



Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

# Personality and Individual Differences

journal homepage: [www.elsevier.com/locate/paid](http://www.elsevier.com/locate/paid)



## Dark personality, interpersonal rejection, and marital stability of Chinese couples: An actor–partner interdependence mediation model

Qiong He<sup>a</sup>, Yuchen Wang<sup>b,d</sup>, Yaxin Xing<sup>e</sup>, Yue Yu<sup>b,c,\*</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Institute of Developmental Psychology, Beijing Normal University, Beijing, China

<sup>b</sup> Department of Psychology, University of Chinese Academy of Sciences, Beijing, China

<sup>c</sup> Key Laboratory of Mental Health, Institute of Psychology, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Beijing, China

<sup>d</sup> Key Laboratory of Behavioral Science, Institute of Psychology, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Beijing, China

<sup>e</sup> Department of Psychology, Capital Normal University, Beijing, China



### ARTICLE INFO

#### Keywords:

Machiavellianism  
Psychopathy  
Marital stability  
Interpersonal rejection  
Actor–partner interdependence mediation model

### ABSTRACT

Previous studies revealed the association between personality and relationship outcomes. Our research aimed to explore the concurrent relationship between dark personality traits and marital stability and further explore its mechanism in an actor–partner interdependence mediation model. The present study recruited 260 married couples using Mach-IV and the Levenson self-report psychopathy scale for both self- and partner-ratings of Machiavellianism and psychopathy and chose the interpersonal rejection subscale from the interpersonal cognitive distortions scale as the indicator of interpersonal cognition. Additionally, the marital instability scale (short form) was used to measure marital stability. Results showed that self- and partner-rating of Machiavellianism and psychopathy had both direct and indirect actor–partner effects on marital stability. Furthermore, dark personality by partner-rating is more likely to affect marital stability by the partial mediation of interpersonal rejection. In conclusion, interpersonal rejection plays a total or partial mediation role between dark personality and marital stability. The current study improves the theoretical framework of the relationship between personality and marital stability and provides practical significance for the maintenance of intimate relationships.

### 1. Introduction

Almost everyone hopes to get married to an appropriate partner and possesses a stable marriage. However, increasingly more couples are getting divorced in recent years. The crude divorce rate of China has risen rapidly annually, and 3.84 million couples divorced each other in 2015 alone (National Bureau of Statistics of the People's Republic of China, 2016). Obviously, the crisis of the high divorce rate is becoming a serious social problem. Therefore, the factors influencing marital stability have received increasing attention from researchers for a long time. Many factors were already shown to be related to marital stability, including spouses' race (e.g., Udry, 1966), religion (e.g., Call & Heaton, 1997), sex (e.g., Udry, 1966), education (e.g., Karney & Bradbury, 1995), and age at marriage (e.g., Booth, Johnson, & Edwards, 1983).

Personality also plays a critical role in relationship stability. Back and Vazire (2015) reviewed the social consequences of personality and underscored that personality plays an important role in social

relationship (such as marital stability and satisfaction). The literature has suggested that further research on the association between personality and social outcomes is needed, and the internal mechanism should also be explored. In general, there are two kinds of studies focusing on the relationship between romantic relationship and personality. First, some researchers concentrate on the effects of similarity and complementarity of couples' personalities on the quality of their relationships. Most research has found that the similarity of couples is more important to the sound development of romantic relationship. Specifically, the similarity of partners' personality has been proved to have effects on both marriage quality and marriage stability (e.g., Antill, 1983; Arrindell & Luteijn, 2000). Other research is about the relationship between some specific personality traits on intimate relationship, which is more concerned about by the current study. In related studies, the Big Five Personality traits have been referred for most time, and frequently considered to be predictors of marital stability. Among the five personality traits, neuroticism has been found to be the most stable and influential trait negatively associated with

Abbreviations: APIMeM, actor–partner interdependence mediation model

\* Corresponding author at: 16 Lincui Road, Chaoyang District, Beijing 100101, China.

E-mail address: [yuy@psych.ac.cn](mailto:yuy@psych.ac.cn) (Y. Yu).

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2018.06.003>

Received 4 February 2018; Received in revised form 16 May 2018; Accepted 2 June 2018  
0191-8869/ © 2018 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

marital stability (e.g., Karney & Bradbury, 1995; Solomon & Jackson, 2014) while the other four failed to reach a consistent conclusion (e.g., Bouchard, Lussier, & Sabourin, 1999). This may be because neuroticism is a more specific and undesirable trait, and previous research found that such traits have a more stable negative association with marital outcomes (Mund, Finn, Hagemeyer, & Neyer, 2016). On this basis, we inferred that some other typical social undesirable personality traits may also have similar effects on the stability of relationship with neuroticism, such as dark personality. According to previous research, the relationship between dark personality and marital stability has not yet been systematically examined (Kardum, Hudek-Knezevic, Schmitt, & Covic, 2017; Muris, Merckelbach, Otgaar, & Meijer, 2017). However, a few studies have already begun to investigate dark traits in subclinical samples and their impact on intimate relationship (e.g., Jonason, Li, & Buss, 2010; Smith et al., 2014).

Dark personality, which was integrated by Paulhus and Williams in 2002, consists of three negative personality traits: Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy. The three personality traits (Dark Triad) are associated with some negative patterns of behavioral and mental performance (Paulhus & Williams, 2002). To be exact, people with the Machiavellian trait always perform in a ruthless, manipulative, and pragmatic way; psychopathy is usually marked by impulsiveness, thrill-seeking, and lack of empathy and sense of responsibility; and narcissism is linked with egocentricity, vanity, dominance, presumptuousness and condescension (James, Kavanagh, Jonason, Chonody, & Scrutton, 2014). Moreover, some researchers have already paid attention to the relationship between dark personality and romantic relationship, and most of the research found that Machiavellianism and psychopathy influence romantic relationship in a negative way (e.g., Ali & Chamorro-Premuzic, 2010; Jonason et al., 2010). Studies also found that the Dark Triad, especially Machiavellianism and psychopathy, are predictors of conflict communication, which is a vital influencing factor leading to relational termination (Horan, Guinn, & Banghart, 2015). However, consensus has not been reached on the influence of narcissism on romantic relationship (Furnham, Richards, & Paulhus, 2013; Muris et al., 2017). It is worth mentioning that the mechanism of the effect between dark traits and romantic outcomes is seldom explored, which could help provides practical implications for maintaining intimate relationship.

The review of Back and Vazire (2015) suggested that searching for mechanisms that can explain the correlations between personality and social outcomes was important in the future research about personality and relationship. Considering numerous studies focus on the relationship between personality and the outcome of intimate relationship, a more in-depth mechanism of the effect of dark personality traits on marital stability should also be explored. Furthermore, personality traits are thought to reflect an individual's habitual style of feeling, thinking, and behaving; thus, the key to understanding the effects of personality on relationships lies in the consideration of basic psychological functions such as affection and cognition (Mund et al., 2016). Additionally, Karney and Bradbury (1995) indicated that adaptive process is the mediating variable between enduring vulnerability (personality) and marital stability in the vulnerability–stress–adaptation model of marriage. For example, there was an impressive study finding that negative relationship-specific interpretation bias partially mediated the associations between neuroticism and lower relationship satisfaction (Finn, Mitte, & Neyer, 2013). It is mentioned that both neuroticism and dark personality are traits with social undesirable characteristics, and individuals with such traits are more likely to have negative cognition bias (Muris et al., 2017). Moreover, previous study revealed that interpersonal cognitive distortion is a kind of irrational cognition that harms relationships (Ellis, 1986). Among the several factors of interpersonal cognitive distortion, interpersonal rejection is the most important part of cognitive distortion, accounting for the most explained variance (Hamamci, 2005). Interpersonal rejection is also a kind of cognitive distortion associated with highly exaggerated,

inappropriately rigid, illogical, or absolute beliefs, describing people who have negative attitudes toward others (DiGiuseppe & Zee, 1986). Meanwhile, previous studies confirmed that interpersonal rejection is an important predictor of romantic relationship (Hamamci, 2005). Therefore, we hypothesized that interpersonal rejection can mediate the association between dark personality and marital stability.

## 2. Method

### 2.1. Participants and procedure

Two hundred and ninety-two pairs of heterosexual couples mainly from Beijing, Shanghai, Shenzhen in China were recruited to join the research by convenience sampling. Considering the balance of demographic variables such as age, marriage time, occupation, and educational background, the data of two hundred and sixty pairs of couples were eventually adopted, accounting for 89.04% of the total participants. The age of the couples ranged from 23 to 40 for men and 20 to 39 for women, and the mean age was 28.28 ( $SD = 3.836$ ) for men and 26.61 ( $SD = 3.959$ ) for women. The lasting years of the couples' marriages ranged from 0.5 to 7; the mean was 2.677 ( $SD = 1.574$ ).

### 2.2. Measures

#### 2.2.1. Dark personality

The results of meta-analysis showed that the interrelation between Machiavellianism and psychopathy is closer than the correlation between either of the two traits and narcissism. And Machiavellianism and psychopathy are darker than narcissism (Muris et al., 2017). Furthermore, Machiavellianism and psychopathy consistently showed negative correlation with relationship outcome (Jonason et al., 2010), but the results of narcissism failed to reach agreement (Rauthmann, 2012). For these reasons, we choose Machiavellianism and psychopathy as dark personality variables in the current study.

#### 2.2.2. Mach IV

The Mach IV inventory (Christie & Geis, 2013) was adopted to measure Machiavellianism in the current study. The inventory consists of 20 items about cheating in interpersonal relationships. The participants should value each item from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5) according to their agreement with a given statement. The Cronbach's alphas of this scale in the current study were 0.75 for self-rating and 0.79 for partner-rating.

#### 2.2.3. The Levenson self-report psychopathy scale

Couples' psychopathy was measured by the Levenson self-report psychopathy scale (Levenson, Kiehl, & Fitzpatrick, 1995). The original inventory includes two subscales and twenty-six items in total. Sixteen items belong to the primary psychopathy subscale, and the remaining ten items form the secondary psychopathy subscale. Since the participants in the current study are all sub-clinical samples, we only used the primary psychopathy subscale (Newman, MacCoon, Vaughn, & Sadeh, 2005). Participants are asked to choose from 1 to 5 to stand for strongly disagree to strongly agree for their agreement with the statements. In current research, the Cronbach's alphas of Levenson self-report psychopathy scale were 0.77 for self-rating and 0.81 for partner-rating.

#### 2.2.4. Marital instability scale (short form)

We measured the instability of marital relationship for marital stability. The measurement used was the short form of the Marital Instability Scale (Booth et al., 1983), including five items. The couples were asked to tell the frequency of the given incidents using never (1) to very often (4). The higher the score is, the less stable the relationship is. The Cronbach's alpha of the Marital Instability Scale was 0.89.

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/7248447>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/7248447>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)