

Research Paper

The Role of Dark Triad Traits on Humor Styles and Psychological Well Being

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ABSTRACT

The term "Dark Triad" refers to a group of three closely related but different personality traits: Machiavellianism (Mach), which is characterized by manipulation and a focus on self-interest; Narcissism (Nar), characterized by an exaggerated feeling of self-importance; and Psychopathy (Pp), characterized by a lack of empathy and regret. This study aims to investigate the role of Dark Triad Traits (DT) on Humor Styles (HS) and Psychological Well-being (PWB). A total of 402 people across India are taken in this study who are between 20 to 35 years of age range. Data collection was done in both online and offline modes. Participants completed self-report measures, including the Short Dark Triad Scale (SD3); Humor Style Questionnaire (HSQ) and Psychological Wellbeing Scale (PWBS). Data were analyzed using SPSS Version 26 (Trial). Pearson's product moment correlation was used for testing the relationship among variables. Regression analysis was done to predict the impact of DT on HS and PWB. Gender differences were analyzed using t-test. The results revealed distinct relations between DT and HS. Mach was positively correlated with self-enhancing (SEH) and aggressive humor (AGH) but negatively with affiliative humor (AFH). Pp showed significant negative correlations with all dimensions of PWB, while Nar did not exhibit significant correlations with the variables measured. Males scored significantly high in Mach, whereas females scored high in Pp. Further research is needed to understand how DT influence HS and PWB, particularly regarding variations across different cultures and age groups to enhance the depth of psychological and behavioral insights.

Keywords: *Dark Triad, Machiavellianism, Narcissism, Psychopathy, Humor Styles, Psychological Well-being*

The word personality comes from the Latin word "Persona", meaning mask. Back in ancient times, a persona was an actor's mask. Although we typically associate masks with hiding one's identity, theatrical masks were first worn to either project or symbolize a certain character's personality attribute. Allport (1937) defined personality as "the dynamic organization within the individual of those psycho-physical systems that determine his unique adjustments to the environment." APA Dictionary of Psychology

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(2018) states that, “Personality refers to the enduring characteristics and behavior that comprise a person’s unique adjustment to life, including major traits, interests, drives, values, self-concept, abilities, and emotional patterns.” Yet there is a small but important subfield in personality psychology that deals with darker, less positive qualities. The term "Dark Triad" refers to a group of three closely related but different personality traits: psychopathy, which is characterized by a lack of empathy and regret, machiavellianism, which is characterized by manipulation and a focus on self-interest, and narcissism, which is characterized by an exaggerated feeling of self-importance.

Dark Triad Traits

The dark triads consist of three non-pathological personality types: Machiavellianism (manipulative), sub-clinical narcissism Narcissism (self-love) and sub-clinical Psychopathy (lack of empathy). Each of these personality types is called Dark as they exhibit malevolent qualities (Paulhus & Williams, 2002). People that exhibit the dark triad features are willing to take advantage of others, from their closest friends and family to their coworkers, in order to advance in life, and they rarely feel remorse for hurting other people. They are capable of extreme dishonesty and aggression.

- **Machiavellianism:** Machiavellianism is often connected with lying, manipulation, self-interest, lack of feelings, and a lack of morality. They have a genuinely pessimistic outlook on life and are extremely cunning, willing to use whatever means necessary to deceive people in order to achieve their goals. (Frothingham, 2023).
- **Narcissism:** Narcissistic individuals might be self-centered, possessive, empathetic deficits, and easily get offended. In general, narcissists think highly of themselves.
- **Psychopathy:** Antisocial conduct, manipulation, unpredictable actions, a lack of empathy, and a lack of regret are personality traits linked to psychopathy. Psychopathy is considered the most malevolent of the dark triad. (Rauthmann, 2011).

Humor Styles

Humor is a main ingredient of interpersonal relationships. It is not only a source of entertainment but also a coping skill used during difficulties in life, in different awkward situations, and stressful events. The humor styles focus on the individual’s way of using humor in different situations. There are four different humor styles that are a subject of research in Personality Psychology (Martin et al., 2003).

- **Affiliative Humor:** It involves using of humor to foster positive affect, cooperation, and interpersonal connections. One of the main advantages of the affiliative humor is its ability to settle disputes.
- **Self-Enhancing Humor:** Self-enhancing humor is a powerful tool for boosting psychological wellbeing and coping stress. It involves the use of humor to maintain positive perspective towards the challenges faced. By finding humor in adverse situations and laughing at it to cope with the stressors helps to improve overall wellbeing.
- **Aggressive Humor:** Aggressive humor involves putting down or insulting people, targeting towards other individuals and not self. It might appear as rude jokes, insults, or sarcasm.
- **Self-Defeating Humor:** Self-defeating humor is when you make jokes or remarks that make fun of yourself or expose your flaws. You encourage a negative view of yourself when you make comments about yourself or speak negatively about yourself.

Psychological Well-Being

Psychological well-being is "a state of mind in which an individual is able to develop their potential, work productively and creatively, and is able to cope with the normal stresses of life," according to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2021).

Ryff identified six key dimensions that contribute to a person's overall sense of well-being (Ryff, 1989):

- **Self-Acceptance:** This dimension reflects a positive attitude towards oneself, including both strengths and weaknesses. It involves accepting your past experiences and feeling good about oneself.
- **Purpose of Life:** This dimension emphasizes having a sense of meaning and direction in life, feeling like your life has a goal or purpose beyond yourself.
- **Environmental Mastery:** This dimension focuses on the feeling of being in control of your life and having the ability to manage your environment to suit your needs and goals.
- **Positive Relation with Others:** This dimension highlights the importance of nurturing strong, supportive, and fulfilling relationships with others.
- **Personal Growth:** This dimension emphasizes the ongoing desire for learning, self-discovery, and striving to become a better person.
- **Autonomy:** This dimension reflects a sense of self-directedness and the ability to make independent choices based on one's values, even if they differ from societal norms.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Dark Triad Traits and Humor Styles

The relationship between Dark Triad traits and humor styles has been a focus of multiple studies. Veselka et al. (2010) found that individuals with higher levels of psychopathy and Machiavellianism were more likely to use negative humor styles, while those scoring higher on narcissism preferred affiliative humor. Martin et al. (2012) confirmed these findings, further demonstrating that narcissism correlated positively with both affiliative and aggressive humor. Subsequent studies by Knight (2015), Lobbestael and Freund (2021), and Yankov (2022) expanded on these results, highlighting psychopathy's consistent association with aggressive and self-defeating humor, while narcissism showed a broader connection to multiple humor styles, including positive forms like affiliative humor, and negative forms such as aggressive humor. Overall, these studies underscore the significant interplay between the Dark Triad traits and the diverse humor styles individuals employ.

Dark Triad Traits and Psychological Wellbeing

The relationship between the Dark Triad traits and psychological well-being has been extensively studied, revealing consistent patterns. Love and Holder (2014) found that psychopathy negatively correlates with various aspects of well-being, a finding echoed in later studies such as Aghababaei and Błachnio (2015) and Saltoğlu & Uysal Irak (2020), where psychopathy was consistently linked to lower well-being. Machiavellianism generally showed little to no significant relationship with well-being, as seen in Aghababaei and Błachnio (2015) and Stavradi et al. (2022), although some studies indicated a negative correlation similar to psychopathy (Joshani, 2021; Blasco-Belled et al., 2023). In contrast, narcissism was consistently associated with positive well-being, particularly in studies like Groningen et al. (2021) and Stavradi et al. (2022), where narcissism positively correlated

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with various well-being components, suggesting that certain aspects of narcissism might contribute to psychological resilience and satisfaction.

Humor Styles and Psychological Wellbeing

According to previous research, Self-defeating humour correlates poorly with psychological well-being, but affiliative and self-enhancing humour are favourably connected with well-being. Martin et al. (2003) found that affiliative and self-enhancing humor positively correlated with the Ryff well-being measures, whereas self-defeating humor showed an opposite trend. Kuiper & McHale (2009), along with Cann and Collette (2014), emphasized that self-enhancing humor is particularly beneficial for well-being, fostering social support and reducing psychological distress. Subsequent studies by Sirigatti et al. (2014) and Maiolino and Kuiper (2016) further confirmed that affiliative and self-enhancing humor are linked to higher well-being levels, while aggressive and self-defeating humor are associated with lower well-being. These findings highlight the significant role of positive humor styles in promoting psychological well-being across different contexts and populations.

Dark Triad Traits, Humor Styles and Psychological Wellbeing

Aghli, Ahi & Mansouri (2018) studied the role of Dark Triad of Personality in predicting Psychological Well Being and Humor styles in nurses of Iran. The result of multiple regression analysis showed significant relationship between dark triad of personality with psychological well-being and humor styles. Among the dark triad, machiavellianism and narcissism predicted psychological well-being ($p < 0.05$). Also, dark triad of personality predicted humor styles in nurses ($p < 0.05$). This led to the conclusion that the Dark Triad personality type has a major impact on humour styles and psychological health, and that all three are somehow related to one another.

METHODOLOGY

Aim

To study the effect of Dark Triad traits on humor styles and psychological well-being.

Objectives

1. To examine the relationship between Dark Triad traits, Humor Styles, and Psychological Well-Being.
2. To examine the effect of Dark Triad traits on Humor Styles and Psychological Well-Being.
3. To compare the difference between males and females in terms of Dark Triad traits, Humor Styles and Psychological Well-Being.

Sample

A total of 404 participants responded to the Google form link; out of these, 2 participants submitted incomplete responses. A total of 402 samples were included in the study who were between 20 to 35 years of age range, proficient in English and belonged to different states of India. More number of females (56%) took part in the study as compared to number of males (44%). And around 74% of the total samples were between the age of 20-25 years. The sample also comprised of participants from diverse educational backgrounds, with the majority (59.7%) having completed graduation. Most participants (63.4%) resided in urban areas, and a significant portion (72.4%) belonged to nuclear families. Additionally, 47.5% of participants were from an upper-middle socioeconomic status, and the largest birth order category was the oldest child, representing 39.6% of the sample.

Instruments

Three measures were used in this study,

- 1. Dark Triad Traits:** The Short Dark Triad Scale (SD3) by Jones & Paulhus (2014) consists of 27 items, with 9 items each assessing Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy. Respondents rate each item on a 5-point Likert scale with Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Neither agree or disagree (3), Agree (4) and Strongly Agree (5) respectively. Reverse scoring is done for 5 items. A high score on any subscale suggests a greater propensity toward that particular dark trait. The SD3 provides efficient, reliable, and valid measures of the Dark Triad of personalities. The overall scores had a test-retest reliability of .90, compared to a Cronbach's alpha of .85. And for narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy, the SD3 validities were .42, .34, and .57, respectively.
- 2. Humor Styles:** The 32-item Humor Style Questionnaire (HSQ) by Martin et al. (2003) is rated on a 7-point Likert scale with Totally Disagree (1), Moderately Disagree (2), Slightly disagree (3), Neither agree or disagree (4), Slightly Agree (5), Moderately Agree (6) and Totally Agree (7) respectively. Reverse scoring to be done in 11 items. The 4 subscales are Affiliative humor, Self-enhancing humor, Aggressive humor and Self-defeating humor with 8 items each. The Cronbach's alpha was good for all 4 subscales, namely, affiliative humor, self-enhancing humor, aggressive humor and self-defeating humor. α ranged from 0.79 to 0.86. The divergent validity of scores on the HSQ were generally satisfactory. Each humor style is interpreted based on the total score for that particular style. Higher scores indicate a stronger endorsement of that humor style, while lower scores suggest less frequent use of that style.
- 3. Psychological Well-Being:** The 18-item Psychological Well-being Scale (PWBS) by Ryff & Keyes (1995) is rated on a 7-point Likert scale with strongly agree (1), somewhat agree (2), little agree (3), neither agree or disagree (4), a little disagree (5), somewhat disagree (6) and strongly disagree (7). Reverse scoring to be done in 10 items. The PWB Scale has six subscales: Autonomy, Environmental Mastery, Personal Growth, Positive Relations with Others, Purpose in Life and Self-Acceptance with 3 items in each subscale. Sum respondents' answers to each subscale's items to calculate subscale scores for each participant. Higher scores mean higher levels of psychological well-being. The Cronbach's alpha was 0.88 with aggregated subscale alphas of 0.72 – 0.88, except 0.57 for Autonomy. Good construct validity and criterion related validity of short-form PWBS were found.

Procedure

Both online and offline data collection for the study were conducted using the survey approach. The convenience sampling strategy was used to gather data. Online Google Form of the questionnaires was circulated through email and social media platforms like WhatsApp and LinkedIn. Offline data was collected from colleges. Participants were briefed about the study. Informed consent was obtained from all the participants. They were assured that their participation is voluntary and they could withdraw at any point and no monetary incentives would be offered. The basic socio-demographic details such as age, gender, birth order, family type, educational qualification and socio-economic status was collected. The participants were thanked for their contribution. Researcher's email address was provided for queries to be addressed. Further, statistical analysis including descriptives, Pearson's product moment correlation and stepwise linear regression analysis was performed, using SPSS (version 26).

RESULTS

Table-1: Descriptive Statistics and Correlations of all the variables of DT, HS and PWB

Parameter s	Mean	Standard Deviation	Correlation													
			Mach	Nar	Pp	AFH	SEH	AGH	ADH	SA	PL	EM	PRO	PG	AU	
Mach	29.34	4.92	1													
Nar	27.53	3.02	.220**	1												
Pp	27.91	3.34	.223**	0.040	1											
AFH	39.21	7.23	-.121*	0.008	0.010	1										
SEH	36.31	7.29	.138**	0.082	0.019	.255**	1									
AGH	25.86	7.49	.157**	0.014	.108*	0.050	-.045	1								
SDH	29.98	8.99	.188**	0.075	0.067	0.038	.165**	.393**	1							
SA	15.08	3.84	-.031	0.090	-.038	.168**	.243**	-.182**	.225**	1						
PL	13.93	3.61	-.088	0.067	0.059	.174**	-.020	.180**	.222**	.200**	1					
EM	14.2	3.42	-.094	0.037	-.120*	.149**	.338**	-.175**	.170**	.555**	0.077	1				
PRO	13.22	3.7	-.193**	0.033	-.159**	.307**	.195**	.252**	.236**	.290**	.189**	.316**	1			
PG	16.97	3.16	-.063	0.021	-.027	.309**	.278**	-.272**	.192**	.348**	.280**	.381**	.287**	1		
AU	14.65	3.4	0.041	-.085	0.007	.174**	.237**	-.167**	.206**	.244**	.102*	.269**	.126*	.343**	1	

Mach- Machiavellianism; Nar- Narcissism; Pp- Psychopathy; AFH- Affiliative Humor; SEH- Self Enhancing Humor; AGH- Aggressive Humor; SDH- Self Defeating Humor; SA- Social Acceptance; PL- Purpose of Life; EM- Environmental Mastery; PRO- Personal Relations with Others; PG- Personal Growth; AU- Autonomy.

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

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

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) and correlation coefficients for the DT, HS and PWB dimensions. Significant correlations are highlighted, indicating relationships between these variables.

In the DT, the three dimensions, Mach, Nar and P exhibited mean scores of 29.34, 27.53 and 27.91 respectively with the corresponding standard deviations of 4.92, 3.02, and 3.34. Additionally, the dimensions of HS including AFH (Mean=39.21, SD=7.23); SEH (Mean=36.31, SD=7.29); AGH (Mean=25.86, SD=7.49); and SDH (Mean=29.98, SD=8.99) and Dimensions of PWB including SA (Mean=15.08, SD=3.84); PL (Mean=13.93, SD=3.61); EM (Mean=14.20, SD=3.42); PRO (Mean=13.22, SD=3.70); PG (Mean=16.97, SD=3.16); and AU (Mean=14.65, SD=3.40) were assessed.

The correlation analysis reveals several significant relationships: Machiavellianism (Mach) shows a significant negative correlation with AFH ($r = -.121^*$). However, Mach is positively correlated with SEH ($r = .138^{**}$), AGH ($r = .157^{**}$), and SDH ($r = .188^{**}$), all at the $p < 0.01$ level. Psychopathy (Pp) is significantly negatively correlated with AGH ($r = -.193^{**}$). Additionally, Mach has a negative correlation with PRO ($r = -.193^{**}$), while Pp is negatively correlated with EM ($r = -.120^*$) and PRO ($r = -.159^{**}$), at $p < 0.05$ and $p < 0.01$, respectively. Affiliative Humor (AFH) is significantly and positively correlated with all dimensions of Psychological Well-Being (PWB) at the 0.01 level. The Pearson’s correlation coefficients for AFH with the dimensions are as follows: SA ($r = .168^{**}$), PL ($r = .174^{**}$), EM ($r = .149^{**}$), PRO ($r = .307^{**}$), PG ($r = .309^{**}$), and AU ($r = .174^{**}$). Self-Enhancing Humor (SEH) also has significant positive correlations with several dimensions of PWB: SA ($r = .243^{**}$), EM ($r = .338^{**}$), PRO ($r = .195^{**}$), PG ($r = .278^{**}$), and AU ($r = .237^{**}$).

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Aggressive Humor (AGH) is significantly negatively correlated with all dimensions of PWB— SA, PL, EM, PRO, PG, and AU—all statistically significant at the 0.01 level. Similarly, Self-Defeating Humor (SDH) shows a significant negative correlation with all dimensions of PWB. The Pearson’s correlation coefficients for SDH with the dimensions are: SA ($r = -.225^{**}$), PL ($r = -.222^{**}$), EM ($r = -.170^{**}$), PRO ($r = -.236^{**}$), PG ($r = -.192^{**}$), and AU ($r = -.206^{**}$), all statistically significant at the 0.01 level. These findings highlight the complex relationships between humor styles, Dark Triad traits, and various dimensions of psychological well-being.

Stepwise linear regression among Dark Triad Traits, Humor Styles and Psychological Well-Being

To find out the impact of DT on HS and PWB, Stepwise linear regression was performed. This statistical analysis enabled to infer about the impact of DT (Mach, Nar and Pp) on HS (AFH, SEH, AGH and SDH) and PWB (SA, PL, EM, PRO, PG and AU).

Impact of Machiavellianism on HS and PWB

Table-2: Model Summary & ANOVA of Machiavellianism predicting HS and PWB

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	.193 ^a	0.037	0.035	362.736	362.736	15.545	<.001 ^b
2	.264 ^b	0.07	0.065	674.169	337.084	14.907	<.001 ^c
3	.286 ^c	0.082	0.075	793.213	264.404	11.82	<.001 ^d
4	.311 ^d	0.097	0.087	936.043	234.011	10.605	<.001 ^e

a. Predictors: (Constant), Positive Relation with others

b. Predictors: (Constant), Positive Relation with others, Self-enhancing Humor

c. Predictors: (Constant), Positive Relation with others, Self-enhancing Humor, Aggressive Humor

d. Predictors: (Constant), Positive Relation with others, Self-enhancing Humor, Aggressive Humor, Affiliative Humor

Table-3: ANOVA^a (Machiavellianism Scores)

Model	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	362.736	362.736	15.545	<.001 ^b
2	674.169	337.084	14.907	<.001 ^c
3	793.213	264.404	11.82	<.001 ^d
4	936.043	234.011	10.605	<.001 ^e

a. Dependent Variable: Machiavellianism

b. Predictors: (Constant), Positive Relation with others

c. Predictors: (Constant), Positive Relation with others, Self-enhancing Humor

d. Predictors: (Constant), Positive Relation with others, Self-enhancing Humor, Aggressive Humor

e. Predictors: (Constant), Positive Relation with others, Self-enhancing Humor, Aggressive Humor, Affiliative Humor

Table-4: Coefficients for predicting Machiavellianism Scores

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	32.739	0.895		36.585	<.001
	PRO	-0.257	0.065	-0.193	-3.943	<.001
2	(Constant)	28.888	1.361		21.224	<.001
	PRO	-0.304	0.065	-0.229	-4.651	<.001
	SEH	0.123	0.033	0.183	3.711	<.001
3	(Constant)	26.447	1.718		15.392	<.001
	PRO	-0.266	0.067	-0.2	-3.958	<.001
	SEH	0.123	0.033	0.182	3.722	<.001
	AGH	0.075	0.033	0.115	2.307	0.022
4	(Constant)	28.309	1.857		15.246	<.001
	PRO	-0.213	0.07	-0.16	-3.048	0.002
	SEH	0.141	0.034	0.209	4.198	<.001
	AGH	0.087	0.033	0.132	2.657	0.008
	AFH	-0.09	0.035	-0.132	-2.544	0.011

a. Dependent Variable: Machiavellianism

PRO- Positive Relation with others, SEH- Self-enhancing Humor, AGH- Aggressive Humor, AFH- Affiliative Humor

In the analysis Significant model emerged for HS and PWB (Table-2, 3 and 4). According to the Model 1, Mach emerged as a predictor of PRO, explaining 3.7% of its variance. As additional variables were included, Mach's explanatory power increased: it accounted for 7% of the variance when predicting both PRO and SEH (Model 2),. For Model 3, 8.2% variance was reported when AGH was included. In Model 4, approximately 9.7% variance was reported when predicting PRO, SEH, AGH, and AFH. All models show a significant F-value (<.001). The negative coefficients of PRO across all models indicate that it is associated with lower Machiavellianism scores. The coefficient becomes less negative as more variables are added, suggesting some shared variance with other types of humor. SEH and AGH are positively associated with Mach, which means people with higher scores in Mach are likely to use SEH and AGH more. But AFH shows a negative association with Mach. Despite significant models and predictors, the overall explained variance remains under 10%, indicating other unexplored factors likely play substantial roles in determining Machiavellianism.

Impact of Narcissism on HS and PWB

Table-5: Model Summary & ANOVA of Narcissism predicting HS and PWB

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	.196 ^a	0.038	0.014	139.604	13.96	1.555	.118 ^b

a. Predictors: (Constant), Autonomy, Purpose of Life, Positive Relation with others, Self-enhancing Humor, Aggressive Humor, Self-Acceptance, Affiliative Humor, Self-defeating Humor, Personal Growth, Environmental Mastery

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Table-6: ANOVA^a (Narcissism Scores)

Model	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	139.604	13.96	1.555	.118 ^b

a. Dependent Variable: Narcissism

b. Predictors: (Constant), Autonomy, Purpose of Life, Positive Relation with others, Self-enhancing Humor, Aggressive Humor, Self-Acceptance, Affiliative Humor, Self-defeating Humor, Personal Growth, Environmental Mastery

Table-7: Coefficients for predicting Narcissism Scores

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	26.646	1.556		17.128	<.001
	AFH	-0.015	0.023	-0.035	-0.625	0.532
	SEH	0.028	0.024	0.067	1.159	0.247
	AGH	-0.001	0.023	-0.002	-0.028	0.978
	SDH	0.022	0.02	0.065	1.104	0.27
	SA	0.103	0.049	0.131	2.105	0.036
	PL	-0.063	0.045	-0.076	-1.409	0.16
	EM	-0.029	0.057	-0.033	-0.508	0.612
	PRO	0.028	0.047	0.034	0.599	0.55
	PG	0.042	0.058	0.044	0.713	0.476
	AU	-0.103	0.049	-0.117	-2.115	0.035

a. Dependent Variable: Narcissism

AFH- Affiliative Humor, SEH- Self-enhancing Humor, AGH- Aggressive Humor, SDH- Self-defeating Humor, SA- Self-Acceptance, PL- Purpose of Life, EM- Environmental Mastery, PRO- Positive Relation with others, PG- Personal Growth, AU- Autonomy

Model tested in stepwise linear regression analysis included Narcissism of DT as predictor for four variables of HS and six variables of PWB

The analysis (Table-5, 6 and 7) revealed that Narcissism serves as a predictor for all dimensions of Humor Styles (HS) and Psychological Well-Being (PWB). However, the model explained only 3.8% of the variance in narcissism (Adjusted R square = 0.014), indicating a low explanatory power. This suggests that the predictors collectively do not significantly account for variations in narcissism. Notably, Self-Acceptance (SA) was positively associated with narcissism, while Autonomy (AU) was negatively associated, showing significant effects on narcissism.

Impact of Psychopathy on HS and PWB

Table-8: Summary of Regression analysis predicting Psychopathy Scores

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	.159 ^a	0.025	0.023	113.647	113.647	10.407	.001 ^b
2	.219 ^b	0.048	0.024	214.556	21.456	1.966	.036 ^c

a. Predictors: (Constant), Positive Relation with others

b. Predictors: (Constant), Positive Relation with others, Autonomy, Purpose of Life, Self-enhancing Humor, Aggressive Humor, Self-Acceptance, Affiliative Humor, Self-defeating Humor, Personal Growth, Environmental Mastery

Table-9: ANOVA^a (Psychopathy Scores)

Model	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	113.647	113.647	10.407	.001 ^b
2	214.556	21.456	1.966	.036 ^c

a. Dependent Variable: Psychopathy

b. Predictors: (Constant), Positive Relation with others

c. Predictors: (Constant), Positive Relation with others, Autonomy, Purpose of Life, Self-enhancing Humor, Aggressive Humor, Self-Acceptance, Affiliative Humor, Self-defeating Humor, Personal Growth, Environmental Mastery

Table-10: Coefficients for predicting Psychopathy Scores

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	29.815	0.612		48.702	<.001
	PRO	-0.144	0.045	-0.159	-3.226	0.001
2	(Constant)	27.939	1.715		16.289	<.001
	PRO	-0.133	0.052	-0.147	-2.582	0.01
	AFH	0.018	0.026	0.039	0.69	0.491
	SEH	0.026	0.026	0.058	1.008	0.314
	AGH	0.032	0.025	0.071	1.26	0.208
	SDH	-0.005	0.022	-0.013	-0.229	0.819
	SA	0.052	0.054	0.06	0.965	0.335
2	PL	-0.038	0.05	-0.041	-0.77	0.442
	EM	-0.138	0.062	-0.141	-2.206	0.028
	PG	0.041	0.064	0.039	0.64	0.522
	AU	0.028	0.054	0.028	0.514	0.608

a. Dependent Variable: Psychopathy

AFH- Affiliative Humor, SEH- Self-enhancing Humor, AGH- Aggressive Humor, SDH- Self-defeating Humor, SA- Self-Acceptance, PL- Purpose of Life, EM- Environmental Mastery, PRO- Positive Relation with others, PG- Personal Growth, AU- Autonomy

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Model tested in stepwise linear regression analysis included Psychopathy of DT as predictor for four variables of HS and six variables of PWB

The regression analysis revealed that Positive Relations with Others (PRO) significantly predicts lower Psychopathy in both models, with Model 1 explaining 2.5% of the variance (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.023$) and Model 2, which includes additional predictors, explaining 4.8% (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.024$). While PRO remains a significant negative predictor in both models, none of the additional variables in Model 2, including all the humor styles, AU, and EM, significantly predict Psychopathy, except for EM, which has a small but significant negative effect. Overall, the models have low explanatory power, with significant predictors offering minimal variance explanation.

Comparison between Males and Females in terms of Dark Triad Traits, Humor Styles and Psychological Well-being

Table-11: A comparison between males and females in terms of Dark Triad traits, Humor Styles and Psychological Well-Being

Variables	Mean (M)		Standard Deviation (SD)		t	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Male (177)	Female (225)	Male (177)	Female (225)		
Mach	30.299	28.587	4.692	4.969	3.516	<.001
Nar	27.678	27.409	2.934	3.082	0.887	0.375
Pp	27.429	28.293	3.136	3.457	-2.59	0.01
AFH	38.961	39.400	7.613	6.919	-0.605	0.546
SEH	37.158	35.640	7.379	7.161	2.082	0.038
AGH	27.441	24.622	7.582	7.198	3.807	<.001
SDH	32.153	28.276	8.488	9.028	4.388	<.001
SA	14.881	15.236	3.878	3.820	-0.917	0.36
PL	13.819	14.009	3.510	3.689	-0.523	0.601
EM	14.277	14.147	3.493	3.370	0.378	0.705
PRO	12.966	13.427	3.629	3.753	-1.239	0.216
PG	16.972	16.964	3.199	3.138	0.023	0.982
AU	14.525	14.756	3.293	3.483	-0.674	0.501

Note: Mach- Machiavellianism; Nar- Narcissism; Pp- Psychopathy; AFH- Affiliative Humor; SEH- Self Enhancing Humor; AGH- Aggressive Humor; SDH- Self Defeating Humor; SA- Social Acceptance; PL- Purpose of Life; EM- Environmental Mastery; PRO- Personal Relations with Others; PG- Personal Growth; AU- Autonomy.

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The results of t-test showed distinct variations between males and females. Males exhibited significantly higher scores on Mach ($M = 30.299$) compared to females ($M = 28.587$, $p < .001$), whereas females ($M = 28.293$) scored significantly higher on Pp than males ($M = 27.429$, $p = 0.01$). No significant differences were found in Nar scores between genders. Regarding HS, males significantly outscored females in SEH ($p = 0.038$), AGH ($p < .001$), and SDH ($p < .001$), but no significant gender differences were observed in AFH. On the other hand, no significant gender difference was found on any dimensions of PWB.

DISCUSSION

This study was done to explore how Dark Triad traits (DT) relate to Humor Styles (HS) and Psychological Well-Being (PWB). While past researches have often looked at these traits separately or only focused on one or two dimensions, leaving a gap in comprehensively understanding their interconnectedness. The present study aimed to better understand how these personality traits influence humor and well-being. It uncovers complex relationships among DT, HS, and PWB, revealing both similarities and contradictions with previous research.

The results obtained in the present study found Machiavellianism to have a significant positive correlation with Self-enhancing Humor, suggesting that individuals high in Machiavellian traits may use humor strategically to elevate their status or charm others, aligning with their manipulative tendencies. However, this finding contrasts with previous research by Martin et al. (2012), which reported a negative correlation between subfactors of Machiavellianism and Self-enhancing Humor. Additionally, Machiavellianism negatively correlates with Positive Relations with Others, consistent with its traits of distrust and exploitation. This negative association with well-being is supported by Joshanloo (2021), who found that Machiavellianism negatively predicts well-being, as individuals high in these traits prioritize their own gains over the well-being of others.

Psychopathy, characterized by lack of empathy and impulsivity, positively correlates with Aggressive Humor, aligning with findings from Veselka et al. (2010), who observed a greater tendency for those with psychopathic traits to use negative humor styles like Aggressive and Self-defeating Humor. Furthermore, Environmental Mastery and Positive Relations with Others, dimensions of PWB, were negatively correlated with Psychopathy, echoing findings from Love and Holder (2014), which also highlighted the detrimental impact of psychopathy on psychological well-being.

The study further reveals a strong positive correlation between Affiliative Humor and all dimensions of Psychological Well-Being. Affiliative Humor, which fosters good relationships and reduces social stress, is associated with better mood states, higher self-esteem, and a greater sense of control, leading to improved life satisfaction. This supports findings by Kuiper et al. (2009). However, Sirigatti et al. (2014) noted that while Affiliative Humor showed weaker correlations with Psychological Well-Being in adolescents, it was positively connected with all PWB dimensions in young adults. Conversely, both Aggressive and Self-defeating Humor were negatively correlated with Psychological Well-Being, consistent with findings by Maiolino and Kuiper (2016).

Regression analysis further explains these relationships, particularly the link between Machiavellianism and humor styles. Machiavellianism positively aligns with both Self-enhancing and Aggressive Humor, as corroborated by Dhanabhakya & Sarath (2023), who found positive correlations between negative humor styles and Machiavellianism. However,

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the negative correlation between Self-enhancing Humor and Machiavellianism in their study contradicts the present findings. Affiliative Humor, which promotes inclusivity and strengthens social bonds, shows a negative association with Machiavellianism, likely because it does not serve the manipulative agendas typical of Machiavellian behavior.

Narcissism predicts Social Acceptance positively, as narcissists often seek and receive admiration and validation, reinforcing their self-perception. However, it negatively correlates with Autonomy, as narcissists may rely heavily on external validation rather than self-directed values or goals. Stavradi et al. (2022) found that narcissism was positively related to all PWB subscales, suggesting that subclinical levels of narcissism may not disrupt psychological positive functioning. In the current study, however, significant predictions were found only for Self-Acceptance and Autonomy in PWB.

Psychopathy, on the other hand, shows a significant negative prediction with Environmental Mastery, a dimension of PWB. Psychopathy's negative impact on well-being is consistent with findings from multiple studies, including those by Joshanloo (2021), Stavradi et al. (2022), and Blasco-Belled et al. (2023). Individuals with high psychopathy often struggle to manage and adapt to their environments due to unstable relationships and disregard for societal norms, leading to poor Environmental Mastery and an impaired ability to engage successfully with the world.

Lastly, gender differences were observed in the expression of DT traits. Males were found to have higher levels of Machiavellianism, suggesting a greater tendency toward manipulation and self-interest. Conversely, females scored higher on psychopathy, indicating more impulsive behavior and emotional detachment. These findings align with Jonason and Davis (2018), who reported lower levels of psychopathy and Machiavellianism in femininity, partially supporting the current study's results. However, Aluja et al. (2022) found that men scored higher on all three DT traits across most cultures, suggesting that gender differences exist in these traits may vary based on cultural context. The present study did not find significant gender differences in Narcissism, highlighting the complexity and variability in how these traits are expressed across genders.

CONCLUSION

The study explored the relationship between the dark triad personality traits—Machiavellianism, Narcissism, and Psychopathy—and various humor styles, alongside their impact on psychological well-being. Findings indicate that Machiavellianism is positively associated with Self-enhancing and Aggressive Humor, likely due to these humor styles aligning with manipulative tactics and self-promotion. However, Affiliative Humor, which nurtures social bonds, shows a negative association with Machiavellianism. Narcissism correlates positively with Social Acceptance but negatively with Autonomy, reflecting a reliance on external validation over self-sufficiency. Psychopathy's negative correlation with Environmental Mastery suggests difficulties in managing life effectively due to unstable interpersonal relationships and norm defiance. Overall, the study highlights how dark triad traits influence personal humor styles and by extension, psychological well-being, shedding light on the complex interplay between personality, humor, and mental health.

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Conflict of Interest

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