs and Encouraging Employees' Self-Improvement.

A Machiavellian-style counterexample for continuous training and encouraging self-improvement could involve the imposition of a training program that focuses exclusively on aspects serving the interests of the administration or a specific group of trainees. For example, such a training program

might focus solely on specific skills that serve the interests of the administration, or promote required skills based on a specific agenda or curriculum. In this framework, the upper management might overlook the real needs and interests of teachers, preventing them from developing skills that would enhance their personal growth or benefit from programs that address their actual needs. Additionally, the administration may impose a continuous training program on employees without providing the necessary resources or time for them to carry it out. Employees may be asked to attend continuous training sessions or workshops without corresponding recognition, adding pressure to the employees and eventually creating resistance to implementing these programs.

Finally, there could be a lack of programs or initiatives for the continuous training and development of teachers, ignoring their need for professional growth.

Point 14. Adoption and Implementation of the New Philosophy Is the Responsibility of All Those Involved In the Educational Process.

A Machiavellian-style counterexample for Point 14 could involve imposing a new philosophy or a specific process without the active involvement or contribution of teachers and other staff members (Graham, 1996, pp. 67-69). For instance, the administration may impose a new educational philosophy or a specific teaching methodology without consulting the teachers directly involved. This philosophy might be restrictive or not responsive to the needs and abilities of students, yet it is implemented without further consultation. This creates resistance, conflicts, and destabilization in the educational environment, rather than enhancing collaboration and progress through the participation and cooperation of all involved parties (Belschak F. D. et al., 2018, pp. 5-12).

These elements could form a hypothetical counterexample of a Machiavellian-style evaluation system in an educational unit, contrasting with the principles of Deming, which promote continuous improvement and the value of human contribution to quality.

4.1. Example of the Combination of Machiavellian Traits

This section attempts to present an example of the combination of Machiavellian traits, utilizing the respective counterexamples of Machiavellian-type behaviors based on the 14 points of Deming, as previously developed, and summarizing their key aspects.

It is evident that within the context of educational institutions, there is a need for the coexistence of the leadership, teaching staff, student body, and the parents and guardians association. It becomes apparent that within the operation of a school, these stakeholders develop relationships that are, at times, tested. Undoubtedly, some of these relationships may become conflictual and intense due to personal interests. The resulting confrontations often lead to the formation of informal groups. Indeed, Machiavellianism in the workplace exacerbates and intensifies all these dynamics.

Specifically, individuals displaying Machiavellian behaviors first refuse to adhere to rules, deceive their colleagues with the ultimate aim of gaining power, and, once they become principals, manipulate and mistrust their teaching staff. As Machiavelli states, "You must either take your opponents to your side or annihilate them." Secondly, a Machiavellian school principal obstructs collaboration, both among colleagues and with students' parents. They prefer to serve their own interests by exerting psychological pressure in every direction. Therefore, they are self-serving and authoritarian leaders, never charismatic ones.

Furthermore, as described by Machiavelli in his work "The Prince," "A promise made was a necessity of the past. The reason it was not kept was a necessity of the present." Based on this, we can argue that the Machiavellian principal is opportunistic, as they are willing to make promises that serve their interests at a given moment, only to retract or modify them as new circumstances and opportunities arise. Often, they become cold and cynical in pursuit of their goal, regardless of the ethical implications. Once appointed as the principal, they would prefer to centralize control and have everything pass through their authority, rather than delegating responsibilities or initiatives to the school's teachers. Additionally, they are not the type of leader who fosters collaboration or the development of good relationships among teachers. Instead, they manipulate and deceive their colleagues into supporting them, all while refusing to trust them. Ultimately, their primary objective is their own personal advancement. It is clear, then, that such Machiavellian behavior severely damages the school's image.

Moreover, a Machiavellian educational organization equates the quality of teaching solely with achieving high exam scores. Consequently, teachers or students may experience pressure to attain high scores, without consideration for their actual learning or their personal direction. The imposition of a new philosophy that promotes the administration's interests or priorities, without considering the needs or views of the teachers, students, or other staff, invariably leads to conflict.

The administration, primarily, insists on increasing the use of examinations as the sole criterion for evaluating the educational process. It promotes intense preparation for exams and study to achieve high performance, regardless of the actual understanding or application of knowledge. Secondly, the administration may impose budget cuts on the educational institution, at the expense of teaching resources or educational tools. This could lead to a lack of essential resources for teachers or students, negatively affecting the learning process. Teachers may be forced to work with fewer resources or limited educational tools, thus diminishing the quality of education they provide.

Additionally, the monitoring of professional development programs may be done in a way that focuses on stricter evaluation and criticism of educational programs, rather than offering constructive feedback to develop and improve teaching. This could create an atmosphere of fear and insecurity among teachers, encouraging compliance rather than creativity and self-improvement.

Furthermore, a Machiavellian-type administration may apply the concept of "competent and effective leadership" to wield arbitrary power without transparency or involvement from the teachers. Instead of promoting cooperation and communication with staff, the administration would adopt a policy focusing on control and authority, without emphasizing the creation of an environment of collaboration and open communication.

The administration may also use teachers' fear of undesirable consequences, such as losing their jobs or reductions in salary, as a means of pressure to enforce decisions or policies that serve the administration's interests, rather than encouraging independent thinking and initiative. In such cases, this could lead to an atmosphere of tension and the exclusion of teachers who disagree with the official line of the administration.

Moreover, teamwork in reality may be used as a tool for controlling the thoughts and views of both teachers and students, while disregarding the diverse approaches or personal needs of individuals. Additionally, an environment may be created in which collaboration between departments or students is used as a form of pressure or control, instead of promoting genuine development and the diversity of ideas. A school or educational institution could set high performance targets for students without providing the appropriate means or resources to achieve them. This could create a sense of pressure and stress among students, as there may be insufficient educational support or preparation to reach these goals. Furthermore, the dismantling of work standards and arbitrary numerical targets could promote a reward system that focuses solely on quantity rather than the quality or true value of education. The internal motivation of students and the reward for their potential work may include the choice of a reward system that fosters competition and creates a pressure-driven environment. It becomes clear that such a system encourages excessive competition, as students compete with each other to achieve the highest grades. This can lead to stressful conditions, undermining collaboration and solidarity among students. Simultaneously, the pressure to succeed in exams may divert attention from true understanding of the subjects and creative thinking.

In the context of Machiavellian leadership in the school unit, teachers may be required to attend continuous training sessions and events without appropriate recognition, exerting pressure on employees and creating resistance to the implementation of these programs. Alternatively, there could be a lack of programs or initiatives for continuous professional development for teachers, neglecting their need for professional growth.

Based on all the above, it is evident that Machiavellian management in the school unit is based on imposing a new philosophy or a specific process without the active participation or contribution of teachers and staff. This philosophy is restrictive and does not meet the needs and abilities of students. However, it is implemented without further consultation. These actions lead to resistance, conflict, and destabilization within the educational environment, rather than fostering collaboration and progress through the participation and cooperation of all involved stakeholders.

5. CONCLUSION

The comparison between the leadership and management principles presented by Machiavellianism and Total Quality Management (TQM) reveals significant contrasts between the two approaches.

According to the literature review (Hamilton, 2017, pp. 45-47; Rehman et al., 2018, pp. 84-85; Belschak et al., 2018, pp. 5-12; Erkutlu et al., 2019, pp. 325-327; Manara et al., 2020, pp. 1-10; Webster et al., 2020, p. 34; Liyanagamage et al., 2022, pp. 664-666; Selvarajan et al., 2023, pp. 30-32), Machiavelli initially presents the leader as someone who:

1. Manipulates others.
2. Does not trust collaborators.
3. Does not promote collaboration among peers.
4. Focuses on personal self-promotion.
5. Is opportunistic.
6. Seeks to gain and maintain power by any means necessary.
7. Serves personal interests.
8. Becomes cold and cynical to achieve goals at any cost.
9. Uses power to ensure loyal supporters, even if it means violating procedures.
10. Treats educators as resources, rewarding those who support his authority.
11. Manages information selectively, focusing on propaganda that benefits his interests.

5.1. In contrast, Total Quality Management (TQM) (Webster et al., 2020, pp. 31-47) promotes:

1. Full and active participation of all employees in an organization.
2. Encouragement of motivation and initiative.
3. Continuous development and improvement.
4. Leadership based on competencies and vision.
5. Trusting and collaborating with subordinates.
6. Focusing on the needs of society.
7. Aiming to serve these needs.
8. Prioritizing the public good over personal interests.

5.2. Furthermore, according to Machiavellian principles, for a teacher to become the principal of a school, they must:

1. Use all available means to achieve this goal.
2. Deceive and divide colleagues, exploiting every opportunity without it being considered immoral.

5.3. Once the individual becomes the school principal:

1. They will be centralized, keeping control over all actions and not delegating initiatives or responsibilities to teachers.
2. They will not promote collaboration or foster good relationships among teachers.
3. They will manipulate and deceive colleagues to gain their support.
4. They will not trust their colleagues.

Overall, a Machiavellian principal seeks personal elevation and controls all positions because they are reluctant to distribute significant tasks to the existing teaching staff of the school.

On the opposite side, according to Total Quality Management, a teacher should be recognized and chosen by their colleagues based on their abilities. Once the principal's position is earned:

1. The principal values the qualifications of each teacher and fairly distributes duties among them.
2. They do not pursue personal success but foster a positive environment in which a team of educators can work together for the smooth operation of the school and the satisfaction of students, parents, and society at large.

3. They continuously work on improving the educational product and never become complacent in their role.
4. Their goal is to eliminate problems and ensure the smooth operation of the school, achieving this through collaboration and honest relationships with other educators.

In conclusion, this paper attempts to connect two different approaches: Machiavelli's and Deming's. This connection, however, is indicative rather than strictly compatible, as Deming's principles focus on collaboration and system enhancement, whereas Machiavelli emphasizes the use of power and strategy to achieve goals.

6. PROPOSALS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Building on the Machiavellian-type counterexample developed in this paper in relation to Deming's principles, further research could be conducted in both primary and secondary education schools. The aim of this proposed research would be to assess the outcomes of the counterexample and determine its impact on the operation of school units.

Additionally, a literature review could be carried out to document the consequences of each specific point of the Machiavellian-type counterexample on the management of educational organizations and the evaluation of the corresponding educational system, both at the international and national levels.

REFERENCES

Greek References

- Gerochristou, Ch. (2012). *The Quality of Educational Services in Secondary Education: An Empirical Approach in the Attica Region*. (Master's Thesis). Harokopio University. Athens.
- Zervas, Ch. (2015). *Management, Leadership, and Ethics: The Machiavellian Model*. (Master's Thesis). National and Kapodistrian University of Athens and University of Peloponnese, Kalamata.
- Zymarakos, S. (2018). *The Influence of the Machiavellian Leadership Model on Organizational Change in the Shipping Industry*. (Master's Thesis). University of Western Attica.
- Karambatos, N.D. (2016). *The Dark Personality in the Workplace: A Case Study*. (Master's Thesis). University of Piraeus, Piraeus.
- Korkotidou, D.K. (2018). *Machiavellianism as a Counterexample to Total Quality Management*. (Master's Thesis). Alexander Technological Educational Institute of Thessaloniki, Thessaloniki.
- Manti, E. (2020). *From Plato and Thucydides to Machiavelli: Power Issues and the Ethical Implications of Leadership Phenomena*. (Master's Thesis). University of Piraeus, Piraeus. Retrieved from: <https://dione.lib.unipi>

Foreign References

- Belschak F. D., Den Hartog D. N. & De Hoogh A. H. B. (2018). Angels and Demons: The Effect of Ethical Leadership on Machiavellian Employees' Work Behaviors. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 1-12. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2018.01082
- Bruschi, F. (2020). A Necessary but Impossible Political Practice: Althusser between Machiavelli and Marx. *Historical Materialism* 28.1 85–113. doi:10.1163/1569206X-00001721
- Cosans C.E.& C. S. Reina. (2017). The Leadership Ethics of Machiavelli's Prince. *Article in Business Ethics Quarterly*. 275-300. DOI: 10.1017/beq.2017.13
- Davis E. A. (2023). New Perspective on Machiavellian Leadership. *Political Research Quarterly*, 76 (4), 1805–1813.
- Emilda J. D. & Vijayalakshmi, S. (2017). Effect of Presentation Skill on Machiavellianism among School Administrators. *Scholarly Research Journal for Interdisciplinary Studies*, 4(36), 6970-6975, Online ISSN 2278-8808, <https://doi.org/10.21922/srjis.v4i36.10069>.
- Erkutlu H. & Chafra J. (2019). Leader Machiavellianism and follower silence The mediating role of relational identification and the moderating role of psychological distance. *European Journal of Management and Business Economics*. 28 (3), 323-342 Emerald Publishing Limited 2444-8494 DOI 10.1108/EJMBE-09-2018-0097
- Genau H. A., Blickle G., Schütte N., & Meurs J. A. (2022). Machiavellian Leader Effectiveness the Moderating Role of Political Skill *Journal of Personnel Psychology* 21(1), 1–10 <https://doi.org/10.1027/1866-5888/a000284>

- Graham, J H. (1996) Machiavellian project managers: do they perform better?. *International Journal of Project Management*. 14(2), 67-74.
- Hamilton C. (2017). Does Machiavelli's The Prince Have Relevant Lessons for Modern High-Tech Managers and Leaders?. *Technology Innovation Management Review* August 2017, 7(8), 40-47.
- Hammali, A. & Nastiezaie, N. (2022). The effect of Machiavelli leadership on destructive organizational behaviors through mediation job stress. *International Journal of Psychology and Educational Studies*, 9(2), 272-282. <https://dx.doi.org/10.52380/ijpes.2022.9.2.319>
- Jones, D. N., & Paulhus, D. L. (2009). Machiavellianism. In M. R. Leary & R. H. Hoyle (Eds.), *Handbook of individual differences in social behavior* (pp. 93–108). The Guilford Press.
- Liyanaganage, N., Fernando M. & Gibbons B. (2023) The Emotional Machiavellian: Interactions Between Leaders and Employees. *Journal of Business Ethics*, (186), 657–673. Ανακτήθηκε από: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-022-05233-8>
- Macaulay M. & Lawton A. (2003). Misunderstanding Machiavelli in Management. *Philosophy of Management*, 1-15. DOI: 10.5840/pom2003333
- Manara MU, van Gils S, Nübold A and Zijlstra F. (2020). Corruption, Fast or Slow? Ethical Leadership Interacts With Machiavellianism to Influence Intuitive Thinking and Corruption. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 11:578419, 1-17, doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2020.578419
- Pillai, S. & Muncherji, N. (2019). Knowledge Hiding & Machiavellianism: An Empirical Analysis *Amity Journal of Management Research* 4 (1), 61-73
- Rehman, U. & Shahnawaz, M. G. (2018). Machiavellianism, job autonomy and counterproductive work behaviour among Indian managers. *Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 34, 83-88. <https://doi.org/10.5093/jwop2018a10>
- Rehman, U. & Shahnawaz, M. G. (2021). Machiavellianism and task-orientated leadership: moderating effect of job autonomy. *Leadership, Education, Personality: An Interdisciplinary Journal*. 3, 79–85 <https://doi.org/10.1365/s42681-021-00024-7>
- Schippers MC, Rauch A, Belschak FD and Hulsink W. (2019). Entrepreneurial Intentions of Teams: Sub-Dimensions of Machiavellianism Interact With Team Resilience. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 10:2607. 1-15. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2019.02607
- Selvarajan, P, Senarathna A. (2023). Phenomenological Review of Machiavellianism in Organizations. *Journal of Business and Technology*. 7(1). 25-36. ISSN 2738-2028. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4038/jbt.v7i1.106>
- Shahibudin I. (2016) The Machiavellianism, Need for Power and Political Behavior in School Management: A Malaysian Case. *Proceeding of The International Conference on Government & Public Affairs*. ISBN 978-983-44661-7-6.
- Webster, K., Litchka, P. (2020). Planning for Effective School Leadership: Teachers' Perceptions of the Leadership Skills and Ethical Behaviors of School Principals. *Educational Planning*. 27 (1), 31-47.
- Williams, G M. (1995). Machiavellian Attitudes Acknowledged by Principals of Tennessee Secondary Schools. *Electronic Theses and Dissertations*. Paper 2827. <https://dc.etsu.edu/etd/2827>

Citation: Keramida Konstantia, "A Hypothetical Machiavellian-Type Evaluation System in Education: Contrasting and Reversing the Key Principles of Total Quality Management" *International Journal of Humanities Social Sciences and Education (IJHSSE)*, vol 12, no. 5, 2025, pp. 7-19. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.20431/2349-0381.1206002>.

Copyright: © 2025 Author. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.