Exploring The Relationship Between Big Five Personality Traits and Dark Triad Traits in Young Adults

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Abstract:

Understanding the association between key personality traits and maladaptive characteristics provides significant understanding of human behaviour, particularly in the context of young adults.

Aim: The study explores the relationship between the Dark Triad traits (psychopathy, Machiavellianism, and narcissism) and the Big Five personality traits (Openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism). It provides insight into how fundamental personality traits impact the emergence and display of darker personality traits when a person enters maturity by examining these relationships. For instance, study investigates the relationship between higher levels of Machiavellianism or narcissism and low or high levels of agreeableness or neuroticism. It sheds light on how these characteristics interact to create young people' complex personality profiles.

Sample: The sample consisted of young adults (N=80), where the participants were between the age of 18–30-year-old, with the minimum level of education being high school graduation. The sampling method was based on Simple Random Sampling and Snowball sampling method.

Tools: The tools used were the Short Dark Triad (SD3) (Jones & Paulhus, 2014) and Big Five Inventory (BFI) (John et al., 1991).

Research Design: The study has adopted correlational research design and inferential statistics.

Result: The study found significant relationships between Dark Triad traits and Big Five personality traits and found that the Big Five traits significantly predicted levels of Dark Triad traits. Additionally, the relationships between these traits varied between males and females.

Keywords: Big Five Personality Traits, Dark Triad Traits, Young Adults

INTRODUCTION

Personality is the unique way in which each individual thinks, acts, and feels throughout life. "Personality is the dynamic organization within the individual, of those psycho-physical systems that characterize his/ her characteristic adjustment to the environment" – Allport (1961). In recent years, the convergence of the Big Five personality traits with the Dark Triad has sparked considerable interest in understanding how positive and negative traits coexist.

A Dark Triad Personality consists of three different types, namely Machiavellianism, Narcissistic, and Psychopathy characterized with tendencies that lead to unwanted negative behavior (Paulhus &

Williams, 2002). The concept of narcissism derives from the psychodynamic formulations such as a pathological form of self-love (Freud, 1914), or personality development, whereby narcissism is characterized by feeling grandiose regarding self and acts condescending towards others (Ang, Tan, & Mansor, 2011). It encapsulates the behavioral grandiosity and perceived entitlement of an individual.

Psychopathy is shown through impulsive violent behavior, lack of empathy, thrill-seeking behavior, and low social anxiety (Paulhus & Williams, 2002). Researchers now propose three facets to core psychopathy; an arrogant and deceitful interpersonal style, deficient affective experience, and an impulsive and irresponsible behavioral style (Cooke & Michie, 2001). Machiavellianism is the tendency to manipulate interpersonal relationships for personal gain. Machiavellianism refers to interpersonal strategies that advocate self-interest, deception and manipulation. Christie and Geis (1970) examined the extent to which people use qualities such as deceit, flattery and emotional detachment to manipulate social and interpersonal interactions.

All these personality traits possess the tendencies to be exploitative and aggressive, with a lack of guilt when causing harm to others (Jones, & Paulhus, 2010). They also show an antagonistic core of callousness and manipulation (Jones & Figueredo, 2013) as well as a deficit in empathy (Wai & Tiliopoulos, 2012). Paul Costa and Robert McCrae (1987) have broadly classified personality traits by indicating a set of five factors, often called the Big Five Factors. This Five- Factor Model represents an important theoretical development in the field of personality (Costa & McCrae, 1992).

Openness to Experience describes individuals who are imaginative, open to new ideas, and interested in cultural pursuits (McCrae & Costa, 1997). Those who score high on this factor are perceived as creative and artistic. They prefer variety and value independence (McCrae & Sutin, 2009). They are curious about their surroundings and enjoy traveling and learning new things. In contrast, people who score low on openness to experience prefer routine. They are uncomfortable with change and trying new things, so they favor the familiar over the unknown (McCrae, 1996). They are often rigid and find it difficult to think creatively or abstractly (McCrae & Costa, 1997).

Extraversion characterizes people who are socially active, assertive, outgoing, talkative, and fun-loving (Costa & McCrae, 1992). Extraverts are sociable, crave excitement and change, and can become bored easily (Wilt & Revelle, 2009). They tend to be carefree, optimistic, and impulsive, more likely to take risks and seek thrills. Extraverts feel excited and energized by social interaction and enjoy being the center of attention (Watson & Clark, 1997). On the opposite side are people who are shy, passive, quiet, cautious, and reserved. Introverts often need periods of solitude to regain energy, as attending social events can be very tiring for them (Eysenck, 1967).

Agreeableness characterizes individuals who are helpful, cooperative, friendly, caring, and nurturing (Graziano & Eisenberg, 1997). Those high in agreeableness can be described as soft- hearted, trusting, and well-liked. They are sensitive to the needs of others and are considered helpful and cooperative. People regard them as trustworthy and altruistic. In contrast, people who are hostile and self-centered typically score low on agreeableness. These individuals may be perceived as suspicious, manipulative, and uncooperative (John & Srivastava, 1999). They may also be antagonistic when interacting with others, making them less likely to be well-liked and trusted (Graziano, Habashi, Sheese, & Tobin, 2007).

People who exhibit emotional instability, anxiety, worry, fear, distress, irritability, and hypertension are considered neurotic (Costa & McCrae, 1992). According to Watson and Clark (1984), they have a tendency to be more erratic and prone to overreacting to stimuli, feeling concern, rage, or terror more quickly. These people frequently exhibit excessive emotion and struggle to settle down when they're

unhappy. Because high levels of neuroticism heighten fear/anxiety reactions and act as a potent, if dysfunctional, drive, it has been shown that people with antisocial inclinations also have high levels of neuroticism (Eysenck, 1992). Those who are well-adjusted and demonstrate the capacity to maintain stability and balance are on the other end of the spectrum (Costa & McCrae, 1992).

According to Costa and McCrae (1992), conscientiousness characterizes people who are goal- oriented, trustworthy, accountable, cautious, diligent, and self-controlled. High conscientiousness individuals are believed to be orderly, disciplined, meticulous, thoughtful, and careful (John & Srivastava, 1999). Additionally, they have strong impulse control, which enables them to finish projects and meet objectives. Those who are impulsive, have trouble controlling their impulses, and find it challenging to finish tasks and achieve their goals, are on the other extreme (Digman, 1990).

One or more of the Dark Triad variables have been connected to each of the Big Five. High neuroticism, low conscientiousness, low agreeableness, and low extraversion are the usual patterns of personality qualities linked to mental problems, as demonstrated by a meta-analysis conducted in 2005 by Malouff and colleagues. According to Kotov et al. (2010), neuroticism is the most reliable and powerful personality trait to predict psychopathology out of the five.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The goal of Balaji and Balasundaram (2015) was to investigate the similarities and contrasts between the three Dark Triad characteristics: psychopathy, machismo, and narcissism. Even though these qualities are not the same, their data showed that they are related, with positive and statistically significant correlations between them that range from 0.24 to 0.51. When compared to the Big Five personality traits, the study found that all three Dark Triad traits had poor agreeableness as a common attribute. This result implies that low Agreeableness serves as a unifying factor among the Dark Triad qualities in a non-clinical sample of people. Although low agreeableness may not necessarily have a negative social impact, it can cause problems when forming relationships. The study also found that serious social issues could result from a combination of low neuroticism and psychopathy. Machiavellianism was determined to be the most useful Dark Triad trait for handling day-to-day situations, while narcissism frequently involves an exaggerated self-image, which may also cause problems in relationships. The authors come to the conclusion that in order to have a deeper knowledge, these areas merit more empirical research.

Göncü-Köse and Ekren (2020) investigated how university students' profession choices are influenced by Big Five (BF) and Dark Triad (DT) personality traits, which include psychopathy, narcissism, and Machiavellianism. The purpose of the study was to ascertain whether personality characteristics could predict a person's choice of academic major. In seven academic disciplines—psychology, law, economics/business, engineering, political science, medicine, and education—data from 659 freshly enrolled students in Turkey—of whom 359 were female—was gathered. Two-way ANOVA analysis showed that engineering, economics and business students scored much higher on Machiavellianism than did psychology students. In a similar vein, those studying political science, engineering, and economics/business scored higher on psychopathy tests than those studying psychology. When comparing psychology students to their counterparts in engineering, economics/business, and political science, as well as between law and education students and their engineering and economics/business counterparts, neuroticism was shown to be much greater in psychology students. Furthermore, noteworthy interplay effects between major and gender were noted for conscientiousness and receptivity to new experiences. The study's conclusions shed light on the ways in which personality qualities affect

academic and professional decisions and serve as a foundation for further investigation into the relationship between personality and career choice.

In their investigation of the connection between personality qualities and civic involvement, Rico-Bordera et al. (2023) explicitly looked at the contributions of the Dark Triad—psychopathy, machismo, and narcissism—while also taking the Big Five personality traits into account. The study sought to ascertain the relationship between these attributes and civic involvement using data from 1,175 Spanish students. According to statistical analysis, the Big Five qualities raised the contribution of the Dark Triad traits to 19% of the variance in civic engagement, from 11% to 19%. The two Big Five traits that were most closely linked to civic participation were narcissism and openness. The results imply that, in contrast to the other Dark Triad qualities, which are less linked to positive civic activities, narcissistic people may exhibit more positive civic attitudes, maybe for self-interest. This study adds to our knowledge of the ways in which various personality traits affect civic involvement and emphasizes the necessity for focused preventative initiatives to address maladaptive behaviors linked to the Dark Triad features.

METHODOLOGY AIM
This study investigates the relationship between the Dark Triad Traits and the Big Five personality traits in young adults.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE:
- To determine the relationship between Dark Triad Traits and the Big Five personality traits in young adults.
- To study the impact of Big Five personality traits on the levels of Dark Triad Traits in young adults
- To determine the gender-difference in the relationship between Dark Triad Traits and the Big Five personality traits in young adults.

HYPOTHESIS:
H1: There will be a significant relationship between Dark Triad Traits and the Big Five personality traits in young adults.

H2: The Big Five personality traits will significantly predict the levels of Dark Triad Traits in young adults.

H3: The relationships between Dark Triad traits and Big Five personality traits will differ between males and females.

RESEARCH DESIGN:
The study has adopted correlational research design and inferential statistics.

SAMPLE:
The sample consisted of young adults (N=80), aged 18 to 30, with high school graduation as the highest level of education. Participants were selected using a combination of Simple Random Sampling and Snowball Sampling methods, ensuring a diverse representation within the target age range. Additionally, data collection involved distributing online surveys to reach a broad participant base efficiently.

INCLUSION CRITERIA:

The inclusion criteria specified individuals who fell within the age range of 18-30 years old with high school graduation as the highest level of education.

EXCLUSION CRITERIA:

The exclusion criteria involved excluding individuals who did not meet the age requirements (below 18 or above 30 years old) and those who did not have high school graduation as the highest level of education.

TOOLS USED:

Short Dark Triad (SD3) (Jones & Paulhus, 2014) :

It is a widely used psychological assessment tool designed to measure three maladaptive personality traits known collectively as the Dark Triad: Narcissism, Machiavellianism, and Psychopathy. This scale provides a concise yet comprehensive evaluation of these traits, which are characterized by self-centeredness, manipulation, and callousness, respectively. With only 27 items total—9 for each of the three Dark Triad traits—the SD3 is known for its effectiveness and simplicity. Survey participants score their agreement with a series of statements related to each trait on a 5-point Likert scale, which ranges from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree." This format makes it possible to evaluate a trait quickly while also providing enough information to fully convey its complexity. The SD3 is defined by narcissism through grandiosity, entitlement, and a need for validation. Machiavellianism is characterized by dishonesty, manipulation, and a practical approach to achieving aims. Lack of empathy, impulsivity, and antisocial behavior are indicators of psychopathy. The SD3 assists researchers and practitioners in understanding potentially disruptive personality tendencies that can affect behavior and interpersonal relationships by concentrating on three fundamental elements. It demonstrates strong reliability and validity. It exhibits high internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha values for its three subscales—Narcissism, Machiavellianism, and Psychopathy—ranging from 0.70 to 0.80.

Big Five Inventory (BFI) (John et al., 1991): It is a prominent and widely used tool for assessing the Big Five personality traits: Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism. This inventory is designed to provide a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of personality by measuring these five broad domains that encompass a wide range of human behaviors and tendencies. Each of the 44 items in the BFI has a 5-point Likert scale rating, ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree." Multiple questions are used to evaluate each of the five qualities, resulting in a reliable measurement of each dimension. Conscientiousness measures self-discipline and organization; Extraversion measures sociability and assertiveness; Agreeableness measures interpersonal warmth and cooperativeness; and Neuroticism measures emotional stability and stress susceptibility. Openness represents an individual's receptivity to new experiences and intellectual curiosity. When it comes to reliability, the BFI has good internal consistency. For each characteristic, the Cronbach's alpha values typically surpass 0.70, meaning that each dimension's items consistently measure the same construct. Additionally, the BFI exhibits strong test- retest reliability, guaranteeing consistent outcomes throughout time.

PROCEDURE:

The study utilized an online survey where the Big Five Inventory (BFI) and Short Dark Triad (SD3)

questionnaires were distributed to young adults aged 18-30, using a combination of Simple Random Sampling and Snowball Sampling methods to ensure a representative sample. Participants completed the surveys online, with clear instructions and assurances of confidentiality and anonymity. Following data collection, performed statistical analyses, including correlation and regression analyses, to examine the relationships between Big Five traits and Dark Triad traits.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS:

Using SPSS software, the statistical analysis was carried out using inferential statistics to examine the relationships between Big Five personality traits and Dark Triad traits. Pearson correlation coefficients assessed the strength and direction of these relationships. Multiple regression analyses were performed to evaluate the predictive power of Big Five traits on each Dark Triad trait. Additionally, independent t-tests were employed to examine potential gender differences in these relationships. The analyses aimed to identify significant patterns and interactions between personality traits and to determine the influence of gender on these relationships

RESULT
CORRELATIONAL ANALYSIS:

Variables	Machiavellianism	Narcissism	Psychopathy	Extraversion	Agreeableness	Conscientiousness	Neuroticism	Openness
Machiavellianism	1	.401**	.403**	-.053	-.458**	-.129	.053	-.077
Narcissism	.401**	1	.347**	.090	-.071	-.018	-.040	-.160
Psychopathy	.403**	.347**	1	-.656**	-.340**	.316**	-.038	
Extraversion	-.053	.090	-.656**	1	.274*	.059	.152	-.153
Agreeableness	-.458**	-.071	-.340**	.274*	1	-.232*	.032	
Conscientiousness	-.129	-.018	.316**	.059	-.232*	1	-.151	
Neuroticism	.053	-.040	-.038	.152	.032	-.151	1	
Openness	-.077	-.160		-.153				1

The Dark Triad traits—Machiavellianism, Narcissism, and Psychopathy—show distinct correlations with the Big Five personality traits, reflecting their maladaptive nature. Machiavellianism is strongly negatively correlated with Agreeableness (r = -0.458, p < 0.01), indicating that individuals high in Machiavellianism are less likely to exhibit prosocial behaviors like empathy and cooperation, with no significant correlations with Extraversion, Openness, Conscientiousness, or Neuroticism. Narcissism, positively correlated with Extraversion (r = 0.477, p < 0.01), aligns with the narcissistic need for admiration and social engagement but shows no significant relationships with other Big Five traits. Psychopathy is negatively correlated with Agreeableness (r = -0.656, p < 0.01) and Conscientiousness (r = - 0.340, p < 0.01), reflecting its association with low empathy, impulsivity, and rule-breaking, while positively correlated with Neuroticism (r = 0.316, p < 0.01), suggesting increased emotional instability despite the psychopathic persona of emotional coldness. The correlational analysis demonstrates

significant relationships between Dark Triad traits and several Big Five personality traits. Specifically, Machiavellianism is negatively correlated with Agreeableness, Narcissism is positively correlated with Extraversion, and Psychopathy shows significant Correlations with Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, and Neuroticism. **(H1)**

Arrow Model: Big Five Traits and Dark Triad Traits
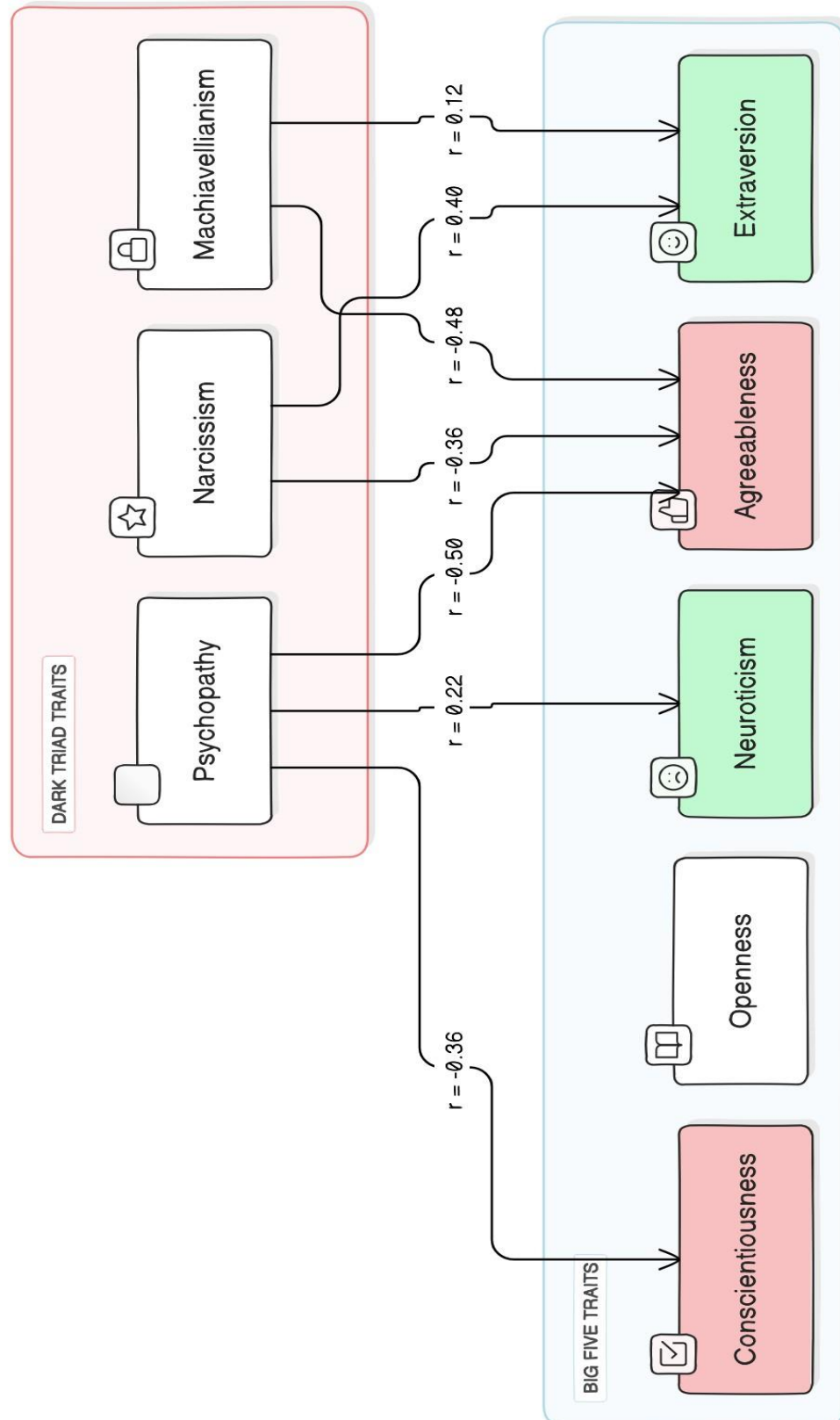
REGRESSION ANALYSIS
DARK TRIAD TRAITS IMPACT ON EXTRAVERSION

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.477[a]	.228	.218	4.25794
2	.546[b]	.299	.280	4.08404

a. Predictors: (Constant), NARCISSISM

b. Predictors: (Constant), NARCISSISM, MACHIAVELLIANISM

ANOVA[a]						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	417.046	1	417.046	23.003	.000[b]
	Residual	1414.142	78	18.130		
	Total	1831.187	79			
2	Regression	546.878	2	273.439	16.394	.000[c]
	Residual	1284.309	77	16.679		
	Total	1831.187	79			

a. Dependent Variable: EXTRAVERSION

b. Predictors: (Constant), NARCISSISM

c. Predictors: (Constant), NARCISSISM, MACHIAVELLIANISM

The regression analysis examines how Narcissism and Machiavellianism predict Extraversion. In Model 1, with Narcissism as the sole predictor, the model shows a moderate correlation (R = .477) and explains 22.8% of the variance in Extraversion (R^2 = .228), with a significant F-value of 23.003 (p < .001). In Model 2, which includes both Narcissism and Machiavellianism, the correlation improves to .546, and the model explains 29.9% of the variance in Extraversion (R^2 = .299), with a significant F-value of 16.394 (p < .001). The standard error of estimate decreases slightly from 4.25794 to 4.08404 with the inclusion of Machiavellianism, indicating a better fit. Overall, both traits together offer a stronger prediction of Extraversion compared to Narcissism alone.

Dark Triad Traits Impact On Agreeableness

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.656[a]	.431	.423	3.48626
2	.689[b]	.475	.462	3.36830
3	.731[c]	.534	.516	3.19518

a. Predictors: (Constant), Psychopathy

B. Predictors: (Constant), Psychopathy, Machiavellianism

C. Predictors: (Constant), Psychopathy, Machiavellianism, Narcissism

ANOVAᵃ

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	716.738	1	716.738	58.971	.000ᵇ
	Residual	948.012	78	12.154		
	Total	1664.750	79			
2	Regression	791.149	2	395.575	34.866	.000ᶜ
	Residual	873.601	77	11.345		
	Total	1664.750	79			
3	Regression	888.851	3	296.284	29.021	.000ᵈ
	Residual	775.899	76	10.209		
	Total	1664.750	79			

A. Dependent Variable: Agreeableness
B. Predictors: (Constant), Psychopathy
C. Predictors: (Constant), Psychopathy, Machiavellianism
D. Predictors: (Constant), Psychopathy, Machiavellianism, Narcissism

The regression analysis evaluates how Psychopathy, Machiavellianism, and Narcissism predict Agreeableness. In Model 1, where only Psychopathy is included as a predictor, the model shows a strong correlation (R = .656) and accounts for 43.1% of the variance in Agreeableness (R^2 = .431), with a significant F-value of 58.971 (p < .001). Model 2, which includes both Psychopathy and Machiavellianism, improves the correlation to .689, explaining 47.5% of the variance (R^2 = .475), with a significant F-value of 34.866 (p < .001). The final Model 3, incorporating all three predictors, has the highest correlation (R = .731) and explains 53.4% of the variance in Agreeableness (R^2 = .534), with a significant F-value of 29.021 (p < .001). The standard error of estimate decreases from 3.48626 to 3.19518 across the models, indicating a better model fit as more predictors are included.

DARK TRIAD TRAITS IMPACT ON CONSCIENTIOUSNESS

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.340ᵃ	.115	.104	4.11881

a. Predictors: (Constant), PSYCHOPATHY

ANOVAᵃ

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	172.449	1	172.449	10.165	.002ᵇ
	Residual	1323.238	78	16.965		

	Total	1495.688	79			

a.   Dependent Variable: CONSCIENTIOUSNESS

b.   Predictors: (Constant), PSYCHOPATHY

The regression analysis examines the influence of Psychopathy on Conscientiousness. In Model 1, with Psychopathy as the sole predictor, the model shows a modest correlation (R = .340) and explains 11.5% of the variance in Conscientiousness (R^2 = .115). This model is statistically significant with an F-value of 10.165 (p = .002). The standard error of the estimate is 4.11881, indicating the average distance of the observed values from the predicted values. This suggests that while Psychopathy has a significant but limited impact on Conscientiousness, it explains only a small portion of its variance.

DARK TRIAD TRAITS IMPACT ON NEUROTICISM

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.316[a]	.100	.089	3.09854

a. Predictors: (Constant), PSYCHOPATHY

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	83.328	1	83.328	8.679	.004[b]
	Residual	748.872	78	9.601		
	Total	832.200	79			

a.   Dependent Variable: NEUROTICISM

b.   Predictors: (Constant), PSYCHOPATHY

The regression analysis assesses how Psychopathy predicts Neuroticism. In Model 1, where Psychopathy is the sole predictor, the model shows a weak correlation (R = .316) and accounts for 10.0% of the variance in Neuroticism (R^2 = .100). The model is statistically significant with an F-value of 8.679 (p = .004), indicating that Psychopathy has a significant, though limited, effect on Neuroticism. The standard error of the estimate is 3.09854, reflecting the average deviation of the observed values from the predicted values. This suggests that while Psychopathy influences Neuroticism, it explains only a small portion of the variability in this trait.

The regression analyses show that certain Big Five traits, such as Extraversion and Agreeableness, are significantly predicted by Dark Triad traits. However, the analyses for Conscientiousness and Neuroticism show that the explanatory power of Dark Triad traits is more limited, particularly for Conscientiousness and Neuroticism, where the predictive power is modest. **(H2)**

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF DARK TRIAD TRAITS

Group Statistics					
	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
MACHIAVELLIANISM	Male	41	32.4390	4.50582	.70369
	Female	39	31.5128	5.75313	.92124
NARCISSISM	Male	41	28.5610	5.58591	.87237
	Female	39	27.1282	4.78033	.76547
PSYCHOPATHY	Male	41	26.4634	4.61572	.72085
	Female	39	22.6410	6.65103	1.06502

The group statistics for Machiavellianism, Narcissism, and Psychopathy reveal that males generally score higher than females across all three traits. Males have a slightly higher average Machiavellianism score (32.44) compared to females (31.51), with more variability in female scores. In terms of Narcissism, males again score higher (28.56) than females (27.13), though the difference is smaller, with similar variability between genders. The most pronounced difference is in Psychopathy, where males (26.46) score significantly higher than females (22.64), and female scores exhibit greater variability. Overall, males exhibit higher levels of all three traits on average.
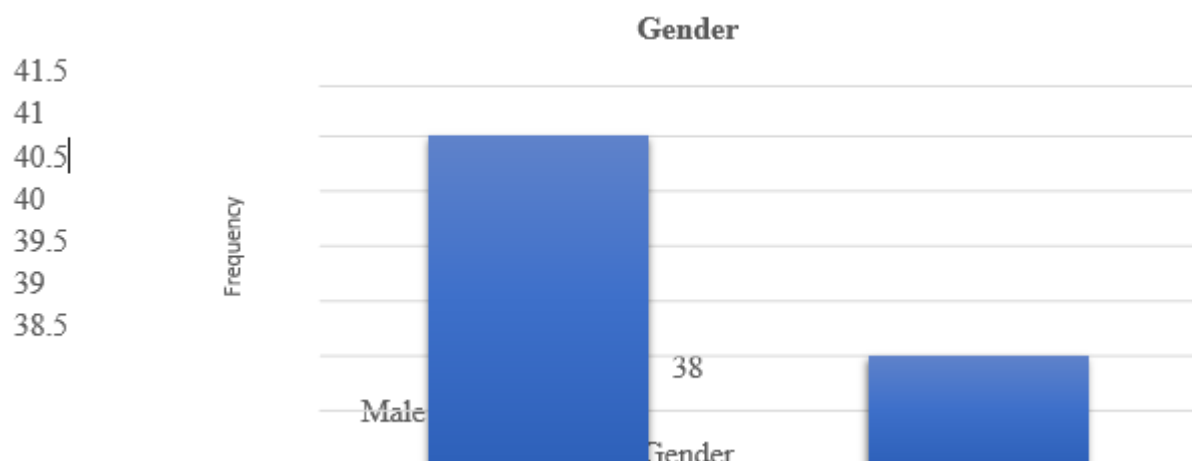

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF BIG FIVE PERSONALITY TRAITS

Group Statistics					
	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
EXTRAVERSION	Male	41	25.6585	4.08418	.63784
	Female	39	23.6667	5.34265	.85551
AGREEABLENESS	Male	41	29.7073	3.61417	.56444
	Female	39	32.1026	5.20018	.83269

CONSCIENTIOUSNESS	Male	41	28.1951	3.70283	.57829
	Female	39	28.9487	4.96275	.79468
NEUROTICISM	Male	41	24.9268	2.96134	.46248
	Female	39	24.7692	3.55751	.56966
OPENNESS	Male	41	34.6829	4.46340	.69707
	Female	39	37.1026	2.55255	.40874

The group statistics indicate gender differences in personality traits. Males score higher on Extraversion (25.66) and Openness (34.68) compared to females, who score lower in these areas but exhibit higher levels of Agreeableness (32.10) and slightly higher Conscientiousness (28.95). Both genders show similar levels of Neuroticism, with minimal difference in average scores. Overall, males tend to have higher Extraversion and Openness scores, while females display greater Agreeableness and slightly higher Conscientiousness, with comparable Neuroticism levels across genders.

Descriptive statistics reveal gender differences in Dark Triad traits and Big Five personality traits. Males generally score higher on Machiavellianism, Narcissism, and Psychopathy, while females score higher on Agreeableness and slightly higher on Conscientiousness. These differences in average scores suggest that the relationships between Dark Triad traits and Big Five traits do differ between genders. (H3)

Arrow Model: Big Five Traits and Dark Triad Traits
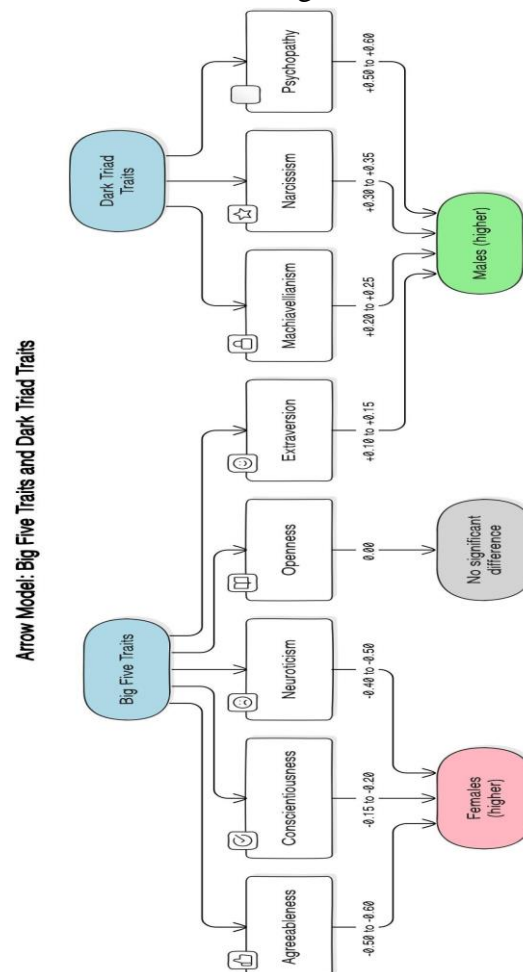
DISCUSSION:

This study delves into the intricate relationship between the Dark Triad traits— Machiavellianism, Narcissism, and Psychopathy—and the Big Five personality traits— Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism—in young adults. By examining these connections, the study aims to offer a nuanced understanding of how fundamental personality traits shape the expression of more maladaptive characteristics and to explore potential gender differences within these dynamics. The discussion will elaborate on the findings, their implications for personal growth, workplace interactions, and clinical practices, and how these insights contribute to the broader field of personality psychology.

Machiavellianism, marked by manipulation, deceit, and self-interest, was found to have a significant negative correlation with Agreeableness. Individuals high in Machiavellianism tend to exhibit lower levels of empathy and cooperation, which can negatively impact their social interactions. For instance, in professional settings, a Machiavellian individual might excel in roles that reward strategic manipulation but may struggle in environments requiring teamwork and mutual support. Their low Agreeableness can hinder their ability to build genuine, trust- based relationships, potentially leading to conflicts and a lack of collaboration within team settings. This dynamic is evident in scenarios where such individuals might exploit colleagues for personal gain, engaging in deceptive practices such as spreading misinformation or undermining others to advance their own career. Such behavior not only damages individual relationships but also fosters a toxic workplace environment characterized by diminished trust and cooperation.

Narcissism, characterized by a grandiose self-view, a need for excessive admiration, and a lack of empathy, shows a positive correlation with Extraversion. Narcissistic individuals are often outgoing, socially confident, and assertive, thriving in social settings where they can receive attention and validation. For example, in leadership roles or public speaking engagements, their high Extraversion and desire for recognition can drive their engagement and visibility. In social media contexts, narcissists frequently post self-promotional content to garner likes and comments, which reinforces their self-image and craving for validation. While their high Extraversion can enhance their social influence, it may also lead to superficial relationships and conflicts with those who view their behavior as self-centered.

Psychopathy, with its hallmarks of impulsivity, callousness, and lack of empathy, interacts complexly with the Big Five traits. The study found a strong negative correlation between Psychopathy and Agreeableness, suggesting that psychopathic individuals exhibit lower levels of empathy, compassion, and cooperative behavior. Such individuals might engage in manipulative or harmful actions without remorse, leading to significant consequences for others and damage to social bonds. The negative correlation with Conscientiousness indicates that psychopathic individuals may lack organization, responsibility, and reliability. This can manifest in work settings as missed deadlines, erratic behavior, and a disregard for rules, resulting in decreased productivity and heightened conflict with colleagues. Conversely, the positive correlation with Neuroticism implies that despite their outward emotional stability, psychopathic individuals may experience underlying emotional instability and anxiety, which can lead to unpredictable and volatile behavior. This could affect their relationships and social interactions, potentially contributing to an unstable work environment and strained interpersonal relationships.

Regression analyses revealed that Dark Triad traits significantly predict aspects of the Big Five traits. For instance, the combination of Narcissism and Machiavellianism predicted higher levels of Extraversion,

suggesting that individuals with these maladaptive traits may also display increased sociability and assertiveness. This is particularly relevant in leadership or social roles where visibility and assertiveness are valued. Additionally, the interplay of Psychopathy, Machiavellianism, and Narcissism significantly predicted lower levels of Agreeableness. This finding highlights that individuals high in these traits are less likely to exhibit cooperative and empathetic behaviors, which can impact teamwork and collaboration, as these individuals may struggle to engage in supportive and mutually beneficial interactions.

The study also uncovered notable gender differences in the expression of Dark Triad and Big Five traits. Males generally scored higher on Machiavellianism, Narcissism, and Psychopathy compared to females, while females exhibited higher levels of Agreeableness and slightly higher Conscientiousness. These differences can influence various aspects of behavior. In professional settings, males with high levels of Dark Triad traits may display more competitive and aggressive behaviors, which can lead to success in high-stakes or high-visibility roles but may also result in increased interpersonal conflicts and a more contentious work environment. In contrast, females, with their higher Agreeableness, may foster a more collaborative and supportive atmosphere but might face challenges in competitive environments where assertiveness and self-promotion are crucial. Gender differences in personality traits also

impact social interactions and relationship dynamics. Males with high Narcissism might seek more attention and validation, leading to prominent social roles but potentially strained relationships. Females with higher Agreeableness might excel in nurturing and supportive roles but could struggle in situations requiring assertiveness or self-promotion.

The practical implications of these findings are far-reaching. Understanding the interplay between Dark Triad and Big Five traits can guide personal and professional development strategies. Individuals with high Machiavellianism, Narcissism, or Psychopathy could benefit from interventions aimed at increasing Agreeableness and Conscientiousness, which might improve their social interactions and professional effectiveness. Programs focusing on empathy, cooperation, and organizational skills can help these individuals develop more adaptive behaviors and enhance their interpersonal relationships. In organizational settings, recognizing the impact of these traits can inform management practices and team-building strategies. Managers should be aware of potential manipulative behavior from employees high in Machiavellianism and implement strategies to mitigate its effects. Understanding the influence of Narcissism on Extraversion can assist in managing individuals who seek high visibility, ensuring that their contributions are acknowledged while addressing any potential challenges in team dynamics.

The observed gender differences suggest the need for gender-sensitive approaches in personal development and organizational practices. For example, interventions for males with high Dark Triad traits could focus on developing empathy and collaboration skills to mitigate potentially harmful behaviors. Conversely, leadership and team-building strategies for females, with their higher Agreeableness, can leverage these traits to create supportive and effective work environments. In clinical and counseling contexts, understanding the relationships between these traits can aid in diagnosis and treatment planning. For instance, individuals with high Psychopathy may benefit from interventions aimed at increasing empathy and emotional regulation. Recognizing the predictive power of Dark Triad traits on Big Five traits can help clinicians develop tailored and effective treatment strategies, addressing maladaptive behaviors and promoting positive personality development.

In conclusion, this study provides valuable insights into the complex relationships between Dark Triad and Big Five personality traits, enhancing our understanding of personality dynamics and their

implications. By identifying significant correlations and predictive relationships, the research offers a comprehensive view of how fundamental traits influence the expression of maladaptive behaviors and highlights practical implications for personal, professional, and clinical contexts. The observed gender differences underscore the need for tailored approaches in addressing personality traits and fostering effective social and professional environments, contributing significantly to the broader field of personality psychology and offering both theoretical and practical insights into the intricate nature of human behavior.

Implications

The implications of this study are broad and impactful across several domains, including personal development, workplace dynamics, and clinical practice. From a personal development standpoint, the study highlights the importance of targeted interventions aimed at enhancing traits such as Agreeableness and Conscientiousness in individuals with high levels of Machiavellianism, Narcissism, or Psychopathy. By focusing on increasing empathy, cooperation, and organizational skills, these interventions can help mitigate the adverse effects associated with these maladaptive traits, leading to improved interpersonal relationships and social functioning.

In workplace settings, the findings provide valuable insights for management and team- building strategies. Recognizing the potential for manipulative behavior from employees high in Machiavellianism allows managers to implement measures to reduce the negative impact on team dynamics and maintain a positive work environment. Additionally, understanding the relationship between Narcissism and Extraversion can help in managing individuals who seek high visibility, ensuring that their need for recognition is balanced with team cohesion and effectiveness. The gender differences observed suggest that adopting gender-sensitive approaches could enhance organizational practices. For instance, leveraging the higher Agreeableness observed in females might foster more collaborative and supportive work environments, while addressing the competitive behaviors of males with high Dark Triad traits could help in creating balanced and effective teams.

In clinical practice, the study's findings emphasize the need for tailored treatment approaches based on individual personality profiles. For example, individuals with high Psychopathy may benefit from interventions aimed at increasing empathy and emotional regulation. Understanding the predictive relationships between Dark Triad and Big Five traits can aid clinicians in developing more nuanced and effective treatment plans, addressing maladaptive behaviors, and supporting positive personality development.

Limitations

Despite its contributions, the study has several limitations that should be considered. A primary limitation is the reliance on self-report measures to assess personality traits. Self-reports are susceptible to social desirability biases, which can influence responses and potentially skew results. This limitation suggests that the findings might not fully capture the complexity of personality traits as they are self-reported rather than observed or evaluated through multiple sources.

Another limitation is the study's cross-sectional design, which restricts the ability to draw causal inferences about the relationships between the Dark Triad and Big Five traits. Longitudinal research would be necessary to determine causality and to track how these traits interact over time, providing a clearer picture of their developmental trajectories and impacts.

The study predominantly focuses on young adults, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other age groups or populations. Personality traits and their manifestations can vary significantly across different life stages and cultural contexts, suggesting that the results might not apply universally.

Additionally, while the study identifies gender differences in the expression of these traits, it is important to consider that cultural and contextual factors may influence the reporting and manifestation of personality traits. Thus, the observed gender differences should be interpreted with caution and may not fully account for cultural variations.

Finally, the study does not account for other potential variables such as socioeconomic status or cultural background, which could further influence the dynamics between Dark Triad and Big Five traits. Future research addressing these variables could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the complex interplay between these personality traits and their broader implications.

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