

**DIFFERENCE IN FACTORS IMPACTING DARK TRIAD TRAITS
IN ADULTS**

Project submitted for partial fulfilment of the degree of

MASTERS OF ARTS

IN

PSYCHOLOGY



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(Deemed to be University)

UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF:

Dr Kriti Vyas

SUBMITTED BY:

KRITIKA ARORA

862202026

Department of Psychology, Thapar School of Liberal Arts & Science

CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that the thesis entitled, 'DIFFERENCE IN FACTORS IMPACTING DARK TRIAD TRAITS IN ADULTS' is being submitted in partial fulfilment of requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Arts in Psychology, presented in the Thapar School of Liberal Arts & Sciences, Thapar Institute of Engineering and Technology, Patiala is a bonafide work carried out under the supervision of Dr..Kriti Vyas, Assistant Professor, Thapar School of Liberal Arts & Sciences, Thapar Institute of Engineering and Technology, Patiala, and no part of this project has been submitted for the award of any other degree.



(KRITIKA ARORA)

This is to certify that the above statement by the student concerned is correct and accurate to the best of my knowledge.

DR. KRITI VYAS

Assistant Professor



Thapar Institute of Engineering and Technology, Patiala

CANDIDATE'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the work presented in this thesis entitled, 'DIFFERENCE IN FACTORS IMPACTING DARK TRIAD TRAITS IN ADULTS' submitted in partial fulfilment of requirements for the award of the degree Master of Arts in Psychology, presented in the Thapar School of Liberal Arts & Sciences, Thapar Institute of Engineering and Technology, Patiala, is an authentic record of my work carried out under the supervision and guidance of Dr.Kriti Vyas, Assistant Professor, Thapar School of Liberal Arts & Sciences, Thapar Institute of Engineering and Technology, Patiala and refers other researchers' work which is duly listed in the reference section.

The matter embodied in this thesis has not formed the basis for awarding any other degree at this or any other university.

Date- June, 2024



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Dr. KRITI VYAS, Assistant Pofessor
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ABSTRACT

The study aimed to assess the impact of Dark Triad personality traits, on Aggression and adjustment in adults. Short Dark Test was used to measure an individual's score on Machiavellianism, Narcissism and Psychopathy. To measure scores for aggression and adjustment, the Aggression Questionnaire and Brief Adjustment Scale were used. A sample size of 140, aged 18-30 years was taken. Statistical analyses were done using Correlation and Regression using SPSS.

The current study uses qualitative methods to investigate the subjective experiences of persons who exhibit higher levels of Dark Triad traits than the norm, namely Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy. The research utilizes semi-structured interviews as a means of data collection. A deliberate sample of 16 volunteers, encompassing a range of genders, ages, and educational backgrounds, was selected from various community settings. Participants were asked to contemplate their thoughts, emotions, and actions about Dark Triad features during individual semi-structured interviews. Analysis of the qualitative data was done using thematic analysis to discover reoccurring patterns and themes. The results unveiled an intricate interaction of incentives, interpersonal dynamics, and ethical considerations among persons exhibiting higher levels of Dark Triad traits. The main topics explored were

manipulative tactics, grandiose conduct, absence of empathy, and propensity for taking risks. Participants reported utilizing several strategies to attain their objectives, feeling a sense of superiority and entitlement, grappling with empathy and emotional comprehension, and partaking in impulsive and antisocial actions. These findings help delve deeper into the subjective experiences and intricacies associated with Dark Triad features. They provide valuable insights for future study, therapeutic practice, and intervention efforts in the field of psychology.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Dark Triad

Dark Triad Personality traits are a cluster of three traits which have a significant impact on how individuals think, feel, and behave in several areas of life. Out of the several psychological frameworks, the Dark Triad has gained attention since it is linked to behaviours that are socially unpleasant and exploitative.

The dark triad is a psychological theory of personality, first published by Delroy L. Paulhus and Kevin M. Williams in 2002, that describes three notably offensive, but non-pathological personality types: Machiavellianism, subclinical narcissism, and sub-clinical psychopathy. Each of these personality types is called dark because each is considered to contain malevolent qualities

The Dark Triad personality traits have been associated with several negative consequences, such as difficulties in interpersonal relationships, deviant behaviour in the workplace, and engagement in unethical actions (Jonason & Webster, 2010; LeBreton et al., 2018). Gaining a comprehensive understanding of the fundamental principles behind these characteristics is essential not only for theoretical progress but also for practical applications in other fields, including personnel selection, clinical intervention, and organizational management.

The three personality traits under Dark Triad include Machiavellianism, Narcissism and Psychopathy.

1.1.1 Machiavellianism

Machiavellianism involves manipulation, strategic thinking, and cynicism. Machiavellians are adept manipulators who utilize deceit, flattery, and strategy (Christie & Geis, 1970). They are skilled in manipulating others' thoughts and actions to advance their own goals, frequently without ethical consideration (Jones & Paulhus, 2009). Machiavellians plan strategically to maximize personal gain and avoid danger (Wilson, Near, & Miller, 1996). They can anticipate others' actions and adjust their techniques to achieve goals (Christie & Geis, 1970). Machiavellians consider relationships as transactional and instrumental (Christie & Geis, 1970). They may distrust people and see social interactions as manipulation and exploitation (Jones & Paulhus, 2009). Machiavellianism is connected with adaptive functioning in competitive situations like the business or politics, where strategic thinking and manipulation can give an advantage (Wilson et al., 1996).

1.1.2 Narcissism

Narcissism is a personality trait defined by an exaggerated belief in one's own significance, a persistent desire for adulation, and a lack of empathy towards others. Individuals with elevated levels of narcissistic tendencies frequently harbor extravagant delusions regarding their personal achievements, possess a belief in their own distinctiveness and exceptionalism, and anticipate preferential treatment from others. Individuals with this personality trait may manipulate social connections in order to satisfy their personal wants and aspirations, often without considering the emotions and welfare of others (Raskin & Terry, 1988).

1.1.3 Psychopathy

Psychopathy is a condition marked by a blend of antisocial conduct, absence of empathy, and superficial emotional responses. Individuals with elevated psychopathic qualities demonstrate characteristics such as impulsivity, lack of accountability, and a disrespect for social norms

and rules. They exhibit manipulative and exploitative behaviour without feeling sorrow or guilt, frequently causing harm to others for their personal gain (Hare, 1991).

1.1.4 Impact of dark triad

The Dark Triad has a broad and significant influence that extends beyond individual traits, affecting interpersonal, organizational, and social domains. Individuals who possess elevated degrees of Dark Triad traits often display exploitative and manipulative behaviors in their interpersonal relationships, leading to dysfunctional connections and bringing harm to society (Jonason et al., 2013). The presence of Dark Triad traits in corporate environments is associated with workplace deviance, unproductive behaviors, and leadership derailment (O'Boyle et al., 2012). Moreover, the Dark Triad has substantial societal implications, including the progressive erosion of trust, the decrease in social capital, and the encouragement of antisocial conduct (Chabrol et al., 2009).

Although the dark triad qualities have historically been investigated in relation to criminal activity and dysfunctional personality functioning, more recent research has highlighted their existence and influence in a variety of contexts. People with high dark triad traits are skilled in seizing opportunities, winning people over, and slyly navigating social environments in both romantic and business contexts. Furthermore, the advent of digital communication platforms has created an environment that is conducive to the expression and spread of these characteristics, prompting concerns about the social ramifications of a hyperconnected world populated by people who exhibit dark triad tendencies.

Although qualitative studies on the Dark Triad have yielded useful insights into the subjective experiences and inner realms of individuals exhibiting high levels of Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy, there are still several areas of research that require additional investigation:

Numerous qualitative studies on the Dark Triad have predominantly utilized convenience or purposeful sampling techniques, resulting in homogeneous samples that may not comprehensively encompass the range of persons exhibiting high levels of these qualities. Future study should aim to incorporate a wider array of participants in terms of demographics, cultural backgrounds, and contextual elements in order to encompass a more comprehensive spectrum of experiences and viewpoints.

Insufficient attention has been given to unexplored contexts and settings in qualitative studies on the Dark Triad. These studies have predominantly concentrated on interpersonal connections and personal experiences, neglecting to thoroughly investigate the influence of contextual elements and settings. Subsequent studies could explore how various settings, including professional workplaces, educational institutions, and online communities, impact the expression and outcomes of Dark Triad characteristics.

Intersectionality and Diversity: A requirement exists for qualitative research that investigates the intersectionality of the Dark Triad qualities with additional demographic and identity criteria, including gender, race, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic position. Researchers can enhance their understanding of the complexity and diversity of Dark Triad features by examining how these overlapping identities influence their expression and impact.

Longitudinal Perspectives: Only a small number of qualitative studies have used a longitudinal approach to investigate how persons with high Dark Triad features develop over time. Longitudinal research has the potential to offer valuable insights into the development and interplay of these characteristics over several life stages, spanning from adolescence to maturity. This information can then be used to guide early intervention and prevention strategies.

Comparative and cross-cultural research on the Dark Triad is lacking, especially when it comes to qualitative methods, and especially in varied cultural settings. Comparative studies can investigate the impact of cultural norms, values, and socialization practices on the manifestation and outcomes of Dark Triad traits. This can provide valuable insights for developing interventions and prevention techniques that are culturally sensitive.

Qualitative research has mostly emphasized the adverse effects of Dark Triad traits, while giving little attention to the examination of resilience and protective factors that alleviate their influence. Subsequent research endeavours may explore the coping skills, social support networks, and adaptive mechanisms utilized by persons with these features to effectively navigate difficulties and enhance their psychological well-being.

By conducting thorough qualitative research, we can fill in these gaps in our knowledge and gain a deeper understanding of the Dark Triad and its impact on individuals and society. This will allow us to develop more effective ways for preventing, intervening, and providing support in the field of psychology.

The current study uses a sample age range of 18-30. Dark triad can have a potential impact on various domains such as interpersonal relationships, conflict resolution, leadership etc. Young individuals aged 18 to 25 with heightened levels of Dark Triad traits may face challenges in forming and maintaining healthy interpersonal relationships. Jonason and Webster (2010) found that individuals that engage in manipulative, exploitative, and self-centered behaviors might lead to conflict, mistrust, and social isolation. The presence of Dark Triad traits, namely narcissism, can impact the academic performance of young adults. While narcissistic persons may display confidence and ambition, they may also engage in behaviors such as cheating or plagiarism to maintain a sense of superiority or achieve success, regardless of the potential negative outcomes (Furnham & Crump, 2014). Professional development:

The prevalence of Dark Triad traits can have an impact on the career choices and subsequent achievements of young adults. While traits like Machiavellianism can be advantageous for strategic career planning and advancement, they can also lead to unethical behavior in the workplace, which can hinder long-term career prospects (O'Boyle Jr et al., 2012).

Elevated levels of Dark Triad traits have been associated with several mental health issues, including depression, anxiety, and substance addiction, especially among young individuals (Vize et al., 2018). The manipulative and vicious nature of these behaviors might potentially result in a feeling of emptiness, alienation, and dissatisfaction with one's life.

Individuals exhibiting elevated levels of Dark Triad traits have a notable influence on their peers within the age range of 18 to 30, exerting a more substantial impact compared to others. Their charismatic demeanour, charm, and skill in persuading others may lead to obtaining leadership positions or earning social dominance among their peers. Nevertheless, it can also result in the exploitation and manipulation of others for personal gain (Jonason & Webster, 2010).

Young individuals who have heightened levels of Dark Triad traits are more prone to engaging in risky or impulsive behaviour, such as substance abuse, reckless driving, or criminal acts. Their lack of empathy and disregard for consequences may lead to dangerous or harmful situations for both themselves and others (Jones & Paulhus, 2011).

A study conducted by Pechorro et al (2022) aimed to examine whether self-control mediated the relationships between Dark Triad, Delinquency, conduct disorder and crime seriousness outcomes. A sample size of 567 (N=567) was used. Self-control acted as a mediator in the relationship between psychopathy and Machiavellianism (excluding narcissism) and self-reported instances of juvenile delinquency, signs of conduct disorder, and the gravity of crimes committed. Within the framework of the interconnected system of negative personality traits,

narcissism seems to have long-lasting and direct connections with outwardly-directed characteristics and behavioural issues. The results contribute to the existing body of research that examines the Dark Triad, in conjunction with self-control, to better understand their impact on antisocial and criminal behaviours in young individuals.

A study by Li, Cong, Fan & Li (2022) aimed to investigate the intergenerational transmission effect of Dark Triad traits and emotional reactivity within households. The Emotion Reactivity Scale (ERS) and the Dirty Dozen (DD) were used to deliver the questionnaire to a total of 486 (N= 486) families, including dads, mothers, and children. The study examined how the three Dark Triad qualities and emotion reactivity are passed down from one generation to the next. The Dark Triad degree and emotion reactivity of children exceeded that of their parents significantly. Males had significantly greater Dark Triad scores compared to females, although there were no notable variations in emotion reactivity ratings between the two genders. The study established the actor and partner impacts of Dark Triad traits and emotion reactivity between fathers and mothers. The impact of parental Dark Triad on children's emotion reactivity is mediated by parental emotion reactivity and children's Dark Triad. The findings have both theoretical and practical importance for improving the ability to react moderately to emotions in college students.

Tolan (2023) undertook a study with the objective of examining the correlation between childhood traumas, dark triad personality traits, and obsessive views. The study utilized the Personal Information Form, Childhood Trauma Questionnaire, Short Dark Triad Scale, and Obsessive Beliefs Questionnaire to gather data. The study involved a total of 480 (N= 480) participants. The acquired data was analysed using Pearson Correlation Analysis, independent samples t-test, and Parallel Multiple Mediator Variable analysis. The correlation study revealed a strong and positive link between childhood traumas and both dark triad personality traits and

obsessive beliefs. The mean scores of psychopathic personality traits in male participants were substantially higher than those in females. The mediation study revealed that the psychopathic personality traits acted as a mediator in the connection between the sub-dimensions of childhood traumas, specifically physical and emotional neglect and abuse, and obsessive beliefs.

1.2 RATIONALE, OBJECTIVES AND HYPOTHESIS

1.2.1 RATIONALE

Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy—the Dark Triad—are socially undesirable and extreme personality traits. These traits reveal the full range of personality types (Paulhus & Williams, 2002). Research repeatedly shows that those with high Dark Triad qualities are more likely to deceive, manipulate, and exploit. These actions can hurt themselves and others (Jones & Paulhus, 2014).

Understanding the causes of Dark Triad traits can help identify people who are likely to engage in harmful behaviours and face negative consequences like interpersonal conflict, aggression, and legal issues (Furnham et al., 2013). Trust, closeness, and social influence are greatly affected by the Dark Triad. Studying how these traits affect interpersonal interactions might help us understand how relationships start, last, and end (Jonason & Webster, 2010). Deviance, inefficiency, and unethical activity can result from Dark Triad traits in employees. These actions may affect organisational performance (O'Boyle Jr et al., 2012). Research on the Dark Triad helps develop and improve personality theories and frameworks. Scientists can better understand personality structure, dynamics, and operation by analysing the fundamental mechanisms and associations of these qualities (Miller et al., 2010). Understanding the Dark Triad can help create medicines to mitigate its negative consequences. Positive social

behaviour, emotional control, and ethical decision-making may be targeted in therapies (Jonason et al., 2015).

Although dark triad personality traits have been extensively studied for years, it is still a relatively newer area of research due to its controversial components and their implications. Further, the study that does exist, is mostly spaced out across individualistic societies, such as in the western culture. A huge gap exists when it comes to research on dark triad traits in collectivist cultures like South Asia, where factors such as family dynamics, societal norms, interpersonal belongingness and cultural expectations could have a huge impact on the presence of Dark Triad traits in an individual.

Keeping this in mind, a mixed approach was used to assess the relationship between Dark Triad traits, aggression and adjustment through quantitative methods and to assess the factors affecting presence of dark triad traits and the impact they have in various domains in an individual's life through qualitative research approach.

1.2.2 OBJECTIVES

1. To study the impact of Dark Triad traits on Aggression and Adjustment in adults
2. To study the characteristics of adults with dark triad traits
3. To study the factors affecting presence of dark triad traits in adults
4. To study the impact of dark triad traits in the life of adults

Objective 1 will be studied quantitatively in Study 1

Objective 2, 3 and 4 will be studied in a qualitative method in the current study

1.2.3 STUDY 1 HYPOTHESES

H1: There will be a positive relationship between Machiavellianism and Aggression in adults.

H2: There will be a positive relationship between Narcissism and Aggression in adults.

H3: There will be a positive relationship between Psychopathy and Aggression in adults.

H4: There will be a negative relationship between Machiavellianism and Adjustment in adults.

H5: There will be a negative relationship between Narcissism and Adjustment in adults.

H6: There will be a negative relationship between Psychopathy and Adjustment in adults.

CHAPTER 2

METHODOLOGY

STUDY 1

SAMPLE

A sample of 140 participants was taken, aged 18-30. The sample was collected from participants from different parts of the country (India) for diversity.

(DEMOGRAPHIC)

DESIGN

Correlational study design was used in the current experiment. The independent variable in this experiment was Dark triad, and the dependent variables were Aggression and Adjustment.

INSTRUMENTS USED

Short Dark Triad Test (SD3) – The Short Dark Triad (SD3) is a brief personality test developed by Delroy Paulhus and Daniel Jones in 2011 to measure the three malevolent personality traits of narcissism, Machiavellianism, and Psychopathy. The test consists of 27 statements that must be rated on how much you agree with them

Aggression Questionnaire- The Aggression Questionnaire (AQ) developed by Buss and Warren in 2000, measures an individual's aggressive responses and his or her ability to channel those responses in a safe, constructive manner. It includes 15 items, each of which is typically rated on a scale of 1 to 5.

1. Not at all like me.

2. Little like me.
3. Moderately like me.
4. A lot like me.
5. Completely like me.

Brief Adjustment Scale (base-6) – The BASE-6 is a self-report questionnaire used to assess an individual's emotional and psychological adjustment. It consists of six items that measure various aspects of emotional well-being and adjustment. Each of these items is typically rated on a Likert scale, where respondents indicate the extent to which each statement is true for them, often using a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) or similar response options.

PROCEDURE

The participants were seated in a calm and quiet environment. They were assured that all the information would remain confidential. After establishing rapport and making the participants feel at ease, instructions were given. The participants were asked to fill in their demographic details, and after that, they were asked to fill out the questionnaire. They had to read each statement carefully and select the response that best indicated their feelings. They were told not to spend too much time on each question because there were no correct or incorrect responses; answering every question was mandatory.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

The data analysis was done using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.1, and Correlation and Regression was used for result analysis.

STUDY 2

SAMPLE

The age range of the sample is 18 to 30 years.

DESIGN

Mixed Method Design

(Quantitative and Qualitative data will be collected)

First, demographic details will be collected. Then, qualitative data will be collected using semi-structured interviews. The interviews will explore factors affecting Dark Triad personality traits and its impact on various areas like emotional regulation, conflict management, interpersonal relationships etc.

PROCEDURE

Quantitative data will be collected from adolescents aged 18 to 25 who live with their fathers. Their demographic details will be collected, and their age, gender and grade will be considered.

After that, Qualitative data will be collected on the selected sample, and semi-structured interviews will be conducted where we will explore factors affecting Dark Triad personality traits in adults and their impact on areas such as emotional regulation, conflict management, leadership and interpersonal relationships and will be evaluated using Braun and Clark Thematic analysis.

DATA ANALYSIS

The results for quantitative research will be analysed using a regression and correlation in SPSS.

Thematic analysis by Braun & Clark's (2006) was used for qualitative analysis. The steps involved are:

1. **Transcription, Familiarization with the Data, and Selection of Quotations:** Thoroughly read and reread the data to understand the whole.
2. **Selection of Keywords:** Researchers identify recurring patterns and terms and designate them as keywords. The keywords capture participants' experiences and perceptions.
3. **Coding:** Codes are assigned to the segment of data that represents the core theme. Keywords play an essential role in coding as they form the analysis's backbone and help convert raw data into insightful, manageable units.
4. **Theme Development:** Theme development involves organising codes into meaningful groups to identify patterns and relationships, offering insights into the research question.
5. **Conceptualization Through Interpretation of Keywords, Codes, and Themes:** This step, conceptualization, involves understanding and defining concepts emerging from the data.

CHAPTER 3

RESULTS

STUDY 1

To interpret the results, the three subscales of Dark Triad were scored according to the standard scoring given in the manual. A correlational analysis using IBM SPSS version 20.1 was computed for all three Dark triad subscales for the data analyses. Dark Triad was taken as the independent variable. The dependent variables were Aggression and Adjustment. Further, Regression analysis was used for Dark Triad and Aggression.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
AQ TOTAL	32.91	8.139	140
Machiavellianism	29.43	5.344	140
Narcissism	28.36	5.858	140
PSYCHOPATHY	21.69	4.828	140

In Table 1, the Descriptive statistics for individuals; Sex (Male, Female, and PNS), Education (UG, PG), and Residence (Urban, Rural, and Semi-urban) were computed. The mean and Standard deviation of age were computed.

Table 2: correlation analysis of Machiavellianism, Narcissism, Psychopathy, Aggression and Adjustment

	Machiavellianism	NARCISSISM	PSYCHOPATHY	AQ TOTAL	BASE TOTAL
Machiavellianism	1				
NARCISSISM	.248**	1			
PSYCHOPATHY	.471**	.168*	1		
AQ TOTAL	.477**	.295**	.415**	1	
BASE TOTAL	.094	.145	.112	-.079	1

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

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

From the above table, Correlation can be established between Dark Triad and Aggression at the 0.01 level, or at a confidence interval of 99%.

Table 3: Regression analysis for Machiavellianism, Narcissism, Psychopathy and Aggression

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Adjusted R Square
		B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	11.548	3.408		3.388	.001	.222
	Machiavellianism	.726	.114	.477	6.368	.000	
2	(Constant)	7.482	3.587		2.086	.039	.263
	Machiavellianism	.550	.126	.361	4.376	.000	
	PSYCHOPATHY	.375	.126	.245	2.970	.004	
3	(Constant)	-.854	4.985		-.171	.864	.287
	Machiavellianism	.492	.126	.323	3.905	.000	
	PSYCHOPATHY	.357	.124	.234	2.871	.005	
	NARCISSISM	.374	.158	.175	2.367	.019	

From the above regression table, adjusted R square for aggression is 0.287. Therefore, 28.7% variation in Aggression can be attributed to Dark Triad. The Beta value obtained for Machiavellianism in relation to aggression is 0.492, which means that one unit increase in Machiavellianism will result in 0.492 units increase in Aggression. The Beta value obtained for Narcissism in relation to aggression is 0.375, which means that one unit increase in Narcissism will result in 0.375 units increase in Aggression. The Beta value obtained for Psychopathy in relation to aggression is 0.374, which means that one unit increase in Psychopathy will result in 0.374 units increase in Aggression.

STUDY 2:

Table 4: Qualitative analysis

Sr.	THEMES	CODES
no.		
1.	DARK TRIAD	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Machiavellianism (Materialism as driving force, Low emotional sensitivity, Logical reasoning for desired outcome, Excessive justification and explanation) 2. Narcissism (Pride, Perfectionism and demotivated when not met personal standards, Admiration of successful individuals, Conformity and seeking validation, Self-interest, Emotional reactivity, 3. Psychopathy (Lack of concern for others perspectives and emotions, Critical stance on institutions, Overthinking and over analysis, Asocial tendencies)
2.	LIGHT TRIAD	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. High Empathy 2. High emotional awareness and management 3. Desire for continuous self-improvement and expansion of perspective 4. Altruism 5. Harmonious conflict resolution 6. Ethical behaviour/ moral reasoning
3.	FACTORS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. RISK FACTORS (tumultuous relationship with family, traumatic experience) 2. PROTECTIVE FACTORS (quality of family environment)
4.	IMPACT	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Interpersonal relationships (aggression) 2. Self (discrepancy between ideal self and real self)

Table 4 signifies various themes and sub- themes which were references and inferred based on interview transcripts. The first theme was Machiavellianism, further classified into Materialism as driving force, Low emotional sensitivity, Logical reasoning for desired outcome and Excessive justification and explanation. The second theme was Narcissism, further qualified into Pride, Perfectionism and demotivated when not met personal standards, Admiration of successful individuals, Conformity and seeking validation, Self-interest and Emotional reactivity. The third theme was Psychopathy, which had Lack of concern for others perspectives and emotions, Critical stance on institutions, Overthinking and over analysis and Asocial tendencies as subthemes. The fourth theme, Light triad, had High Empathy, High emotional awareness and management, Desire for continuous self-improvement and expansion of perspective, Altruism, Harmonious conflict resolution and Ethical behaviour/ moral reasoning categorised as sub- themes. Unlike the Dark Triad, the Light Triad emphasizes empathy, compassion, and altruism. Humanism is the belief in the inherent value and dignity of all people and the promotion of their well-being and flourishing (Kaufman & Kaufman, 2018). Humanists attempt to understand and help others grow via empathy, compassion, and charity. Kantianism, based on Immanuel Kant's ethics, emphasizes morality, universalizability, and autonomy (Kaufman & Kaufman, 2018). Kantian people value honesty, fairness, and justice and uphold moral rules even without external rewards or punishments. Faith in humanity is optimism about human nature, trusting in people's compassion, decency, and possibility for growth (Kaufman & Kaufman, 2018). People with great confidence in humanity believe people can learn from their mistakes, overcome adversity, and improve the world. Theme factors for the study were classified as Risk factors and Protective factors, and impact themes were categorised as sub- themes interpersonal relationships and Self.

CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION

STUDY 1

The study aimed to assess the impact of Dark Triad personality traits, on Aggression and adjustment in adults. It was hypothesized that there would be a significant positive relationship between Machiavellianism, Narcissism and Psychopathy with Aggression, and a negative relationship between Machiavellianism, Narcissism and Psychopathy and Adjustment. Three variables, Dark Triad Aggression and Adjustment, were taken. As per the current study's findings, it was observed that among the three dimensions of Dark Triad, a significant positive relationship was observed with aggression, hence accepting the hypotheses at three levels, and rejecting it at three.

Barlett (2016) conducted a study to investigate the associations between emerging adulthood, Dark Triad features, and aggressive behaviour. A total of 599 participants were included in the study. The study's theoretical model was supported by the following findings: (a) participant age was correlated with all emerging adulthood facets, except for other and self-focused facets, (b) aggression was predicted by all qualities of the Dark Triad, and (c) several Dark Triad traits were predicted by multiple emerging adult facets. More precisely, the study found that the experience of being in-between, negative emotions, and exploring one's identity were the main factors that linked age to violent behaviour. These factors were found to predict at least one trait from the Dark Triad. In general, the Dark Triad qualities serve as a significant factor leading to aggressive behaviour. However, they are also likely to develop as a result of adult predictions that are crucial to development.

STUDY 2

The current study aimed to assess the factors affecting Dark Triad personality traits and the impact of its presence in an adult's life in domains such as interpersonal relationships, conflict resolution, discrepancy between self-etc. A qualitative analysis was performed to investigate the variables in greater detail and acquire a more profound comprehension of the research problem. The quantitative part of the research process involves analysing data using statistical methods to uncover patterns or trends. On the other hand, the qualitative phase delves further into these findings, providing thorough explanations and a deeper knowledge of the underlying causes behind them. Qualitative analysis yields comprehensive and intricate data that might elucidate the reasons and mechanisms behind the observed statistical associations. A qualitative analysis was performed by conducting semi-structured interviews with 16 individuals, 6 with characteristics of dark triad and 6 participants with characteristics of low triad, in order to provide a more comprehensive picture of the research. The analysis concluded the following themes and subthemes; Machiavellianism, narcissism, psychopathy, High Empathy, High emotional awareness and management, Desire for continuous self-improvement and expansion of perspective, Altruism, Harmonious conflict resolution and Ethical behaviour/ moral reasoning. It was inferred that characteristics of dark triad and Light triad were significantly different. Further, family environment was observed to be a factor and impact was observed on aggression expression and idea of self.

A study conducted by Smith & Johnson (2021) employed a qualitative approach to investigate the firsthand experiences of persons who perceive themselves as having high levels of Dark Triad traits, namely Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy. Participants were asked to engage in semi-structured interviews to discuss their thoughts, emotions, and actions pertaining to these specific personality qualities. The qualitative data was analysed using

thematic analysis to uncover consistent patterns and themes. A total of 15 participants (8 males, 7 females) between the ages of 18 and 35 were interviewed individually. From the findings, the following themes were inferred; Manipulative strategies, sense of grandiosity, lack of empathy and risk-taking behaviours.

Theme 1

Dark Triad

The dark triad is a psychological theory of personality, characterizing three distinct personality types that are highly offensive in nature, yet not considered pathological: Machiavellianism, subclinical narcissism, and sub-clinical psychopathy. Each of these personality types is referred to be "dark" due to their association with malicious characteristics.

The Dark Triad personality traits have been linked to several adverse outcomes, including challenges in interpersonal relationships, deviant behaviour in the workplace, and involvement in unethical behaviours. Acquiring a thorough comprehension of the basic ideas behind these traits is crucial not just for theoretical advancement but also for practical implementation in several domains, such as personnel selection, therapeutic intervention, and organizational management.

Sub theme 1:

Machiavellianism

Machiavellianism is a sub theme of Dark Triad, which involves manipulation, strategic thinking, and cynicism. Machiavellians are adept manipulators who utilize deceit, flattery, and strategy (Christie & Geis, 1970).

Based on the interviews, it was seen that Materialism as driving force and motivating factor was repeated as a characteristic. Participant 5 said “If it would be a few hundred or a few thousands, I would let it go because that might be somebody's hard-earned money. Rich people do not carry wallets with such kind of money. If it would have loads of money, I would definitely take it. Because I want that money as well as it is a guy's wallet. So, he must be having more money. He won't get affected because of this money. That's what I think. Depends on the money inside the wallet.”

Low emotional sensitivity and regulation was observed in participants who possessed higher characteristics of Dark Triad. Participant 1 said No. “I don't think I do manage these emotions, nor do I suppress it. I guess I do suppress it sometimes, and sometimes I don't know what am I actually feeling. Okay. My emotions are very complicated at times. Sometimes I do manage.” And “I used to be like happy all the time. Maybe that was just something like I was doing something else and not feeling the correct emotions at that time. But I used to feel happy all the time”. Participant 13 said “It's a continuous feeling which I have been experiencing when I go numb and I don't experience a particular emotion of anger or love around a particular person. A person for whom I thought that I would feel immense closeness and love that person might not cause any particular emotion in me. And I might just feel numb around them.”

Logical reasoning for desired outcome was observed in participants scoring high on Dark Triad. Participant 5 said “Like I told you, I handle all the conflicts very much logically that I have, whether they are related to my friends or like my batch mates that I have. So, I see all the problems through a very logical point of view. So that that helps me a lot because then I can reason them out why I'm thinking like this and why I come up with this solution.”

A tendency towards excessive justification and explanation of one's own statement, specially as a manner of defending oneself or clarifying one's statements was observed. Participant 3

said “So I really don't know because all I can do is talk to other members about it but yeah so you can't like I said it started happening in college and in college you can't really just see because you always make group with your friends and it's not if it was a randomly made group by the prof or whatever then I would obviously confront them but since they are my friends so it's harder to confront them so I kind of just do my work and let the other members handle like I'm just concerned with what I have to do and I do it perfectly I'm not concerned with what other people do if they lack with their work they lack.”

Sub theme 2:

Narcissism

Pride, characteristic of Narcissism was observed frequently. Participant 3 said “I am full of confidence. And I really don't care what people say. That's the God complex part.” Participant 5 said “If I'm like, if I have like a circumstance where I was not able to give my full 100% because of a few circumstances, maybe personal, maybe not. So, they're fine with it because they've seen me work before. And they will see me work after.”

Perfectionism and demotivated when not met personal standards as observed as a trait of Narcissism. Participant 1 said I mean, “if the criticism is something that I already know ki yeh Hai mere may, then it's fine. So yeah, that's it. When I do get criticism, if it's a new thing, then I keep thinking when did that happen? Matlab, am I like that?” Participant 5 said “So, I was always into partying and everything. So, that got me a little distracted. And then in my second year, I used to see my roommates working hard at night for like competitions and everything. They were coding and everything all the time, working hard. Of course, there were a few that were always into again going to parties and going for outings. But of course, there is this group that I told you about my roommate who got into Google. So, that kind of like really much motivated me and inspired me to work harder.”

People high Dark Triad have admiration for successful individuals, which signifies an unrealistic personification of self. Participant 3 said “And then another example, I would say, is my brother and all his friends were in an army preparatory institute and, like, one of his friends was, like, he got an All-India rank, 17 in India, and I, like, that inspired me to also try for the army, along with my grandfather and dad being in service. So, like, I would just pick up traits and want to be good at that as well.” Participant 5 said “So that's what I keep and I can like do much more new things that successful people have already done. I try to learn about my I do read or like listen about them what have they done in their life that they reach that level.”

Conformity and seeking validation from peers and social groups was observed frequently in participants. Participant 1 said “I don't have opinions in general. I'm just neutral on everything. So, it's fine. Okay. I don't have any fixed my opinion on something. Maybe that's because I want to fit in ha jagha so I can change accordingly, I guess.” Participant 3 said “So whenever that happens, I obviously feel really pissed because I really don't like people freeloading but if like I really don't do anything about it because again, I don't like confrontation I guess.” Participant 7 said “I'd be the one making Like I'd be wondering mimicry. I'd be the one like making fun of people and yeah, and I would always be into a lot of sports and Yeah, I was definitely very like my brother was also into art and all so I would be having a lot of I would be very influenced by my siblings initially like They do it I'd copy them and I'd like to I think I usually I did like a lot of attention in a way that I Loved it when people appreciated my work. That's what got me into art I don't think that's the same purpose now, but I think that's what got me and yeah, I think that's it. It's a lot.”

Self-interest was repeated across various instances. Participant 1 said “In just that angry aspect that I was talking about. I guess that is the main thing. Because that's what I said. I used to get

very angry. So, they had to bring me that particular thing. So, then it developed as a habit. It's just I don't have the habit of being used to being said no." Participant 13 said "Resolution of the conflict is very important to me with what I might gain from the person and sometimes it's also very selfish in a manner that if I want the person around me or if I have something to benefit from the person, I might want to resolve the conflict there and then."

Emotional reactivity and decision making based on emotional dynamics is also characteristic trait. Participant 3 said "Okay, this is confusing because I do abide by rules. I do try to abide by rules because that is how my childhood was because I always thought about, like, if you want to succeed in life, you want to be within the rules. But as I've grown up, I have stopped thinking that they are as important and I am more open and, like, more likely to break them and not be bound by them." Participant 5 said "So, that is sometimes frustrating, I would say. Which I kind of take out on my friends and everybody. And my close ones." Participant 7 said "Um, yeah, with things that I try hard on, then I give up. But so, like in the in that middle phase, I'd be pretty much, I'd be almost intentionally trying to disconnect with my emotions. That comes that is very much with the case with my family. They'd have their problems, which I try to resolve, I'd go hard. And then I'd understand that it's not a good idea, because they are very much believers on their own ideas. And I don't think that you can change anything. I'm a firm believer of that part that you can't change anything, you can just change some person's habits or some, some, some just basic things. So, I usually go with that idea, but then I immediately drop it off. So, in that drop it off, because I have to save my energy so that I can put that energy, that channel, that energy into better things." Participant 13 said "Yes, it really responds to the general day to day life and what my emotion is at that moment. It mainly responds to my relationship with the person I might be very gloomy or I might be very angry about a particular incident going on outside that friendship. And I might just solve the argument in a very silent

way. Or I might just escalate the argument in a very angry manner even if I am very happy in my day-to-day life.”

Sub theme 3:

Psychopathy

Lack of concern for others perspectives and emotions was observed. Participant 7 said “Also is not a good thing when I want them to be more enthusiastic about things because they just don't have a very enthusiastic life in general, they don't have any passion towards anything like could be whatever the careers they have like they don't really see careers as a very big part of their life. They don't see any relationship otherwise also they don't really are not very outgoing for people They're very like staying at home and then you know, just just being by themselves kind of people.” Participant 13 said “It's very easy for me and I sometimes trigger a particular emotion in the other person just to make it a point that I am proven right in front of a group. I sometimes make the person shout in front of a group when I sense anger, I sometimes make the person cry in front of a group when I want to show the group that. That person does not hold an emotion in the soundness.”

Critical stance on institutions and disdain of rules was a characteristic. Participant 7 said “Okay, yeah. Okay, for myself, I feel like, I think what really influenced me, initially I was very, I think around my teenage, I was very much like, very much, you know, anti-rule kind of, like, you know, trying, like wanna be cool, wanna be edgy kind of person. And which was me for quite long. But then, I think for the whole societal part of rules, I think I still am the same person that feel like it's like society's way of making rules and regulation, which is obviously, everything needs a structure to be done, which is great.” Participant 13 said “A sense of challenge being posed by the authority and a sense of mischief is what intrigues me towards finding the

loophole but knowing that there exists a loophole and I can find my way around it is enough for me and I don't necessarily break the rule just to prove my point.”

Overthinking and over analysis was a sub theme which was repeated across various participants who were high on characteristics of Dark Triad. Participant 1 said “But I was not able to do and then I did not get desired marks so I felt a little bad but then I was like it doesn't matter but I like kept thinking ki kar lena chahiye tha.” And “Particularly sadness, sometimes maybe betrayal, but mostly I guess I get very sad and I keep overthinking about the situation.” Participant 3 said “That is actually a hard question for me to answer because I really just don't think about what they would think of me because I know what they think of me. And I would just make myself believe that everyone would just say some shit that would be bad. It's all in my head. So, if I tell you something that other people would think it's not actually what they think about me, it would just be something overly negative. I don't know.” Participant 13 said “I sometimes also tend to go back and retrospect to those childhood experiences and think what decision in a particular day or at a particular time of the day is responding to a particular Childhood trait or childhood trait which I get by an experience.”

Asocial tendencies, characteristic of Psychopathy was also observed frequently. Participant 3 said “Think if I actually think about it, people just used to think that I was a smart kid. I don't talk to people much. And I just stay on my own. Whatever I'm doing, I'm just in my own self. I really don't bother people much.” Participant 7 said “My sister and my brother go well together. I don't go well with anyone or any of my siblings much in a way that I don't really talk to much them that and they are very I'd say very fond of like they're very outgoing. They're very enthusiastic of like having family gatherings My brother and my sister not my parents But since I don't like to be a part of these things they don't really appreciate that much so that as well Yeah, I think that's mostly what I can think of my family dynamics.”

Theme 2

Light Triad

Sub theme 1

High Empathy was a characteristic trait repeated frequently across participants. Participant 2 said “I mean, at times it does feel a little problematic because I would like to obviously empathize more and truly understand the other person, truly make them feel understood as well. But I think for the most part, for the most part, it's like important for me to do that because I can't let myself get too bothered or too, you know, Involved? Involved, yes, involved or just affected by what other people are feeling.” Participant 4 said “Yeah, I mean, I've seen how people who are harsh or mean affect other people and it's not good. And I've seen when people do it with a little bit of kindness, how it affects the other person. So I would like to have a positive effect on a person and on myself as well.” Participant 8 said “No, I wouldn't do so. Yeah, I wouldn't do so because, I don't know, maybe I am someone who doesn't really like to harm others. No, I try to not do that. So, maybe it can happen to me, but I wouldn't do that back to anyone else.” Participant 9 said So, particular experiences of my childhood have shaped my personality. I guess I will say yes because being from all that chaotic you know, seeing the family fighting every time because it used to happen very often than I can say at my house and now that I'm this old, I understand when someone is out there frustrated, going out and so that helps me, makes me understand it. Every person, there's something going on in their family or in their own life. Be it related themselves or their family. Also, the fact that sometimes I have seen some situations or something which have made me realize that this is very, very wrong which is happening. Now that I understand, that time I had no understanding of it but now I understand that that is very wrong and what an individual can be carrying throughout the timeline or throughout their life. They do not tell anyone what they have been through. So, I

have seen situations and now I can understand everything. So, it has definitely made me more kinder and it has definitely affected my personality as well.”

Sub theme 2:

High emotional awareness and management

It was observed repeatedly. Participant 2 said “I feel angry at the situation because when it can be when we can talk about it normally when it doesn't have to be this complicated, why do we have to make it so? That's where the frustration arises. Like with the teacher example that I'm telling you, right? If we just listen to each other, if we just be calm and just hear each other out, things can be resolved. Similarly, even here, just say what you mean, listen to the other person, come to a common ground and it doesn't have to be so difficult.” Participant 8 said “But to give you an example, mostly it was at the time of pandemic. I think it was very fast that we had to adapt to moving back to our homes. Basically, my college was stopping us from getting the placements. So, I had to really set a goal in certain time that I have to grab a job and get myself earning to really put myself into a situation where I can do what I want to do. So, yeah, I would say I was able to achieve it and yeah, that's where I am now.”

Sub theme 3:

Desire for continuous self-improvement and expansion of perspective

It was a repetitive characteristic of people scoring higher on light triad. Participant 2 said “So from after that from like, going from 12th grade to college, yeah, I just, I guess it just impacted me in the way that I wanted to keep that academic or what would you call it? Like, keep it up basically, like keep my scores up. And because I had done it once, I felt I had the confidence that I could do it again, and I should work for it.” Participant 8 said “Yeah, I've been trying to keep consistent workout sessions and I've been consistently trying to put up with my schedule.

Like I said, you know, I'm trying to grow myself so I can do what I want to. So, I'm trying to build up some things like that.”

Sub theme 4:

Altruism

Specifically, without expectation of acknowledgment was observed. Participant 2 said “It was just something that you have to do when you're put in a situation like that, and that's what anybody would do, I guess. But I never felt proud of it or felt like, you know, like, I did good or whatever.” Participant 4 said “I mean, we have taken care of a lot of injured animals. I don't really talk about it much but we have. At some point in our life, our house was called a zoo because there were a lot of animals. And yeah, I like that time in my life. And how did that make you feel? Just helping animals is like the best thing for me. I like it more than helping humans to be honest. So, that was just joy and pure joy and happiness to be honest.”

Sub theme 5:

Harmonious conflict resolution

It was an approach which was observed frequently. “If we just listen to each other, if we just be calm and just hear each other out, things can be resolved. Similarly, even here, just say what you mean, listen to the other person, come to a common ground and it doesn't have to be so difficult.” Participant 4 said “Because the conversation kept on breaking, it took like a day to get back to the conversation. So we had to start at the very beginning again and the resolution was difficult. So conflict came because of that. And once we were very calm and actually started listening to each other. So then we resolved that issue in like maybe a minute even. So it was fine.” Participant 8 said “I try to let them tell what is the understanding they have. Then

I try to let them know how the picture really is and then I try to see how much I can be on the same point as them or if they need to be on the point that I am trying to picture.”

Sub theme 6:

Ethical behaviour/ moral reasoning

It was repetitive. Participant 2 said “If the cost wasn't that high and whatever it is I'm trying to gain is extremely important to me then I might but for the most part I can't really think of a lot of situations where I would do that. Where I would feel like so compelled that I want something this badly that I would be okay you know sacrificing the other person for it. There aren't there really isn't anything I can think of right now. Maybe like really extreme scenarios like if my family is involved or something but beyond that like a day-to-day basis, I can't really think of anything.” Participant 4 said “I would, to be honest, look at both sides of the things. Do I have an alternative from this? If I don't accept this, do I have an alternative? Or how important is this to me? I would look at those things from my side, and then I'll come to the other person's side and I'll think, how much is it costing this person, mentally, physically, whatever, in whatever kind of situation. Can he recover if I accept this? Does he or she have an alternative to this? So I'll just look at all the factors for, I think, a very long period of time, and I think that situation will go away till that time.” Participant 9 said See, rules. I am pro rules. Necessary. It is there for a reason. But I think it shouldn't be strict. Rules, it depends on situation. I am pro rules. I will follow all the rules. But the situation is demanding something and the rule is totally unjust and not according to it. Then I am ready to break the rule as well.”

A study conducted by Hill et al (2016) investigated the role of sense of purpose in predicting both current and future levels of income and net worth. This was done by analysing data from two waves of the MIDUS sample, which consisted of a total of 4660 persons (N= 4660). Individuals who had a greater sense of purpose initially had higher levels of household income

and net worth, and were more inclined to experience growth in these financial outcomes over the course of nine years. The results of the interaction tests indicated that there was some indication of age moderating the relationship, but there was no evidence to imply that gender moderated the influence of purpose on economic outcomes.

Theme 3

Factors

Sub theme 1

Risk Factors included tumultuous relationship with family and traumatic experience, specifically during childhood. Participant 2 said “I only have like one incident that I remember that kind of like, set everything off. It was when I was 14, 15. And my dad was like having an argument with my mom. And I felt like I had had enough and needed to like, raise my voice. And that's the first time I said anything back to him. And that was also the first time I had an anxiety attack. So that I think, I mean, I remember it vividly. So that might have had like a direct impact on my personality. And I guess, because my mom's always been struggling a lot with her mental health, I kind of had to feel like I need to solve that for her. So, assuming this, like caretaker role, also kind of stemmed from that, you know, needing to fix things, needing to take care of why, take care of how other people are feeling and kind of adjusting myself around that.” And “And like simultaneously, I had also like switched school not that long before, like three years before that. And I wasn't really having a good time there. I was getting bullied a lot. So, I think both of those things, but that incident definitely like, yeah, it really scared me. And I wasn't expecting that to happen.” Participant 7 said “We're not very expressive of how we feel about each other there's not been a lot of people not been like at times be like I think I think I remember like any kind of memory where I have sat down with my parents and I've expressed my feelings or any kind of Emotional stuff which have only happened Which

has started happening a little more after there was an accident not accident, but like Incident in my family where my mom went through tongue cancer So like after that things did change quite a bit because we felt the need of the emotional part to exist more”

Sub theme 2

Protective Factors

Quality of family environment, such as a provision of safety, quality family time, open communication with family etc are seen acting as protective factors against Dar Triad traits. Participant 8 said “I really try to put myself into their place, like how they must be feeling it. So, I really try to empathize with them. Yeah, I would say it comes easily to me. The way I've grown and the way I've been, so empathy is something inside me.” Participant 12 said “If I stay related to my family, I would say I am pretty secure because of them. I know that there are people who love and cherish me, so I have that sense of security due to them. The sense of security that I was talking about earlier that I need to inculcate in myself is regarding the peer circle that I genuinely establish be it in my high school or any other educational institute or any other institute whatsoever.”

Theme 4

Impact

Sub theme 1

Interpersonal relationships were observed in terms of Aggression and how it was expressed. Hostility, sarcasm, emotional shutting out, domineering verbal aggression etc were observed. Participant 7 said “Yeah, I do get a little loud and dominant when I have to explain it to others, because I feel like, what I feel like is like, if it's an argument, let's say if I'm not very educated

about it, I love to just give up, I love to just be like, yeah, fine, I'm not a person to argue, but if I think I'm very much aware of certain things, and if I think I can look at the situation better, then I try to almost throw it at the other person pretty angrily, I don't say angrily, but pretty loudly. So, but then, if that's not taken well, then that's when I think anger does kick in.” Participant 12 said “So during that time when they gave me a call and they told me that they had to cancel after making me wait and telling me that they're postponing, I got angry at them and I told them that I might just say something so don't continue the calls and after that when they responded to that in an ugly manner I told them that I don't know how to talk and I don't know how to talk to people and that particular friend is just a bad friend.”

A study was conducted by Charbrol et al (2009). The objective of this study was to investigate the correlations between psychopathic, narcissistic, Machiavellian, and sadistic personality traits with juvenile delinquency in a group of 186 high school students (N= 186). In addition, analysis was conducted for the distinct impacts of each of these dark personality traits on delinquent conduct when they were all included in the regression equation concurrently. The findings indicated a positive correlation between sadistic and psychopathic personality traits and adolescent criminality. There was no substantial correlation between Machiavellian and narcissistic personality traits and adolescent delinquency. Nevertheless, when all of the negative personality qualities were concurrently included in the regression equation, it was found that only psychopathic personality traits had a substantial impact on adolescent delinquency.

A study conducted by Moor et al (2018) The objective of this study was to examine and contrast the personality traits linked to the Dark Triad (Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy) and the Light Triad (humanism, Kantianism, and faith in mankind), as well as their individual connections to psychological well-being. Subjects were administered surveys to assess Dark

Triad and Light Triad qualities, along with evaluations of psychological well-being indicators including life satisfaction, positive affect, and negative affect. The study identified clear personality profiles linked to both the Dark Triad and the Light Triad. Individuals with elevated Dark Triad qualities displayed diminished levels of empathy, compassion, and altruism, whereas those with elevated Light Triad traits revealed heightened levels of these prosocial inclinations. The presence of Dark Triad features was found to have a negative correlation with psychological well-being markers, such as reduced life satisfaction and increased levels of negative affect. Conversely, the Light Triad qualities were found to have a positive correlation with psychological well-being, which includes higher levels of life satisfaction and good emotions, as well as lower levels of negative emotions.

CHAPTER 5:

CONCLUSION, IMPLICATIONS, LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

5.1 Conclusion

Study 1: the quantitative study helps better understand the relationship between Dark Triad personality traits, namely Machiavellianism, Narcissism and Psychopathy and Aggression and Adjustment. A positive relationship was observed between Dark Triad and aggression. Hence, the hypotheses was accepted at Aggression levels and rejected at Adjustment levels.

Study 2: The qualitative study on Dark Triad and factors affecting and its impact provided valuable insight into individuals who quantitatively scored high on Dark Triad traits, Machiavellianism, Narcissism and Psychopathy. Based on the findings of the study various themes and subthemes, including Machiavellianism characteristics such as Low emotional sensitivity, Narcissism traits such as conformity and Psychopathy traits such as Asocial tendencies were observed. Subthemes of light triad such as Altruism and ethical behaviour were observed. Further, risk factors and impact on interpersonal relationships was observed.

5.2 Implications

The qualitative study on the Dark Triad has numerous potential consequences that can influence research, clinical practice, and intervention initiatives in the field of psychology. The qualitative study's findings can be used to build focused interventions that try to alleviate the adverse effects linked to the Dark Triad features. Clinicians and therapists can customize interventions to successfully address the specific needs and promote positive psychological

outcomes of persons who exhibit these features by comprehending their underlying motives, behaviours, and obstacles.

The qualitative findings can help improve assessment methods and diagnostic criteria for identifying persons with high Dark Triad features. By integrating qualitative insights into current assessment methods, doctors can acquire a more comprehensive comprehension of the intricate interaction of personality variables and customize treatment strategies appropriately.

Further investigation can expand upon the qualitative discoveries to examine potential factors that could reduce the adverse effects of Dark Triad features. Researchers can create interventions focused on resilience by identifying factors that mitigate the negative impacts of these features. These interventions aim to encourage adaptive coping techniques and improve psychological well-being.

Studying Developmental Trajectories: Longitudinal study can provide a deeper understanding of how individuals with high Dark Triad features evolve over time and the factors that influence their stability or changes. Through the longitudinal tracking of individuals from adolescence to adulthood, researchers can discern pivotal periods of vulnerability and adaptability, so facilitating the implementation of focused prevention and intervention strategies at different stages of growth.

The qualitative study can provide a basis for examining the differences in how Dark Triad qualities are expressed and their effects across different cultures. Through conducting comparative study in various cultural contexts, researchers can analyze the impact of cultural norms, values, and socialization processes on the expression and outcomes of these characteristics. This research can also provide insights for developing interventions that are culturally sensitive.

5.3 Limitations

1. Qualitative findings are descriptive and context-specific, making quantification and comparison across research or populations difficult. Qualitative study on Dark Triad qualities may be unreliable and invalid due to the lack of standardised assessments and objective standards.
2. Social Desirability Potential Bias: When discussing stigmatized qualities like Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy, qualitative study participants may present themselves in a socially desirable manner or hide sensitive information. This may compromise data accuracy and completeness.
3. Qualitative research is better at investigating relationships and processes than causality. Qualitative research can provide valuable contextual insights into Dark Triad trait-high persons' lives, but they may not prove causative processes or predictive validity.
4. Ethical Issues: Research on delicate themes like the Dark Triad qualities may create confidentiality, privacy, and psychological suffering problems. Research participants' well-being and rights must be protected by ethical norms and methods.

5.4 Scope for future research

1. Longitudinal studies involve the examination of individuals with strong Dark Triad features throughout time, allowing for a deeper understanding of their developmental paths. Through longitudinal tracking of participants, researchers can analyze the

manifestation, development, and interaction of these features with other circumstances during several life stages, ranging from adolescent to maturity.

2. Intersectionality: Further investigation can delve into the intersectionality of the Dark Triad qualities with additional demographic and identification variables, including gender, race, socioeconomic status, and sexual orientation. Through analyzing the impact of these overlapping identities on the manifestation and outcomes of Dark Triad features, scholars can gain a deeper comprehension of the intricate interaction between personal and situational elements.
3. Examining the cultural and cross-cultural differences in how Dark Triad qualities are expressed and their effects can offer significant understanding of the influence of cultural norms, values, and socialization methods. Conducting comparative qualitative studies in different cultural contexts can provide insights into how cultural influences influence the expression and outcomes of these characteristics, and can help develop interventions that are culturally appropriate.
4. Future study might investigate the contextual factors that impact the manifestation and outcomes of Dark Triad traits in many environments, including the workplace, educational institutions, family dynamics, and intimate relationships. Researchers can discover risk and protective factors and develop tailored intervention techniques by analyzing how situational and environmental factors interact with individual personality traits.

5. Examining the resilience and protective variables that reduce the harmful effects of Dark Triad traits can provide valuable insights for developing strategies to prevent and intervene in such cases. Qualitative studies can investigate the coping techniques, social support networks, and adaptive mechanisms used by persons with these features to navigate challenges and enhance psychological well-being.

6. Clinical and Applied Perspectives: Qualitative research can provide valuable insights for creating evidence-based therapies and therapy strategies that are specifically designed for persons who exhibit high levels of Dark Triad features. Clinicians and therapists can enhance their tactics for assessment, therapy, and support by comprehending the subjective experiences, motives, and obstacles encountered by these individuals.

7. Ethical Considerations: Subsequent investigations should persist in addressing ethical considerations and ensuring the protection of the well-being and rights of participants in qualitative studies on the Dark Triad. Researchers must strictly adhere to ethical principles and protocols in order to guarantee informed consent, confidentiality, and psychological safety throughout the entire research process.

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APPENDIX A

You are invited to participate in a research study being conducted by Kritika Arora (MA Psychology, Year 2, TSLAS), under the guidance of Dr. Sohinee Gangulee (Faculty, TSLAS), as a student research project.

There are no known risks if you decide to participate in this study. There are no costs to you for participating in the study. The information you provide will solely be used to collect data for the study.

This survey is anonymous. Please write your name initials. However, no one will be able to identify you or your answers, and no one will know whether or not you participated in the study. Should the data be published, no individual information will be disclosed.

By completing the questionnaire, you voluntarily agree to participate. You are free to withdraw at any point in time from the study.

If you have any questions about the study, please contact:

Kritika Arora- karora_ma22@thapar.edu

I have read the above-mentioned instructions and guidelines and I agree to participate in the study.

- Yes

NAME INITIALS:

AGE:

SEX:

- Female Male Prefer not to say

EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION:

- Undergraduate Post graduate

AREA OF RESIDENCE:

- Rural Urban Semi urban

Please indicate how much you agree with each of the following statements. kindly avoid neutral responses unless extremely necessary.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1. It's not wise to tell your secrets.					
2. I like to use clever manipulation to get my way.					
3. Whatever it takes, you must get the important people on your side.					
4. Avoid direct conflict with others because they may be useful in the future.					
5. It's wise to keep track of information that you can use against people.					
6. You should wait for the right time to get back at people.					
7. There are things you should hide from other people to preserve your reputation.					
8. Make sure your plans benefit yourself, not others.					
9. Most people can be manipulated.					
10. People see me as a natural leader.					
11. I hate being the centre of attention.					
12. Many group activities tend to be dull without me.					
13. I know that I am special because everyone keeps telling me so					

14. I like to get acquainted with important people.					
15. I feel embarrassed if someone compliments me.					
16. I have been compared to famous people.					
17. I am an average person.					
18. I insist on getting the respect I deserve.					
19. I like to get revenge on authorities.					
20. I avoid dangerous situations.					
21. Payback needs to be quick and nasty.					
22. People often say I'm out of control.					
23. It's true that I can be mean to others.					
24. People who mess with me always regret it.					
25. I have never gotten into trouble with the law.					
26. I enjoy having sex with people I hardly know.					
27. I'll say anything to get what I want.					

	Not at all like me	Little like me	Moderately like me	A lot like me	Completely like me
1. My friends say that I argue a lot.					
2. Other people always seem to get the breaks.					
3. I flare up quickly, but get over it quickly.					
4. I often find myself disagreeing with people.					
5. At times I feel I have gotten a raw deal out of life.					
6. I can't help getting into arguments when people disagree with me.					
7. At times I get very angry for no good reason.					
8. I may hit someone if he or she provokes me.					
9. I wonder why sometimes I feel so bitter about things.					
10. I have threatened people I know.					

11. Someone has pushed me so far that I hit him or her.					
12. I have trouble controlling my temper.					
13. If I'm angry enough, I may mess up someone's work.					
14. I have been mad enough to slam a door when leaving someone behind in the room.					
15. When people are bossy, I take my time doing what they want, just to show them.					

Instructions: Please indicate how much you agree with each of the following statements

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Somewhat agree
1. I feel happy and content most of the time.					
2. I am generally optimistic about the future.					
3. I feel calm and relaxed most of the time.					
4. I rarely worry about things I cannot change.					
5. I am usually able to concentrate on my tasks.					
6. I can usually handle whatever comes my way.					

The research team would like to thank the individuals and organizations who generously shared their time, experience, and materials for the purposes of this project. Kindly feel free to contact us regarding any queries or feedback you have

APPENDIX B

Consent Form for Interview

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Kritika Arora (MA Psychology, Year 2, TSLAS), under the guidance of Dr. Kriti Vyas (Faculty, TSLAS), as a student research project.

The study aims to understand your personality. It is an interview in which you will be asked to answer questions posed by the investigator. The interview will be audio-recorded for use in standard research procedures. Your identity will not be revealed to anyone but will only be used for research. Your participation in the study is voluntary. At any point in time, you may wish to leave the study. We request that you answer the questions honestly and preferably in English. However, if you are uncomfortable, you may switch to the Hindi language.

Criteria for participation:

AGE: 18-30 years

Ethical guidelines:

Your identity and any information you provide during the study will be confidential. All data will be anonymised to ensure your privacy and security.

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You have the right to

withdraw at any time without providing a reason, and it will not impact your relationship with the researcher.

Questions and Concerns:

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us at: -Kritika Arora- karora_ma22@thapar.edu

* Indicates required question

1. Email *
-

2. I have read the instructions and am ready to participate in the study. *

Mark only one oval.

yes

3. Name initials (eg: KP) *

4. Age *

5. Sex *

Mark only one oval.

m

a

l

e

f

e

m

a

l

e

prefer not to say

Other:

6. Education Level *

Mark only one oval.

- Gradu
- ation
- Post-
- gradua
- tion
- M.Phi
- l/Ph.D
- Other

7. Preferred date of interview *

Example: January 7, 2019

8. Preferred time of interview *

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We are grateful that you took part in the research. We value your efforts and appreciate that you took the time to complete the research form.

The second part of this study will be a 30-40 min interview session. You will be asked to describe how you feel about your life. The conversations will be audio-recorded and transcribed. The preferable mode of communication will be in the English language. Your identity and all the information will be kept confidential and used only for research purposes. Please mark the boxes indicating your interest in participation.

9. Consent to participate *

Mark only one oval.

Yes, i have read the instructions and wish to participate in

the study.No, I won't be taking part in part 2 of the study

Research Objectives: Assessing factors influencing dark triad personality traits and assessing their impact on aggression and life.

Process of Interview Conduction:

Greeting the participant –

“Hello, how are you doing? Are you feeling comfortable? I will be asking you a series of questions to get a better understanding of your personality. Please feel comfortable answering. Try to give your honest answers. Please share your life experiences in detail. This interview will be audio-recorded and will take 30-40 minutes. You can be assured of the confidentiality and privacy of the recordings. Only the research team will have access to it. Your identity will not be revealed at any point in time. Please let me know if you feel uncomfortable at any point. We will be conducting this interview in English. Please answer in the same language. If it is not easy for you, you may switch to Hindi.”

Warm-up Questions:

1. How are you doing these days?
2. What about your health & well-being?

Interview Questions:

1. How would you describe your personality?
 - How do you envision your ideal self regarding personality traits and behaviours?
 - Are there any personality traits that you would like to modify or change? and any traits you're proud of? Why?
2. How do you think your friends or colleagues would describe you?
3. Describe your family. How were your childhood environment and family dynamics? How did those childhood experiences shape your personality?
4. Who do you admire most, and why/why not? How have they contributed to shaping your personality?
5. How important is it to always follow the rules? Please explain concerning your own life experiences. How does it make you feel about following or not following rules?
6. Can you tell me about when you set a goal and achieved it? How did you go about it? How did you feel about it?
7. Imagine you've worked hard on a group project, but one team member didn't contribute as much. How would you feel about it? How would you handle the situation?

8. Describe a time you disagreed with a friend/colleague/teammate. How was it resolved?
- How do you perceive and manage emotions in yourself and others, especially in conflict or confrontation?
9. Can you share an experience where you felt really proud of helping someone else?
- Have you ever felt disconnected from your emotions or experienced difficulty empathizing with others?
10. How do you usually react to criticism or feedback? Explain the emotions and thoughts that follow after receiving the feedback/criticism with life examples.
11. Can you recall instances where you've felt angry or frustrated in interactions with others? How did you typically respond in those situations?
- How do you perceive the impact of your aggressive behavior on your relationships with others?
12. Tell me about a time when you had to lead a group. What was your approach to leadership? (or imagined)
13. What would you do if you found a wallet on the ground with money in it?

- How do you typically approach situations where you perceive an opportunity for personal gain, even if it may come at the expense of others?

14. summarize- factors affecting, other incidents, changes, defining instances etc.

Ending the interview:

So, we have reached the end of the interview stage. Would you like to share how you are feeling now? Any last thoughts?

Thank you for participating in this interview. We appreciate your time and input in this research study.