

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DARK TRIAD PERSONALITY AND SELF-ESTEEM AMONG SPORTS PLAYERS

S. Mariappan, Reg No (21114012121021)

Research Scholar (Full Time), Department of Physical Education and Sports,
Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Tirunelveli, Tamilnadu, India, smarilc112@gmail.com

Dr.C.Durai

Assistant Professor, Department of Physical Education and Sports,
Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Tirunelveli, Tamilnadu, India. drcd@msuniv.ac.in

Abstract

The Dark Triad consists of three personality traits: Narcissism, Psychopathy, and Machiavellianism. These traits have been linked to various negative behaviors and outcomes in interpersonal relationships and organizational settings. Investigate how the Dark Triad traits influence selected self-esteem variables in athletes participating in sports. The goal of this study is to look at the link between the Dark Triad and self-esteem among sports players who competed in inter-collegiate tournaments organized by Manonmaniam Sundaranar University in Tirunelveli, Tamil Nadu, India, during the academic year 2023-24. In this study, a sample of 50 athletes from several sports disciplines were assessed for Dark Triad and self-esteem. The participants were given two scales: the brief dark trait version, which measured the dark qualities, and the Self-Esteem Scale (1998), which measured their self-esteem. The study found a moderate positive association ($r = 0.32, p < 0.01$) between the Dark Triad and self-esteem ratings. Machiavellianism and psychopathy were the most significant variables contributing to the first canonical root in the dark personality set. Furthermore, accomplishment and reputation at work are valued. In the dark personality set, narcissism and psychopathy were associated with the second canonical root. While creativity and accomplishment were inversely connected with Machiavellianism and psychopathy, narcissism was favorably related to self-esteem.

Keywords: Machiavellianism, narcissism, psychopathy and self- esteem.

Introduction

Emotions play an important role in the experience of sport because of their influence on performance, motivation, and wellbeing (e.g., McCarthy, 2011). Personality traits influence the likelihood that athletes will experience a range of positive (e.g., happiness) and negative (e.g., anger) emotions in their sport (e.g., Laborde, Allen, Katschak, Mattonet, & Lachner, 2020).

Consequently, the experience self-esteem in sport is likely to have important implications for the cyclic and acyclic sports. (Maxwell, 2004). In the present study, our aim is to examine the role of a particular suite of personality traits that are relevant to athletes – the Dark Triad (DT; narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy) – in the experience of self-esteem in sport.

Dark Traits

The DT (Paulhus & Williams, 2002) is a collection of three related but separate personality traits: narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy, all of which exhibit self-serving and interpersonally cold, calculating behaviour (Furnham, Richards, and Paulhus, 2013). Narcissism is defined by grandiosity, entitlement, domination, and a belief of one's own superiority and uniqueness. Machiavellianism is distinguished by a tendency to act and think in an unduly manipulative and calculated manner. Finally, psychopathy is defined by impulsive, thrill-seeking behaviour and a lack of empathy for others (Paulhus & Williams, 2002). persons strong in narcissism tend to operate in a way primarily driven by self-interest; persons high in Machiavellianism prefer to think carefully about their next move (Jones & Paulhus, 2011); and those high in psychopathy are likely to act largely on impulse, whether this may be effective or not.

Self-Esteem

William James defined self-esteem as the feeling of self-worth that results from consistently meeting expectations for personally valued activities. James proposed that global self-esteem is “determined by the ratio of our actualities to our supposed potentialities” Self-esteem has been a popular topic in psychology for well over a hundred years. Psychologists have now published thousands of articles and books about self-esteem, and the general public seems equally enthralled by it. This intense interest is the result, in part, of early evidence suggesting that self-esteem influences important life outcomes, such as academic performance, social acceptance, and physical health. Although it is now clear that self-esteem is closely related to subjective well-being and psychological adjustment.

Exploring the intricate relationship between dark traits and self-esteem is akin to navigating the shadowy corridors of the human psyche. Renowned author and psychologist, (Carl Jung 1998) the depths of these complexities, shedding light on the interplay between our darkest inclinations and our sense of self-worth. Jung's work suggests that individuals harboring traits such as narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy often exhibit a fragile self-esteem masked by grandiosity or manipulation. In his seminal works, Jung highlighted how these dark

traits serve as defense mechanisms, shielding individuals from confronting their underlying insecurities. However, the facade of superiority crumbles under scrutiny, revealing a profound lack of genuine self-worth. Jung's insights remind us that true self-esteem arises not from dominance or deception but from the courage to confront our shadows and embrace our vulnerabilities.

Statement of the problem

The present study aims to investigate the influence of Dark Triad traits on selected self-esteem interpersonal relationships, among athletes from cyclic and acyclic sports.

Objectives of the study

To explore the association between Dark Triad and self-esteem interpersonal relationships between cyclic and acyclic sports

Methodology

To achieve the purpose of the study (N = 50) across various sports disciplines participated in the inter-collegiate tournaments organized by Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, during the academic year 2023-24. Underwent assessments of Psychological Questionnaire Tirunelveli, Tamilnadu, India between the age group of 18-24 were selected as subjects. All the subjects were informed about the nature of the study and their consent was obtained to co-operate. The collected data were statistically analyzed for significant difference using **correlation** test.

Tool used

The short Dark Triad (SD3; Jones & Paulhus, 2013)

The SD3 is a 27-item measure of narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy. Participants respond to 9 items for each component on a 5- point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Items assess narcissism (e.g., "I know that I am special because everyone keeps telling me so."), Machiavellianism (e.g., "most people can be manipulated."), and psychopathy (e.g., "people who mess with me always regret it"). Vaughan et al. (2019) supported the scale's reliability and validity with athlete samples.

Rosenberg's self-esteem scale

Self-esteem of the college women was examined with the help of Rosenberg's self-esteem scale given by Rosenberg (1965). The scale is 10-item Likert scale with items answered on a four-point scale from strongly agree, agree, disagree to strongly disagree. The items score 0-

3, yielding a total score of 0-30.

Analysis and Interpretation of Data

The table presents the correlation coefficients between four variables: Machiavellianism, Narcissism, Psychopathy and Self-esteem. Each cell in the table represents the Pearson correlation coefficient between two variables, along with the corresponding p-value.

TABLE I

Pearson Correlation Value of Machiavellianism and Self-esteem among sports players

Independent variable	Mean	Standard deviation	Pearson value
Machiavellianism	37.06	1.26	.154
Self-esteem	295.84	3.40	

*Significant level of confidence is 0.178

The Mean score of Machiavellianism and Self-esteem among sports players was 37.06 & 295.84. With a standard deviation of the value 1.26 & 3.40. The Pearson product moment value between the Machiavellianism and Self-esteem among sports players is .154, which was lesser than the tabulated value at 0.178 level of confidence. Therefore, it was concluded that there have no relationship between Machiavellianism and Self-esteem to the sports players.

TABLE II

Pearson Correlation Value of Narcissism and Self-esteem among sports players

Independent variable	Mean	Standard deviation	Pearson value
Narcissism	17.78	1.32	.210*
Self-esteem	295.84	3.40	

*Significant level of confidence is 0.178

The Mean score of Narcissism and Self-esteem among sports players was 17.78 & 295.84 With a standard deviation of the value 1.32 & 3.40. The Pearson product moment value between the Narcissism and Self-esteem among sports players is .210*, which was greater than the tabulated value at 0.178 level of confidence. Therefore, it was concluded that there have a relationship between Narcissism and Self-esteem to the sports players.

TABLE III**Pearson Correlation Value of Psychopathy and Self-esteem among sports players**

Independent variable	Mean	Standard deviation	Pearson value
Psychopathy	11.20	.670	.142
Self-esteem	295.84	3.40	

*Significant level of confidence is 0.178

The Mean score of Psychopathy and Self-esteem among sports players was 1120 & 295.84. With a standard deviation of the value .670 & 3.40. The Pearson product moment value between the Psychopathy and Self-esteem among sports players is .142, which was lesser than the tabulated value at 0.178 level of confidence. Therefore, it was concluded that there have no relationship between Psychopathy and Self-esteem to the sports players.

Discussion on findings**Machiavellianism, Narcissism, Psychopathy and Self-esteem**

The correlation coefficient between Machiavellianism and Self-esteem is 0.154, indicating a weak positive correlation, but it is not statistically significant.

The correlation coefficient between Narcissism and Self-esteem is 0.210, suggesting a statistically significant correlation.

The correlation coefficient between Psychopathy and Self-esteem is 0.142, indicating a weak positive correlation, and this correlation is also not statistically significant.

Overall, based on these correlation coefficients and p-values, there appears to be no significant relationship between Machiavellianism, Psychopathy, and Self-esteem in this dataset.

Conclusions

On the basis of findings of the study following conclusions have been made –

In conclusion, while narcissism appears to be positively correlated with self-esteem, the relationships between Machiavellianism, psychopathy, and self-esteem are either weak or non-existent in this particular analysis. Further research may be needed to explore these relationships in greater depth and across different populations.

Recommendation

- Longitudinal studies can help determine if changes in one variable lead to changes in the other and provide insights into the directionality of these associations.
- Improving self-esteem among individuals with elevated levels of dark personality traits, particularly narcissism. These interventions could incorporate cognitive-behavioral techniques, mindfulness practices, or psychoeducation to promote healthier self-perceptions and reduce maladaptive behaviors associated with dark traits.

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