The Effect of Machiavelli Leadership on Destructive Organizational Behaviors Through Mediation Job Stress

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effect of Machiavelli leadership on destructive organizational behaviors through mediation job stress. This study is an applied and correlation research method based on structural equation modeling. 191 elementary school teachers of Sarbaz city were studied by stratified random sampling method. To collect information, three questionnaires were used: Machiavelli leadership, job stress and destructive organizational behaviors. For data analysis the Pearson correlation coefficient and structural equation modeling were used by SPSS and Lisrel software. Based on the results the direct effect of Machiavelli leadership on destructive organizational behaviors, the direct effect of Machiavelli leadership on job stress and the direct effect of job stress on destructive organizational behaviors was positive and significant. The indirect effect of Machiavelli leadership on destructive organizational behaviors was also positive and significant with the mediator role of job stress. Thus, can conclude that managers with high Machiavelli increase staff job stress and job stress, in turn, increases destructive organizational behaviors.

Keywords:
Click or tap h Machiavelli leadership, destructive organizational behaviors, job stress.

1. Introduction

Destructive work behaviors, known as deviant behaviors in the workplace, are voluntary behaviors that violate organizational norms and threaten the health of the organization and its members (Moslemi Kaviri, Karimi & Nikmanesh, 2019). Five types of destructive behaviors include misbehavior to others, deviation from production, stealing including taking and using the organization's assets for personal requirements or damaging the organization, sabotage, and time-wasting behaviors. These behaviors are not limited to a certain geographical area and are global in nature (Nasre Esfahani & Heidari, 2019). When people in an organization show destructive behaviors instead of working in compliance with employment rules in the organization, they impose challenges to achieving the organization's goals. An organization, in which employees damage the organization facilities, show various verbal and non-verbal aggressive behaviors, are deliberately absent from work or late, and have many other deviant behaviors, will not succeed in achieving its goals and accomplishing its missions (Golmeymi, Fayaz & Nasri, 2019).

Machiavelli leadership is one of the factors influencing destructive organizational behaviors. Such leaders are less willing to persuade ways or follow moral and spiritual standards (Younus, Danish, Sair, Ramzan & Sheikh, 2020). Leaders who are described as high Machiavellian people are genuine politicians, analyzers, and strategists in their thoughts. They can lead power dynamism in the organization in attempt to abuse power without feeling guilty or ashamed (Stradovnik & Stare, 2018). People with high Machiavellian characteristics

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may use aggressive, profitable, and deviant behaviors to achieve personal and organizational goals, thereby paying less attention to others' welfare. Moreover, Machiavellians do not consider common morals and are commonly known as immoral people (Mohammadi, 2019). In general, lying and being predisposed to deception, controlling the situation in their favor, being ambitious, implementing real impersonation, making division, hurting one's pride, respecting people possessing wealth, power, and fame, role-playing, and doing people favors to achieve goals are among Machiavellian individuals' characteristics (Kazemi, Nazari, Zare & Ramazan, 2020).

One of the possible consequences of Machiavelli leadership is job stress. If there is an imbalance between job status and personal characteristics, job stress occurs in a way that the person can not meet the demands of the workplace (Kouhnavard, Hosseinpour, Honarbakhsh, Ahmadiazad & Pashangpour, 2020). Responsibility uncertainties, high workload, role conflict, bad personal relationships, ineffective communications, work issues, and family are all among stressful agents (Dehghani, Bahariniya, Khaleghi & Servat, 2020). Teaching is considered among stressful jobs. According to some studies, teaching is regarded as one of the ten most stressful jobs in the world. One-third of teachers believe that professional teaching is a stressful job (Sadidi, 2019). Teachers' job stress is associated with different job outcomes, such as relocation intention, low job satisfaction, job burnout, inefficiency in teaching, and inefficiency in classroom management (Hamidi & Shamloo, 2021).

The schools' leadership style plays a significant role in school quality, teachers' job satisfaction, organizational culture, and teacher's motivation (Barani & Nastiezaie, 2020). However, leadership does not always have a bright and positive aspect, and its dark and negative aspects should be highlighted. One of the negative leadership styles is Machiavelli leadership. The Machiavelli's leadership is destructive and a voluntary behavior from the leader and most employees see it as deviant and harmful behavior that has costs for people or organizations (Mohammadi, 2019). In many schools, there are signs of destructive and despotic leadership, such as lack of clear goals for teachers and the principal, hostile relationships between the principal, teachers, students, and parents, strong emphasis on organizational rules and mission, mistrust and dishonesty in conversations, emphasis on working independently (instead of teamwork and participation), greater use punishment, feelings of insecurity and lack of support, controlling interactions and conversations between colleagues, and being risk aversion (Epitropoulos, 2019). Such school principals create job stress for teachers. According to studies, most teachers are under severe stress and a large part of this stress is due to their profession; in terms of job stress, 30.5 percent of teachers are in high risk area and 3.2 percent of them are in very high risk area (Habibi, Basharat & Fadayi, 2007). School principals who use Machiavelli's leadership style not only create more job stress for teachers but also lead to appearing more deviant behaviors for the teachers including wasting class time, delays in entering the classroom, early completion of the class, excessive absenteeism, disobeying the rules, arbitrary treatment with the students, biased evaluation of students, inattention to weak students, lack of coöperation and coördination with colleagues and school agents, communicating with parents without school information, lack of seriousness and carelessness in performing tasks, aggression and physical punishment, giving inappropriate information, pulling the rug from under somebody's feet, disclosing confidential information, taking bribes from students or parents, abusing one's position, tolerating in school property maintenance, backbiting behind colleagues, verbal confrontation with the colleagues, labeling colleagues, tainting and reproaching (Rafiee & Barghi, 2018). Given the complex nature and multidimensional of Machiavelli leadership and destructive organizational behaviors, the relationship between these two variables is not linear and direct, and variables such as job stress intervene in their relationship. Therefore, the main purpose of the current study was to investigate the effect of Machiavelli leadership on destructive organizational behaviors through the mediation of job stress. This study addressed several research hypotheses:

- Machiavelli leadership has a positive and significant effect on the destructive organizational behavior.
- Machiavelli leadership has a positive and significant effect on job stress.
- Job stress has a positive and significant effect on the destructive organizational behavior.
- Machiavelli leadership has a positive and significant effect on the destructive organizational behavior through mediation job stress.

1.1. Theoretical perspective

Machiavellianism is defined as a social behavior strategy that requires influencing others to achieve personal interests and is often against others' interests. Machiavellianism is also viewed as an individual's behavior toward achieving individual goals. Such people do not pay attention to morals and are usually known as immoral people (Götz, Bleidorn & Rentfrow, 2020). Machiavellians are also intensively predisposed to influence, force, control, and find others and do not have effectiveness in interpersonal relationships and common morals (Collison, Vize, Miller & Lynam, 2018). Highly Machiavellian people ignore moral norms to achieve personal goals. One of their characteristics is to be emotionally cold with no closeness in their relationships. Moreover, Machiavellian people are less emotionally involved with people and situations, i.e. they care less about feelings, rights, and requirements of others (Muris, Merckelbach, Otgaar & Meijer 2017). In their interactions with others, they are receptive to cold approaches apart from others and only focus on their interests which are against those of others. Further, Machiavellians are less conscientious since they are more successful in unstructured environments where norms are less explicitly, thereby changing the situation in their own favor (March & Springer, 2019).

Studying immoral behaviors of organizations' employees has a weaker background than studying their efficiency-focused positive behaviors. Destructive organizational behaviors are inappropriate voluntary exercises repeatedly performed by employees. Such exercises oppose incidental and unwanted destructive exercises. Destructive organizational behaviors aim at hurting the organization or its members (Moslemi Kaviri et al., 2019). Such behaviors are observed to be destructive because they disturb or at least impair and corrupt relationships among people and their organizations (Golmeymi et al., 2019). Some examples of destructive work behaviors are organizational invasions, anti-citizen behaviors, crimes, deviation, revenge, bullying, stealing, sabotage, isolation, beating, bothering, abuse, violence, and trying to hide information with no willingness to share information (Nasre Esfahani & Heidari, 2019). Mulki, Jaramilo and Locander (2006) believe that person and positional factors (e.g. job, leadership style, and organizational space and culture) play a significant role in creating destructive behaviors.

Today, job stress has become one of the most common and costly problems in the workplace. The International Labor Organization has considered stress job as the most known phenomenon threatening labor health. According to the World Health Organization, over a half of employees in industrialized countries complain about job stress, with about 10 million people suffering from job stress only in the United States (Ghanei Gheshlagh, Valiei, Rezaei & Rezaei, 2013). According to the occupational safety and health administration, job stress consists of harmful physical and mental responses that are created as a result of non-compatibility and non-coordination between job requirements, resources, and individual abilities (Park, 2007). Job stress can result from disequilibrium between demands and resources or as an overpressure on people beyond their comprehensibility (Dolatshad, Maher, Hosseini & Aghili, 2020). The stress cognitive assessment theory explains inhibiting and challenging stress. Rahimian Aghdam, Safaiyan, Rasoulzadeh & Alizadeh (2020) have suggested that inhibiting stress agents are stressful demands and are evaluated as personal growth and goal achievement destroyers (e.g., role ambiguity, role conflict, and job security). Challenging stress agents involve stressful demands as obstacles, which should be eliminated for enhancing learning, control, personal growth, and success (e.g., high responsibility, challenges, job complications, and high workload).

1.2. Conceptual perspective

One of the characteristics of Machiavellian leaders is violent behavior toward and treatment of their employees and subordinates. When destructive leaders treat their employees destructively and violently, they intentionally or unintentionally urge employees to develop destructive behaviors through creating resentment and negative emotions like anger (Li, Ling & Liu, 2009). The second path through which Machiavellian leaders encourage employees to practice destructive behaviors is the simple message by such leaders that destructive behaviors are relatively common and tolerable. When leaders allow themselves to behave destructively and abusively, employees may also be prone to destructive behaviors (Golparvar & Salahshour, 2016). Thus, the first research hypotheses can be stated as follows: Machiavelli leadership has a positive and significant effect on the destructive organizational behavior.

Destructive and despotic leaders control subordinates through hostile and continuous verbal and nonverbal behaviors (Tepper, 2000). Such leaders engage in behaviors such as disrupting employees, trying to achieve

goals other than intended purposes, stealing organizational resources such as assets, equipment, money, or time, encouraging employees to engage in these activities, and neglecting or even deliberately impeding organizational goals (Tepper et al., 2008). Tandon and Mishra (2017) found that such leaders would threaten the legitimate right of the organization by neglecting or disrupting the goals, resources, tasks, motivation, mental health, and job satisfaction of followers. As a result, employees will experience more job stress by employing a despotic and destructive leadership style in the organization. Thus, the second research hypotheses can be stated as follows: Machiavelli leadership has a positive and significant effect on job stress.

Job stress, which is developed based on role conflict, role ambiguity, role overload, lack of support from colleagues and supervisors, and conflict with them, disturbs one's mental and physical balance. Thus, when people feel that job stress has disturbed their physical and mental balance, they will be apt to practice destructive behaviors if they fail to efficiently cope with experienced stress (Anton, 2009). Fox, Spector, and Miles (2001) found that destructive behaviors or anti-productive behaviors such as isolation, absenteeism, inattention, and disobedience were consequences of stressors and emotions caused by them. Moreover, Boyas and Wind (2010) have suggested that stressful factors in the workplace, such as limited authority, responsibilities and resources, conflict, ambiguity, and inadequate coping skills lead to emotional exhaustion. Then, this feeling of emotional exhaustion tends to direct individuals toward demonstrating destructive organizational behaviors in the form of various negative emotions such as hopelessness, anxiety, and depression. Thus, the third research hypotheses can be stated as follows: Job stress has a positive and significant effect on the destructive organizational behavior.

In the Machiavellian and exploitative leadership style, the leader has little confidence in their subordinates and leader-follower relationships are based on fear and intimidation. In such an environment, employees have little control over what they do and thus have low self-esteem. Under these circumstances, managers force employees to do specific assigned tasks within a short time, or they exercise strict control over employees. In such a situation, employees will experience job stress (Beiginia & Kalantari, 2008). Due to weaknesses in their positive behavioral and functional capacities in establishing healthy human relationships, such leaders provide a psychosocial stressful environment in the workplace, which results in the incidence of destructive behaviors in employees. Thus, the third research hypothesis can be stated as follows: There is a positive relationship between Machiavellian leadership and job stress (Golparvar & Salahshour, 2016) .Thus, the fourth research hypotheses can be stated as follows: Machiavelli leadership has a positive and significant effect on the destructive organizational behavior through mediation job stress .The relationships between Machiavelli leadership, job stress, and destructive organizational behaviors can be illustrated as follows:
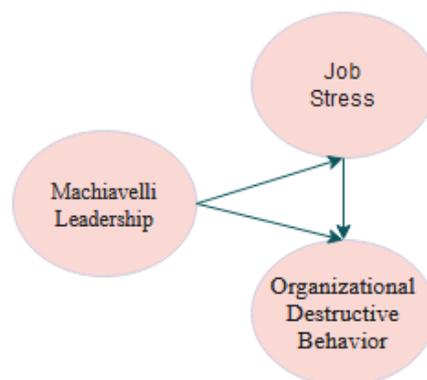

Figure1. Model of the research

2. Methods

2.1. Research Model and Group

The study is a cross-sectional survey. The statistical population included 377 teachers (278 males and 99 females) in elementary schools in Sarbaz City, Sistan and Baluchestan Province, Iran. Given that the individuals were not equal in number in terms of gender (73.74% male and 26.26% female), 191 teachers (141 males and 50 females) were randomly selected in proportion to gender and Cochran's sample size formula.

The sample selection method was such that the researcher obtained the list of primary school teachers by referring to the Sarbaz City Education Organization. Give each teacher a code and randomly select the appropriate sample according to the gender of the teachers so that everyone has an equal chance of being selected. Table 1 provides the demographic information of the participants.

Table 1. *Demographic İnformation of the Participants*

Variable		Frequency	Variable		Frequency
Gender	Male	141	Educational Degree	Diploma & Associate	60
	Female	50		Bachelor	99
Marital Status	Married	130		Master	32
	Unmarried	61			
Employment Status	Permanent	139	Work Experience (years)	<11	82
	Contractual	52		11-20	93
				>20	16

2.2. Instrument

Three questionnaires including Machiavellian Leadership Questionnaire, Job Stress Questionnaire, and Organizational Destructive Behavior Questionnaire were employed for collecting data.

Machiavellian Leadership Questionnaire: It was adapted from the study by Wilson et al. (1996). The questionnaire evaluates Machiavellian leadership using 12 items in four dimensions including over-control, dishonesty, suspicion, and power maintenance willingness (three items for each dimension). Based on 5-point Likert scale from "never" (1) to "always" (5), the questionnaire organized. The minimum and maximum scores in the questionnaire are 12 and 60, respectively, with scores closer to 60 showing a higher Machiavellian leadership style. Two of the items are: 1) The principal tends to tell the teachers what to do and what not to do, and 2) the principal tends to be suspicious about the teachers' abilities.

Job Stress Questionnaire: It was adopted from the Health and Safety Executive Stress Questionnaire (2004). The questionnaire contains 19 items in three micro-scales of role ambiguity (five items), non-control (six items), and work demand (eight items). Based on 5-point Likert scale from "never" (1) to "always" (5), the questionnaire organized. The minimum and maximum scores of the questionnaire are 19 and 95, respectively, with scores closer to 95 demonstrating higher job stress. Two of the items are: 1) I do not clearly know what the workgroup expects from me, and 2) I have to ignore some of my tasks due to the high workload.

Organizational Destructive Behavior Questionnaire: It was adapted from the study by Khorasani Taroghi et al. (2018). The questionnaire consists of 14 items in three dimensions of inappropriate behavior (four items), unfavorable political behaviors (six items), and narcissism (four items). Based on 5-point Likert scale from "never" (1) to "always" (5), the questionnaire organized. The minimum and maximum scores are 14 and 70, respectively, with scores closer to 70 indicating more destructive behaviors in the organization. The following expressions are among the items: 1) Teachers are disrespected in the school, and 2) there is a climate of flattery in the school.

By using the Cronbach's alpha test, the reliability was 0.883, 0.926, and 0.894 for Machiavellian leadership, job stress, and organizational destructive behavior questionnaires, respectively.

2.3. Data analysis technique

Descriptive statistics, including frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis, as well as inferential statistics, including Pearson correlation coefficient and structural equation modeling (SEM), used to analyze the data in SPSS 21 and LISREL.

3. Findings

SEM was used to investigate the hypotheses of the study. Table 2 represents the descriptive indices of the variables including mean, standard deviation, as well as skewness and kurtosis.

Table 2. *Descriptive Statistics for the Study Variables*

Variable	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Machiavelli Leadership	22.188	6.471	0.697	0.113
Job Stress	35.743	12.356	1.051	0.811
Organizational Destructive Behavior	25.062	7.286	0.927	1.294

In causal modeling, the distribution of variables should be normal. Thus, the absolute value of the skewness and kurtosis of the variables should not be greater than 2. As shown in Table 2, the absolute value of the skewness and kurtosis of all the variables was in line with the desired standard. Thus, the assumption normality of the variables confirmed. In addition, before implementing SEM, the relationship between the variables of the study was investigated using the Pearson correlation coefficient test:

Table 3. Correlation coefficient of variables

Variable	Machiavelli Leadership	Job Stress	Organizational Destructive Behavior
Machiavelli Leadership	1		
Job Stress	0.601	1	
Organizational Destructive Behavior	0.611	0.656	1

As shown in Table 3, a significant relationship observed between Machiavellian leadership with job stress and destructive organizational behaviors (r=0.601 and 0.611, respectively), while job stress was positively related to destructive organizational behaviors (r=0.656).

Moreover, a structural equation model used to test the relationship between the variables of the study. Model fit assessed before investigating the assumptions of the study. The size of model fit used in determining the relationship between the overt and covert variables. According to researchers, fit indices include goodness-of-fit index (GFI), comparative fit index (CFI), root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), and root mean residual (RMR). Regarding the last three indices, the proper amount of fit was less than 0.8, 0.08, and 0.05, respectively (Kareshki, 2016). As shown in Table 3, the fit results were proper.

Table 4. *Fit İndexes of the Theoretical Model of the Study*

	χ2/df	GFI	CFI	RMR	RMSEA
Optimal amount	<3	>0.94	>0.9	<0.05	<0.1
Value obtained	1.43	0.92	0.98	0.049	0.074

To analyze the data, the theoretical model for each assumption should be processed to determine the amount with which the collected data can support the theoretical model. To answer this question, the quantitative indices of model fit (CFI, GFI, SRMR …) were used. If the general indices are acceptable or, in other words, the theoretical model is approved, in-model relationships are assessed. These mutual relationships are the regression coefficients related to assumption and factor loads of each item. Figure 2 displays all the relationships between the covert variables and factor loadings of each item.
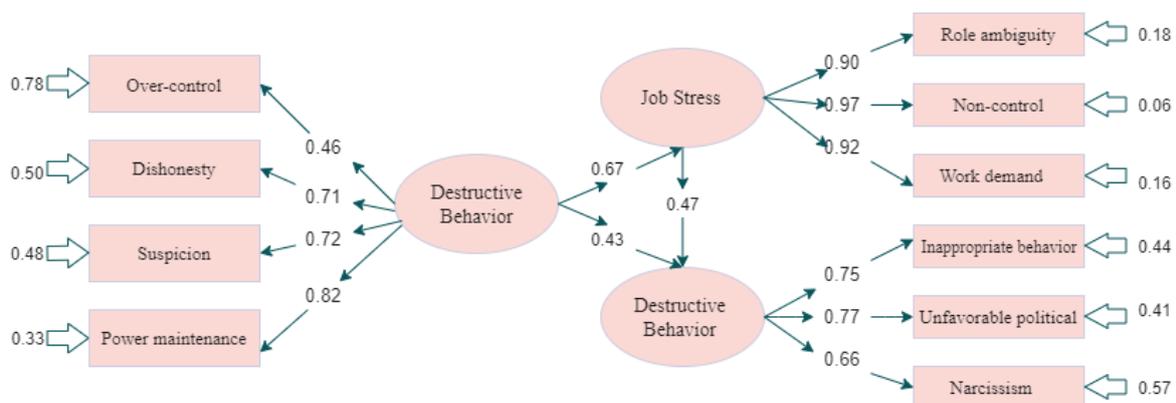

Figure 2. Fitted model of the study (standard cofficients)

According to the model (Figure 2), the research hypotheses can be analyzed as follows:

Table 5. *Path Coefficients for the Study of Research Hypotheses*

Hypotheses	Path coefficients	t	Conclusion
Machiavelli Leadership → Destructive Organizational Behavior	0.43	3.67	Accept
Machiavelli Leadership → Job Stress	0.67	5.51	Accept
Job Stress → Destructive Organizational Behavior	0.47	5	Accept
Machiavelli Leadership → Job Stress → Destructive Organizational Behavior	0.314	3.70	Accept

According to the model and table 5, the direct effect of Machiavelli leadership on organizational deviant behaviors (β=0.43, t=3.67), the direct effect of Machiavelli leadership on job stress (β=0.67, t=5.51), and the direct effect of job stress on organizational deviant behaviors (β=0.47, t=5) was positive and significant. Also, to investigate the indirect effect of Machiavelli leadership on organizational deviant behaviors mediated by job stress the Sobel test used. The Sobel t-test value was 3.70 (p-value = 0.001). Therefore, the indirect effect of Machiavelli leadership on organizational deviant behaviors mediated by job stress (β=0.314, t=3.70) was also positive and significant. Also, the analysis of variance (VAF) was used to evaluate the effect of the mediating variable, which is obtained by dividing the indirect effect by the total effect and its value was 0.422.

4. Conclusion and Discussion

The present study aimed to investigate the relationship between Machiavellian leadership and destructive organizational behaviors with the mediating role of job stress. The findings indicated Machiavellian leadership has a positive and significant effect on destructive organizational behaviors. In other words, leaders with high Machiavellianism tended to control, influence, threaten, force, and deceive people and to be self-centered. They showed behaviors toward the organization and people, which consequently caused the employees to practice destructive organizational behaviors. Shaw, Erickson and Nassirzadeh (2014) believe that leaders with destructive behaviors can negatively influence productivity, financial processes, and employees' spirits in the organization. According to Schyns and Schilling (2013), leaders with destructive behaviors are considered as duty models by their followers. They believe that negative behaviors are necessary within the organization. In fact, destructive behaviors of leaders can lay the ground for employees' deviant behaviors. Followers of leaders with destructive behaviors face more stress and hopelessness, have less self-steam, and tend to accomplish tasks with reduced quantity and quality. They rarely share their information and knowledge in the organization and have high political interests. Mojtahedzadeh (2009) demonstrated that inappropriate leadership styles could result in employees' deviation and that destructive leadership styles would enhance the probability of official corruption among employees by increasing the feeling of job insecurity, causing non-commitment, and reducing incentives. Further, Yousefi, Sharifiyan, Ghahraman Tabrizi and Zaraki (2016) showed that immoral criteria of coaches as leaders of teams and people would cause aggressive tendencies among athletes. Golparvar et al. (2012) believe that leaders who treat their subordinates inappropriately and cruelly increase the probability of immoral behaviors such as deviant, anti-productive, and anti-social behaviors.

In addition, Machiavellian leadership has a positive and significant effect on job stress. In fact, leaders with high levels of destructive behaviors, hostility, and negative emotions were more likely to provide their staff with a stressful environment. Such leaders are a potential source of stress. Leaders' destructive behaviors can impair organizational productivity, financial performance, and staff spirit and thus increase job stress in employees (Khorasani Toroghi, 2018). Furthermore, according to the social exchange theory, leaders who mistreat their staff (e.g., ridiculing and humiliating them, using obscene language toward staff, showing anger to the innocent, mocking staff, making staff feel incapable, constantly reminding them of their errors, faults, and failures, trampling their obligations toward the staff, violating employees' privacy, etc.), cause them experience a set of behavioral, emotional, and perceptional states (Tepper, 2000), the most common of which are job stress, job burnout, and job alienation (Harvey, Stoner, Hochwarter & Kacmar, 2007).

Furthermore, job stress has a positive and significant effect on destructive organizational behaviors. In other words, according to the stress/non-equilibrium/compensation approach, job stress can eliminate individuals' emotional, cognitive, and behavioral equilibrium. Disequilibrium has a motivational nature and makes individuals restore their lost equilibrium and show different behaviors. Additionally, according to the

stress/non-equilibrium/compensation approach, equilibrium loss is associated with the survival threat. Thus, it involves a motivational nature. Hence, when individuals feel that job stress violates their mental and physical equilibrium and they are not able to efficiently handle their experienced stress, destructive behaviors may be considered as one of their behavioral choices (Golparvar, Kamkar & Javadian, 2012). In support of the theoretical explanation provided on the relationship between job stress and destructive organizational behaviors, many studies also reported a positive relationship between them (Salami, 2010, Van Jaarsveld et al., 2010, Hershcovis et al., 2007).

Finally, Machiavellian leadership has a positive and significant effect on destructive organizational behaviors with the mediating role of job stress. In this regard, abusive supervision, which is a result of the Machiavellian leadership style, can impose stress on people in different manners. From the cognitive appraisal perspective, the relationship between abusive supervision and job stress among employees can be explained through experience of failure, perceived unfairness, and inability. Based on this perspective, when supervisors mistreat employees differently and in various positions, they, in fact, destroy the image, capability and competency of employees. Capability and competency destruction create a feeling of unfairness among employees and weakens their self-efficacy. In the process of an intra-psychological chain, individuals gradually lose their qualifications and skills required for employment and thus are more likely to experience job stress (Tepper, 2000). In support of this view, Harris, Kacmar and Zivnuska (2007) demonstrated that abusive leadership was negatively associated with formal performance assessment and performance assessment by the supervisor. Furthermore, Harvey, Stoner, Hochwarter and Kacmar (2007) suggested that abusive leadership was significantly related to job stress among employees. In turn, job stress may be followed by destructive organizational behaviors. According to the job tress/emotion/anti-productive behavior (which is a form of destructive behaviors) model, destructive behaviors in an organization can essentially be a response to job stress agents in the workplace. According to this model, after evaluating events of the workplace, individuals consider factors threatening their well-being as job pressures, which cause them to show emotional reactions such as anger and stress. Accordingly, this assessment may involve different responses such as mental and physical pressure, as well as reactions such as destructive behaviors (Fox et al., 2001). Theoretically, when people face occupational stress, they deal with it and try to reduce its physical and psychological consequences. These coping efforts consume a great deal of energy; they make teachers emotionally exhausted and increase their deviant behaviors (Golparvar, et al., 2012). According to the conserving of resources theory, human beings have different psychological, personal, and social resources to protect themselves and cope with any condition they face (Babakus, Yavas, & Ashill, 2009). When resources available to individuals are threatened by various factors such as occupational stress, a possible reaction is to feel anxiety, worry, and insecurity (Seiger & Wiese, 2009). On the other hand, the feeling of job insecurity, which itself acts as a stressor, threatens resources to survive a job, thereby causing deviant reactions to the situation (Chirumbolo, 2015). On the other hand, if people experience less occupational stress and feel job security, they avoid deviant behaviors since such behaviors can play role as a threat to job security and survival resources (Yi, & Wang, 2014).

In summary, Machiavellian leadership is positively and significantly associated with destructive organizational behaviors both directly and indirectly with the mediating role of job stress. Thus, proposed to managers and policy makers in organizations to provide educational plans and organize training workshops to identify signs of Machiavellian behaviors in managers, job stress, and destructive organizational behaviors, and to provide solutions to such problems. The study had some limitations. Since the education department of Sarbaz City provided the researchers only with information about the teachers' gender, they selected only based on gender. Other researchers are recommended to consider other demographic characteristics of teachers such as age, education level, education field, and management experience in future works. Another limitation was that the data collected only through questionnaires. Thus, given that the responses were self-reported, biases may have occurred despite ensuring the participants about the confidentiality of the data. In future studies, researchers are recommended to use qualitative tools such as interviews and document reviews. The other research limitation was that the study was geographically limited to a specific area of Iran. Views of teachers in Sarbaz City cannot be fully representative of teachers' views throughout the country, and this restricts the spatial generalization of the research. To increase the generalizability of the results, similar research should be conducted in other cities and on other teachers. It should also be acknowledged that the findings of the study are not fully definitive because the relationships found among the research variables cannot be considered as causal (cause and effect) relationships and are merely correlation.

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