



Forming the machiavellianism dark leaders' behaviour pattern: A thematic analysis within the context of public sector in Bangladesh

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Abstract

In recent times, research on dark leadership has offered several definitions of it, focusing on both causes and processes, has received scholarly attention, but research remains limited in public sector of the Global South, particularly Bangladesh. This study investigates the political factors and examines how the political factors shape leadership behaviour pattern through leadership individual capability within the public sector context of Bangladesh. A qualitative research approach was employed to investigate the research questions using thematic analysis. The study involved a sample of 42 respondents from public sector. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, field notes, and relevant documents provided by the respondents. Analysis identifies 3 themes of political factors (political discrimination, socio-cultural norms and policies, political power and freedom), 3 mediating conditions rooted in leadership individual capability (occupational capability, lifestyles choice capability, power distances capability) that shape 3 patterns of Machiavellianism leadership behaviour (gained personal power, gained wealth, manipulative and coercive controllers) has emerged and sustained. The study is intended to develop a conceptual framework explaining how political factors influence the emergence of Machiavellianism leadership behaviour through individual leadership capabilities within the research context. The conceptual model encourages public sector executives and leaders to understand how political factors directly affect individual capabilities and, in turn, influence leadership behaviour. The study identifies 3 themes that offer valuable insights for public sector practitioners and policymakers in Bangladesh. By adopting a holistic perspective grounded in the Global South context, the study contributes to the existing body of knowledge on dark leadership, which has been predominantly shaped by Western, trait-based perspectives.

Keywords: Public Sector, Dark Leadership, Machiavellianism, Political Power, Individual Capability, Socio Cultural Norms and Policies

Introduction

In the Global South context, particularly Bangladesh, public sector is potentially significant to increase social, economic and environmental growth. Conducting research within the context necessarily significant in terms of socio-cultural structure, and they are embedded in political factors that influence leadership practices (Tepper, Simon & Park, 2017)^[48]. Public sectors are keen to integrate best leadership practices to maintain social, environmental and economic growth, this could be gained by incorporating a good leadership practice (Borins, 2000; Tepper, Simon & Park, 2017)^[8, 48]. Most literatures have failed to address socio-cultural structure such as political factors that influence leadership individual capability to shape leadership behaviour, particularly Bangladesh (Farooq & Ibrahim, 2017)^[21]. The objective of understanding political factors affects dark leadership through leadership individual capability within the research context is an emerging concept. Existing research has examined dark leadership from a broader perspective (Higgs, 2009; Alvesson, 2020)^[2, 24]. However, there remains a significant gap in the literature concerning dark leadership within the public sector context of Bangladesh.

A wide range of leadership theories introduced over the past decades (Clark & Harrison, 2018)^[15]. The extent leadership theories predominantly focused on good side of leadership (Alvesson, 2020)^[2], limited scholarly attention to dark side of leadership (Higgs, 2009; Clark & Harrison, 2018)^[24], and

how leadership functions (Tourish, 2013)^[15, 50]. Similarly, numerous research put attention to leadership processes and its consequences (Furtner, Maran & Rauthmann, 2017; Alvesson, 2020)^[2, 22]. Leaders with dark personalities are notorious for exercise their power negatively to influence followers is dark side of the leadership behavior (Tepper, Simon & Park, 2017)^[48]. Existing research found that destructive leadership is associated with dark leadership trait which brings problems for the organisations due to its negative impact on followers' work-related basic needs, job performance, workplace outcome, attendance, and retention (Tepper, Simon & Park, 2017)^[48]. The positive results are associated with leaders, but definite risks are still involved due to ignore dark leadership behaviour (Schyns & Schilling, 2013; Fatfouta, 2019)^[20, 47]. Similarly, studies focused on ethical leadership perspectives but relatively a little attention to dark leadership (Clark & Harrison, 2018)^[15]. There is no established literature within the context of public sector in Bangladesh; therefore, this context is significant to the study.

The aim of this study is to assess how socio-cultural structure such as political power influences dark leadership behaviour pattern through leadership individual capability and subsequently develop a new conceptual framework within the research context. A qualitative research approach was adopted, employing thematic analysis to analyse the data. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, supplemented by field notes and relevant documentary

sources. The study justified the development of a new conceptual framework within the research context, contrasting with the existing literature. The findings deepen the current understanding about the political factors shape leadership individual capability that effects dark leaders' behaviour. The study conceptualised a new holistic approach to investigate political power on dark leadership behaviour, which has never been addressed within the research context; consequently, this study contributes to the existing literature.

Literature Review

1. Dark leadership and The Dark Triad of Personality

Leadership is often conceptualised as an ambiguous and multidimensional construct, predominantly characterised by its goal-influencing functions and context-dependent processes (Antonakis & Day, 2018) ^[3]. The existing literature offers several definitions on dark side of leadership, which generally falling into 3 broad categories. The first category emphasises the negative outcomes (Thoroughgood *et al.*, 2018) ^[49]. The second category considers the leadership process as the basis of their definition (Krasikova, Green & LeBreton, 2013) ^[29]. In contrast, the third category, focuses on both outcomes and processes (Kellerman, 2004) ^[27]. The diverse definitions made the leadership styles are very complicated with a variety of constructs (Tepper, Simon & Park, 2017; Banks *et al.*, 2018) ^[5, 48]. Nevertheless, the relationships do not indicate that all constructs have similar or are not valuable nuances (Lee & Gibbons, 2017; Tepper, Simon & Park, 2017) ^[30, 48].

The dark triad refers to 3 personality traits of Narcissism, Machiavellianism and Psychopathy (Paulhus, 2014) ^[34]. The 3 personality traits are known as dark personality traits due to destructive and negative outcomes (Rauthmann, 2011; Paulhus, 2014) ^[34, 36]. The concept Narcissism and Psychopathy introduced in the clinical literature, conversely the concept Machiavellianism derive from the philosophy (Christie & Geis, 1970) ^[13]. The Machiavellianism, Narcissism, and Psychopathy overlap empirically, which have many common features of manipulation, duplicity, selfishness, self-promotion, emotional coldness, and aggressiveness (Paulhus & Williams, 2002) ^[35]. Machiavellianism may be defined as a leader's desire to get maximum own interests, benefits, achieving individual goals, opportunism by using people as a tool (Bereczkei, 2017) ^[8].

Machiavellianism refers to a tactic strive for gaining and maintaining power, particularly, they are coercive controllers, unethical behaviour mistrust in human nature and opportunism (Paulhus, 2014; Bereczkei, 2017; Furtner, Maran & Rauthmann, 2017) ^[8, 22, 34], and their prime motive is to obtain wealth, power and status (Jones & Figueredo, 2013) ^[26]. The term Narcissism refers to the different dark triad of personalities of a leader, which characterised by grandiosity, self-love, egocentric self-image, self-obsession, self-exhibition and inflated self-views (Higgs, 2009; Campbell *et al.*, 2011) ^[11, 24], they are also characterised by selfish behaviour, egoistic (Paulhus, 2014) ^[34], and feeling of superiority, the seeking of attention, strive for attention and admiration from others (Kowalski *et al.*, 2018) ^[28]. Psychopathy is characterised by thrill seeking, high impulsivity, aggressive behaviour, uncontrolled aggression, low empathy, callousness, and interpersonal manipulation

(Paulhus & Williams, 2002) ^[35], it is associated with dysfunctional impulsivity, proactive aggression (Cima & Raine, 2009) ^[14].

2. Public Sector and Leaders' Behaviour

Bangladesh, as part of the Global South, represents a culturally diverse context shaped by a range of religious beliefs, traditions, social norms and values, as well as distinctive educational and social practices. Public sectors adhere to government policies to gain sustainable development goals SDGs in Bangladesh focusing on social, economic and environmental sustainability (UNDP, 2018), executing SDGs' policy to promote sustainable business success (Farooq & Ibrahim, 2017) ^[21]. This role is particularly significant in the Global South, where public sector contributes to social transformation, poverty reduction, and economic growth through government planning, policymaking, decision-making, and policy implementation. Through these functions, the public sector can contribute substantially to national development and progress towards the SDGs (SAFTA, 2018; UNDP, 2018). Public sector governance in Bangladesh is characterised by a bureaucratic system of centralised authority, through which the bureaucracy plays a significant role in national development and public administration. In the Global South, particularly Bangladesh, the bureaucratic system has historically assumed a more prominent role in national progress than is typically observed in Western contexts (Salahuddin, Khan & Akram, 2008) ^[41]. Furthermore, public sector leadership and public affairs in Bangladesh have traditionally been influenced and shaped by government institutions and political parties (Haque, 2007). The hierarchical structure of bureaucratic systems, the centralisation of process and leadership approach are significant to the public sectors' functions, which build fairness, efficiency, and predictability. However, the centralisation of power led to sluggish reaction to capture innovation, technology, resilience, social and climate change, and ignore employees' right (Abdullah, Boyle & Johan, 2011) ^[1]. Senior executives are taskmasters rather than facilitators, work is regarded as boring and juniors live in fear in a high-power distance with centralised power, where employees depend on the senior who execute power (Salahuddin, Khan & Akram, 2008; Zhangwen & Hoque, 2017) ^[41, 52]. Thus, public sector experiencing potential difficulty and challenges to sustain, and making the sectors profitable (Zhangwen & Hoque, 2017) ^[52]. Socio-cultural structures may foster bureaucratic practices and contribute to the development of corrupt behavioural patterns among leaders. Despite its potential implications for organisational governance and public administration, dark leadership behaviour in the public sector remains an emerging area of research that has received limited scholarly attention (Farooq & Ibrahim, 2017) ^[21]. In this regard, the public sector in Bangladesh represents a significant research context for examining how socio-cultural and institutional factors shape the emergence and manifestation of dark leadership behaviours.

3. Leadership Competency Framework

Leadership behaviour associates with a leadership competencies framework focussing on how these relates to the leadership behaviour and practices. The study concludes by critically examining the competency framework

approach to leadership behaviour and leadership development. Although competency frameworks seek to identify the competencies associated with effective performance (Bartram, 2005) ^[6], their application to innovation leadership raises important questions regarding the extent to which leadership effectiveness can be defined and measured through predetermined competency and capability sets. In particular, the usefulness of static competency models in capturing the adaptive and dynamic capabilities required of innovation leaders. Moreover, competency should not be understood simply in terms of knowledge and skills; it also encompasses the ability to apply these capabilities effectively within organisational and situational contexts.

The concept of competency and capability have been widely discussed in the leadership literature, although there is no universally agreed definition of the term. (Asame & Wakrim, 2018) ^[4] conceptualised competency as a combination of personal characteristics, including knowledge, skills, and attitudes that enables an individual to perform an activity within a particular context and at a specified level of performance. Similarly, (Sampson & Fytros, 2008) define competency in terms of capacity to perform a job or function based on their knowledge, skills, and attitudes. These definitions highlight an important distinction between possessing knowledge or skills and being able to apply them effectively in practice. Social intelligent leaders may therefore be better positioned to recognise social cues, identify the expertise required for particular situations, and modify their behaviour to influence others (Zaccaro, 2002) ^[53]. Cognitive intelligence provides a complementary perspective by focusing on how leaders process information, interpret complex situations, and make decisions (Richard, Boyatzis & Ratti, 2009) ^[37]. Nevertheless, the assumption that stronger cognitive capabilities necessarily result in better leadership or organisational outcomes requires caution. Cognitive capability may facilitate effective decision-making, but innovation also depends on social processes, resources, psychological safety, risk tolerance, and the willingness of others to support and implement new ideas.

Intrapersonal intelligence provides a further dimension by focusing on leaders' understanding and regulation of their own emotions and psychological processes. The importance of understanding personal feelings, including optimism, self-expression, self-awareness, self-confidence, self-control, and adaptability, provide examples of characteristics associated with effective leadership (Singh, Manser & Dali, 2013) ^[45]. These capabilities may be particularly important in innovation environments because innovation involves uncertainty, failure, ambiguity, and resistance to established practices. Social, cognitive, interpersonal, and intrapersonal competencies address different aspects of leadership behaviour, but considerable conceptual overlap exists between these categories. A theoretically grounded clustering of competencies is therefore required to improve the validity of a leadership assessment framework. The literature suggests that effective leadership competency is multidimensional rather than dependent on a single form of intelligence or capability.

Ruben (2019) ^[39] provides a broader perspective by arguing that competencies can be considered at the individual, team, and organisational levels because leadership behaviour is also shaped by interactions with colleagues, teams,

organisational structures, and the wider environment. The literature specifically addresses leadership capabilities and competencies remains fragmented (Rickards & Moger, 2006; De Jong & den Hartog, 2007) ^[18, 38]. Dark leaders' behaviour has been explored through various overlapping and differing conceptualisations, including Destructive leadership (Thoroughgood *et al.*, 2018) ^[49], Machiavellianism (Paulhus, 2014) ^[34], Narcissistic leadership (Paulhus, 2014; Bernerth, 2022) ^[7, 34], Psychopathic leadership (Boddy, 2017) ^[9] and Exploitative leadership (Schmid, Pircher & Peus, 2019) ^[44], however, these conceptualisations may differ in different contexts. Limited literature focuses on dark leaders' behaviour in public sector within Bangladesh. The aim is to review existing theories, identify political factors and leadership individual capability shapes dark leaders' behaviour. Subsequently, the following research questions were identified to direct the research are;

RQ1. What are the political factors causes of dark leaders' behaviour?

RQ2. What constitutes the leadership individual capability of dark leaders' behaviour?

RQ3. How are the political factors identified in RQ1 could influence the leadership individual capability?

RQ4. Based on the answer to the RQs 1, 2, and 3, what would be the pattern of darks' leaders' behaviour?

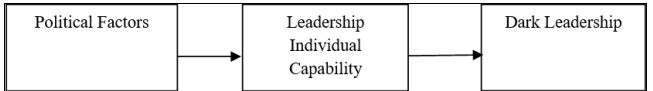


Fig 1: Political factors impacting on dark leadership through individual capability

Methodology

1. Sampling Method

Thematic data analysis was applied to explore the qualitative research questions and identified the insights into how the dark leaders' behaviour patterns emerged and its causes and effects (Mills, Durepos & Wiebe, 2010) ^[33]. The study used purposive sampling for a single unique case as an example of public sectors' directors, deputy directors, and deputy secretary, join secretary were participated in the research. Respondents were chosen considering their practical experience and knowledge about the research topics and who wanted to be taken part in the interview and who considered being the best provided significant insights about what and how causes dark leaders' behaviour into the given situations (Mills, Durepos & Wiebe, 2010; Corbin & Strauss, 2015) ^[16, 33]. 42 participants were chosen from 21 various public sectors; their aged group between 30 and 60. Each 2 respondents were chosen from each public sectors, 21 males and 21 females (Charmaz, 2024) ^[12]. The data collection through in-depth interview started on 15 June 2024 and finished on 15 September 2024. The interview sessions typically lasted 1 hour and thirty minutes maximum. Initial contact with participants was established via email to arrange a mutually convenient date and time for the interview. The public sectors' names were labelled with code numbers, P1 to P21 and the respondents' names were labelled with code numbers, C1 to C42.

2. Data Collection

The study used primary data collection techniques and data were used to explore multiple themes of dark leaders'

behaviour, and providing evidence of the collected data which facilitated detailed in-depth insights into the given situations and validated the research data (Simons, 2009; Easterby-Smith *et al.*, 2018; Charmaz, 2024) ^[12, 19, 46]. This study strictly adheres to ethical guidelines for collecting data and field notes were taken while obtaining data. The in-depth interview is a meticulous primary data source which comprised a mix of open-ended and semi-structured questions to gather respondents' perspectives about a phenomenon (Simons, 2009; Easterby-Smith *et al.*, 2018) ^[46], which facilitated the exploration of meaningful insights (Charmaz, 2024) ^[12, 19]. Interview conducted open-ended approach at the beginning. When interview progressed, they shifted from open-ended to semi-structured) to uncover rich and descriptive data (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Saunders *et al.*, 2015) ^[16, 43]. All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed for analysing, interpreting, and validating data (Easterby-Smith *et al.*, 2018) ^[19].

Various documents were used to identify the themes and sub-themes related to dark leadership behaviour to support and validate primary data, which enriched the data analysis, and contributed to developing a conceptual model (Simons, 2009; Corbin & Strauss, 2015) ^[16, 46]. Appropriate databases, company annual reports, business reports, and financial reports were used as rigorous data sources for management decisions. Company plans, policies, and procedures were also reviewed where available. Government GDP report, public online data base, government budget, government plan and policy, news and magazine were applied as secondary data sources.

Field notes were taken throughout the data collection period which is a comprehensive primary data capture to identify code, themes and multiple sub-themes (Simons, 2009; Saunders *et al.*, 2015; Charmaz, 2024) ^[12, 43, 46].

3. Data Analysis

Thematic data analysis was applied in this study to answer the research questions. Data were repeatedly read to familiarise with data, and the data were grouped, sorted, synthesised, and organised (Charmaz, 2024) ^[12], and the coding, themes and sub-themes emerged from data analysis related to research topic. The initial codes and themes were reviewed, and the findings were re-analysed (Simon, 2009; Charmaz, 2024) ^[12]. During the data analysis, theme was

developed through initial coding, analytic memo, conceptual map, and refining initial themes, sub-themes and linked them to each other, including defining and confirming the themes (Charmaz, 2024) ^[12]. After each interview, the data analysis involved data transcription, the identification of codes, theme and sub-theme through coding process. The codes emerged through open coding process as 'initial code, *in vivo* code, descriptive code' but during subsequent data analysis those became theme, then systematically relating the theme to all other sub-theme. The themes and sub-theme emerged and subsequently, established, verified the relationships between themes and sub-themes through analytic memos, concept maps, a coding paradigm, and developing constant comparison to identify links between them (Simons, 2009; Saunders *et al.*, 2015) ^[43, 46], and comparing with the existing literature. Figure 2 shows political factors affects leadership individual capability that shapes dark leaders' behaviour pattern.

Results

A total of 130 codes primarily emerged during the thematic data analysis. The study found 3 themes and 9 sub-themes during data analysis. The findings compared with existing literature allowing the aim and objectives to be achieved. Figure 2 shows the conceptual framework of Machiavellianism behaviour within the public sector in Bangladesh.

1. Theme 1: Political Factors: The 3 sub-themes of political factor that include political discrimination, socio cultural norms and policies, and political power and freedom are potentially significant causes for the dark leadership in public sectors. Political factors are the causes that affect individual capability which lead to the emergence of dark leadership. Respondent C4 reported: "I believe that negative socio-cultural norms and beliefs may hinder the development of strong individual capabilities. Maladaptive cultural practices can lead to poor social interaction within a team, which may influence a leader to become dictatorial and engage in malpractice, such as accepting bribes."

Codes were attached to almost every line in the interview transcripts to capture what was said (Table 1). For example, participant C7 and C11 made the following observation.

Table 1: Illustration of the codes, sub-themes and the theme political factors

Case ID and Quote	Line by line Coding	Sub-themes	Theme
C7, "I know an executive officer in the telecommunications department who exhibits political power because he is the son of the Minister of Telecommunications. He uses his political influence to direct actions and obtain financial benefits. Although he does not pose a direct threat to others, he exercises his political power to maximise his personal interests."	Exhibits political power, Political influence to direct actions, Obtain financial benefits, Pose a direct threat to others, Exercises his political power	Political power and freedom	Political factors
C11, "Deputy Secretary in our cadre who leverages political connections to influence decisions. He does not directly intimidate or threaten others; he leverages his political influence to pursue self-interests and benefits."	Political connections to influence decision, Intimidate or threaten others, Political influence to pursue self-interests and benefits	Political power and freedom	

2. Theme 2: Leadership Individual Capability: Leadership individual capability consists of 3 sub-themes that include occupational capability, lifestyles choice capability, and power distances capability emerged from data analysis and those influence the dark leader's behaviour pattern. Respondents also

stated that capability and its sub-themes influence the pattern of dark leaders. Participant C16 stated: "higher authority should focus on their power distance capability. Executive support facilitates the development of sustainable organisational processes. However, a high power-distance orientation can also

result in leaders becoming overly controlling and concentrating decision-making power at the centre.” Leadership individual capability emerged from

participants' responses; for example, participant C17 made the following observation in the interview (Table 2).

Table 2: Example of an interview statement, identified codes, jotted down and theme

Case ID and Quote	Open Codes and Jotted down notes	Theme
C17, “Directors should be able to identify ethical issues and assess their leadership capability to manage corruption and capability to misuse of power. Senior executives having the capability and autonomy to make appropriate lifestyle choices, if they do not, they will start doing malpractice.”	Identify ethical issues, Assess their leadership capability to manage corruption, Capability to misuse of power, Senior executives having the capability, Autonomy to make appropriate lifestyle choices, They will start doing malpractice	Leadership individual capability

3. Theme 3: Machiavellianism Dark Leadership: Machiavellianism consists of 3 sub-themes that include gained personal power, gained wealth, and manipulative and coercive controllers emerged from data analysis which marked by dark leadership in the public sector of Bangladesh. The participants stated that dark leaders are characterised by gained personal power, gained wealth, manipulative, coercive controllers are known as Machiavellianism dark trait personality.

Participant C13 stated: “Our leaders manipulate others for their own interest; they are task oriented and over controller to hold power, prestige, and obtain money.”

Again, participant C18 stated: “Sometimes leaders are over controller, doing everything on their own choice which is harmful for the follower to follow the command.”

4. The Integration of the Sub-themes to the Themes to Develop Conceptual Framework

The thematic data analysis was used to identify and establish relationships between the themes and sub-themes, thereby describing how political factors influence the pattern of dark leadership. Three overarching themes and nine sub-themes were identified and subsequently linked through a set of relationships that illustrated the impact of political factors on dark leadership. The relationships between the themes and sub-themes were developed through analytic memos and a process of continuous comparison (Creswell, 2014)^[17]. The themes initially emerged from the thematic data analysis process and were subsequently refined through an iterative examination of the data. The relationships between the themes and sub-themes were further confirmed and validated through comparison with the existing literature.

Political Discrimination and Occupational Capability

Most participants explained that political discrimination in Bangladesh constrains equal occupational opportunities and may contribute to corrupt practices.

Participant C19 stated: “The political situation of a country is highly important because it influences various aspects of occupational capability, including recruitment, employment opportunities, career progression, and job security.”

Socio-Cultural Norms and Policies, and Lifestyle Choice Capability

Most participants explained that socio-cultural norms and policies in Bangladesh provide individuals, particularly senior executives, with considerable freedom and opportunities to choose their lifestyles.

Participant C25 stated: Lifestyle choice is important to facilitate the freedom that individuals value. But I think right now our senior boss using too much freedom because of socio-cultural norm significant to choose lifestyle. Some leaders adopt lifestyles shaped by socio-cultural practices that may contribute to unethical or corrupt behaviour.

Political Power and Freedom and Power Distances Capability

Most participants explained that political power and freedom in Bangladesh allow leaders to apply their bureaucratic practice which facilitated senior executive having high power distance capability that allow leader to be exploitative and manipulative.

Participant C24 stated: Power distance capability creates a problem to hold a superior power at the central, no doubt that is barriers to be a good leader and finally our boss become detector or manipulative. I believe during the Hasina, Awamelig government, our senior boss applying high power distance to hold power in the central because of their having a political power and interest. Political freedom also is very important to hold power and capability.

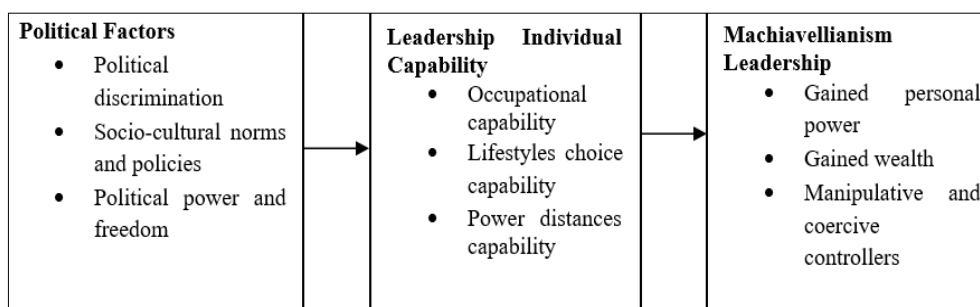


Fig 2: Extended framework: Political factors influence Machiavellianism dark leadership

5. Discussion

The research focuses on the impact of political factors on the Machiavellianism dark leadership through leadership individual capability (Figure 2), concerning research questions and proposition. Focusing on the research questions, the findings presented an in-depth understanding of the causes and consequences of dark leadership within the research context. The research applied thematic analysis and bridges the gap in the existing literatures. That in turn underpinned and justified the development of a context specific conceptual model.

The study results indicated that the political factors, including political discrimination, socio cultural norms and policies, and political power and freedom are potentially significant causes for the Machiavellianism dark leadership behaviour in public sector, which are different results from the literature of (Paulhus & Williams, 2002; Paulhus, 2014; Tepper, Simon & Park, 2017; Kowalski *et al.*, 2018)^[28, 34, 35, 48]. Political factors are the causal conditions that lead to the emergence of dark leadership through leadership individual capability, the findings are slightly differ from the work of (Paulhus & Williams, 2002; Paulhus, 2014)^[34, 35].

The political factors emerge as salient and having a direct impact on leadership individual capability, including occupational capability, lifestyles choice capability, power distances capability and decision-making capability of senior executives and those enable senior executive to involve in malpractice such as gaining personal power, gain wealth, and manipulative and coercive controllers. This study slightly identified different results from destructive leadership styles literature of (Paulhus, 2014; Tepper, Simon & Park, 2017; Kowalski *et al.*, 2018)^[28, 34, 48]. Political factors potentially harm for a positive leadership approach.

The Machiavellianism leaders are characterised by exercise power, gain wealth, and manipulative and over controller because of occupational capability, lifestyles choice capability, and power distances capability, the findings are slightly differ from the literature of (Higgs, 2009)^[24] who argued that abusing power may be a vital element to take into account while examining the causes of the dark leadership. The findings Machiavellianism are partially similar to the literature of (Paulhus & Williams, 2002; Krasikova, Green & LeBreton, 2013; Paulhus, 2014; Tepper, Simon & Park, 2017)^[29, 34, 35, 48] who suggested that Machiavellianism consists of gained personal power, manipulative, coercive controllers. leaders who manipulate others and over controller to hold power, prestige, status and obtain money. The study identified political factors affect Machiavellianism dark leaders' behaviour pattern through individual capability, which were ignored in the existing literature; therefore, these constructs are genuinely novel contributions, and which represent extensions of prior literatures and theories.

(Figure 2) represents how political factors have a direct affect leadership individual capabilities and shape the Machiavellianism dark leaders' behaviour pattern. Particularly, the impact of political factors is a macro level reflects leadership individual capability (micro level) in terms of: (a) how political discrimination affects leaders gaining personal power through occupational capability; The study indicates that political discrimination in Bangladesh constrains equal occupational opportunities and may contribute to corrupt practices. Furthermore, senior executives may use their occupational authority

inappropriately, potentially contributing to exploitative leadership practices and the abuse of organisational power. According to the findings, individuals are more likely to be promoted when they possess political influence, powerful connections, or close relationships with senior government and political figures. Such political discrimination can undermine merit-based career progression and create unequal opportunities within organisations, the findings are not consistent with the literature of (Paulhus & Williams, 2002; Krasikova, Green & LeBreton, 2013; Paulhus, 2014; Tepper, Simon & Park, 2017; Kowalski *et al.*, 2018)^[28, 29, 34, 35, 48].

(b) how socio-cultural norms and policies affects leaders gaining wealth through lifestyles choice capability; The study indicates that socio-cultural norms and policies in Bangladesh provide individuals, particularly senior executives, with considerable freedom and opportunities to choose and pursue their preferred lifestyles. However, the study also perceived that this freedom may create conditions that facilitate corrupt practices such as gaining wealth. While lifestyle choice is fundamentally associated with individual autonomy, the findings suggest that the socio-cultural norms and policies environment can shape how such autonomy is exercised. In particular, where institutional and social constraints are weak, the discretion afforded to senior leaders may provide opportunities for the pursuit of lifestyles that are sustained through, or contribute to, corrupt practices. Thus, the findings indicate that individual freedom of lifestyle choice does not operate in isolation but is embedded within a broader socio-cultural and policy context that may, in certain circumstances, enable corruption among organisational leaders to gain wealth, the findings are not consistent with the literature of (Paulhus & Williams, 2002; Krasikova, Green & LeBreton, 2013; Paulhus, 2014; Tepper, Simon & Park, 2017; Kowalski *et al.*, 2018; Mackey *et al.*, 2020)^[28, 29, 31, 34, 35, 48].

(c) how political power and freedom affects leaders to be manipulative and coercive controllers through power distances capability; The study suggests that political power constitute important contextual conditions shaping the exercise of power distance leadership capability in public sectors within Bangladesh. The findings indicate that such leadership capability may be embedded within broader political power and structures. Participants described how political powers enable senior executives to exercise bureaucratic authority, access organisational facilities, privileges, and maintain considerable control over decision-making processes. This suggests that leadership behaviour is not necessarily exercised independently of the institutional context; instead, it is shaped and reinforced by the distribution of power within that context, the findings are differ from the literature of (Fischer *et al.*, 2021; Mehraein, Visintin & Pittino, 2023)^[23, 32]. The study further indicates that the centralisation of authority is an important mechanism linking political power to manipulative leadership practices. Manipulative and coercive controllers' practices may become more feasible where leaders possess substantial positional authority, enjoy political support, control access to organisational resources, and operate within hierarchical structures where dissent is difficult. Political powers may strengthen a senior executive's position and access to organisational resources and may reinforce centralised decision-making and hierarchical authority which associated with manipulative and coercive

controllers. The findings therefore suggest that manipulation may be facilitated by power distance capability.

1. Theoretical and Practical Contributions

This study makes a theoretical contribution to the literature on dark leadership by defining and conceptualising the emergence of Machiavellianism leadership within the public sector context of Bangladesh. Machiavellianism has been examined extensively within the broader literature on dark trait leadership, but limited attention has been given to how Machiavellianism leadership emerges and manifests within the context of public sector and politically influenced institutional context. The study therefore extends the existing body of knowledge by contextualising Machiavellianism leadership within the political and organisational realities within the public sector context of Bangladesh.

The originality of the study lies in the development of an extended conceptual framework that incorporates political factors and leadership individual capability to explain the emergence of Machiavellian leadership behaviour. Rather than treating Machiavellianism leadership solely as an individual-level phenomenon associated with personality characteristics, the study conceptualises its emergence as being influenced by contextual political factors and mediated or shaped through leadership individual capability. The study also contributes theoretically through the identification and conceptual definition of additional constructs that were not sufficiently addressed in the existing Machiavellianism leadership literature. These constructs were integrated into an extended conceptual framework to explain the relationships between political factors, leadership individual capability and Machiavellianism leadership behaviour, thereby developed a new conceptual model. The study therefore contributes both contextual originality, through its focus on the Bangladeshi public sector, and conceptual originality, through the integration of political factors and leadership individual capability into the study of Machiavellian leadership.

The findings have practical implications for the theory, public sector management and leadership practice and practitioner, provided guidelines and highlights how political factors and leadership individual capability may create conditions in which certain dark leadership behaviours reformed or shaped. The study further has implications for organisational governance. Understanding the political conditions associated with the emergence of Machiavellian leadership may enable public-sector organisations to identify structural and institutional conditions that could facilitate undesirable leadership behaviours. Strengthening institutional accountability, transparency, oversight mechanisms and clearly defined leadership responsibilities may provide organisational safeguards against the inappropriate use of power and influence.

Finally, the study provides a foundation for future empirical research. The three categories of theoretical propositions and the proposed conceptual model can be tested across different public-sector organisations, institutional settings and national contexts. Future studies may examine the relationships between political factors, leadership individual capability and Machiavellian leadership using quantitative, longitudinal or comparative research designs. Such research

would allow the proposed framework to be further refined and determine the extent to which the relationships identified in the Bangladeshi public sector context can be observed in other organisational and cultural settings.

Conclusion and Limitation

This research focussed on the issues of dark leadership where research-based knowledge is limited. The study found robust evidence that the dark leadership is influenced by political factors includes political discrimination, socio cultural norms and policies, political power and interest and political freedom. The research found individual capabilities relating to the association between political factors and leaders' dark behaviour. The political factors directly affect employee capabilities that influence to be a dark leader. Additional constructs are added to the conceptual model, consequence, the research aim and objectives are achieved. The study findings cannot claim the generalisability which needs to be empirically tested. The findings are not representative of all locations, cultures, industries or organisations; however, generalisability is not a requirement of qualitative research. The new conceptual framework was developed in the particular research setting. Therefore, the findings will be applicable within the research context, however, to validate and generalise the theory in another context further research is needed with larger sample.

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