The Dark Triad and its Effects on Counterproductive Work Behavior and Career Success

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Abstract

The Dark Triad traits have become more popular among researchers with its connection to work outcomes. This research aimed to investigate the connection between Dark Triad traits on career success as well as counterproductive work behavior. We proposed that individuals high in Dark Triad traits will show both more success and counterproductive work behavior, and that each of these relationships is moderated by either approach or avoidance motivation respectively. Analysis was carried out with n = 174, and results indicated a relationship between narcissism and success, as well as all three Dark Triad traits and counterproductive work behavior. We found two significant results for our moderating variables: first with Machiavellianism, approach motivation and success, and secondly with Machiavellianism, avoidance motivation and counterproductive work behavior. To conclude, some interesting relationships were found, however limitations of our study could have prevented us from seeing more significant results overall.

Keywords: Dark Triad, Success, CWB, Goal Achievement Motivation

The Dark Triad and its Effects on Counterproductive Work Behavior and Career Success

Introduction

The dark triad is a higher-order construct proposed by Paulhus & Williams (2002), that consists of three personality traits known as narcissism, psychopathy and Machiavellianism. They can be seen as sub-clinical personality traits that have interpersonally aversive qualities (Furnham & Treglown, 2021). In recent years, organizations have come to seek a better understanding of the impact the Dark Triad traits have in the workplace. Each of the dark traits have been linked to numerous different work outcomes such as unethical behavior, diminished organizational commitment, abuse towards subordinates and manipulative behaviors (Amernic and Graig, 2010; Zettler et al., 2011; Kiazad et al., 2010). Although they have been found to have numerous of negative outcomes for the organization and its employees, they have also been shown to have positive effects for the individual. Individuals with Dark Triad traits embody many desirable traits such as charm, leadership and assertiveness, which could lead to positive outcomes such as job performance and success (Ames, 2009). This research will focus on both the positive and negative outcomes by looking at career success and counterproductive work behavior and their relationship to the Dark Triad Traits. Counterproductive work behaviors can cause extreme damage to the organization, and it would be important to avoid it when possible (Nübold et al., 2017). If a there is a relationship between the Dark Triad traits and counterproductive work behavior, it could help organizations design interventions or screen for certain behaviors in order to prevent it. As the Dark Triad has been heavily research in connection to negative outcomes, finding a possible connection to a positive one could also be interesting for researchers and organizations. It could be a positive contribution in order to

understand that the Dark Triad does not always have to lead to damage and abuse in organizations. We will also be examining a potential moderator of achievement motivation in order to examine whether any of our relationships between variables could strengthened by a certain motivation type.

Dark Triad in the Workplace

The construct of "normal" narcissism comes from a paper written by Raskin and Hall (1979) where they attempted to define a version of narcissism that was subclinical. It can be characterized by grandiosity, high needs of admiration, dominance and superiority (Paulhus & Williams, 2002; Volmer et al., 2016). Most psychopathy research is built upon the observations by Cleckley (1941) and comes from a clinical pedigree (Derbis, 2020; Jakobwitz & Egan, 2006). Psychopathy has been associated with behaviors such as high impulsivity, thrill-seeking, as well as low empathy and anxiety (Paulhus & Williams, 2002).

Unlike narcissism and psychopathy, Machiavellianism does not have a clinical pedigree. The trait Machiavellianism comes from a reference to the infamous philosopher Niccolò Machiavelli and his original books, in particular "The Prince." In this book he described his view on brutal and immoral rulership, and by the late 16th century the term "Machiavellianism" became common to describe being deceptive to get ahead (Derbis, 2020). However, Machiavellianism was not a psychological term until the 1970s when Christie & Geiss (1970) developed a measure of normal personality by using statements from the original books by Machiavelli (Paulhus & Williams, 2002). This then lead Machiavellianism to be characterized by exploitation, manipulation, and emotional coldness (Volmer et al., 2016).

Dark Triad and Success

Career success can be described as "the real or perceived achievement individuals have

accumulated as a result of their work experience" (Judge et al., 1999a). When we look at this definition the terms "real" and "perceived" could also be described as "objective" and "subjective" respectfully. Objective career success involves measurable, observable, and verifiable attainments, such as one's salary or recent promotion. Whereas subjective success refers to an individual's own evaluation of their career progress (Abele et al., 2010; Volmer et al., 2016). Ng et al., (2005) found that objective success and subjective success are moderately positively correlated.

In terms of career success, individuals that possess dark triad traits are more proactive in the manipulation and their environments, and in control of outcomes, which could facilitate them in becoming more successful overall (Jonason et al., 2010; Furnham et al., 2021). Abele and Spurk (2009) found that subjective success ratings had an influence on the growth of objective success, suggesting that self-confidence has power of one's career success. Narcissism has been linked to high levels of self-confidence, which in turn could be a powerful predictor for both objective and subjective career success (Jonason et al., 2010; Abele & Spurk, 2009). Hirschi and Jänsch (2015) also found that narcissists have higher salaries, which is a direct measure of objective career success.

Although narcissism in particular seems to have some strong connections to career success, psychopathy does not. Psychopathy as a trait has been linked to more negative career outcomes than positive ones (Spurk et al., 2015; Scherer et al., 2013; Eisenbarth et al., 2018). However, we can pose the question whether there are any positive outcomes linked to this trait, such as our variable, career success. When Cleckley (1941) first defined the fundamental features of psychopathy, he described individuals with psychopathic traits as superficially charming, articulate, and devoid of anxiety, but they can also be described as guiltless, callous

and self-centered. Due to the contradictory characteristics, psychopaths have the ability to easily deceive others into thinking they are trustworthy and capable of doing their jobs, which in turn could allow for them to reach higher levels of success (Lilienfeld et al., 2015). As such, psychopathy has been associated with rise in both power, success, and they seem to prosper in work settings where the environments suits their characteristics (O'Boyle et al., 2011). Furthermore, psychopathy, as well as the other dark traits, are associated with low agreeableness, which is related to higher levels of objective career success (Paulhus & Williams, 2002; Ng et al., 2005).

Previous research has shown that Machiavellianism positively predicts career success (Pfeffer, 2021). With characteristics such willingness to manipulate and exploit, Machiavellians seem to be better suited for positions of high responsibility where they have authority over others (Spurk et al., 2015). Although, the trait is also linked to negative career outcomes such as counterproductive work behaviors, they also strive for control and have a high desire to be in power (Kessler et al., 2010). Kessler et al., (2010) derived the term "Organizational Machiavellianism" which describes the use of manipulation, when necessary, in order to achieve their desired end goals in the work environment. This would indicate the use of their characteristics in order to become more successful objectively compared to their non-Machiavellian counterparts. Jonason et al., (2012) distinguished between soft and hard tactics to pursue goals. They found that individuals with Machiavellian traits tend to use soft tactics more, which involves characteristics such as charm, joking, compliments, and exchange of favors, in order to manipulate the situation and person (Jonason et al., 2012). They have the ability to be a social chameleon, which allows them to build strong social networks and gain the trust of their coworkers (Hurley, 2005). These tactics are socially desirable and acceptable and should lead to

more objective success within an organization (Spurk et al., 2015). Based on this we assume that each of the dark triad traits have a positive relationship to career success:

>   *Hypothesis 1:* The Dark Triad traits are positively related to career success.

Dark and Counterproductive Work Behavior

Our second variable looks at the relationship between counterproductive work behavior and the Dark Triad traits. Counterproductive work behavior (CWB) involves voluntary behaviors that causes harm to the organization and/or stakeholders of the organization (Fox & Spector, 2005). Individuals that partake in CWB could carry out acts such as theft, sabotage, abuse and withdrawal (Spector et al., 2006)

All three dark triad traits have been positively linked to CWB (O'Boyle et al., 2012). Although we previously linked the three traits to the positive outcome of career success, based on the negative characteristics possessed by each of the dark triad traits, it is easy to assume that they will participate in some form of CWB.

Bushman and Baumeister (1989) found that narcissist tend to act in aggressive ways when their self-esteem is threatened. This can be explained by the theory that individuals with high self-esteem are hypersensitive to threats and experience more negative emotions, which in turn could lead to negative behaviors such as CWB (Penney and Spector, 2002). In fact, Penney & Spector (2002) found evidence that individuals higher in narcissism showed higher levels of CWB through anger. Besides their anger and aggression tendencies, they also have an inflated self-view, and their high grandiosity leads them to take part in attention seeking behaviors (O'Boyle et al., 2012; Paulhus & Williams, 2002). Their high self-view and sense of importance leads to the violation of rules to gain desirable outcomes for themselves. Narcissism is also associated with impulsiveness, which CWB often consists of as well (Michel & Bowling, 2012).

Although one of the main characteristics associated with Machiavellianism is manipulation, it is important to point out that although they want to be manipulative, they are not always successful (Austin et al., 2007). Successful manipulation could lead to positive work outcomes such as career success, whereas unsuccessful manipulation could lead to negative work outcomes such as CWB (O'Boyle et al., 2012). Machiavellians have less desire to abide by the normal social exchange which would lead them to participate in more interpersonal forms of CWB, such as bullying and betrayal (O'Boyle., 2012). In fact, Kish-Gephart et al., (2007) found that individuals higher in Machiavellianism showed more unethical behavior. Individuals high in Machiavellianism tend to be remorseless and use their dishonesty to gain power (Ying & Cohen, 2018). When faced with an obstacle to achieving their goal, they are more likely to engage in CWB. Furthermore, Machiavellians are more likely to lie, steal, and mislead others and engage in unethical decision making; all forms of CWB when carried out in an organization (Harrison et al., 2018). Ying & Cohen (2018) found a strong positive relationship between CWB and Machiavellianism, indicating that individuals high in Machiavellianism are more likely to show CWB.

Finally, most psychopathy research in terms of the dark triad, looks at clinical psychopathy (Sherer et al., 2013). Psychopaths and sub-clinical psychopaths share the same characteristics however, sub-clinical psychopathy functions at a lower intensity, and it does not significantly harm their day-to-day life (LeBreton et al., 2006). Sub-clinical psychopaths lack the ability to empathize, they tend to be selfish and are prone to lying and manipulation and lastly, they also have the tendency to act impulsively (Mahmut et al., 2011; Paulhus & Williams, 2002). All these characteristics should lead to a high chance of CWB (Sherer et al., 2013). Their increased impulsiveness and decreased inhibitions could lead to an increase in theft and sabotage.

Whereas, their lack of remorse, and callousness towards others could also lead to bullying and

abuse (O'Boyle., 2012). Based on this our second prediction assumes that there is a positive

association between the Dark Triad and CWB:

Hypothesis 2: The Dark Triad traits are positively related to counterproductive work

behavior in

Moderating Effect of Achievement Goals

Our first two hypotheses focus on the direct relationship between Dark Triad traits with

career success and CWB. In this research we will also explore the moderating effect of

achievement goal motivation. We look at approach and avoidance motivation which differ as a

function of valence (Elliot, 1999). This distinction involves either the energization of behavior

towards positive stimuli (approach motivation) or the direction of behavior away from negative

stimuli (avoidance motivation) (Elliot, 2008).

Nicholls (1984) theorized the traditional goal achievement motivation and distinguished

between mastery goals, and the comparison with others. Elliot and McGregor (2001) then

created a four-factor model of achievement goal motivation that includes both approach and

avoidance motivation, as well as mastery and performance goals. Mastery goals involve the

development of competence for masterful performance, whereas performance goals involve the

demonstration of competence compared to others (Elliot & McGregor, 2001). With this a 2x2

matrix was formed with four different motivation typed: 1 – mastery approach as a path to

success, 2 – mastery avoidance to avoid failure, 3 – performance approach a path to normative

competence, and 4 – performance avoidance where the focus is on avoiding normative

incompetence.

When looking at CWB and achievement motivation, we can make small assumptions based on what we know about each of the two. Derbis (2021) found evidence that individuals who show avoidance motivation tend to show more CWB compared to those who use approach forms of motivation. They theorized that activating CWB involves fear of embarrassment and failure based on the original theory by Elliot and McGregor (2001) (Derbis, 2021). As both of these variables have been associated to CWB, we can expect that the combination will strengthen the relationship between the Dark Triad traits and CWB.

Although there is not a lot of research that looks at approach forms of motivation and success, we do know that the main focus is to go towards a positive stimuli such as success. Achievement approach is associated with the drive to achieve a goal at the same level or better than others (Elliot & McGregor, 2001). This would indicate the use of approach motivation in order to reach levels of success, especially in cases such as narcissism where their self-view is inflated. As the Dark Triad traits have also been associated with success, the combination of the Dark Triad and approach motivation could lead to a stronger relationship between the dark traits and success.

This information leads us to our last two predictions where we assume that the relationship between the Dark Triad traits and career success is strengthened by approach motivation, and the relationship between dark traits and CWB is strengthened by avoidance motivation:

Hypothesis 3: The relationship between the Dark Triad and career success is strengthened by approach motivation goals.

Hypothesis 4: The relationship between the Dark Triad and CWB is strengthened by avoidance motivation goals.

Figure 1:

Research Model
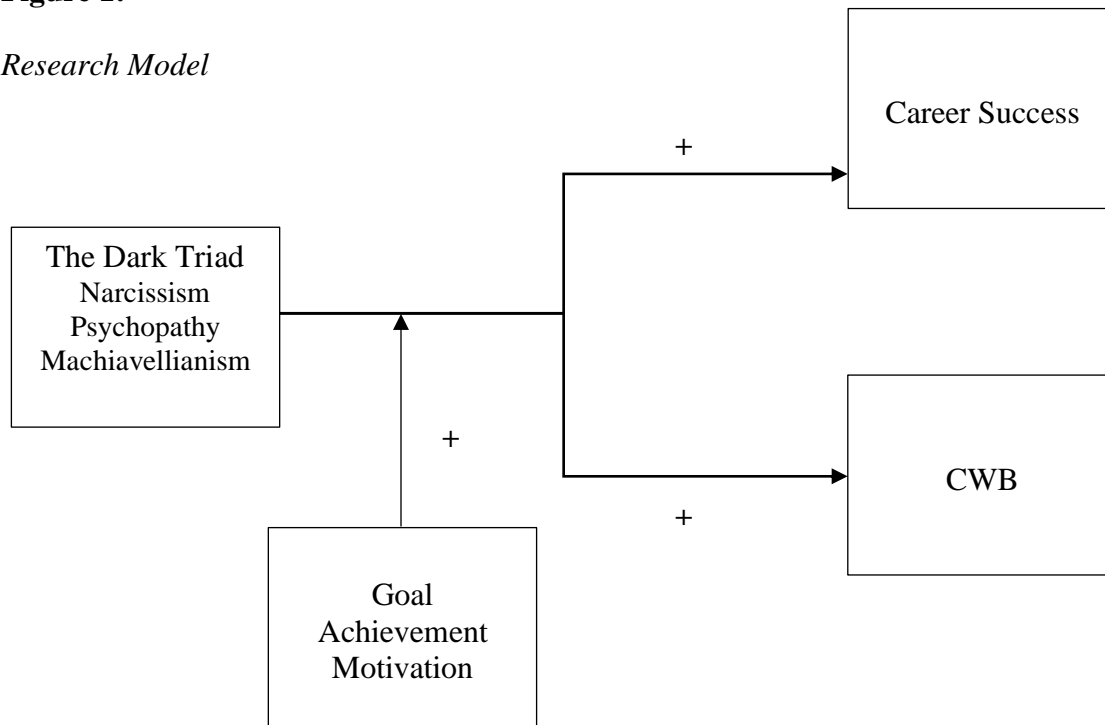
Method

Materials

The Dark Triad

Narcissism was measured using 16 items from the NPI-16; a short measure for narcissism (Ames et al., 2005). We used the "narcissistic response" questions on a 5-point Likert scale (*1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree)* such as this:

1. I like to be the center of attention (Appendix A)

A reliability analysis gave a value of λ-2 = .817, which indicates low error and good reliability for this scale.

Psychopathy was measured using the Levenson self-report psychopathy scale (LSRP; Levenson et al., 1995). The questionnaire has both primary and secondary psychopathy questions however, for this study we only focused on the primary focused questions. The questionnaire

consisted of 16 items, and were scored on a 5-point Likert scale (*1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree)*:

1. For me, what's right is whatever I can get away with (Appendix B)

Measures of Guttman error indicated good internal reliability (λ-2 = .823), and low error.

Lastly, Machiavellianism was measured using the 8 – item short version of the Christie and Geis (1970) measure of Machiavellianism using a 5-point Likert scale (*1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree)* and involved questions such as (Den Hartog and Belschak, 2012):

1. Anyone who completely trusts anyone else is asking for trouble (Appendix C) (λ-2 = .749).

Career Success

Objective success was measured using questions related to income and recent promotions. Teodora et al., (2017) conducted a study that involved both objective and subjective career success, and we used both their measures for this study. Three questions were asked with regard to objective career success: their annual income, last pay rise, and last promotion (Appendix D). Objective career success showed quite a low internal reliability (λ-2 = .339), indicating that most of the variance is due to error and not true score, making it harder to differentiate between test-takers. However, the reliability analysis indicated that if item 1 (annual income) were removed the internal reliability would increase to (λ-2 = .612). Therefore, it was decided to remove this item when calculating overall scores for each participant.

Subjective success was measured on a 5-point Likert scale (*1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree)* and involved 5 items such as:

1. I am generally very successful (Appendix D).

Compared to objective success, subjective success had a much better result for internal reliability (λ-2 = .629). In this research we looked at objective and subjective success as separate variables, and did not use a combined score for "overall success."

Counterproductive work behavior

A 10 item scale first used by Spector et al., (2010) was used to measure counterproductive work behavior. The original scale consists of 45 items, however for this study a shortened version was used. The items were scored on a 5-point Likert scale (*1 = never, 5 = everyday)* and involved asking participants whether they ever carried out certain acts such as:

1. Purposely wasted their employer's materials/supplies (Appendix E)

Measures of internal reliability showed good results, indicating low variance due to error (λ-2 = .773).

Goal Achievement Motivation

Lastly, goal achievement motivation was measured using the Achievement Goal Questionnaire Revised (AGQ-R; Elliot & Murayama, 2008). The scale consists of 12 items where all four motivation types are measured in three questions each. The questions for mastery and performance approach were grouped together to get a combined score for approach motivation, and the same was done for mastery and performance avoidance. The answers were scored on a 5-point Likert scale (*1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree),* with items such as:

1. My goal is to learn as much as possible (Appendix F)

Internal reliability was high for both approach and avoidance motivation at (λ-2 = .755 and λ-2 = .785) respectively.

Participants and Procedure

Participants were recruited through convenience in the form of snowball sampling. The original sample size consisted of 368 participants however it was narrowed down due to missing data for some participants, and lack of informed consent from others (137 participants). We narrowed down the missing data by providing a cut-off score of < 10 missing values per participant. The final sample size used for the analysis consisted of 174 participants. Our responses were slightly skewed towards female participants with 61.5% female and 36.8% male respondents. The mean age was 35.6 (SD = 12.08), however we had participants ranging from 18 to 66 years old.

The study was a non-experimental cross-sectional design. Using the materials, an online questionnaire was created using Qualtrics. The questionnaire was sent out through the personal network of the researcher, as well as social network platforms. The questionnaire took about 10-15 minutes to complete, and participation was completely voluntary.

Results

Preliminary Analysis

Before conducting the main analysis, we first looked at some descriptive measures and correlations. Measures of central tendency indicated that most of our variables were distributed to a normal degree, however, there were some that were skewed. CWB seemed to be skewed the most, with a skewness statistic of 1.746, indicating that the data is skewed to the right. Based on the mean we can also see that most of the answers were on the lower end of the Likert scale (*M = 1.604, SD = .497).* The other variable that was slightly skewed was objective career success at 1.359, all other variables seemed to be fairly symmetrically distributed.

In order to examine our first two hypotheses we looked at correlations in order to determine whether there were any significant relationships between our variables. In terms of the first hypothesis of the Dark Triad and success, we only found a significant effect for Narcissism and subjective success *(r = .368**, p<.001).* This is only partially in line with our initial hypothesis, as Machiavellianism and psychopathy did not seem to be related to subjective or objective success. Interestingly, there was also no significant correlation between objective and subjective success, which is not in line with previous research *(r = -.081, p = .304).*

For our second hypothesis we found quite some significant results. Based on our correlation analysis it would seem that all three Dark Triad traits significantly correlate with CWB. Machiavellianism was correlated at *r = .282, p < .001,* psychopathy at *r = .274, p <.001* and lastly, narcissism at *r = .236, p = .002.* These results are in line with our second hypothesis, all other correlations are shown in the table presented below.

Table 1:

Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations

Variable	*n*	*M*	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Machiavellianism	174	2.48	.653	-							
2. Psychopathy	174	2.78	.411	.216**	-						
3. Narcissism	174	2.76	.533	.378**	.234**	-					
4. Subjective	174	3.33	.538	.025	.058	.368**	-				
5. Objective	174	2.34	.607	.083	-.037	-.044	-.081	-			
6. CWB	174	1.60	.497	.282**	.274**	.236**	.041	.035	-		
7. Approach Motivation	174	3.88	.558	.175*	.218**	.274**	.265**	-.079	.082	-	
8. Avoid Motivation	174	3.54	.681	.093	.217**	.164*	.088	-.179*	.164*	.589**	-

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$

Moderation Analysis

In order to test our moderating variables we carried out three separate regression analysis for each of the dependent variables of objective success, subjective success and CWB, and looked at the interaction terms. The interaction terms were created for each of the three traits with both approach and avoidance motivation, and were then used as independent variables together with our predictor variables separately (Appendix G). Our third hypothesis predicted that the relationship between the Dark Triad and career success would be strengthened by the

addition of approach motivation. We first looked at subjective success, and found no significant

moderation effect for any of the Dark Traits with approach motivation. When we looked at

objective success however, we did find one small, but significant effect for Machiavellianism

and approach motivation (*b = -.233, (t(174) = -2.01, p = .046,* 95% CI [-.462, -.004]). This is not

completely in line with our initial prediction, as the other two dark traits did not seem to show

more

objective success with approach motivation.

Our last hypothesis focused on the moderating variable of avoidance motivation. In our

preliminary analysis we found that all three Dark Triad traits were significantly correlated with

CWB, however, in our regression analysis we only found a significant result for

Machiavellianism and avoidance motivation (*b = .252, t(174) = 2.58, p = .011,* 95% CI [.059,

.445]). As our hypothesis predicted that all three Dark Triad traits in combination with avoidance

motivation would strengthen the relationship with CWB, it was not in line with our hypothesis.

Discussion

The aim of this study was to examine the relationships between the Dark Triad traits with

career success and CWB, and the potential moderating effect of goal achievement motivation.

Our first hypothesis assumed a relationship between the Dark Triad and career success. Research

has shown that individuals with these dark traits are able to use their characteristics to get ahead

and more successful both objectively and subjectively (Jonason et al., 2010; Abele & Spurk,

2009). Our analysis showed results that were only partially in line with previous research and our

hypothesis. We found that there is a positive relationship between narcissism and subjective

success. These findings are in line with research where narcissism has been shown to have the

most beneficial characteristics for career success compared to the other two dark traits (Volmer

et al., 2016). In terms of the relationship between subjective success and narcissism, we could explain it in terms of their high self-view and self-confidence. Subjective success involves a person's own evaluation of their success, if the individual has a high self-view they could also be much more likely to rate their success high compared to those with an average self-view (Abele et al., 2010; Volmer et al., 2016). As narcissism has been characterized with high levels of self-confidence and self-view, this could explain the strong relationship we found in our analysis (Jonason et al., 2010). However as we found that objective and subjective success did not significantly correlate with each other, we cannot assume that because individuals with narcissism show subjective success that they will also be more objectively successful, despite previous research that indicated otherwise (Ng et al., 2005).

Although we found one significant effect, the other two Dark Triad traits were not related to success. Previous research has indicated connections between psychopathy, Machiavellianism and career success through characteristics such as manipulation and charm (O'Boyle et al., 2011; Pfeffer, 2021). There could be a couple of explanations as to why we did not find significant results for these two traits. Firstly, although some research has shown that there is a positive relationship between psychopathy and success, there has also been research that shows the opposite (Ullrich et al., 2008). Ullrich et al., (2008) found that lack of empathy and callousness are actually counterproductive to career success, something we first predicted would aid them based on previous research (Lilienfeld et al., 2015).

As Machiavellians are mainly characterized by manipulation, we hypothesized that they would use this in order to get to power and success. However, we also know that although they want to manipulate individuals, they are not always successful (Austen et al., 2007). This could be a reason that it is not linked to objective or subjective success.

Our second hypothesis predicted a relationship between the Dark Triad traits and CWB. We found significant results for all three Dark Triad traits. This is in line with previous research that found similar results (O'Boyle et al., 2012). Penney and Spector (2002) found a relationship between narcissism and CWB, and it seemed to be for individuals who show more anger. Research has shown that negative emotional arousal is an important factor for CWB and narcissistic individuals could become angry if their self-view is threatened, leading to CWB (Bushman & Baumeister, 1989; Penney & Spector, 2002; Fox and Spector, 1999). There is reasonable fit between the negative traits of the Dark Triad and negative behaviors such as CWB, therefore, we can safely conclude that the two will be related (Ying and Cohen, 2018). Sherer et al (2013) found that psychopath's impulsive, callous affect and manipulative behavior leads to more forms of CWB, which our findings also confirmed. Lastly, in line with previous research, a Machiavellian's tendency to manipulate and exploit leads to more acts of theft, lying and abuse, which has been replicated in the results (Harrison et al., 2018).

Our last two hypotheses looked at both these relationships moderated by approach and avoidance motivation. In terms of objective and subjective success, we only found one relationship that was strengthened by approach motivation, and that was between Machiavellianism and objective success. This could be because individuals characterized with Machiavellians tend have shown to behave in unethical ways such as lying and exploiting others, in order to achieve their goal, which could be seen as a way of energizing towards positive stimuli (Ying and Cohen, 2018). The other Dark Traits did not have a stronger relationship to either objective or subjective success with the addition of approach motivation.

For our last hypothesis, we predicted that avoidance motivation would moderate the relationship between the Dark Triad traits and CWB. Although we found significant results for

each of the dark traits and CWB, we only found one significant result for Machiavellianism, avoidance motivation and CWB. This is partially in line with previous research where this relationship was found for all three traits (Derbis, 2021). It is interesting that only one of the three traits seemed to be moderated by avoidance motivation. Avoidance motivation and its connection to CWB was theorized to be linked to fear of embarrassment and failure, and not being able to master a task (Derbis, 2021). When we look at the characteristics of psychopathy, we know that they are devoid of anxiety, which could mean that they are not so easily influenced by fear of failure and embarrassment (Cleckely, 1941). Narcissism is also characterized by grandiose behavior and high self-views, which could indicate that they also, like psychopathy, do not feel easily embarrassed or fear not being able to master something (Paulhus & Williams, 2002).

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

The main predictors in our research were the Dark Triad traits, which would require data from individuals with these traits in order to get accurate results. Our sample was of convenience, leading to a restriction of range as our sample was limited and might not be representative of the population. Because of our convenience sample our participants were not individuals that scored particularly high on any of the Dark Triad traits, which was something that could have made a difference in our results. Another limitation is the fact that we used self-report questionnaires to collect our data. It is know that self-report forms of data collection are less valid and susceptible to faking. Our research involved measures that involved sensitive topics such as the Dark Triad, which could be seen as an intimidating questionnaire. Individuals could be more prone to faking as they want to seem more socially-desirable, and obviously, do not want to come across as someone who "finds it easy to manipulate someone." We also used

single-sourced data, instead of using a second source such as co-worker reports. This type of data collection can lead to bias where we cannot directly infer the true relationship between our variables (Podsakoff & Organ 1986). Lastly, we cannot infer anything about the causality of our relationship because the limitations mentioned, as well as the important fact that although we have correlations, it does not mean causation.

Future research should focus more on the link between the Dark Triad and success and CWB, with a possibly more applicable sample. We found significant results for Narcissism and subjective success, which could be built on further in terms of what characteristics exactly causes this relationship. We also found similar findings as previous research in terms of The Dark Triad and CWB, however we found that avoidance motivation significantly moderated this relationship for Machiavellianism. This could be something interesting to explore further. Research should focus on which particular avoidance motivation has an impact. Lastly, approach motivation also significantly moderated the relationship between Machiavellianism and objective success, which is another interesting relationship that should be explored further. It would also be fascinating to find out why the other two traits did not show any significant interactions between both approach and avoidance for success and CWB.

Conclusion

Our research found some significant effects between the Dark Triad traits and work outcomes such as success and CWB. However, we only found moderate evidence to prove the theory that goal achievement motivation moderates these relationships in some form. We did have limitations in this study that could have influenced these results, therefore, it is suggested that the variables should be studied in the future but with a different sample more representative of the variables we are trying to measure.

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Appendix A

Instructions: Please read each statement carefully and decide how much you agree or disagree with that statement. Then, report your response by clicking the button that best corresponds to your level of agreement or disagreement.

	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neither agree or disagree 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5
I know that I am good because everybody keeps telling me so	○	○	○	○	○
I like to be the center of attention	○	○	○	○	○
I think I am a special person	○	○	○	○	○
I like having authority over people	○	○	○	○	○
I find it easy to manipulate people	○	○	○	○	○
I insist upon getting the respect that is due me	○	○	○	○	○
I am apt to show off if I get the chance	○	○	○	○	○
I always know what I am doing	○	○	○	○	○
Everybody likes to hear my stories	○	○	○	○	○
I expect a great deal from other people	○	○	○	○	○
I really like to be the center of attention	○	○	○	○	○
People always seem to recognize my authority	○	○	○	○	○
I am going to be a great person	○	○	○	○	○
I can make anybody believe anything I want them to	○	○	○	○	○
I am more capable than other people	○	○	○	○	○
I am an extraordinary person	○	○	○	○	○

Appendix B

Instructions: Please read each statement carefully and decide how much you agree or disagree with that statement. Then, report your response by clicking the button that best corresponds to your level of agreement or disagreement.

	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neither agree or disagree 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5
Success is based on survival of the fittest; I am not concerned about the losers.	○	○	○	○	○
For me, what's right is whatever I can get away with	○	○	○	○	○
In today's world, I feel justified in doing anything I can get away with to succeed.	○	○	○	○	○
My main purpose in life is getting as many goodies as I can.	○	○	○	○	○
Making a lot of money is my most important goal.	○	○	○	○	○
I let others worry about higher values; my main concern is with the bottom line.	○	○	○	○	○
People who are stupid enough to get ripped off usually deserve it.	○	○	○	○	○
Looking out for myself is my top priority.	○	○	○	○	○
I tell other people what they want to hear so that they will do what I want them to do.	○	○	○	○	○
I would be upset if my success came at someone else's expense.	○	○	○	○	○
I often admire a really clever scam.	○	○	○	○	○
I make a point of trying not to hurt others in pursuit of my goals.	○	○	○	○	○
I enjoy manipulating other people's feelings.	○	○	○	○	○
I feel bad if my words or actions cause someone else to feel emotional pain.	○	○	○	○	○
Even if I were trying very hard to sell something, I wouldn't lie about it.	○	○	○	○	○
Cheating is not justified because it is unfair to others.	○	○	○	○	○

Appendix C

Instructions: Please read each statement carefully and decide how much you agree or disagree with that statement. Then, report your response by clicking the button that best corresponds to your level of agreement or disagreement.

	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neither agree or disagree 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5
Anyone who completely trusts anyone else is asking for trouble.	○	○	○	○	○
It is safest to assume that all people have a vicious streak and it will come out when they are given a chance.	○	○	○	○	○
Generally speaking, people won't work hard unless they're forced to do so.	○	○	○	○	○
It is wise to flatter important people.	○	○	○	○	○
It is hard to get ahead without cutting corners here and there.	○	○	○	○	○
The best way to handle people is to tell them what they want to hear.	○	○	○	○	○
The biggest difference between most criminals and other people is that criminals are stupid enough to get caught.	○	○	○	○	○
Never tell anyone the real reason you did something unless it is useful to do so.	○	○	○	○	○

Appendix D

Instructions: Please read each statement carefully and decide how much you agree or disagree with that statement. Then, report your response by clicking the button that best corresponds to your level of agreement or disagreement.

	Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neither agree or disagree 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5
I am generally very successful	○	○	○	○	○
I do not get promoted as quickly as my colleagues	○	○	○	○	○
I am/was very successful in education	○	○	○	○	○
In education I tended to receive higher marks than my peers	○	○	○	○	○
I am very successful in my line of work	○	○	○	○	○

Appendix E

Below questions refer to how you behave in your current job. Please indicate how often you have done echt of the folowing things at work. The answering option run from 1 = never to 5 = every day. there are no good or right answers. We are interested in your opinion.

How often have you done each of the following things on your present job?

	Never 1	Once or Twice 2	Once or Twice/Month 3	Once or Twice/Week 4	Everyday 5
Purposely wasted your employer's materials/supplies	○	○	○	○	○
Complained about insignificant things at work	○	○	○	○	○
Told people outside the job what a lousy place you work for	○	○	○	○	○
Came to work late without permission	○	○	○	○	○
Stayed home from work and said you were sick when you weren't	○	○	○	○	○
Insulted someone about their job performance	○	○	○	○	○
Made fun of someone's personal life	○	○	○	○	○
Ignored someone at work	○	○	○	○	○
Started an argument with someone at work	○	○	○	○	○
Insulted or made fun of someone at work	○	○	○	○	○

Appendix F

Instructions: Please read each statement carefully and decide how much you agree or disagree with that statement. Then, report your response by clicking the button that best corresponds to your level of agreement or disagreement.

	Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neither agree or disagree 3	Agree 4	Strongly agree 5
I aim to completely master the material presented in my most difficult projects	○	○	○	○	○
I am striving to do well compared to other colleagues.	○	○	○	○	○
My goal is to learn as much as possible.	○	○	○	○	○
My aim is to perform well relative to other colleagues.	○	○	○	○	○
My aim is to avoid learning less than I possibly could.	○	○	○	○	○
My goal is to avoid performing poorly compared to others.	○	○	○	○	○
I am striving to understand the content of my most difficult project/job as thoroughly as possible.	○	○	○	○	○
My goal is to perform better than the other colleagues.	○	○	○	○	○
My goal is to avoid learning less than it is possible to learn.	○	○	○	○	○
I am striving to avoid performing worse than others.	○	○	○	○	○
I am striving to avoid an incomplete understanding of the job.	○	○	○	○	○
My aim is to avoid doing worse than other colleagues.	○	○	○	○	○

Appendix G

Table 2:

Regression Analysis for Objective Success

Model	*b*	Std. Error	B	t	Sig.
(Constant)	.030	.081		.396	.712
Machiavellianism	.166	.088	.166	1.876	.063
Psychopathy	-.066	.090	-.065	-.741	.460
Narcissism	-.105	.092	-.102	-1.137	.257
Approach	.078	.104	.079	.750	.454
Avoidance	-.198	.102	-.195	-1.974	.053
MachXApp	-.233	.116	-.241	-2.009	.046
MachXAvoid	.010	.109	.011	.093	.926
PsychXApp	.096	.119	.101	.800	.425
PsychXAvoid	-.031	.098	-.036	-.315	.753
NarXApp	-.106	.116	-.115	-.916	.366
NarXavoid	.140	.135	.132	1.041	.299

Table 3:

Regression Analysis for Subjective Success

Model	*b*	Std. Error	B	t	Sig.
(Constant)	-.036	.073		-.501	.617
Machiavellianism	-.149	.079	-.149	-1.869	.063
Psychopathy	-.022	.079	-.022	-.275	.783
Narcissism	.400	.081	.400	4.911	<.001
Approach	.216	.093	.216	2.330	.021
Avoidance	-.092	.089	-.092	-1.032	.304
MachXApp	.108	.106	.109	1.015	.312
MachXAvoid	-.069	.098	-.073	-.701	.484
PsychXApp	-.045	.103	-.049	-.440	.661
PsychXAvoid	.113	.086	.132	1.319	.189
NarXApp	.128	.101	.138	1.266	.207
NarXavoid	-.158	.111	-.156	-1.422	.157

Table 4:

Regression Analysis for CWB

Model	*b*	Std. Error	B	t	Sig.
(Constant)	-.014	.072		-.196	.845
Machiavellianism	.179	.079	.179	2.262	.023
Psychopathy	.179	.078	.179	2.289	.025
Narcissism	.076	.081	.076	.930	-.085
Approach	-.088	.093	-.088	-.952	-.271
Avoidance	.139	.089	.139	1.572	-.036
MachXApp	-.178	.106	-.180	-1.675	-.388
MachXAvoid	.252	.098	.269	2.577	.059
PsychXApp	-.108	.103	-.116	-1.048	-.311
PsychXAvoid	.080	.086	.092	.928	-.090
NarXApp	.032	.101	.034	.314	-.168
NarXavoid	.118	.111	.117	1.069	-.100