



# The Dark Triad and social behavior: The influence of self-construal and power distance



Stephen A. Robertson<sup>a,\*</sup>, Jesus Alfonso D. Datu<sup>b</sup>, Alice M. Brawley<sup>a</sup>, Cynthia L.S. Pury<sup>a</sup>, Niño Jose Mateo<sup>c</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Clemson University, Clemson, SC, USA

<sup>b</sup> University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong, China

<sup>c</sup> De La Salle University, Manila, Philippines

## ARTICLE INFO

### Article history:

Received 8 October 2015

Received in revised form 5 March 2016

Accepted 29 March 2016

Available online xxx

### Keywords:

Dark Triad  
Machiavellianism  
Narcissism  
Psychopathy  
Self-construal  
Power distance  
Interpersonal

## ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship of Dark Triad traits with interpersonal facilitation (IF) and interpersonal counterproductive work behavior (ICWB) through the mediators of independent and interdependent self-construals and power distance. Using multigroup latent variable modeling, we examined differences in this model between the United States ( $n = 204$ ) and the Philippines ( $n = 265$ ). Machiavellianism was unrelated to any mediators or outcomes. Narcissism was positively related to independence in both countries, and narcissism was negatively related to interdependence and positively related to power distance in the Philippines. Psychopathy was negatively related to IF in the U.S. only and positive to ICWBs in both countries. Psychopathy was negatively related to interdependence in the U.S. but positively related to interdependence in the Philippines, and positively related to power distance in the U.S. Independent and interdependent self-construal were positively related to IF and negatively related to ICWB. Power distance was negatively related to IF and positively related to ICWB. Indirect mediation relationships were also found in both countries. The findings suggest that the Dark Triad traits operate differently across the countries due in part to differences in the cultural variables of self-construal and power distance. Limitations and directions for future research are discussed.

© 2016 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

## 1. Introduction

Extant literature in organizational psychology has often focused on the bright side of human personality instead of exploring darker aspects. Recognizing this gap, scholars have investigated the relations of socially undesirable personality traits on psychological functioning (Furnham, Richards, & Paulhus, 2013; Jonason, Wee, & Li, 2014; Spain, Harms, & Lebreton, 2014). The Dark Triad (i.e., Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy) represent one collection of socially undesirable personality traits pertinent in organizational (Spain et al., 2014) and social psychology (Furnham et al., 2013). Individuals high on Dark Triad traits are socially malevolent with tendencies towards callousness, aggression, and manipulation (Furnham et al., 2013). Initial evidence supports its importance for social behavior; however, the Dark Triad is a relatively new construct in the field of personality, and questions remain as to its relevance in diverse samples.

In particular, it is important to examine the relevance of the Dark Triad in non-Western societies as the constructs and measures primarily have been developed in the United States (Henrich, Heine, & Norenzayan, 2010). In a recent meta-analysis of the Dark Triad and employee performance (O'Boyle, Forsyth, Banks, & McDaniel, 2012), only four of 186 studies drew samples from predominantly collectivistic

societies. Although more recent studies have demonstrated differences in the Dark Triad between culturally distinct societies (e.g., the U.S. and Singapore; Jonason, Li, & Czarna, 2013), there is still a need to continue this line of research.

The current study expands the Dark Triad literature in three ways. First, we directly compare Dark Triad traits assessed in both an individualist (United States) and a collectivist (Philippines) context. Second, although Machiavellianism has been studied in the Philippines (e.g., Zagenczyk, Restubog, Kiewitz, Kiazad, & Tang, 2014), we also examined narcissism and psychopathy. Third, we addressed a key research gap by assessing the extent to which two cultural variables (self-construal and power distance) mediate the relations between Dark Triad traits and pertinent social behaviors. To our knowledge, this was the first empirical investigation which examined the degree to which self-construal and power distance explain the theoretical relations between Dark Triad traits, interpersonal facilitation (IF), and interpersonal counterproductive work behavior (ICWB), across American and Filipino samples, and we present a theoretical mechanism to account for any differences.

### 1.1. The Dark Triad: Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy

All three Dark Triad traits share a lack of honesty and humility (e.g., sincerity and fairness; Book, Visser, & Volk, 2015; Jonason & McCain, 2012), but each trait adds additional components. Machiavellian

\* Corresponding author at: Department of Psychology, Clemson University, 418 Brackett Hall, Clemson, SC 29634–1355, USA.

individuals are adept at skillful manipulation and are cynical of other people (Furnham et al., 2013). The narcissism component of the Dark Triad emerged from clinical research of individuals who lack empathy and display inflated self-worth and need for admiration (Campbell, Hoffman, Campbell, & Marchisio, 2011). Individuals with high levels of psychopathy exhibit both high impulsivity and low anxiety about subsequent consequences of their behavior (Boddy, Ladyshevsky, & Galvin, 2010).

These three traits are of particular relevance in the organizational sciences because of their relationship to employee work behaviors. For example, the Dark Triad is related to increases in counterproductive work behaviors (CWBs; O'Boyle et al., 2012) and exerting potentially harmful influence over coworkers (Jonason, Slomski, & Partyka, 2012). Narcissism is related to decreases in organizational citizenship behaviors (Campbell et al., 2011), and psychopathy is related to decreases in employee perceptions of corporate social responsibility (Boddy et al., 2010).

We also studied two major cross-cultural difference variables – individualism/collectivism and power distance (Hofstede, 2001) – for their relationship to the Dark Triad. We used independent and interdependent self-construal as a proxy for individualism/collectivism as a way to assess these differences without making sweeping conclusions about an entire country's disposition (Oyserman, Coon, & Kemmelmeier, 2002). Independent self-construal mirrors the individualistic cultural expectation of an autonomous self whereas interdependent self-construal mirrors the collectivistic cultural expectation of finding identity in family and community.

Self-construal consists of the fundamental views individuals hold about emotions and motivations for themselves and in relation to others (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Zhao, Huh, Murphy, Chatterjee, & Baezconde-Garbanati, 2014). People in individualistic societies may be more likely to endorse independent self-construal, a self-view which emphasizes self-oriented forms of feelings, behaviors, and motivation. Conversely, those in collectivistic societies may be more likely to endorse interdependent self-construal, a self-view placing much importance on embodying socially-oriented emotions, actions, and motivation (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Uchida & Ogihara, 2012). Cultural variations in behaviors, emotions, and thinking patterns may be largely explained by these distinctions in self-construals (Markus & Kitayama, 1991).

Another framework that is related to self-construal and the Dark Triad is that of agency and communion. Agency is related to independent self-construal, an egotistic bias, and social dominance whereas communion is related to interdependent self-construal, nurturance, and social desirability (Abele & Wojciszke, 2007). The Dark Triad is characterized by unmitigated agency (i.e., high agency/low communion) which encompasses deviant values that justify social exploitation (Trapnell & Paulhus, 2012). This deviant value system has been described as an agentic social style that might be opposite of the societal expectation of selflessness (Jonason, Strosser, Kroll, Duineveld, & Baruffi, 2015). The assertions of the agency/communion and self-construal frameworks are complementary in that agency/communion describes interpersonal social styles, and self-construal describes one's sociocultural self-concept. These two frameworks suggest that the Dark Triad will be positively related to the more agentic independent self-construal while it will be negatively related to the more communal interdependent self-construal. Therefore, it was expected that the Dark Triad would function differently in an individualistic society (e.g., the U.S.) when compared to a collectivistic society (e.g., the Philippines) because of the cross-cultural variations in the endorsement of self-construals and cultural beliefs (e.g., power distance) in such sociocultural settings.

Based on the theoretical importance of self-construal in explaining behaviors, self-construal likely explains the relations between Dark Triad traits and behavioral outcomes. For instance, studies have shown that self-construal served as a key theoretical mechanism which explained cross-cultural differences in various outcomes such as cognitions

(Varnum, Grossmann, Kitayama, & Nisbett, 2010) and self-centered motivation (Kitayama & Park, 2014). Given that espousing Dark Triad traits may enhance individuals' inclinations to express self-serving motivations, the traits should be positively related to independent self-construal and negatively related to interdependent self-construal. As the Dark Triad affects how individuals interact with other people (Jonason et al., 2015), we examined interpersonal behaviors that encourage others (i.e., IF) and behaviors that discourage others (i.e., ICWB<sup>1</sup>). Each dimension of self-construal will mediate the relationships between the Dark Triad traits and the social behaviors of IF and ICWB.

Power distance is another cultural dimension that may be related to the Dark Triad traits and impacts an individual's social behavior. Power distance is the degree to which societies accept the governance of authority as unquestionable (Taras, Kirkman, & Steel, 2010). In high power distance societies, people are expected to defer to authority and may even feel uncomfortable passing judgement on authority. Power distance also relates to job performance in that power distance is negatively related to CWB (Chao, Cheung, & Wu, 2011). Each of the Dark Triad traits are characterized by manipulation, callousness, and social dominance (Jones & Figueredo, 2013), therefore, the Dark Triad may enforce the cultural expectation of deference to authority while at the same time it may be related to resisting the social dominance of others. Taken together, the Dark Triad may increase an individual's adherence to power distance, and then power distance will mediate the relationship of the Dark Triad to both IF and ICWB.

The theoretical model is as follows: each Dark Triad trait is related to each cultural variable and each cultural variable is related to IF and ICWB. Additionally, we propose five direct relationships between specific Dark Triad traits and interpersonal outcomes. Narcissism should be positively related to IF, as it is primarily related to an approach orientation. Machiavellianism should be positively related to IF because charming others is a primary manipulation tactic and should be positively related to ICWB because coercion is an often used manipulation tactic. Psychopathy should be negatively related to IF and positively related to ICWB because of the coercive nature of the trait (see Jonason & Webster, 2012).

Finally, we were interested in exploring any differences in the interrelationships of Dark Triad traits, cultural mediators, and outcomes between the countries. Therefore, we analyzed models that were not moderated by country and models that allowed the relationships between Dark Triad traits and cultural variables to be moderated by country. To this end, we exploratorily examined differences between the countries for direct relationships between Dark Triad traits and cultural variables and indirect relationships between Dark Triad traits and outcomes that were mediated by the cultural variables.

## 2. Method

### 2.1. Participants

We recruited American participants ( $n = 204$ ) from a large public university in the southeastern U.S., and Filipino participants ( $n = 265$ ) from a private university in the Philippines. For American participants, mean age was 19.40 ( $SD = 2.01$ ), and the sample was 67.20% female; for Filipino participants, mean age was 19.01 ( $SD = 1.54$ ), and the sample was 55.80% female. Participants in the U.S. received course credit, and participants in the Philippines were recruited on a volunteer basis. No survey items were translated as English is taught in schools in the Philippines, but all items were screened by a Filipino native to check for country-specific relevance in the Philippines.

<sup>1</sup> This study's assessment of CWBs is strictly interpersonal as the scale items do not assess more impersonal types of CWBs (e.g., stealing).

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/7249910>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/7249910>

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