DARK TRIAD CHARACTERISTICS AMONG STUDENTS OF MANAGEMENT AND TEACHING DISCIPLINES

Marianna Berinšterová[1], Miroslava Bozogáňová[1], & Tatiana Pethö[2]

[1]*Institute of Pedagogy, Andragogy and Psychology, Faculty of Humanities and Natural Sciences, University of Prešov, (Slovakia)*
[2]*Institute of Social Sciences of the Centre of Social and Psychological Sciences SAS (Slovakia)*

Abstract

Professions with increased demands on personal qualities include teachers and managers. The aim of the contribution was to explore professional and gender differences in personality among managers and students of teaching disciplines.

The sample consisted of 585 participants (34.9% of men; Mage=20,07, SD=1.848). Students of the University of Presov participated in the research in spring 2020; 27.5% students of teaching disciplines and 72.5% students of management. Personal qualities were explored by Dark Triad Questionnaire (Jones, Paulhus, 2014), which consists of three factors - Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy.

Multivariate analysis of variance (gender, field of study, gender x field of study) was conducted to compare the factors of personality qualities. Using Pillai's trace, there was significant effect of gender, $V = .060$, $(F(3, 579) = 12.344, p < .001)$; field of study, $V = .045$, $(F(3, 579) = 9.048, p < .001)$. There was no significant effect of interaction of gender x field of study $V = .007$, $(F(3, 579) = 1.360, p = .254)$. The higher level of Machiavellianism, narcissism and psychopathy were found among men and among managers.

The results point to the need to develop students' personality in professions where there are demands in terms of interpersonal relationships, as well as the need to include psychological tests in the entrance exams.

Keywords: *Personality, dark triad, university students, teachers, managers.*

1. Theoretical background

Nowadays, the need for personal training of students of professions with increased demands for interpersonal functioning is growing. People management is one of the key competencies of managers and teachers. Their personal qualities are directly linked to job success and satisfaction (Binti Rusbadrol, Mahmud, & Arif, 2015; Perera, Granziera & McIlveen, 2018; Mahlamäki, Rintamäki & Rajah, 2019). Personality of teachers has an effect on students' intrinsic motivation (Khalilzadeh & Khodi, 2021). Personality of managers is linked with employees' emotional and organizational commitment (Abedi, Mahali, Mirzaian & Ghara, 2009). Personality becomes a working tool, and its knowledge should be also crucial for vocational training.

One of the ways to track the negative aspects of a personality is the Dark Triad concept. The authors of the concept are Jones and Paulhus (2011). The Dark Triad consists of Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy. The individual personality characteristics overlap empirically and each of them predicts self-promotion, emotional coldness and aggression. The common core of individual personality characteristics is associated with the fact that individuals are indifferent to the damage they cause to others in achieving their own goals. All personality characteristics of the Dark Triad include selfishness, emotional coldness and manipulation (Furtner, Maran, Rauthmann 2017).

The authors Christi and Geis (1970) feature Machiavellianism as a cynical worldview, lack of morality and manipulation. Machiavellians plan ahead, form alliances, and do their best to create the best possible image in society (Jones, Paulhus 2014). According to researcher Lykken (1995), personality traits are characterized by two key traits - lack of emotions (numbness) and self-control (impulsivity).

The personality trait of psychopathy is manifested by numbness in the short term (Jones, Paulhus, 2011). According to Spain et al. (2014) defined as impulsivity and the search for excitement combined with low empathy and anxiety. Psychopathy has two key elements: affect deficit (callousness) and self-control deficit (impulsivity).

Personality trait narcissism can be defined as the intersection between grandiose identity and basic uncertainty. Narcissistic behavior is also associated with narcissism itself (Jones, Paulhus 2014). The narcissistic personality is characterized by grandeur, a sense of legitimacy and, last but not least, a lack of empathy (Cohen, 2016). Wu and Lebreton (2011) point to a sign of narcissism, where narcissists tend to perceive themselves as victims, believe in interpersonal interactions that this is a negative intent, and are particularly sensitive to interpersonal interactions.

The aim of the contribution is to explore professional and gender differences in negative personality characteristics among managers and students of teaching disciplines in Slovakia. Gender differences in Dark Triad variables were also confirmed (Jonason, Davis, 2018; Szabó, Jones, 2019). Among students, differences in Dark Triad variables were found in relation to the choice of profession (Čopková, 2020). Research on the sample of students of management and teaching was selected due to the issue of psychological and personal training of these professions.

2. Methods

Research sample consisted of 585 participants (34.9% of men; Mage=20.07, SD=1.848). Students of The University of Presov in Slovakia participated in the research. Among students of teaching disciplines (N=161; 27.5%), there were 112 women (69.5%). Among managers there were 296 (61.8%) women.

Students of The University of Presov participated in the research in spring 2020. Data collection took place during the lessons.

Personality characteristics were explored by the Dark Triad Questionnaire (Jones, Paulhus, 2014), which consists of three factors - Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy. Each dimension is measured by 10 items and assessed on a five-point Lickert scale. Cronbach alpha values are satisfactory: all items (Cronbach α = 0.816), Machiavellianism (Cronbachova α = 0.663), narcissism (Cronbachova α = 0.640) a psychopathy (Cronbach α = 0.611). Item examples: "It is not wise to divulge your secrets."; "It is necessary to get important people on your side at all costs".

Multivariate analysis of variance (gender, field of study, gender x field of study) was conducted to compare the factors of personal qualities. The software IBM SPSS Statistics was used for analysis.

3. Results

Table 1. Descriptive analysis of Dark Triad among managers and teacher students.

	Gender	Profession	M	SD
Machiavellianism	male	teacher	31.429	4.528
		manager	33.755	5.634
	female	teacher	30.286	4.896
		manager	30.981	4.805
narcissism	male	teacher	27.714	4.628
		manager	30.361	4.982
	female	teacher	26.554	5.088
		manager	27.781	4.848
psychopathy	male	teacher	22.082	5.028
		manager	25.452	5.561
	female	teacher	19.804	5.764
		manager	21.502	5.773

In all dimensions of Dark Triad, students of management and men scored higher (Table 1). The highest level of variable was reached in Machiavellianism among man, managers and the lowest level in psychopathy among women. Machiavellianism was the most manifested variable, followed by narcissism and psychopathy.

Table 2. Multivariate analysis of variance (gender).

	Pillai's trace	F	df	sig.	Gender	M	SE	99.9% confidence Interval	
								lower bound	upper bound
Machiavellianism					male	32.592	0.232	31.782	33.402
					female	30,634	0.283	30.078	31.189
narcissism	0,6	12.344	3.000	0.001	male	29.038	0.403	28.247	29.828
					female	27.167	0.276	26.625	27.710
psychopathy					male	23.767	0.464	22.856	24.667
					female	20.653	0.318	20.028	21.277

Using Pillai's trace, there was significant effect of gender (Table 2; V = .060, (F(3. 579) = 12.344, p < .001). The higher level of all Dark Triad variables was found among men.

Table 3. Multivariate analysis of variance (field of study).

	Pillai's trace	F	df	sig.	Field of study	M	SE	99.9% Confidence Interval	
								lower bound	upper bound
Machiavellianism					teachers	30.857	0.431	30.010	31.704
					managers	32.368	0.254	31.870	32.867
narcissism	0,6	9.048	8.000	0.001	teachers	27.134	0.421	26.308	27.960
					manager	29.071	0.248	28.584	29.557
psychopathy					teachers	20.943	0.484	19.991	21.894
					managers	23.477	0.285	22.916	24.037

Using Pillai's trace, there was significant effect of field of study (Table 3; V = .045, (F(3, 579) = 9.048, p< .001). The higher level of Machiavellianism, narcissism and psychopathy were found among managers.

There was no significant effect of interaction gender x field of study V = .007, (F(3, 579) = 1.360, p = .254).

4. Discussion

The aim of the contribution was to explore professional and gender differences in negative personality characteristics among university students (future managers and teachers in Slovakia). Results point to the higher level of Machiavellianism, narcissism and psychopathy among men and among students of managerial field of study.

Čopková and Jendrejáková (2020) found similar results. In their research, significantly higher psychopathy was shown by students oriented to the area of production compared to students oriented to education. Also, in dimension of psychopathy, students oriented towards the area of business scored higher than students oriented towards the area of art and education.

In this research, we found that the level of Machiavellianism is the highest from the Dark Triad characteristics among teachers but also managers. Čopková (2020) interprets similar results in the context of the need for power, status, authority and obtaining benefits from others, that teaching profession, but also managerial profession fulfills.

The higher level of Machiavellianism, narcissism and psychopathy was found among men. Similar results were found by Jonason and Davis (2018). In their research masculinity was strongly associated with Dark Triad characteristics than femininity. However, in our research sex differences were explored. Self-perceived femininity and masculinity, in relation to personality characteristics may be the subject of further research.

The peculiarity is that most research shows that women's self-esteem is lower than men's self-esteem (Casale, 2020). In this case, women expressed fewer negative characteristics. Ludwig, Fellner-Röhling and Thoma found that self-assessment of woman is influenced by shame. The shame is associated with the fact that others could find that they overestimate themselves. Self-assessment in negatively formulated items may be distorted.

Further research should focus on other personality traits in relation to Dark Triad variables, Gender moderates the association between Machiavellianism and impulsivity. Szabó and Jones (2019) found that men, but not women, high in Machiavellianism were non-impulsive and high in planning. Thus, the very content of the terms Machiavellianism, narcissism and psychopathy may be different in relation to gender or sex differences.

The research points to the importance of monitoring the personal assumptions of employees. Kurhajcová (2009) emphasizes social maturity as one of the prerequisites for management professions. Characteristics that relate to the work activity performed, such as determination, conscientiousness, time management and perseverance, are important.

Mathieu (2012) proposes screening, in the selection of employees. We would recommend screening when selecting students, which is not common in Slovakia.

Furthermore, Mathieu (2012) emphasizes the importance of the ability to give, as well as receive feedback. This ability presupposes maturity of social skills, which may be affected to some extent by training. We recall the Bronfenbrenners model of the social environment (1977) and Hirshis model of social control (1969). Individual components of social environment interact, and the behavior of teachers and managers should be subject to social control in the form of assertive reactions of the environment.

The recommendation for practice is the psychological preparation of students of teaching as well as management professions, with an emphasis on recognizing their own positive and negative reactions, receiving feedback and self-regulation.

On the other hand, we can talk about the benefits of the characteristics of the Dark Triad for the organization. Majors (2016) describes on other examples that narcissism predicts more frequent changes in organizational strategy and Machiavellianism predicts skillful negotiation tactics and political prowess. For this reason, it is important to understand how managers with higher or lower levels of Dark Triad personality characteristics respond to stimuli within interpersonal relationships and conflict resolution.

The unevenness of the samples of managers and teachers, men and women, can be included among the limits of research. Also simplifying the understanding of gender / sex.

References

Abedi, G., Mahali, Q. A. M., Mirzaian, B., & Ghara, A. N. (2009). The effect of managers and supervisors personality traits on the employees' organizational commitment. *Arth Prabhand: A Journal of Economics and Management*, *3*(6), 52-59.

Binti Rusbadrol, N., Mahmud, N., & Arif, L. S. M. (2015). Association between personality traits and job performance among secondary school teachers. *International Academic Research Journal of Social Science*, *1*(2), 1-6.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1977). Toward an experimental ecology of human development. *American Psychologist, 32*, 513–531.

Casale, S. (2020). Gender Differences in Self-esteem and Self-confidence. *The Wiley Encyclopedia of Personality and Individual Differences: Personality Processes and Individual Differences*, 185-189.

Christie, R. & ve Geis, F. (1970). *Studies in Machiavellianism*. New York: Academic Press

Cohen, A. (2016). Are they among us? A conceptual framework of the relationship between the Dark Triad personality and counterproductive work behaviors (CWBs). Human Resource Management Review, 26(1), 69-85.

Čopková, R. (2020). The Dark Triad in Helping Professions–Comparison of Teachers and Pedagogy Students. *JWEE*, (1-2), 125-141.

Čopková, R., & Jendrejáková, A. (2020). Dark Triad in the context of career choice. Sociální Pedagogika, 8(2).

Furtner, M. R., Maran, T., & Rauthmann, J. F. (2017). Dark leadership: The role of leaders' Dark Triad personality traits. In Leader development deconstructed (pp. 75-99). Springer, Cham.

Hirschi, T. (1969). Key idea: Hirschi's social bond/social control theory. *Key ideas in criminology and criminal justice*, (1969), 55-69.

Jonason, P. K., & Davis, M. D. (2018). A gender role view of the Dark Triad traits. *Personality and Individual Differences*, *125*, 102-105.

Jones, D. N., & Paulhus, D. L. (2011). The role of impulsivity in the Dark Triad of personality. Personality and Individual Differences, 51(5), 679-682.

Jones, D. N., & Paulhus, D. L. (2014). Introducing the short Dark Triad (SD3) a brief measure of dark personality traits. *Assessment*, *21*(1), 28-41.

Mahlamäki, T., Rintamäki, T., & Rajah, E. (2019). The role of personality and motivation on key account manager job performance. *Industrial Marketing Management*, *83*, 174-184

Majors, T. M. (2016). The interaction of communicating measurement uncertainty and the Dark Triad on managers' reporting decisions. The Accounting Review, 91(3), 973-992.

Mathieu, C. (2012). How Can Managers' Personality and Behaviors Affect Employees' Well-Being?. *International Journal of Science in Society*, *3*(3).

Khalilzadeh, S., & Khodi, A. (2021). Teachers' personality traits and students' motivation: A structural equation modeling analysis. *Current Psychology*, *40*(4), 1635-1650.

Kurhajcová, L. (2009). Kľúčové kompetencie manažéra. *Economics and management, 1*, 31–35.

Ludwig, S., Fellner-Röhling, G., & Thoma, C. (2017). Do women have more shame than men? An experiment on self-assessment and the shame of overestimating oneself. *European Economic Review, 92*, 31-46.

Lykken, D. T. (1995). *The antisocial personalities*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Perera, H. N., Granziera, H., & McIlveen, P. (2018). Profiles of teacher personality and relations with teacher self-efficacy, work engagement, and job satisfaction. *Personality and individual Differences*, *120*, 171-178.

Spain, S. M., Harms, P., & LeBreton, J. M. (2014). The dark side of personality at work. Journal of organizational behavior, 35(S1), S41-S60.

Szabó, E., & Jones, D. N. (2019). Gender differences moderate Machiavellianism and impulsivity: Implications for Dark Triad research. *Personality and Individual Differences, 141*, 160-165.

Wu, J., & Lebreton, J. M. (2011). Reconsidering the dispositional basis of counterproductive work behavior: The role of aberrant personality. Personnel Psychology, 64(3), 593-626.