

# The Dark Triad Personality: The Impact and How to Manage at Work

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## ABSTRACT

This article is based on a literature review on the dark personality. The Dark Triad personality traits encompass malevolent and socially aversive characteristics and have been associated with a wide range of behaviors and outcomes, including short-term mating strategies, socially aversive outcomes, selfish and exploitative behaviors, and career-related implications. Understanding the implications of these traits is crucial for promoting responsible and ethical conduct in various contexts. The Dark Triad personality traits encompass malevolent and socially aversive characteristics and have been associated with a wide range of behaviors and outcomes, including short-term mating strategies, socially aversive outcomes, selfish and exploitative behaviors, and career-related implications. Understanding the implications of these traits is crucial for promoting responsible and ethical conduct in various contexts. The identification of Dark Triad traits has been approached using various measures and assessments, allowing researchers to explore the malevolent and socially aversive characteristics associated with narcissism, psychopathy, and Machiavellianism in different contexts and populations.

**Keywords:** Dark triad, personality traits, narcissism, psychopathy, Machiavellianism

## INTRODUCTION

The Dark Triad personality traits encompass a set of malevolent and socially aversive characteristics, consisting of narcissism, psychopathy, and Machiavellianism (Muris et al., 2017; Jonason et al., 2009; Kaufman et al., 2019; Akat et al., 2022). These traits have been associated with a range of behaviors and outcomes, including short-term mating strategies, socially aversive outcomes, and selfish, exploitative, and aggressive behaviors (Jonason et al., 2009; Kaufman et al., 2019). Additionally, the Dark Triad traits have been linked to social media addiction, anti-natalist views, and risky behaviors (Siah et al., 2021; Schönegger, 2021; Maneiro et al., 2020). Furthermore, the Dark Triad traits have been found to predict selfish thinking and behavior, as well as deceptive behavior (Howell et al., 2023; Wissing & Reinhard, 2019). The Dark Triad personality has also been associated with counterproductive work behavior among nurses and has been studied in the context of leadership effectiveness (Panda, 2022). Moreover, the Dark Triad traits have been examined concerning career growth and have been found to have a significant negative impact on employee career growth (النجار et al., 2023). The Dark Triad personality traits are characterized by antagonistic maladaptive personality traits and have been contrasted with the Light Triad, which represents a positive counterpart characterized by humanism, Kantianism, and faith in humanity (Kaufman et al., 2019; Peterson & Palmer, 2021). Additionally, the Dark Triad traits have been associated with a desire for power, status, and social dominance in the workplace, potentially drawing individuals

towards occupations affording such outcomes (Vedel & Thomsen, 2017). Furthermore, the Dark Triad traits are significantly related to ambition and political participation (Peterson & Palmer, 2021). The Dark Triad personality traits have also been examined in the context of religiousness, with a person-centered approach revealing differences in intellectual humility, pro-sociality, and mental health (Lee et al., 2022; Šram & Bufford, 2021).

## DEFINITION OF DARK TRIAD PERSONALITY TRAITS

The Dark Triad personality traits, comprising narcissism, psychopathy, and Machiavellianism, have been extensively studied in various contexts. These traits have been associated with a range of behaviors and outcomes, including short-term mating strategies, socially aversive outcomes, and selfish, exploitative, and aggressive behaviors (Jonason et al., 2009). Additionally, the Dark Triad traits have been linked to social media addiction, anti-natalist views, and risky behaviors (Schönegger, 2021; Musek & Grum, 2021; Maneiro et al., 2020). Furthermore, the Dark Triad traits have been found to predict selfish thinking and behavior, as well as deceptive behavior (Wissing & Reinhard, 2019; Deutchman & Sullivan, 2018). The Dark Triad personality has also been associated with counterproductive work behavior among nurses and has been studied in the context of leadership effectiveness (Muris et al., 2017; النجار et al., 2023). Moreover, the Dark Triad traits have been examined concerning career growth and have been found to have a significant negative impact on employee career growth (النجار et al., 2023). The Dark Triad personality traits are characterized by antagonistic maladaptive personality traits and have been contrasted with the Light Triad, which represents a positive counterpart characterized by humanism, Kantianism, and faith in humanity (Musek & Grum, 2021). Additionally, the Dark Triad traits have been associated with a desire for power, status, and social dominance in the workplace, potentially drawing individuals towards occupations affording such outcomes (Muris et al., 2017; Vedel & Thomsen, 2017). Furthermore, the Dark Triad traits have been found to be significantly related to ambition and political participation (Peterson & Palmer, 2021). The Dark Triad personality traits have also been examined in the context of religiousness, with a person-centered approach revealing differences in intellectual humility, prosociality, and mental health (Lee et al., 2022; Wertag & Bratko, 2019). Moreover, the Dark Triad traits have been found to play a role in social entrepreneurial intention, with empathic concern and perspective taking moderating their effects (Akat et al., 2022).

## HOW TO IDENTIFY DARK TRIAD TRAITS

To identify Dark Triad traits, researchers have utilized various measures and assessments to capture the malevolent and socially aversive characteristics associated with narcissism, psychopathy, and Machiavellianism. Studies have employed self-report measures such as the Short Dark Triad Scale (SD3) (Brunett & Oberle, 2022), as well as other established instruments to assess the Dark Triad traits, including the HEXACO factor of honesty-humility (Muris et al., 2017), the Dark Triad traits from a life history perspective (Jonason et al., 2017), and the Dark Triad traits and the PID-5 maladaptive personality traits (Wissing & Reinhard, 2017). Additionally, researchers have explored the relationship between the Dark Triad traits and different types of jealousy (Barelds & Dijkstra, 2021), as well as the association between the Dark Triad and the detection of parental judicial manipulators (Clemente et al., 2020). Furthermore, studies have investigated the Dark Triad traits in various contexts, such as professional fighters (Hauwermeiren et al., 2023), social networking site use (Hussain et al., 2021), and the detection of others' darkness (Lämmle et al., 2019). Additionally, research has examined the Dark Triad traits from a multidimensional view, considering the relationship between empathy and the Dark Triad (Jonason & Kroll, 2015), and the link between bright and dark personality traits and different types of jealousy (Barelds & Dijkstra, 2021). Moreover, studies have explored the Dark Triad traits in the context of mate selection and the creation of a volatile environment (Jonason et al., 2011), as well as the association between the Dark Triad and the

perceived effectiveness of penalties in traffic offenders and non-offender groups (Vadvilavičius et al., 2023).

## HOW TO MANAGE PEOPLE WITH DARK TRIAD TRAITS

Managing individuals with Dark Triad traits can be challenging due to their malevolent and socially aversive characteristics. However, understanding and addressing these traits can help in effectively managing individuals with such tendencies. Here are some strategies based on relevant research:

1. *Awareness and Training*: Educate and train managers and team members to recognize the signs of Dark Triad traits. Awareness can help in identifying potential issues and addressing them early on (O'Boyle et al., 2012).
2. *Set Clear Boundaries*: Establish clear and firm boundaries in the workplace to prevent individuals with Dark Triad traits from engaging in manipulative or exploitative behaviors (Serenko & Choo, 2020).
3. *Encourage Ethical Behavior*: Promote a culture of ethical behavior and integrity within the organization. Emphasize the importance of honesty, fairness, and respect for others (Prusik & Szulawski, 2019).
4. *Supervision and Monitoring*: Provide close supervision and monitoring, especially in roles where individuals with Dark Triad traits may have the opportunity to exploit others or engage in unethical behavior (Spurk et al., 2015).
5. *Supportive Leadership*: Encourage supportive and transformational leadership styles that focus on building positive relationships and fostering a healthy work environment (النجار et al., 2023).
6. *Addressing Motivation*: Understand the motivations of individuals with Dark Triad traits and provide alternative, positive outlets for their ambitions and desires for power and status (Khan et al., 2021).
7. *Psychological Safety*: Foster an environment of psychological safety where employees feel comfortable reporting any concerns about potential manipulative or abusive behavior (Wisse & Sleebos, 2016).
8. *Conflict Resolution*: Develop effective conflict resolution strategies to address interpersonal conflicts that may arise due to the behavior of individuals with Dark Triad traits (Biçer, 2020).
9. *Performance Evaluation*: Use objective and fair performance evaluation processes to assess the contributions of individuals with Dark Triad traits, ensuring that their behavior does not negatively impact others (Smith et al., 2015).
10. *Seek Professional Help*: In severe cases, consider involving mental health professionals to provide support and guidance in managing individuals with extreme Dark Triad traits (Diller et al., 2020).

It is important to note that managing individuals with Dark Triad traits requires a nuanced and careful approach. Understanding the underlying motivations and behaviors associated with these traits can help in developing effective management strategies while maintaining a healthy and productive work environment.

## THE IMPACT OF DARK TRIAD TRAITS AT WORK

Based on the provided references, the impact of Dark Triad traits at work is a multifaceted and complex issue. The Dark Triad traits, comprising narcissism, psychopathy, and Machiavellianism, have been associated with various workplace-related behaviors and outcomes. Here are some key insights from the literature:

1. *Negative Psychosocial Outcomes*: Dark Triad traits are substantially intercorrelated and associated with various types of negative psychosocial outcomes, suggesting potential challenges in interpersonal relationships and work dynamics (Muris et al., 2017).
2. *Health Beliefs and Pandemic Responses*: The Dark Triad traits have been correlated with work

behaviors affecting people's health, indicating a potential influence on responses to health crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic (Nowak et al., 2020).

3. **Workplace Deviance:** Research suggests that individuals with Dark Triad traits may engage in undesirable workplace behaviors, and modeling the effects of these traits may be important in understanding workplace deviance (Ellen et al., 2021).
4. **Impact on Employee Career Growth:** The presence of Dark Triad traits in leaders has been linked to ineffective job behavior, lower job performance, greater stress levels, and decreased job satisfaction among employees (النجار et al., 2023).
5. **Leadership Effectiveness:** There is a positive relationship between leaders scoring high in Dark Triad personality traits and their desire for power, which may impact their leadership effectiveness (Panda, 2022).
6. **Selfish Behavior and Attitudes:** Dark Triad traits have been associated with increased selfish thinking and behavior, as well as attitudes towards infidelity among married individuals in work place (Howell et al., 2023; Akin et al., 2021).
7. **Workplace Relationships:** The Dark Triad traits have been linked to emotional manipulation, strategic followership, and perceptions of dark triad characters in media, indicating potential challenges in workplace relationships and dynamics (Hyde et al., 2020; Schyns et al., 2019; Snyder et al., 2019).
8. **Organizational Impact:** The Dark Triad traits have been associated with negative workplace behaviors, suggesting potential implications for organizational culture and dynamics (Schyns et al., 2022).

In summary, the impact of Dark Triad traits at work encompasses a wide range of behaviors and outcomes, including workplace deviance, leadership effectiveness, workplace relationships, and organizational culture. Understanding and addressing the implications of these traits is crucial for promoting a healthy and productive work environment.

## **DARK TRIAD PERSONALITY: THE DYNAMIC OF AGE, GENDER, AND CULTURAL**

In exploring the analysis of gender and age differences concerning Dark Triad personality traits, research findings indicate that Dark Triad traits, such as narcissism, psychopathy, and Machiavellianism, are more prevalent among men than women (Muris et al., 2017). This gender difference is consistent across various cultures and is particularly pronounced in societies with more egalitarian gender roles (Schmitt et al., 2016). Studies have also shown that men tend to score higher on the Dark Triad traits compared to women, while women demonstrate more empathic abilities (Jonason & Kroll, 2015). Furthermore, age has been identified as a factor influencing the manifestation of Dark Triad traits. Research suggests that these traits may become more pronounced over an individual's working life due to the cumulative effects of personality across different situations over the lifespan (Spurk et al., 2015). Additionally, age is a crucial factor in studies related to Dark Triad traits and cyberbullying, as there are known negative associations between cyberbullying and age (Schade et al., 2021). In professional contexts, gender has been found to negatively moderate the relationship between Dark Triad traits and counterproductive work behaviors (Miao et al., 2023). This suggests that the impact of Dark Triad traits on work-related outcomes may vary based on gender differences. Moreover, research has explored the connection between Dark Triad traits and career success, indicating that these traits may influence objective and subjective career success differently across age groups (Spurk et al., 2015). Studies have also delved into the association between Dark Triad traits and various domains such as mate selection, environmental attitudes, and coaching dynamics. These investigations offer insights into how Dark Triad traits influence decision-making processes, interpersonal relationships, and behavioral outcomes across different genders and age groups (Jonason et al., 2011; Huang et al., 2018; Diller et al., 2020).

Cultural influences also play a significant role in the manifestation and impact of Dark Triad personality traits. Research has shown that the prevalence and expression of these traits can vary across different cultures and societies. Studies have explored how cultural norms, values, and practices shape the development and display of Dark Triad traits, shedding light on the complex interplay between individual characteristics and cultural contexts (Aluja et al., 2022; Huang et al., 2018). Cross-cultural research has indicated that the Dark Triad traits may be influenced by societal factors, such as levels of interpersonal conflict, gender equality, and social hierarchies. Countries characterized by high levels of the Dark Triad traits have been associated with more internal conflicts and less gender equality, suggesting a potential link between cultural dynamics and the prevalence of these traits at a societal level (Uppal, 2021). Moreover, a study on Dark Triad traits, social position, and personality across different cultures found that between 6% and 16% of the variance in the Dark Triad traits was accounted for by culture, highlighting the significant role of cultural factors in shaping these personality characteristics (Peterson & Palmer, 2021). This underscores the importance of considering cultural variations when studying and interpreting the Dark Triad traits. Additionally, research has explored the relationship between Dark Triad traits and specific cultural phenomena. For example, a study on environmental attitudes in China investigated the roles of the Dark Triad traits, future orientation, and place attachment, highlighting the need to consider cultural contexts when examining individual attitudes and behaviors related to environmental concerns. This study underscores the importance of understanding how cultural values and beliefs may influence the expression of Dark Triad traits in different populations. Furthermore, studies have examined the impact of Dark Triad traits on various aspects of society, such as job performance, career growth, and political participation, across different cultural settings. These investigations provide insights into how cultural norms and practices may interact with individual personality traits to influence work behavior and work outcomes in diverse cultural contexts.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the above analysis, here are some key points and insights related to the Dark Triad traits. The Dark Triad traits including narcissism, psychopathy, and Machiavellianism, have been associated with various workplace behaviors, such as workplace deviance, abusive supervision, and job performance. The presence of Dark Triad traits in leaders has been linked to ineffective job behavior, lower job performance, and decreased job satisfaction among employees, suggesting potential implications for leadership effectiveness and employee career growth. The Dark Triad traits have been associated with emotional manipulation, cyberbullying, and mate selection, indicating potential challenges in social relationships and interpersonal dynamics in the workplace and organization. Research on Dark Triad also recognizes the influence of gender and age differences in Dark Triad personality traits and reveals nuanced patterns in how these traits manifest and impact individuals across various contexts, especially in the workplace. Understanding these nuances is essential for developing targeted interventions and strategies to address the challenges posed by Dark Triad traits in different populations in the workplace. Finally, cultural influences play a crucial role in shaping the manifestation and impact of Dark Triad personality traits. Understanding how cultural factors interact with individual characteristics is essential for gaining a comprehensive understanding of these traits and their implications on the workplace in different cultural settings.

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