Original Research

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Talent Management and the Impact of Dark Triad Personalities in the Workplace

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Abstract

This study examines links between the Dark Triad of personality types (Machiavellianism, psychopathy, and narcissism) and workplace behaviors. The research objective seeks to confirm the relationship between the Dark Triad and several negative behaviors while investigating positive externalities that have not been previously explored. A literature review covers the background of the Dark Triad, instruments that have been used to measure it, and ongoing research streams in the field. The Short Dark Triad (SD3) survey was administered to 142 working professionals and data collected were quantitatively examined using a variety of statistical tools in SPSS. Corresponding results provide additional evidence that the Dark Triad personalities are positively related to risk taking. Additional findings support a previously theorized link between these personalities and a distaste for workplace training programs and, notably, could not confirm other previously supported linkages associating this phenomenon with negative behaviors. By better understanding the strengths and weaknesses of individuals with Dark Triad characteristics, organizations are provided with appropriate guidance to ensure the most beneficial relationship possible for all constituents.

Introduction

The Dark Triad of personality types, composed of Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy, is an important phenomenon in both organizational behavior and the wider field of business research. Understanding the individual and collective effects of those who exhibit these characteristics will enable organizations to better account for the drawbacks they cause and to harness any upsides of their behavior. To that end, the purpose of this article is to investigate potential benefits that individuals who exhibit Dark Triad characteristics may bring to their organizations, as well as to examine their effects on teamwork more closely.

Before outlining the structure of this paper, we should briefly define each of the personality traits in question. This is valuable as the definitions of each can differ somewhat from study to study and across research fields. Additionally, this study will focus on the subclinical version of each personality type rather than making any clinical diagnoses.

First, Machiavellianism is "a personality trait marked by a calculating attitude toward human relationships and a belief that ends justify means, however ruthless. A Machiavellian is one who views other people more or less as objects to be manipulated in pursuit of his or her goals, if necessary, through deliberate deception" (APA, 2021b). In turn, narcissism is defined as "a mental condition in which people have an inflated sense of their own importance; a deep need for excessive attention and admiration; troubled relationships; and a lack of empathy for others" (Mayo Clinic, 2021). Finally, psychopathy (sometimes known as antisocial personality disorder) is, "the presence of a chronic and pervasive disposition to disregard and violate the rights of others. Manifestations include repeated violations of the law, exploitation of others, deceitfulness, impulsivity, aggressiveness, reckless disregard for the safety of self and others, and irresponsibility, accompanied by lack of guilt, remorse, and empathy" (APA, 2021a).

The review of literature begins with an examination of several of the major research paths taken by experts who have studied the Dark Triad phenomenon. Scholars have expended a great deal of effort on developing models to appropriately detect the Dark Triad within individuals and debating the efficacy of those models. Many articles focus on which sectors attract Dark Triad personality types and how they affect the organizations they join. More detailed analysis has produced studies outlining the impact of the Dark Triad at the organizational level. In a similar fashion, many have also used the traditional metric of job performance to better understand how Dark Triad characteristics affect the work habits and behaviors at the individual level.

The article then proceeds to the research objective and the methodology. A survey instrument, known as the Short Dark Triad (SD3), was distributed to a sample of working professionals, and the results were analyzed in SPSS. The main research question investigates the relationship between variance in employee Dark Triad characteristics and their corresponding workplace behavior. Corresponding hypotheses and analyses, as well as the methods used to obtain them, are covered in detail. The study concludes with potential limitations, recommendations for future studies, and a concluding summary.

Summary of Literature

Origins of the Dark Triad

Like the field of organizational behavior itself, the Dark Triad of personality types (narcissism, psychopathy, and Machiavellianism) has its roots in psychology and sociology, and its study has had a profound impact on the research body of the field. The term "Dark Triad" was coined in 2002 by Delroy Paulhus and Kevin Williams of the University of Columbia while responding to a claim that the three personality types shared many characteristics and were interchangeable (Paulus & Williams, 2002; McHoskey et al., 1998). While individual experiments examined the Dark Triad in relation to various aspects of business studies after that,

the bulk of the research did not shift into business more broadly—and organizational behavior in specific—until around 2012 when Ernest O'Boyle and a team of researchers published a series of meta-analyses highlighting Dark Triad studies conducted in the workplace (O'Boyle et al., 2012). The subsequent decade has seen a dramatic expansion in the type and number of articles examining Dark Triad personality types and their effects on organizations. Once that shift occurred, the research stream diversified into a number of distinct tracks that became more readily distinguishable.

Instruments for Measuring the Dark Triad

A significant portion of Dark Triad literature is geared toward the methods science has developed to measure the phenomenon and the validity of the results produced while utilizing those methods. Science has formulated an extensive list of differing tools and models to measure Dark Triad characteristics with heavily debated results. While some of the models reviewed in this section have produced statistically significant results, others have had their findings called into question for improperly measuring target constructs. Additional controversy has surrounded the underlying logic and theory behind tools attempting to measure the Dark Triad, calling into question the findings of many experiments.

A wide range of studies has used an equally diverse range of tools to measure the Dark Triad with varying degrees of success. Two common Dark Triad measures are the SD3 (Jones & Paulhus, 2014) and the "Dark Triad Dirty Dozen" (Jonason & Webster, 2010), both of which measure subject self-responses that generate an overall Dark Triad score, which can also be broken down into each of its three subcategories. Other established measures focus on a single aspect of the Dark Triad, such as the Mach IV for Machiavellianism (Christie & Geis, 1970) or the NPI for narcissism (Raskin & Terry, 1988). Several creative studies have measured the Dark Triad by looking for a lack of "bright" or socially desirable personality types (Smith et al., 2018). There is also evidence that combining Dark Triad measures with other instruments may yield more accurate, or at least more sophisticated, measures of the phenomenon (Howard & Van Zandt, 2020). One such candidate is the HEXACO personality measure (an acronym for honesty-humility, emotionality, extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness to experience) developed in the early 2000s (Lee & Ashton, 2004). A meta-analysis of various personality measures uncovered that the honesty-humility dimension of the HEXACO model had a strong negative relationship with all the Dark Triad traits. When individuals exhibited elevated levels of honesty and humility, the propensity to score high on a Dark Triad measure almost disappeared. This suggests that the honesty–humility measure can be a powerful tool for identifying individuals with Dark Triad characteristics.

For every tool that has had success in measuring the Dark Triad, others have delivered more mixed results or had their accuracy called into question, highlighting the debate that exists within the research regarding which measures are most appropriate. This conflict can be illustrated through several of the instruments used to measure psychopathy. For example, the authors of the most famous psychopathy measure, the Hare Psychopathy Checklist Revisited (PCL-R) (Hare, 2003), argued that the PM-MVR measure developed from their model is inaccurate; does not measure corporate psychopathy accurately; and fails to distinguish between the differing facets of the Dark Triad (Jones & Hare, 2016). Another evaluation determined that the B-Scan Self measure of the Dark Triad, which itself was also developed from the Hare model, is a more reliable tool (Mathieu & Babiak, 2016). That study also established a positive link between the reliability of the B-Scan Self Dark Triad measure and the Self-Report Psychopathy (SRP-III) test, another well-established and popular measure of psychopathy (Neumann et al., 2012). Others contend that too many studies only evaluate the negative outcomes associated with "dark" personality types and the measures currently in use may not be ideally designed to capture potential upsides to these personality types (Smith et al., 2018). The exact number of tools used to measure the Dark Triad and their various strengths and weaknesses are beyond the scope of this review, but these examples highlight many of the most popular instruments and are demonstrative of the ongoing process of refining them.

The Dark Triad at the Organizational Level

Another major avenue of Dark Triad research is geared toward how the triad is connected to business and its effects on organizations. Many studies have worked to determine which industries and professions Dark Triad personalities are drawn to, finding strong, specific connections to management and entrepreneurship. Further research has taken the next step in identifying the strengths and weaknesses of each of the Dark Triad personalities, as well as the external factors that affect their performances. A considerable body of research further detailed in this section also postulates there are upsides to Dark Triad personality types, challenging the prevailing notion that these individuals only have negative effects on themselves, their colleagues, and their organizations. They instead attribute many of these outcomes to external factors that explain much of the negative variation when properly accounted for.

An additional research path has identified strong links between the Dark Triad, entrepreneurship, management, and certain types of industries. A significant positive relationship exists between the Dark Triad personality traits and the inclination to start a business and engage in other entrepreneurial activities (Do & Dadvari, 2017). Research has also found that students with Dark Triad personality types are drawn to business and management and are found in those fields with greater propensity (Krick et al., 2016). Other analyses have uncovered a modest link between the Dark Triad and organizational type, finding these personalities are more common in the civil service and financial institutions rather than primary industries or retail (Boddy, 2010). An evaluation of individuals in the U.K. found significantly higher levels of psychopaths in the service sectors, while Machiavellians and narcissists were more prevalent in managerial occupations, suggesting those personality types help drive success in climbing hierarchical ladders (Lindley, 2018).

More detailed analyses have examined the specific strengths and weaknesses associated with each of the Dark Triad personalities and the underlying factors driving those outcomes. For example, the narcissistic desire for positive attention drives individuals to problem solve and take on leadership roles to better stand out vis-à-vis their peers (Zhou et al., 2020). Individuals with a Dark Triad personality type are also more likely to engage in risk taking; be more self-reliant and self-loyal; and be more performance oriented, factors that naturally incline them toward entrepreneurship (Do & Dadvari, 2017). One study found narcissists possess higher levels of work energy that drive them to take charge in the workplace and that this effect only grows stronger as one moves up in the organizational hierarchy (Zhou et al., 2020). On the other hand, a study examined differing entrepreneurial motives and found individuals with Dark Triad personalities are more likely to enter new business ventures for unproductive motives, such as power, attention, control, or thrill-seeking (Hmieleski & Lerner, 2016). However, narcissism stood apart from the other Dark Triad types as showing a link to productive entrepreneurial motives, perhaps due to the desire of the narcissist to receive positive attention, a factor Machiavellians and psychopaths were less concerned with. Therefore, there is research that reinforces the claim that Dark Triad personalities can drive positive effects in certain circumstances and that a more nuanced evaluation of them may be appropriate in future studies.

Other research has produced results that challenge the prevailing negative findings associated with Dark Triad entrepreneurs and managers, demonstrating that these negative effects may be attributed to environmental and circumstantial factors surrounding Dark Triad personality types rather than the individuals in question. One study found entrepreneurial orientation has a positive effect on organizational outcomes regardless of executive personality type and that there is no significant moderating effect between the Dark Triad and entrepreneurial orientation (Kraus et al., 2018). Despite the greater propensity of business and management students to possess a Dark Triad personality, several studies have been unable to establish a link between poorer moral judgment and individuals in those fields of study (Krick et al., 2016). Certain circumstances have also been shown to positively moderate the effectiveness of Dark Triad CEOs, including whether that individual is the founder of the firm or if one is only required to develop short-term relationships for success (Kraus et al., 2018). It may be that Dark Triad personality types are beneficial or, at the least, may be

moderated dependent upon the situation, organizational type, and the appropriate accounting of the full range of variables in a given circumstance.

The Dark Triad and Individual Performance

Job performance has long been a critical measure in business research, and many Dark Triad researchers have focused their attention on its relationship to individual performance. The consensus of the studies that have examined the connection between the Dark Triad and individual job performance is that a negative relationship exists between the two. Most studies also point to a correlation between these personalities and poor decision-making and improper behavior, which further hinder performance. Lastly, much of the research in this vein has focused on unique characteristics of each of the Dark Triad subsets.

While some studies have revealed positive aspects of the Dark Triad personality types, most have found strong, negative relationships between the Dark Triad and job performance. Stronger levels of narcissism in adulthood are associated with lower managerial effectiveness (Martin et al., 2016). This is due to a decreased likelihood to engage in positive work activities, such as task management and citizenship behavior, and an increased likelihood of taking part in counterproductive work behaviors. A meta-analysis of hundreds of studies found that Machiavellianism and psychopathy were correlated with decreases in job performance and that all three Dark Triad traits were associated with counterproductive work behaviors (O'Boyle et al., 2012). Additionally, the tendency of Dark Triad personalities to focus on promotion exacerbates these counterproductive characteristics (Smith et al., 2016). When this fixation was noted by supervisors, it resulted in narcissists and psychopaths receiving a further decrease in evaluations of their performance and capabilities, excepting Machiavellians.

These findings are reinforced by studies that have established a link between the Dark Triad and various forms of behavior, demonstrating that these characteristics can have powerful negative effects on decision making and, thus, job performance. For example, Machiavellianism is a key predictor of behavior, stemming from its tendencies to cause an individual to distrust others, engage in amoral, manipulative actions, and strive for greater status among peers (Hutter et al., 2015). One study found a positive link between childhood upbringing, reflected by parental income, and narcissism in later life (Martin et al., 2016). This suggests these behaviors are deeply ingrained and exert influence on nearly every aspect of an individual's life. Another study found that individuals with Dark Triad personalities received consistently poorer performance evaluations from their superiors (Smith et al., 2016). Combining these behavioral traits with counterproductive work habits is a recipe for poor performance outcomes.

Further, it is worth noting that a considerable proportion of Dark Triad research has focused on its subtypes, how they drive individual behavior, and their effects on job performance. As an upside, there is a statistically significant positive relationship between wage level and Machiavellianism (Lindley, 2018). Individuals who scored higher levels of Machiavellianism achieved higher wages even when controlling for performance. Research has also determined that Machiavellians thrive in competitive environments where they can interact face to face, there are fewer defined rules, and there is a great deal of latitude for improvisation (Hutter et al., 2015). However, entering Machiavellians into the setting of an online competition removed many of these advantages and resulted in varying levels of success when their submissions were evaluated by other participants and experts, suggesting their advantages may be limited to less defined, person-to-person interactions. Despite these bright spots, the bulk of the available research has found that negative environmental factors, such as excessive levels of authority and negative organizational culture, enable Dark Triad personalities, including Machiavellians, to emerge and thrive but also contribute to their overall poorer performance levels (O'Boyle et al., 2012). Key differences between the Dark Triad personalities also extend to financial risk taking, which can spill over into how the firm behaves and how key resources are managed (Sekścińska & Rudzinska-Wojciechowska, 2020). Narcissists are drawn to risk taking regardless of the level of

risk involved. Psychopaths are also drawn to risk taking but are more sensitive to the level of risk while Machiavellians were not associated with risk taking at all.

Finally, a key aspect of research has focused on the effect Dark Triad personalities have on the morals and ethics of those around them and the organizations of which they are a part. This is important for any firm, as antisocial work behaviors have severe negative effects, particularly for small- and medium-sized organizations (Valentine et al., 2019). These behaviors also tend to spread in the absence of clearly defined ethical codes or a strong culture of ethics. Another study found that Dark Triad behaviors thrive in organizations where managers are more hands off and social interaction is more limited (Webster & Smith, 2019). The Dark Triad can also influence negative behavior when followers demonstrate its behaviors even when their leaders do not (Schyns & Wisse, 2019). Even worse, seeing colleagues exhibit Dark Triad behaviors creates knock-on effects for other employees, corrodes organizational culture, erodes trust, and increases workplace abuse. However, these effects can be mitigated in high-involvement management climates (Webster & Smith, 2019). With the proper support and oversight, even Machiavellians and narcissists became engaged in higher levels of organizational citizenship behaviors. That study was unique in examining ways to positively channel the energies of individuals with Dark Triad characteristics, suggesting there is an opportunity for further research in this key topical area.

Research Questions and Main Hypotheses

The preceding literature highlights an important gap in Dark Triad research as it pertains to workplace behaviors. There is a distinct lack of research that seeks to identify circumstances and behaviors in which individuals who express these traits may be beneficial to their organizations. In particular, the research is lacking in terms of studying the Dark Triad in team or group settings. Utilizing a validated instrument that has successfully measured the Dark Triad (the Short Dark Triad/SD3), this study will seek to identify beneficial behaviors of working professionals with Dark Triad characteristics and to answer questions about their behavior in team settings. Thus, the primary research question this study seeks to address is:

What is the relationship between variance in employees' Dark Triad characteristics and their corresponding workplace behavior?

Further, this study seeks to confirm several negative behaviors previously linked to individuals who score high on Dark Triad measures. The reasoning behind this is twofold: first, to further demonstrate the validity of the theory underlining the hypotheses and the SD3 instrument used to examine them; and second, to reinforce the knowledge that these individuals can have profoundly negative effects on their organizations when their talents are not guided and utilized in the best manner possible. For example, previous studies have linked the Dark Triad to increased propensities to engage in counterproductive work behaviors (CWB) (O'Boyle et al., 2012), make lifestyle choices focused on the short term (Jonason, Koenig et al., 2010), and engage in heightened levels of risk taking (Hogan & Hogan, 2001).

> *Hypothesis 1A:* There is a positive association between individuals' Dark Triad personality score and their annual number of sick days used (O'Boyle et al., 2012).

> *Hypothesis 1B:* There is a negative association between individuals' Dark Triad personality score and their length of employment tenure (Jonason, Koenig et al., 2010).

> *Hypothesis 1C:* There is a positive association between individuals' Dark Triad personality score and propensity for risk taking (Hogan & Hogan, 2001).

More contemporary research, however, has begun to identify the benefits of employing individuals with Dark Triad characteristics. There is evidence to suggest that having a limited number of these individuals employed in certain positions or engaged in particular tasks can be quite beneficial. Studies have found that individuals with high Dark Triad scores work harder to advance themselves (O'Boyle et al., 2012), thrive in more volatile work environments, and excel in situations that involve short-term relationships, such as sales and negotiations (Spain et al., 2014).

> *Hypothesis 2A:* There is a positive association between individuals' Dark Triad personality score and their desire to ask for overtime (O'Boyle et al., 2012).

> *Hypothesis 2B:* There is a positive association between individuals' Dark Triad personality score and their preference for a volatile work environment (O'Boyle et al., 2012).

> *Hypothesis 2C:* There is a positive association between individuals' Dark Triad personality score and their preference for sales work (Spain et al., 2014).

Finally, there is an appreciable gap in the literature as it pertains to the Dark Triad and its effect on teamwork and team settings. A limited amount of information suggests these individuals do not perform well in team settings and that teamwork does not mitigate their negative tendencies (Smith et al., 2018). However, it is possible that their skill sets and personal preferences are simply not inclined to such formats. Indeed, due to their proclivities to take risks and pursue their own interests, employees with Dark Triad traits may have a natural tendency to dislike work activities, such as orientation and training (Spain et al., 2014). But some evidence suggests employees with high Dark Triad scores report lower levels of counterproductive work behaviors (CWB) when they believe they are receiving sufficient organizational support (Palmer et al., 2017). Thus, rather than compel individuals with these traits to perform under circumstances they are not equipped to succeed in, it may benefit organizations to steer them into positions where they can contribute to team and organizational success from afar.

> *Hypothesis 3A:* There is a negative association between individuals' Dark Triad personality score and their enjoyment of teamwork (Smith et al., 2018).

> *Hypothesis 3B:* There is a negative association between individuals' Dark Triad personality score and satisfaction with training programs (Spain et al., 2014).

> *Hypothesis 3C:* There is a positive association between individuals' Dark Triad personality score and willingness to indirectly contribute to teamwork (Palmer et al., 2017).

Methodology

This study utilizes the SD3 as its main survey instrument to calculate Dark Triad scores and individual subset scores for respondents. The Short Dark Triad was selected for several reasons. First, it provides both a comprehensive Dark Triad and individual subcategory scores for each personality trait, which allows for full analysis of the research question and hypotheses. Second, it is a widely utilized and validated instrument, the reliability of which has been confirmed by prior research. The final reason was practical in that it is a shorter instrument and so less likely to dissuade respondents from completing it or answering honestly, which is a greater risk with lengthier instruments. Additional demographic and research questions were added to the survey to address the research objectives in question. Excepting these questions, the original instrument was utilized as closely as possible (including reversed questions) in order to maintain its established validity and suitability for the purposes of this study.

The survey was self-administered to subjects online via Qualtrics and respondents remained anonymous. The snowball sampling method was used to distribute the survey link and to gather as wide a range of responses as possible. All survey questions were approved by the institutional review board of the primary authors' university. The respondents were adult, working professionals over the age of 18 and employed at least part time. These individuals were employed in a range of positions and industries so as to capture the diverse set of occupations required for the research. The survey was made available to several hundred individuals via email and social media, with 154 total responses, 142 of which were suitable for inclusion in the final analysis.

The study itself was quantitative in nature and sought to either confirm or refute linkages between the Dark Triad personality types and the proposed research questions. We examined the resulting data utilizing SPSS software to determine its suitability for research purposes and the subsequent suitability of the procedures run to examine its characteristics. Several tests were then carried out to determine the statistical significance of links between individuals who scored high on the Dark Triad measure and the various research questions posed. Finally, in the discussion and conclusion sections we describe these results in greater detail.

Data Analysis

We ran descriptive statistics on the initial dataset to produce general summary information. Dark Triad scores ranged from 27 to 135 and subset scores ranged from 9 to 45, with lower scores indicating "darker" personalities. The mean composite Dark Triad score was 94.13, while the subset scores were 27.13 for Machiavellianism, 27.48 for narcissism, and 38.52 for psychopathy. These figures were in line with the averages from other studies, which found Machiavellianism to be the most common Dark Triad characteristic, followed by narcissism and psychopathy. Similar averages were computed for each of the nine dependent variables utilized in this study and for the demographic information collected. These are listed in the descriptive statistics table (Table 1).

Table 1. *Descriptive Statistics*

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Age	142	4	2	6	3.87	1.010	1.019	.132	.203	-.773	.404
Gender	142	1	1	2	1.65	.477	.228	-.659	.203	-1.589	.404
Education	142	4	1	5	2.84	1.264	1.598	-.139	.203	-1.081	.404
Hours Worked	142	4	1	5	3.43	.926	.857	-.689	.203	.634	.404
Employment Length	142	6	1	7	3.32	1.760	3.097	.661	.203	-.560	.404
Industry	142	1	0	1	.23	.424	.180	1.281	.203	-.365	.404
Call Off	142	4	1	5	2.04	1.013	1.027	.758	.203	-.143	.404
Income	140	6	1	7	2.87	1.383	1.911	.897	.205	.784	.407
Training Programs	142	4	1	5	2.33	1.063	1.131	.739	.203	-.281	.404
Risk Taking	142	4	1	5	3.07	1.275	1.626	-.029	.203	-1.191	.404
Overtime	142	4.0	1.0	5.0	2.570	1.1571	1.339	.397	.203	-.373	.404
Teamwork	142	4	1	5	2.02	1.101	1.212	.992	.203	.253	.404
Indirect Contribution	142	4	1	5	2.15	.816	.666	.594	.203	.507	.404
Machiavellianism Composite Score	142	27.00	12.00	39.00	27.1268	5.64538	31.870	-.365	.203	-.035	.404
Narcissism Composite Score	142	28.00	16.00	44.00	28.4789	5.45220	29.727	-.060	.203	-.316	.404
Psychopathy Composite Score	142	21.00	24.00	45.00	38.5211	4.84324	23.457	-.681	.203	-.019	.404
Dark Triad Composite Score	142	62.00	60.00	122.00	94.1268	12.33795	152.225	-.393	.203	-.224	.404
Valid N (listwise)	140										

Several measures of distribution normality were also employed, including the Shapiro-Wilk test and the Smirnov-Kogorov tests of normality. The results of this analysis revealed significant statistics and *p*-values for every variable in one test or the other. Thus, the data were not normally distributed, which could also be inferred from the ordinal nature of the survey. Therefore, non-parametric measures were utilized for further analysis. (See Table 2.)

Table 2. *Tests of Normality*

Tests of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Age	.219	140	.000	.894	140	.000
Gender	.425	140	.000	.596	140	.000
Education	.195	140	.000	.888	140	.000
Hours Worked	.249	140	.000	.857	140	.000
Employment Length	.203	140	.000	.893	140	.000
Industry	.474	140	.000	.526	140	.000
Call Off	.224	140	.000	.845	140	.000
Income	.193	140	.000	.897	140	.000
Training Programs	.318	140	.000	.835	140	.000
Risk Taking	.205	140	.000	.896	140	.000
Overtime	.190	140	.000	.888	140	.000
Teamwork	.239	140	.000	.821	140	.000
Indirect Contribution	.291	140	.000	.848	140	.000
Machiavellianism Composite Score	.094	140	.004	.981	140	.052
Narcissism Composite Score	.072	140	.074	.989	140	.372
Psychopathy Composite Score	.101	140	.001	.948	140	.000
Dark Triad Composite Score	.079	140	.031	.984	140	.111

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

The next stage of the analysis was conducted to confirm the validity of the survey measures and the overarching relationships between the variables. We used Cronbach's Alpha to analyze the validity of the survey questions used in the SD3. The resulting Cronbach's Alpha test produced a value of .818. This was in line with the original findings of the designers of the instrument. Next, we used Spearman's rho to measure the overall correlations between the independent variables and the Dark Triad score. Spearman's test was chosen as the independent variables are all ordinal scale and the resulting data was thus nonparametric.

The first series of hypotheses were tied to negative work behaviors associated with Dark Triad personalities in prior studies. The first test did not support Hypothesis 1A, which stated there would be a positive association between individuals' Dark Triad personality score and their annual number of sick days used; Spearman correlation coefficient = -.033, p = .698. We could not establish support for Hypothesis 1B either, which stated there would be a negative association between individuals' Dark Triad personality score and their length of employment tenure; correlation coefficient = .11, p = .898. These findings were important as they failed to replicate previous findings regarding Dark Triad personalities and negative workplace behaviors (O'Boyle et al., 2012; Jonason, Koenig et al., 2010). However, Hypothesis 1C, which stated there would be a positive

association between individuals' Dark Triad personality score and propensity for risk taking, was supported; correlation coefficient = .275, p = .001.

Table 3. *Correlations*

Correlations

				Dark Triad Composite Score	Risk Taking
Spearman's rho	Dark Triad Composite Score	Correlation Coefficient		1.000	.275[**]
		Sig. (2-tailed)		.	.001
		N		142	142
		Bootstrap[c]	Bias	.000	-.005
			Std. Error	.000	.080
		95% Confidence Interval	Lower	1.000	.100
			Upper	1.000	.422
	Risk Taking	Correlation Coefficient		.275[**]	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)		.001	.
		N		142	142
		Bootstrap[c]	Bias	-.005	.000
			Std. Error	.080	.000
		95% Confidence Interval	Lower	.100	1.000
			Upper	.422	1.000

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

c. Unless otherwise noted, bootstrap results are based on 1000 bootstrap samples

The second series of hypotheses led into Dark Triad behaviors regarding group settings and once more sought to confirm or refute findings of previously published studies. Hypothesis 2A states there will be a positive association between individuals' Dark Triad personality score and their desire to ask for overtime (operationalized by hours worked per week). The Spearman's rho test returned a correlation coefficient = .117, p = .164, which did not support a correlation between Dark Triad score and working additional hours. Hypothesis 2B states there will be a positive association between individuals' Dark Triad personality score and their preference for a volatile work environment. This was also refuted by the Spearman coefficient = .084, p = .321. Lastly, Hypothesis 2C states there is a positive association between individuals' Dark Triad personality score and their preference for sales work. This hypothesis was not supported by the data; correlation coefficient = -.114, p = .178. Thus, it was not possible to establish support for findings from several previous studies connected to each of these behaviors (O'Boyle et al., 2012; Spain et al., 2014). The difficulty in replicating these findings regarding the Dark Triad and group/team settings further highlights the importance of continued study in this area to verify established findings and to fill in the significant gaps in the literature.

The final trio of hypotheses sought to explore new dimensions of the relationship between the Dark Triad and teamwork. We designed these measures to determine whether individuals with these characteristics could contribute to teamwork in a more productive fashion under different circumstances. Hypothesis 3A stated there would be a negative association between individuals' Dark Triad personality score and their enjoyment of teamwork. The correlation coefficient = .002, p = .980 failed to reflect support for this hypothesis. Because we theorized that Dark Triad personalities had an aversion for teamwork, Hypothesis 3C postulated there may be a positive association between individuals' Dark Triad personality score and willingness to contribute to teamwork indirectly. However, this hypothesis was also not supported; correlation coefficient = .101, p = .232. Therefore, it may be that other factors drive potential dissatisfaction Dark Triad personalities express regarding teamwork,

that more research is required, and that these individuals are just as willing to engage in group work as others under the right circumstances. Hypothesis 3B, however, stated there would be a negative association between individuals' Dark Triad personality scores and satisfaction with training programs. As hypothesized, Spearman's test found a significant negative correlation between these two variables with a coefficient = -.177 and p = .035. To our knowledge, this was the first time a study was able to establish a statistical link between Dark Triad personalities and disapproval for these types of organizational initiatives. (See Table 4.)

Table 4. *Correlations*

Correlations

				Dark Triad Composite Score	Training Programs
Spearman's rho	Dark Triad Composite Score	Correlation Coefficient		1.000	-.177[*]
		Sig. (2-tailed)		.	.035
		N		142	142
		Bootstrap[c]	Bias	.000	.001
			Std. Error	.000	.090
		95% Confidence Interval	Lower	1.000	-.341
			Upper	1.000	.008
	Training Programs	Correlation Coefficient		-.177[*]	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)		.035	.
		N		142	142
		Bootstrap[c]	Bias	.001	.000
			Std. Error	.090	.000
		95% Confidence Interval	Lower	-.341	1.000
			Upper	.008	1.000

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

c. Unless otherwise noted, bootstrap results are based on 1000 bootstrap samples

Conclusion

The literature surrounding the Dark Triad phenomenon states, for the most part, that it is a negative force that only produces negative outcomes for both individuals and organizations. The bulk of prior research has shown poorer organizational performance for firms led by Dark Triad type managers and lower quality reviews for individuals with these characteristics. In at least one instance, this study was able to support those findings by producing evidence linking Dark Triad personalities to heightened risk taking. This reinforces the notion that employing these individuals may itself carry a certain level of additional risk.

However, there are several key factors that challenge this prevailing notion. More contemporary studies have revealed specific circumstances in which having an individual with these characteristics is valuable for an organization. Scholars have also identified considerable gaps in the research where studies have either neglected to look for the upsides to Dark Triad personalities or have not fully accounted for all the variables driving the negative outcomes associated with them. This study reexamined a considerable list of well-known associations between the Dark Triad and counterproductive work behaviors utilizing a sample that drew data from a popular, validated Dark Triad instrument but was unable to find even the most basic statistical evidence to support many of them. This suggests that the circumstances of these findings may warrant further study, in greater detail, to fully understand the phenomena. Finally, there is evidence that the talents and

abilities of these individuals can be channeled in productive ways with the proper support and supervision. The most unique contribution this study makes is in this vein, as the data suggest Dark Triad personalities do not value mandatory training programs. Thus, providing them with more latitude and flexibility in their training may be a better use of their skill set and of organizational time and resources.

Discussion

The major question that arises from these results is why the data failed to produce the relationships hypothesized in the literature. While it is possible that there was an anomaly in the respondents that produced this result, this is unlikely as the sample itself was found to be representative of Dark Triad characteristics in the general population. One possibility is that there has been a change in the way organizations operate and the manner in which people interact and that these linkages are fading. Another is that the Dark Triad itself is not a direct, linear linkage between personality and behavior, but rather only a piece of a much more complex system of social interactions. This in turn raises the question of whether it is possible to collect data on the phenomenon in a parametric fashion. Survey data is nonparametric by nature, and this may have an effect on how responses are analyzed and interpreted. Few, if any, studies have addressed this issue. All of these possibilities represent fruitful avenues for further research.

Limitations

This study has several important limitations that should be disclosed and that future experiments may seek to overcome. The most obvious is the debate surrounding the suitability of creating a composite measure from the responses to the SD3. A second limitation is the well-known drawbacks of utilizing the snowball method for data collection. The study is also limited in that its response pool was primarily drawn from professionals in the Western Pennsylvania area only, and it is thus restricted in scope to that geographic area. The nonparametric nature of the data also reduced the range of statistical tools available for analysis. However, the results of this study may be viewed as a starting point for further research and the development of more sophisticated models to examine the Dark Triad phenomenon.

Future Issues

In addition to the research outcomes associated with this study, there are several avenues available for future researchers. The interaction between the Dark Triad and teamwork has received only a limited amount of attention. This study could not find evidence to support the limited findings that have been gathered on the subject thus far. Future endeavors should seek to examine that relationship in more detail and build on these findings. While this study focused on the overall connections between the Dark Triad and various workplace behaviors, future research may look in closer detail at the connections between these variables and the three subcategories of the Dark Triad to seek potential linkages. Additional efforts could be made to examine more potential upsides to Dark Triad personalities as well. It is quite likely that these benefits exist and that individuals who exhibit these characteristics can be of value to their organizations if managed and utilized properly. For example, while the Dark Triad was not found to be linked to a propensity to seek overtime, this could be viewed in a positive light as Dark Triad types are not selfishly pursuing their own interests at the expense of company resources. Even the finding on risk taking can be seen in this light, as the characteristic may be valuable in a position where comfort with taking risks is necessary for success. It may also be of value to conduct more sophisticated nonparametric tests on the hypotheses proposed in this paper. Finally, future research might seek to expand the scope of this study beyond its geographic and demographic limitations to better generalize its findings. In summary, while much progress has been made in understanding the impact of the Dark Triad on business, undoubtedly there is still much to be learned and uncovered.

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