

Why do we desire 'dark' personalities?

**A study investigating attractiveness of
the Dark Triad personality traits**

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March 2018

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Table of Contents

Table of contents	1
Acknowledgements	3
Abstract	4
Chapter 1: Introduction	5
1.1. Narcissism	6
1.2. Psychopathy	7
1.3. Machiavellianism	8
1.4. The Dark Triad	9
1.5. Attraction and the Dark Triad	11
Chapter 2: Methods	18
2.1. Participants	18
2.2. Design	18
2.3. Measures	18
2.4. Procedure	20
2.5. Analysis	21
Chapter 3: Results	22
3.1. Personality similarity	22
3.2. Gender differences	24
3.3. Age differences	25
Chapter 4: Discussion	30
4.1. Attractiveness of the Dark Triad	30
4.2. Attractiveness and gender	32
4.3. Attractiveness and age groups	33
4.4. Limitations and future directions	34

	2
4.5. Conclusion	35
Chapter 5: References	36
Chapter 6: Appendix	48
6.1. Information sheet	48
6.2. Survey	48
6.3. Debriefing form	57

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my immense gratitude to Dr Barbara Caska for her constant support and for providing me with her time, patience and outstanding professional guidance throughout the duration of this project.

I would also like to thank my fellow students for encouraging and empowering one another throughout the past three years.

Abstract

In light of the thriving research on the adverse, exploitative and game playing behaviours of Dark Triad (DT) traits – narcissism, psychopathy and Machiavellianism – the present study aims to determine the attractiveness of the DT. Using a correlational between groups design, this was addressed by measuring responses between males and females, younger and older age groups, and of similar and dissimilar personalities. Participants (N = 121) completed an online survey, whereby personality descriptions depicting characters high and low in the DT traits were rated on attractiveness. Findings of the study were, at most, consistent with the hypotheses. Narcissism was highly attractive, and psychopathy and Machiavellianism were not. Narcissism was found to be highly attractive for similar narcissists, males and females, and younger age groups. However, younger individuals were more attracted to characters low in psychopathy and Machiavellianism, and males and females rated comparably. Suggestions for future directions are provided.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Research on the DT has become an area of great interest in psychology since its emergence in 2002 by Paulhus and Williams. The DT is a set of undesirable personality traits, described as being abnormal, pathological, and immoral (Kowalski, 2001). It is comprised of: narcissism, psychopathy and Machiavellianism. The term ‘dark’ refers to the malevolent, maladaptive tendencies possessed by these personality traits. Narcissism is defined by excessive self-admiration, and the need for authority and superiority over others (Paulhus & Williams, 2002; Ronningstam, 2005). Psychopathy is defined by impulsiveness, a disregard towards others, and an absence of remorse and empathy (Paulhus & Williams, 2002; Levenson, Kiehl, & Fitzpatrick, 1995). Machiavellianism is defined by manipulative and deceitful behaviours, distrustfulness, and motivated by self-interest (Festinger & Schachter, 2013; Paulhus & Williams, 2002).

The purpose of the current study is to investigate the attractiveness of the DT traits. Personality profiles depicting the DT personalities, high and low in each dimension, will be rated on attractiveness. This study will evaluate several factors that may influence attraction, such as gender, age, and level of personality similarity. Previous research on the DT has been explored in various domains, such as friendship strategies (Jonason & Schmitt, 2012), physical attractiveness (Visser, Pozzebon, Bogaert, & Ashton, 2010; Holtzman & Strube, 2012), and short-term mating (Jonason & Tost, 2010; Jonason, Koenig, & Tost, 2010); however there has been insufficient work regarding the role of the DT personalities in terms of attraction, which the current study aims to address.

The three dimensions of the DT are inter-correlated; however, each holds their own distinctive behavioural, cognitive, and personality qualities (Paulhus and Williams, 2002). I will first provide an overview of each trait to truly understand the *darkness* that lies behind them and will then focus on the DT as a whole.

1.1. Narcissism

Knowledge on the darker side of human personality dates back centuries ago. Narcissism derives from Narcissus, the Greek tale of a man who, after seeing his reflection in a pond, fell in love with himself (Cupach & Spitzberg, 2011). Ellis (1898, as cited in Ronningstam, 2005) identified the concept of autoeroticism and established the term *Narcissus-like* describing sexual emotions arising by attraction to oneself. Freud's work 'On Narcissism' (1914/1957, 1923/1961, as cited in Ronningstam, 2005) explains several behavioural phenomena of this trait: i) strong perspectives towards themselves, such as self-admiration and self-glorification; ii) fears of failing or the loss of love, or other factors that may hinder self-esteem, which can result in devaluating other; iii) employing defensive means in managing conflict, such as splitting, denial, projection, and megalomania; iv) driven by the need to be admired, loved, self-sustained, and for perfection; and lastly, v) the position one holds towards their relationships, i.e. a sense of entitlement, superiority, omnipotence, holding expectations from others, and critical of people however, will not stand for being criticised themselves. In Freud's 'Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality' (1905/1953, as cited in Ronningstam, 2005), he would correspond "narcissistic libido" with "ego-libido" – the ego being the decision-making component of the psyche, holding no concept of right and wrong, but rather seeks out pleasure and avoids pain (Hall, 2013).

Narcissists are sociable and outgoing individuals (Holtzman, Vazire, & Mehl, 2010). They demonstrate little interest in others and assume no responsibility for the consequences of their actions (Campbell, Bosson, Goheen, Lakey, & Kernis, 2007). They struggle to preserve their interpersonal relationships (Rauthmann, 2012), which often involves an aggressive style (Bushman & Baumeister, 1998) and are constantly changing their surroundings where they can be idolised (Baumeister & Vohs, 2001). It is suggested that their self-esteem is established upon their dominance over others (Brown, Budzek, & Tamborski, 2009), therefore can be very fragile (Thomaes & Bushman, 2011). It is evident that narcissists prefer to get ahead than get along with others.

1.2. Psychopathy

The term *psychopath*, deriving from *psych* meaning the *soul* and *pathy* meaning *disease* or *suffering*, was introduced by the German psychiatrist, J.L.A Koch (1888, as cited in Kiehl & Hoffman, 2011). In the past, the concept of psychopathy referred to convicted felons who were violent, threatening, and morally insane. However, psychopaths are not always murderous criminals, but people we encounter in our day-to-day life. Although appearing charming at first, they inflict pain and suffering onto others without feeling an ounce of shame or moral conscience (Connelly, Lilienfeld, & Schmeelk, 2006; Ali, Amorim, & Chamorro-Premuzic, 2009). Thus, emerged our understanding of subclinical psychopathy, introduced by Robert Hare (1971, as cited in Kiehl & Hoffman, 2011). Individuals scoring high in psychopathy are egotistic, callous, short-tempered (Hare, 1993), and seek excitement and chaos (Williams & Paulhus, 2004), which generally results in behavioural misconduct, i.e. substance abuse, bullying, disobeying authority, theft-related behaviours (Nathanson, Paulhus, & Williams, 2006; Lyons & Jonason, 2015). They have little or no moral reasoning (Connelly, Lilienfeld, & Schmeelk, 2006). In a previous study, psychopathic individuals were found to be pragmatic

in their decisions-making and present no emotional or meaningful factor (Bartels & Pizarro, 2011). They focus only on what benefits them. Manson, Gervais, Fesler, & Cline (2014) found that primary psychopathy will reuse previously discussed information with the intention to exploit others for personal gain. They are oblivious to the risks or potential social and personal consequences of their actions (Reidy, Zeichner, Miller, & Martinez, 2007), and do not learn from their mistakes (Van Honk, Hermans, Putman, Montagne, & Schutter, 2002). Given its immoral and malevolent nature, psychopathy is deemed the darkest amongst the DT personalities (Rauthmann & Kolar, 2012; Paulhus & Williams, 2002).

1.3. Machiavellianism

Machiavellianism was introduced to psychology by Richard Christie and Florence L. Geis (1970, as cited in Festinger & Schachter, 2013) with their development of ‘the Machiavellianism Scale’/‘the Mach-IV test’. The term *Machiavellianism* originates from Niccolò Machiavelli, the infamous political philosopher of the Renaissance (Festinger, 2013). Machiavelli is mostly known for his book *The Prince*, expressing his perspectives on the ruthlessness and callousness that is required of a powerful ruler, whereby the immorality and indecency of one’s actions would be condoned by the grandiosity and success that one gains. Thus, giving name for those who possess immoral mechanisms, using deception, exploitation and manipulation for personal gain. People high in Machiavellianism are malevolent, vindictive, and pragmatic, seeking only to win, and disregarding whatever the cause (Jones & Paulhus, 2009; Garcia, Adrianson, Archer, & Rosenberg, 2015). Machiavellians do not abide by rules and will cheat to get their way (Jones & Paulhus, 2009), e.g. with academic undertakings, negotiations, or tax avoidance, disregarding any future consequences. Socio-environmental constraints profoundly limit the prosperity of their traits. Recent research has associated Machiavellianism with sadism in a study on “trolling” behaviours, where one

initiates in interpersonal aggression (Buckels, Trapnell, & Paulhus, 2014). Additionally, Machiavellianism appears to have a strong correlation with psychopathy (Paulhus & Williams, 2002; Paulhus, Williams, & Harms, 2001).

1.4. The Dark Triad

As reviewed above, the DT is characterised by dark, destructive, and malevolent behaviours. Narcissism, psychopathy, and Machiavellianism are traits highly evident in many people encountered throughout life. However, these individuals are not desolate and lonesome individuals, but are generally popular and regarded very highly by others (Holtzman & Strube, 2010; Back, Schmukle, & Egloff, 2010), achieve multiple partners (Jonason, Luevano, & Adams, in press), and are well capable of attracting and poaching mates (Jonason, Li, & Buss, 2010). Thus, begs the question: why are people attracted to such dark personalities? To understand the desirability of the DT, it is interesting to consider what relationships are like with these individuals and how the DT attract mates.

Research on the DT highlight the adaptive function of these traits. The evolutionary outlook of the DT adopts the Life History Strategy, specifically a “fast-life” (Jonason & Tost, 2010; Jonason, Koenig, & Tost, 2010) – an orientation with the primary intention of mating and that pursues short-term and direct benefits (Jonason, Li, Webster, & Schmitt, 2009; Jonason, Valentine, Li, & Harbeson, 2011). The DT demonstrates a need for sexual diversity (Jonason et al., 2009), possess an egocentric and vying social style (Jonason et al., in press), and a hostile character (Paulhus & Williams, 2002). In a study that further extended on the DTs short-term relationship subtypes, narcissism was associated with favouring one-night stands and having friends-with-benefits (Jonason et al., in press). Narcissism is deemed the most sociable amongst the three traits and has a strong affiliation towards novel relationships as it

validates their ego (Foster & Trimm, 2008). Psychopathy is associated with favouring booty call relations (Jonason et al., in press) and their exploitative behaviours are highly evident as they use others for sex. All three traits had a negative correlation with serious relationships, with Machiavellianism demonstrating no relationship preferences (Jonason et al., in press). It is evident that when attracting mates, the DT execute a strategic approach.

According to Jonason & Kavanagh (2010), the DT also engages in a game playing and pragmatic love style. Game playing behaviours provides excitement, thrill and enables one to protect their short-term mating style. A pragmatic approach identifies the usefulness of the partner, i.e. how they will reflect on them. The DT engages in a “dark side” of love (p.607), acting selfishly and attending only to their personal needs. Jonason, Li, & Buss (2010) found that the DT is greatly associated with mate poaching, whether poaching others away from their current relationships; or being poached themselves by others, thus abandoning their current relationship for another; or their partner being poached by others. The DT individual revels in new and greater sexual encounters, pursuing their impetuous, risk-taking, and neophilic behaviours.

The above studies contribute greatly to the current study in better understanding the true nature of the DT personalities and how they function to adapt in the social world, i.e. by engaging in romantic relationships with their head as oppose to their heart. Narcissists attract mates through their confident and vibrant characters, however fend off partners after getting what they wanted (Holtzman & Strube, 2010; Campbell & Foster, 2002; Campbell, Foster, & Finkel, 2002). Machiavellians make use of their deceptive and devious ways, enabling for social manipulation, exploitation, feigning love, infidelity and coercion (Jones & Paulhus, 2009; Festinger, 2013; McHoskey, 2001). Lastly, the psychopathic aspect is beneficial for

mating strategies with their callousness, lack of empathy, and superficial charm (Paulhus & Williams, 2002). Despite their destructive, malevolent behaviours and poor relationship choices, people are still drawn to such individuals. It is evident that the DT are well capable of attracting partners through their deceptive and strategic styles.

Attractiveness and the Dark Triad

Previous research has indicated that individuals possessing the DT personalities have greater physical attractiveness (Visser et al., 2010; Holtzman & Strube, 2010). However, this supposed attractiveness is primarily due to appearance enhancement (Buffardi & Campbell, 2008; Holtzman & Strube, 2010). In a study by Holtzman and Strube (2012), the DT lost its physical attractiveness when unadorned, i.e. lost freedom to dress up in their own way. People who possess the DT personalities compose themselves in a physically desirable manner. Adornment in the DT is based on enhancing self-esteem, gaining attention (Morf & Rhodewalt, 2001), or to attract short-term mates (Harris, Rice, Hilton, Lalumiere, & Quinsey, 2007). In a similar study, narcissists have exhibited greater likability with their ostentatious look, confidence, and more appealing facial expressions (Back, Egloff, & Schmukle, 2010), and is known to be the ‘brightest’ amongst the DT personalities (Rauthmann, 2012; Back, Schmukle, & Egloff, 2010). Holtzman & Strube (2012), however found that psychopathy had a significantly greater association with ‘successful’ adornment. It is evident that the DT actively establish positive first impressions that function as social lures – another demonstration of their social strategies. As physical attractiveness is a significant predictor in the DT for attracting mates, any indications to their physical appearance will be disregarded. Therefore, attractiveness rating would be based solely on personality than physical appearance.

The DT possess varying levels of *darkness*. However, when considering attractiveness of the DT personalities, are people's perceptions of these traits the same or to what extent do people's perceptions between the traits differ? Previous research found that individuals high in narcissism are perceived as: holding high status (Young & Pinsky, 2006; Brunell et al., 2008); are attractive and popular (Holtzman & Strube, 2012; Back, Schmukle, & Egloff, 2010); and highly accomplished in short-term mating (Jonason et al., 2009; Holtzman & Strube, 2010). These studies indicate that narcissism is an appealing quality for mating and friendships. In contrast, psychopathy is perceived as insensitive, demonstrate anti-social behaviours, and their lifestyle is unpredictable and eccentric (Patrick, 2005; Connelly, Lilienfeld, & Schmeelk, 2006; Van Honk et al., 2002). Machiavellianism is perceived as reclusive, cold, unsociable, and distrustful (Festinger, 2013; Rauthmann & Will, 2011). Psychopathy and Machiavellianism have been deemed as identical traits (Paulhus & Williams, 2002; Paulhus, Williams, & Harms, 2001), and both do not receive the same appeal as narcissism. In a speed-dating study, narcissism was the only attractive trait associated with short-term and long-term relationships due to their extraversion and physical attractiveness (Jauk, Neubauer, Mairunteregger, Pemp, Sieber, & Rauthmann, 2016). Psychopathy and Machiavellianism were desired only for short-term relationships. There are limitations however to the above studies as they did not explore attractiveness of the DT personalities in different forms, e.g. attractiveness of domineering qualities over submissive, which the present study will address.

Research argues that personality is a strong predictor when engaging in relationships (Buss & Barnes, 1986; Lewandowski, Aron, & Gee, 2007; Kniffin & Wilson, 2004; Swami et al., 2010). Earlier research on attraction and personality outline the vitality of attribute interaction at the primary phases of attraction (as cited in Schmitt, 2002). Our attraction towards others can be explained with the Similarity/Attraction theory (Byrne, 1971, as cited in

Huston, 2013). According to this theory, people tend to be attracted to individuals they share similarities with, more specifically, personality characteristics (Montoya, Horton & Kirchner, 2008; Singh & Tan, 1992). Sharing similar personalities with those close to you provides a sense of affirmation that the person is not alone; it ensures that the person will be easily accepted; interaction is more pleasurable than being with someone dissimilar; reduces conflict; and lastly, it opens the person up to meet more similar individuals (Morry, Kito, & Ortiz, 2010; Hatfield & Rapson, 1992; Morry, 2005). Therefore, the present study will examine the level of personality similarity between the participants and the characters profiles to assess whether personality similarity in the DT traits influence attractiveness of the DT.

Although shedding light into our interpersonal tendencies towards others, the similarity/attraction theory is not a definite prediction of every attraction outcomes. Certain studies argue that individuals often pursue others that complement their characteristics, as opposed to being identical, as they favour personalities that they lack in (Schmitt, 2002; Eagly & Wood, 1999). According to researchers (Kiesler, 1983; Smith, Traupman, Uchino, & Berg, 2010; Cundiff, Smith, Butner, Critchfield, & Nealey-Moore, 2015), affiliation, i.e. warmth and coldness, and control, i.e. dominance and submissive, are the most prominent traits that demonstrate the Complementary Fit theory. As reported, individuals favour others who are similar in affiliation, however individuals favour others who are dissimilar in control. In contrast, Markey and Markey (2013) found that dissimilarities in control resulted in lower relationship satisfaction. Accordingly, when similar personalities involve negative traits, some people would rather the company of others who demonstrate dissimilarities (Schmitt, 2002; Cundiff et al., 2015; Kiesler, 1983; Smith et al., 2010). Although encouraging understanding and commonality, relationships are not solely based on the closeness and connection between partners, however involve aspects of separateness that occur in between such connections.

Therefore, in testing the second hypothesis, the current study will thus address such uncertainties.

Hypothesis 1: people are more attracted to others who score similarly in the DT personalities as them than others with dissimilar personalities.

Another factor that may influence attraction towards the DT is gender. Research states that males score higher on narcissism than women (Twenge, Konrath, Foster, Campbell, & Bushman, 2008; Campbell & Twenge, 2003), although these studies also show that narcissistic tendencies have increased over the years for both men and women, but particularly in women. According to Twenge and Campbell (2009) the present generation, also known as the Millennial Generation or “Generation Me”, have become an ‘age of entitlement’. They are confident, ambitious, and open-minded; however, are dubious, self-involved, and detached. Majority of research favours that men demonstrate higher scores in Machiavellianism than women (Jonason, Li, Webster, & Schmitt, 2009; Dahling & Whitaker, 2008; Paulhus & Williams, 2002), however other studies have concluded inconsistent results uncovering no sex differences (Rayburn, Overby, & Hammond, 2003), or found women to score higher (Mostafa, 2007; Gable, Hollon, & Dangelo, 1990). In terms of psychopathy, this trait relates to 5% of the population, with the greatest representatives being men at 4%, whereas women scoring at 1% (Mealey, 1995; Cale & Lilienfield, 2002).

Research posits that men and women differ in how they choose their mates (Khaleque, 2018). Women are inclined to pursue men who are strong, confident, dominant, and charming; whereas physical appearance is the primary factor in men’s attraction to women (Lucas, Wendorf, Imamoglu, Shen, Parkill, Weisfield; & Weisfield, 2004; Fletcher et al., 2004).

Although it does not depend solely on appearance, it is considered to a great extent (Radwan, 2017). Men tend to view romance, passion, and physical pleasure more significantly than women (Khaleque, 2018; Pines, 1998; Fehr & Broughton, 2001). Women tend to be more selective and cautious when considering partners due to their concerns for security and raising children (Khaleque, 2018; Radwan, 2017). A man who possesses dominant and confident qualities – qualities highly evident in the DT traits – is appealing to a woman as they seek similar qualities in their children, which are hoped to be passed down (Pines, 1998; Radwan, 2017). Women tend to seek signs that are perceived as an indication of her desired traits, however may encounter something different (Radwan, 2017). Examples in misperceptions of the DT traits may be: an aggressive person may be seen as assertive and dominant; anti-social behaviours may be perceived as independent and confident; cheater style or a someone with multiple partners may seem more appealing as he is desired by many women; and the duplicitous and impulsive nature of the DT demonstrates intelligence, creativity, and a person who takes risks. For the above reasons, the current study predicts that women favour the DT personalities more than men.

Hypothesis 2: women are more attracted to the DT personalities than men.

Age is another interesting factor to consider that may influence attraction to the DT. Studies have shown that as a person grows, so do their attitudes and behaviours; and as their attitudes and behaviours develop, so do the nature and patterns of their relationships (Khaleque, 2018). As people grow into different stages of adulthood, passion and excitement become less significant and commitment and intimacy are more valued (Shallcross, Ford, Floerke, & Mauss, 2013). The physical elements of a relationship (e.g. euphoria, excitement, and libido) are less valued; whereas psychological elements (e.g. compassion, affection, concern) are more

valued (Kalra, Subramanyam, & Pinto, 2011). As the DT is characterised by impulsivity, risk-taking, and in pursuit of personal and short-term benefits, the current study predicts that younger individuals – who seek excitement and new experiences – are more attracted to the DT than older individuals – who seek balance and commitment. Previous research on age, demonstrated that younger women found the DT personalities more attractive than older women, and older women are substantially more attracted to personalities low in the DT traits than younger women (Qureshi, Harris, and Atkinson, 2016). Although, they also found that younger women are more attracted to personalities low in the DT traits than personalities high in the DT traits. Additionally, an abundance of research exploring attraction to the DT has been largely based on college participants; therefore, the current study will address this limitation and explore various age groups.

In defining “younger” and “older” individuals, we will look to Levinson’s Seasons of Life theory (1986, as cited in Peterson, 2014). Levinson’s theory of adult development outlines the different stages and challenges of adulthood in terms of forming a life structure. As the individual moves towards balance and wholeness, each stage is influenced by the different social norms relative to the individual’s specific age group, more specifically regarding relationships and career. Levinson theory outlines seven stages: i) early adult transition (age 17-22); ii) entering the adult world (age 22-28); iii) age thirty transition (age 28-33); iv) settling down (age 33-40); v) mid-life transition (age 40-45); vi) entering middle adulthood (age 45-50); vi) late adulthood (age 50+). We will focus on participants in the first two stages in defining “younger” individuals as they are still transitioning into the adult world and only at the beginning of making life choices. In defining “older” individuals, we will focus on participants in the remaining seasons as such individuals seek to change their life structure, invest in major commitments, and settle down. As their obligations and expectations grow, so

must they; meaning having the right people surrounding them. “Younger” individuals are still exploring their options, including relationships, and so initiate relationships with various kinds of people. Therefore, it is predicted that younger individuals favour the DT personalities more than older individuals.

Hypothesis 3: younger individuals are more attracted to the DT personalities than older individuals.

Chapter 2

Methods

2.1. Participants

Participants (N = 121) in the study consisted of males (N = 61) and females (N = 59) and were categorised into the following age groups: 18-22 (N = 39), 23-28 (N = 27), 29-39 (N = 36) and 40 and over (N = 19). Participants were obtained through opportunity sampling; selection was based on who was available and willing. Participants were recruited through social networking websites, such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Individuals were eligible to participate in the study if he/she was: i) eighteen years old and over; and ii) single/not romantically involved.

2.2. Design

The present study is a correlational study using a between-participants design. Randomisation was not used in any way. Variables measured were as follows: i) personality similarity and dissimilarity to profiles; ii) males and females; iii) age groups of: 18-22, 23-28, 29-39, and 40 and over; and iv) total attractiveness ratings for narcissism, psychopathy and Machiavellianism in their high and low dimensions.

2.3. Measures

The study involved an online survey. The survey consisted of DT personality profiles, which were rated on attractiveness through a 5-point Likert scale, as presented in *Appendix 6.2. section 2*. Twenty-four personality profiles were presented: four high in narcissism, four low in narcissism, four high in psychopathy, four low in psychopathy, four high in Machiavellianism, and four low in Machiavellianism. The personas high in the DT composite

were created to depict the personality descriptors demonstrated in Jonason and Webster (2010) 'Dirty Dozen' measure. The personas low in the DT composites were created to contrast the personas high in the DT composites, e.g. a high narcissistic character wishes to be the centre of attention, whereas a low narcissistic character wishes to blend in with the crowd. Character profiles were presented alone without depictions of physical appearance as the responses may influence a potential bias. Character profiles refrained from creating indications to features that may influence responses to a potential bias, e.g. career, educational achievement (Baize & Schroeder, 1995), and property ownership (Buss & Barnes, 1986). Personality profiles were ordered as follows: high in narcissism, low in narcissism, high in psychopathy, low in psychopathy, high in Machiavellianism, and low in Machiavellianism. To determine that attractiveness ratings for profiles were based on considerations as a romantic partner, as oppose other relations (e.g. friendship or work mates), participants were asked to rate the likelihood to which he/she would consider the character as a potential romantic partner. This was done through a 5-point Likert scale.

The 'Dirty Dozen' measure (Jonason & Webster, 2010) was conducted to address the participants self-reported DT scores, as presented in *Appendix 6.2. Section 3*. The DD consisted of 12 items – four items designated to each DT trait – which were rated through a 7-point Likert scale. The DD is a concise and reliable measure of the DT personalities (Jonason & Webster, 2010). It is adapted and integrated from the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (Raskin & Terry, 1988, as cited in Jonason & Webster, 2010), the Self-Reported Psychopathy Scale-III (Paulhus, Hemphill, & Hare, in press, as cited in Jonason & Webster, 2010), and the Mach-IV (Christie & Geis, 1970, as cited in Jonason & Webster, 2010).

For any participant that experienced any troubling emotions before, during, or after the survey, links to mental health organisations were provided in the debriefing form.

2.4. Procedure

Participation was via online questionnaire. The study was posted on social media websites, such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. By following the URL link provided on the social media post, participants were directed to the survey on Google Docs. The survey comprised of four sections: i) demographic questions; ii) personality profiles that depicted characters scoring high and low in narcissism, psychopathy and Machiavellianism which were rated on attractiveness; iii) the ‘Dirty Dozen’ measure (Jonason & Webster, 2010); and iv) debriefing form.

Participants were presented with a letter of information about the study and eligibility. Participants were informed that by completing and submitting the survey signified their informed consent. To avoid potential bias, participants were informed that the study was an evaluation of personality descriptions, however was later revealed in the debriefing form. Upon beginning the survey, participants were presented with demographic questions. Participants were then presented with the personality profiles and asked to read each profile carefully and rate their level of attractiveness through a 5-point Likert scale. This was measured from 1 (*highly unattractive*) to 5 (*highly attractive*). Following each profile, participants were asked to rate the likelihood to which he/she would consider the character as a potential romantic partner. This was rated through a 5-point Likert scale, which measured from 1 (*highly unlikely*) to 5 (*highly likely*). The next section presented the DD measure, which was rated through a 7-point Likert scale. This was measured from 1 (*Disagree strongly*) to 7 (*Agree strongly*). Lastly, participants were presented with a debriefing form which provided a full background to the

study. Participants were informed that withdrawal was still possible after debriefing. Additionally, in order to achieve adequate numbers of participants in each age category, it was requested that, if possible, each participant forward the survey to another individual of a different age group to them. The duration of the survey was between 10-15 minutes. The survey was open for responses to the public for a duration of 2 weeks.

2.5. Analysis

For hypothesis 2, it was predicted that individuals were more attracted to similar others than dissimilar others. Therefore, level of personality similarity was measured between each participant's DD score and the personality profiles. A complete Dirty Dozen score was not measured; scoring was calculated for each DT trait alone in order to identify the level of match to the profiles, i.e. the twelve items were not calculated as a whole DT score, but rather calculated and averaged the four items designated to each trait. As the personality profiles demonstrated characters of high and low scores in narcissism, psychopathy, and Machiavellianism; to create a level of match/similarity, the averaged DD scores were converted into: low (1-4.39) and high (4.5-7) scores. These were then compared with each profile to determine level of similarity. Consider narcissism for example, the level of match between personalities are as follows: high narcissistic profile and a high personal narcissistic score demonstrate similar personalities; low narcissistic profile and a low narcissistic score demonstrate similarity; high narcissistic profile and low narcissistic score demonstrate dissimilarity; and low narcissistic profile and high narcissistic score demonstrate dissimilarity. An average score was also calculated for attractiveness ratings for each personality dimension, i.e. average attractiveness rating for high narcissistic profiles, low narcissistic profiles, high psychopathy profiles, low psychopathy profiles, high Machiavellianism profiles, and low Machiavellianism profiles.

Chapter 3

Results

3.1. Personality similarity

Independent samples t-tests were conducted to determine for differences in attractiveness ratings of DT personality profiles between individuals with similar and dissimilar DT personalities. Averaged DD scores and attractiveness ratings for each trait were used. Descriptive statistics for attractiveness ratings of narcissism, psychopathy and Machiavellianism profiles and participants level of similarity to profiles are presented in *Table 2*.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of attractiveness ratings of the DT personality profiles for level of similarity for corresponding personality.

Level of personality similarity to profile		Similar		Dissimilar	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Attractiveness ratings of the DT					
Narcissism	High	3.80	1.32	2.81	1.25
	Low	3.39	1.30	2.40	1.42
Psychopathy	High	1.86	1.01	1.87	0.92
	Low	4.74	0.51	4.45	0.83
Machiavellianism	High	1.54	1.00	1.48	0.85
	Low	4.57	0.79	4.85	0.47

The results conveyed a statistically significant difference in attractiveness ratings for high narcissistic profiles in the scores for similar ($M = 3.80$, $SD = 1.38$) and dissimilar ($M = 2.81$, $SD = 1.25$) personalities; $t(119) = 3.98$, $p = 0.00$. These results indicate that level of personality similarity does have an effect on attractiveness ratings for high-scoring narcissistic profiles. Specifically, individuals scoring similarly high in narcissism have increasing attractiveness for others high in narcissism. There was a significant difference in attractiveness

ratings for low-scoring narcissistic profiles in the scores for similar ($M = 3.90$, $SD = 1.3$) and dissimilar ($M = 2.4$, $SD = 1.42$) personalities; $t(119) = 3.87$, $p = 0.00$. These results indicate that level of personality similarity does have an effect on attractiveness rating for low narcissism profiles. Specifically, individuals scoring similarly low in narcissism have increasing attractiveness for others low in narcissism.

There was no significant difference in attractiveness ratings for high psychopathic profiles in the scores for similar ($M = 1.86$, $SD = 1.01$) and dissimilar ($M = 1.87$, $SD = 0.92$) personalities; $t(119) = -0.07$, $p = 0.946$. These results indicate that level of personality similarity does not have an effect on attractiveness rating for high psychopathy profiles. There was a significant difference in attractiveness ratings for low psychopathic profiles in the scores for similar ($M = 4.74$, $SD = 0.51$) and dissimilar ($M = 4.45$, $SD = 0.83$) personalities; $t(119) = 2.27$, $p = 0.025$. These results indicate that level of personality similarity does have an effect on attractiveness rating for low psychopathy profiles. Specifically, individuals scoring similarly low in psychopathy have greater attractiveness for others low in psychopathy.

There was no significant difference in attractiveness ratings for high Machiavellian profiles in the scores for similar ($M = 1.54$, $SD = 1.00$) and dissimilar ($M = 1.48$, $SD = 0.85$) personalities; $t(119) = 0.27$, $p = 0.787$. These results indicate that level of personality similarity does not have an effect on attractiveness rating for high Machiavellianism profiles. There was a significant difference in attractiveness ratings for low Machiavellian profiles in the scores for similar ($M = 4.86$, $SD = 0.46$) and dissimilar ($M = 4.55$, $SD = 0.78$) personalities; $t(119) = 2.61$, $p = 0.01$. These results indicate that level of personality similarity does have an effect on attractiveness rating for low Machiavellianism profiles. Specifically, individuals scoring

similarly low in Machiavellianism have greater attractiveness for others low in Machiavellianism.

To sum up, individuals high in narcissism were more attracted to similar others high in narcissism than dissimilar others; individuals low in narcissism were more attracted to similar others low in narcissism than dissimilar others; individuals low psychopathy were more attracted to similar others low in psychopathy than dissimilar others; and individuals low in Machiavellianism were more attracted to similar others low in Machiavellianism than dissimilar others; whereas individuals high in psychopathy and Machiavellianism were more attracted to dissimilar others.

3.2. Gender differences

Independent samples t-tests were conducted to compare attractiveness ratings of DT personality profiles in males and females. Averaged attractiveness ratings for each trait were used. Descriptive statistics of attractiveness ratings for narcissism, psychopathy and Machiavellianism profiles between males and females are presented in *Table 3*.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics of personality ratings for males and females.

Gender		Male		Female	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Attractiveness ratings of the DT					
Narcissism	High	3.10	1.34	3.22	1.43
	Low	3.02	1.35	3.05	1.48
Psychopathy	High	1.80	0.93	1.93	0.96
	Low	4.61	0.67	4.73	0.55
Machiavellianism	High	1.48	0.85	1.53	0.94
	Low	4.72	0.61	4.85	0.52

The results conveyed no significant difference in attractiveness ratings for high narcissistic profiles in the scores for males ($M = 3.1$, $SD = 1.34$) and females ($M = 3.22$, $SD = 1.43$); $t(118) = -0.48$, $p = 0.630$. There was no significant difference in attractiveness ratings for low narcissistic profiles in the scores for males ($M = 3.02$, $SD = 1.35$) and females ($M = 3.05$, $SD = 1.48$); $t(118) = -0.13$, $p = 0.894$. There was no significant difference in attractiveness ratings for high psychopathic profiles in the scores for males ($M = 1.8$, $SD = 0.93$) and females ($M = 1.93$, $SD = 0.96$); $t(118) = -0.75$, $p = 0.456$. There was no significant difference in attractiveness ratings for low psychopathic profiles in the scores for males ($M = 4.61$, $SD = 0.67$) and females ($M = 4.73$, $SD = 0.55$); $t(118) = -1.09$, $p = 0.276$. There was no significant difference in attractiveness ratings for high Machiavellian profiles in the scores for males ($M = 1.48$, $SD = 0.85$) and females ($M = 1.53$, $SD = 0.94$) conditions; $t(118) = -0.31$, $p = 0.759$. There was no significant difference in attractiveness ratings for low Machiavellian profiles in the scores for male ($M = 4.72$, $SD = 0.61$) and female ($M = 4.85$, $SD = 0.52$) conditions; $t(118) = -0.22$, $p = 0.225$. These results indicate that gender does not have an effect on attractiveness of the DT personalities in all dimensions. However, males and females demonstrated similar findings as both genders were: slightly more attracted towards high narcissistic characters than low narcissistic characters; significantly more attracted to low psychopathy characters than high psychopathy characters; and significantly more attracted to low Machiavellianism characters than high Machiavellianism characters.

3.3. Age differences

A one-way analysis of variance was conducted to compare the effect of age on attractiveness ratings of DT personality profiles in younger age groups, i.e. 18-22-year-olds and 23-28-year-olds, and older age groups, i.e. 29-39-year-olds and 40-year-olds and over. Averaged attractiveness ratings for each trait were used. Descriptive statistics of attractiveness

ratings for narcissism, psychopathy and Machiavellianism profiles between age groups are presented in *Table 4*.

Table 3: Descriptive statistics of personality ratings for four different age groups.

Age group		18-22		23-28		29-39		40+	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Narcissism	High	3.90	1.37	3.67	1.14	2.64	0.87	1.84	1.17
	Low	2.31	1.45	2.44	1.09	3.58	0.94	4.42	1.07
Psychopathy	High	2.26	1.04	2.22	0.85	1.53	0.77	1.21	0.42
	Low	4.49	0.68	4.59	0.64	4.78	0.59	4.95	0.23
Machiavellianism	High	1.69	0.95	1.74	1.20	1.28	0.61	1.16	0.37
	Low	4.72	0.56	4.74	0.71	4.81	0.58	4.95	0.23

The results conveyed that there was a significant effect of age on attractiveness ratings for high-scoring narcissistic profiles at the $p < .05$ level for the four age groups ($F(3, 117) = 17.68, p = 0.00$). More specifically, post hoc analyses using the Tukey HSD test indicated that attractiveness ratings of high narcissism profiles were significantly different in the 18-22 age group than the 29-39 age group (Mean difference = 1.26, $p = 0.00$, CI [95%] 0.56, 1.96) and the 40 and over age group (Mean difference = 2.06, $p = 0.00$, CI [95%] 1.21, 2.90). Additionally, attractiveness ratings of high narcissistic profiles were significantly different in the 23-28 age group than the 29-39 age group (Mean difference = 1.03, $p = 0.004$, CI [95%] 0.27, 1.80) and the 40 and over age group (Mean difference = 1.82, $p = 0.00$, CI [95%] 0.92, 2.78). The 23-28 age group did not significantly differ from the 18-22 age group and the 29-39 age group did not significantly differ from the 40 and over age group. The results indicate that age does have an effect on attractiveness of high narcissistic characters. Specifically, 18-22 and 23-28 age groups demonstrated significantly greater attractiveness ratings of high narcissism characters than 29-39 and 40 and over age groups.

There was a significant effect of age on attractiveness ratings of low narcissistic profiles at the $p < .05$ level for the four age groups ($F(3, 117) = 18.58, p = 0.00$). More specifically, post hoc analyses using the Tukey HSD test indicated that attractiveness ratings of low narcissistic profiles were significantly different in the 29-39 age group than the 18-22 age group (Mean difference = 1.28, $p = 0.00$, CI [95%] 0.57, 1.99) and the 23-28 age group (Mean difference = 1.14, $p = 0.001$, CI [95%] 0.36, 1.92). Additionally, attractiveness ratings of low narcissistic profiles were significantly different in the 40 and over age group than the 18-22 age group (Mean difference = 2.11, $p = 0.00$, CI [95%] 1.25, 2.97) and the 23-28 age group (Mean difference = 1.98, $p = 0.00$, CI [95%] 1.06, 2.90). The 23-28 age group did not significantly differ from the 18-22 age group and the 29-39 age group did not significantly differ from the 40 and over age group. The results indicate that age does have an effect on attractiveness of low narcissistic characters. Specifically, 29-39 and 40 and over age groups demonstrated significantly greater attractiveness ratings of low narcissistic characters than younger age groups.

There was a significant effect of age on attractiveness ratings of high-scoring psychopathy profiles at the $p < .05$ level for the four age groups ($F(3, 117) = 10.03, p = 0.00$). More specifically, post hoc analyses using the Tukey HSD test indicated that attractiveness ratings of high psychopathy profiles were significantly different in the 18-22 age group than the 29-39 age group (Mean difference = 0.73, $p = 0.002$, CI [95%] 0.22, 1.24) and the 40 and over age group (Mean difference = 1.05, $p = 0.00$, CI [95%] 0.43, 1.66). Additionally, attractiveness ratings of high psychopathy profiles were significantly different in the 23-28 age group than the 29-39 age group (Mean difference = 0.69, $p = 0.009$, CI [95%] 0.13, 1.26) and the 40 and over age group (Mean difference = 1.01, $p = 0.001$, CI [95%] 0.35, 1.67). The 23-28 age group did not significantly differ from the 18-22 age group and the 29-39 age group did

not significantly differ from the 40 and over age group. The results indicate that age does have an effect on attractiveness of high-scoring psychopathy characters. Specifically, 18-22 and 23-28 age groups demonstrated significantly greater attractiveness ratings of high psychopathy characters than older age groups.

There was a significant effect of age on attractiveness ratings of low-scoring psychopathy profiles at the $p < .05$ level for the four age groups ($F(3, 117) = 3.15, p = 0.028$). More specifically, post hoc analyses using the Tukey HSD test indicated that attractiveness ratings of low psychopathy profiles were significantly different in the 40 and over age group than the 18-22 age group (Mean difference = 0.46, $p = 0.033$, CI [95%] 0.03, 0.89). There was no significant difference between the 18-22, 23-28 and 29-39 age group, and the 23-28 and 29-39 age group did not significantly differ from the 40 and over age group. The results indicate that age does have an effect on attractiveness of low psychopathy characters. Specifically, the oldest age group, i.e. 40 and over, demonstrated significantly greater attractiveness ratings of low psychopathy characters than youngest age group, i.e. 18-22.

There was a significant effect of age on attractiveness ratings of high Machiavellian profiles at the $p < .05$ level for the four age groups ($F(3, 117) = 3.13, p = 0.028$), however post hoc analyses using the Tukey HSD test found no significant results. There was no significant effect of age on attractiveness ratings of low Machiavellianism profiles at the $p < .05$ level for the four age groups ($F(3, 117) = 0.77, p = 0.513$).

To conclude, younger age groups were significantly more attracted to high narcissistic characters than older age groups. Younger individuals were also more attracted to high narcissistic characters than low narcissistic characters. Conversely, older individuals were

significantly more attracted to characters low in narcissism than those high in narcissism. Younger age groups were significantly more attracted to others high in psychopathy than older individuals. Older age groups were significantly more attracted to low psychopathy characters. However, younger individuals favoured low-scoring psychopathy profiles significantly more than high-scoring psychopathy profiles. Similarly, for Machiavellianism, younger individuals favoured high-scoring Machiavellian characters more than older individuals, however younger age groups favoured low-scoring Machiavellian characters significantly more than high-scoring Machiavellian characters.

Chapter 4

Discussion

Results were at most consistent with predictions of the study. Overall, narcissism was received as highly attractive by males and females, by younger age groups, and by similar others. Psychopathy and Machiavellianism were perceived as unattractive traits by all. Machiavellianism was perceived as the most unattractive trait and psychopathy was relatively close.

4.1. Attractiveness of the Dark Triad

Despite narcissism being one of the negative traits that comprise the DT, narcissism was deemed highly appealing. When considering the qualities that determine a narcissist, it is understood that they seek attention, to be admired, prestige and status, and expect special favours from others (Jonason & Webster, 2010). Although, to some degree, they are desires that many people possess. As Freud (1914/1957, 1923/1961, as cited in Ronningstam, 2005) outlines, narcissism arises from: i) strong self-perceptions; ii) aspects of life that may impede on self-esteem, such as worries of failure or losing love; iii) defensive strategies that aid in resolving conflict (e.g. projection and denial); iv) the need for perfection; and v) the need to establish their position in a relationships. When considering the above reasons, it is not difficult to relate to a number (or all) of the factors. Therefore, possessing such narcissistic desires are not so abhorrent. Additionally, previous research exploring perceptions of narcissists found that they are highly admired for their confident, dominant, and self-loving characters (Holtzman & Strube, 2010; Campbell & Foster, 2002). Additionally, narcissists are perceived as holding high status (Young & Pinsky, 2006; Brunell, Gentry, Campbell, Hoffman, Kuhnert, DeMarree, 2008), popular (Holtzman & Strube, 2012; Back, Schmukle, & Egloff, 2010); and

achieve multiple partners (Jonason, Luevano, & Adams, in press) as they are highly accomplished in short-term mating (Jonason et al., 2009; Holtzman & Strube, 2010). In line with previous studies, narcissism is the most attractive and 'brightest' amongst the DT personalities (Rauthmann, 2012; Back, Schmukle, & Egloff, 2010; Holtzman & Strube, 2012). Additionally, the high regard held towards narcissists provide indication for their desirability by similar others. In line with the attraction/similarity theory, personality similarity is a strong determinant of attractiveness towards others (Montoya et al., 2008; Singh & Tan, 1992; Byrne, 1971; Kiesler, 1983), specifically who are similar in affiliation (Kiesler, 1983; Smith et al., 2010; Cundiff et al., 2015). Therefore, individuals scoring low in the DT traits were more attracted to low-scoring DT profiles as they were similarly who are warm and friendly. Seeking out similar others provides individuals with a sense of togetherness, closeness, acceptance, and pleasurable experiences (Morry et al., 2010; Hatfield & Rapson, 1992; Morry, 2005).

In contrast, the similarity/attraction theory did not apply to high-scoring psychopathy profiles and high-scoring Machiavellianism profiles. Inconsistencies with this theory have also been identified by other researchers whereby, similarities in negative traits are not predictive of attraction (Schmitt, 2002; Cundiff et al., 2015; Smith et al., 2010; Kiesler, 1983). People who possess negative traits are not attracted to others with similar negative traits and would rather seek out and be in the company of others with dissimilar personalities. The psychopath character demonstrated callousness, lack of moral reasoning and remorse, and a cynical nature; and the Machiavellian character demonstrated manipulative, deceitful, exploitative behaviours, and the use of flattery. Therefore, such antagonistic, vindictive and malevolent behaviours are indicative of the heavy disfavour towards psychopathy and Machiavellianism. As previously reviewed, individuals high in psychopathy are perceived to be insensitive, unpredictable, anti-social (Patrick, 2005; Hare, 1993; Connelly et al., 2006; Van Honk et al., 2002), and are

pragmatic in their decisions-making, however present no emotional or meaningful factor (Bartels & Pizarro, 2011). They seek only what benefits them and are oblivious to the risks or potential social and personal consequences of their actions (Reidy, Zeichner, Miller, & Martinez, 2007). The Machiavellian's strong correlation and identicalness to psychopathy (Paulhus & Williams; Paulhus, Williams, & Harms, 2001), would suggest for their similar results. The Machiavellian character made a clear illustration of their distrustful and cheater style (Jones & Paulhus, 2009; Festinger, 2013; Rauthmann & Will, 2011; Jones & Paulhus, 2009). Although psychopathy is deemed the darkest amongst the DT personalities (Rauthmann & Kolar, 2012; Paulhus & Williams, 2002), the current study found that Machiavellianism was received as the most undesirable amongst the DT traits.

4.2. Attractiveness and gender

Inconsistent with predictions, there were no differences in attractiveness ratings for narcissism, psychopathy and Machiavellianism between males and females. Although, women's greater desire towards high narcissistic profiles over low narcissistic profile is consistent with previous research, whereby women are more attracted to men who demonstrate strong, confident and dominant characters (Lucas et al., 2004; Fletcher et al., 2004). This desire towards such qualities is due to the fact that women seek similar qualities to be passed down and develop in their children (Pines, 1998; Radwan, 2017). Due to concerns for security and raising children, women are generally more selective and cautious when considering partners (Khaleque, 2018; Radwan, 2017). Therefore, women's strong disfavour for high-scoring psychopathy characters and high-scoring Machiavellianism characters is also consistent with this concept; given their callous, chaotic, remorseless, and vindictive nature (Williams & Paulhus, 2004; Hare, 1993; Jones & Paulhus, 2009; Garcia et al., 2015). Conversely, women's

strong favour towards low-scoring psychopathy profiles and low-scoring Machiavellianism profiles indicate their desire for honest, selfless, and caring characters.

4.3. Attractiveness and age groups

As predicted, younger individuals were more attracted to the DT than older individuals. In accordance with previous research argues, younger and older individuals demonstrate contrasting pursuits when engaging in relationships as older individuals seek balance, commitment and intimacy (Peterson, 2014; Shallcross et al., 2013), whereas younger individuals seek excitement and passion (Khaleque, 2018; Kalra, Subramanyam, & Pinto, 2011). Accordingly, older individuals were more attracted to personality profiles low in narcissism, psychopathy and Machiavellianism, as such characters provide compassion, concern for others, are honest and selfless. However, in terms of younger age groups, such findings were only consistent for narcissism as younger age groups were significantly more attracted to low-scoring psychopaths and Machiavellian characters. Although seeking excitement and new experiences, perhaps the darkness that lies behind psychopathy and Machiavellianism are too malevolent to be attractive. According to Twenge et al. (2008) and Campbell and Twenge (2003), narcissistic tendencies have significantly grown over time. Twenge and Campbell (2009) argue that the present generation have developed into the “Generation Me” with their confident, eager and hopeful nature, but also egocentric, doubtful and detached characters. Therefore, it is suggested that the significant attraction towards high narcissistic characters amongst younger individuals may be a result of the rise in narcissistic traits amongst newer generations and their desire for similar others (Byrne, 1971, as cited in Huston, 2013).

4.4. Limitations and future directions

The present study demonstrates various limitations which aid in directing future research. Firstly, the personality profiles rated by participants were constructed based on the DD measure, although its reliability and validity are still questionable. Designed to portray a shortened version of the NPI, SRP-III, and the Mach-IV, the greatly condensed nature of the DD scale may demonstrate curtailments. Therefore, future research should further replicate current findings with other measures of the DT, such as the NPI, SRP-III, and the Mach-IV. Second, personality profiles depicted characters scoring high and low in each trait alone and did not include characters possessing a combination of the DT traits. Future research should address this limitation in order to measure attractiveness of a character scoring high and low in a combination of the DT traits, as opposed to high in narcissism alone or low in narcissism alone, etc. Third, attractiveness of the DT was based on personality profiles alone, although an abundance of research demonstrates the physical attractiveness of the DT (Holtzman & Strube, 2010; Back et al., 2010; Buffardi & Campbell, 2008; Morf & Rhodewalt, 2001). Future research should measure and compare attractiveness of the DT personality and physical appearance. Fourth, deception was used to avoid potential bias of attractiveness ratings. Future research should further replicate current findings without the use of bias, to determine for any (if any) significant difference in attractiveness responses. Fifth, adding to the previous suggestion, future research should address evaluations of characters profiles, therefore participants can really identify the traits possessed by each character. Lastly, is the use of correlational methods as it does not determine cause and effect. Conversely, a strength to the current study is the use of correlational design as it enables for the measurement of the strength of a relationship between variables, thus providing strong indication for the direction of future research. Additionally, it is a much simpler method of research compared to more rigorous experimental procedures.

4.5. Conclusion

The DT has been a growing area of research in psychology. Adding to past knowledge, the current study investigated the desirability of the DT by measuring attractive ratings of high-scoring and low-scoring character profiles of the DT traits. Responses from males and females, younger and older age groups, and individuals with similar and dissimilar personality types were compared. To conclude from the present study, a narcissist is highly desirable by both males and females, by younger age groups, and by fellow narcissists. A psychopath and Machiavellian are highly undesirable.

Chapter 5

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Chapter 6

Appendix

6.1. Information sheet

An evaluation of personality descriptions

My name is Andrea Salvino (e-mail: [REDACTED]). I am a final year student of Dublin Business School, working towards a BA in Psychology. I am conducting a study in the Department of Psychology which contributes to my studies and will be submitted for examination. My supervisor is Dr Barbara Caska.

The current research is looking at evaluations of personality descriptions. I am inviting you to take part in this study which involves completing the enclosed survey.

Participants must be:

- 18 years and over
- Single/not romantically involved

If you do not meet both of the above criteria please not complete the questionnaire, however I would like to thank you for your time.

Participation is completely voluntary, and you may withdraw your participation at any time during the survey by exiting the window.

Participation is anonymous, and answers will not be identifiable. All surveys will be securely stored on a password protected computer and will be treated with strict confidentiality. Therefore, following submission of the survey, withdrawal will not be possible.

During the survey, if any negative feelings arise for you, I have included contact information for support services on the final page.

By submitting the survey, you are showing that you have read and understand the contents and are consenting to participate in the study.

Thank you for your time and participation!

6.2. Survey

Section 1: Demographic Questions

Please tick the box which is most applicable to you.

1. What is your gender?

Male

Female

2. What is your age group?

18 – 22

23 – 28

29 – 39

40 and over

Section 2: Personality profiles

This section will comprise of personality profiles. Please read each profile carefully and rate their level of attractiveness and then rate the likelihood that you would consider the individual as a potential romantic partner, based on their personality descriptions. Please answer honestly. There is no right or wrong answer.

Profile 1

I am a very outgoing person. I like to be surrounded by others and I enjoy the spotlight. People always love to hear all my stories. I am always thinking about my future, I know I am going to live a wonderful life full of greatness and success. I can live my life how I please. I am an extraordinary person capable of great things. Maybe one day someone will write my biography.

Highly unattractive : __1__ : __2__ : __3__ : __4__ : __5__ : Highly attractive

Rate the likelihood that you would consider the above individual as a potential romantic partner.

Highly unlikely : __1__ : __2__ : __3__ : __4__ : __5__ : Highly likely

Profile 2

I feel more comfortable blending in with the crowd. Sometimes I have a good story to tell. I like to think of my future every now and again, but I understand that nothing is certain, and people can't always live their lives exactly how they want. I can only hope to live a great life, but I am not too concerned about success. I am very much just like everybody else. There is no reason at all for people to interfere into my life.

Highly unattractive : __1__ : __2__ : __3__ : __4__ : __5__ : Highly attractive

Rate the likelihood that you would consider the above individual as a potential romantic partner.

Highly unlikely :__1__ : __2__ : __3__ : __4__ : __5__ : Highly likely

Profile 3

I love a good challenge, no matter big or small, as it provides me self-fulfilment. If others cannot keep up, I don't see why I should renounce my rise to glory. I am a ruthless and strong-minded person. I like making my opinions heard and shredding arguments, but not for some deeper purpose, primarily just for fun. I have an unyielding honesty, and whether that makes me seem insensitive or not, is your opinion.

Highly unattractive :__1__ : __2__ : __3__ : __4__ : __5__ : Highly attractive

Rate the likelihood that you would consider the above individual as a potential romantic partner.

Highly unlikely :__1__ : __2__ : __3__ : __4__ : __5__ : Highly likely

Profile 4

Life will constantly throw new challenges at you, whether big or small, I try to overcome these challenges to the best of my ability. Sometime people may lose sight of things, including me, so I always think it's important to help each other out. I am strong-willed, but also compassionate towards others. I keep my opinions to myself as I do not like to push my views where they are not wanted. I am generally honest as I don't want to hurt other people's feelings.

Highly unattractive :__1__ : __2__ : __3__ : __4__ : __5__ : Highly attractive

Rate the likelihood that you would consider the above individual as a potential romantic partner.

Highly unlikely :__1__ : __2__ : __3__ : __4__ : __5__ : Highly likely

Profile 5

I am an ambitious and determined person. I know what I want and know how to get what I want. One cannot get ahead in life without cutting corners here and there. Sometimes one must exploit or manipulate others or even to bend the truth now and again to get to the next step – a little white lie won't hurt anyone. Let's be honest, the ones who get ahead in the world are not always the most clean, moral people. Just don't make the mistake of getting caught. It is better to be important than to be humble and honest.

Highly unattractive :__1__ : __2__ : __3__ : __4__ : __5__ : Highly attractive

Rate the likelihood that you would consider the above individual as a potential romantic partner.

Highly unlikely :__1__:__2__:__3__:__4__:__5__: Highly likely

Profile 6

I am passionate about the things that give me joy. I think that being a good and genuine person will get you to where you deserve to be in life. It is important to treat others as you wish to be treated, with kindness and compassion. No good comes from using, lying, and manipulating others. Cheaters never win, and winners never cheat. People will always get caught. Being an honest and humble person is better than being important.

Highly unattractive :__1__:__2__:__3__:__4__:__5__: Highly attractive

Rate the likelihood that you would consider the above individual as a potential romantic partner.

Highly unlikely :__1__:__2__:__3__:__4__:__5__: Highly likely

Profile 7

I am an ambitious and enthusiastic person. I love trying out and exploring new things. However, I can be competitive and quite the show off. There's nothing wrong with wanting to be the best. It makes me feel safe, in control, and admired. I often get upset when people don't notice me. Although, I know I am more capable than other people. I am a special person and I will be very successful one day.

Highly unattractive :__1__:__2__:__3__:__4__:__5__: Highly attractive

Rate the likelihood that you would consider the above individual as a potential romantic partner.

Highly unlikely :__1__:__2__:__3__:__4__:__5__: Highly likely

Profile 8

I'm not much for action and adventure - I like to stick to what I like and know. I do not compare myself to anyone but myself. I know that I don't always have to be the best. I don't really care if people look at me or not, I prefer to blend in with the crowd. There is much that I can learn from others. I am very much like everybody else and can only hope to be accomplish what I seek.

Highly unattractive :__1__:__2__:__3__:__4__:__5__: Highly attractive

Rate the likelihood that you would consider the above individual as a potential romantic partner.

Highly unlikely :__1__ : __2__ : __3__ : __4__ : __5__ : Highly likely

Profile 9

I enjoy getting out into the world, engrossing myself in new and exciting things. It's impossible for me to just sit around doing nothing, so I find anything that keeps me stimulated. Inefficiency will only waste time and energy. I enjoy a good debate where I can make my opinions known and I like to shake things up to keep myself entertained. However, I'm more for winning arguments than building consensus. People appreciate my voice, but there are others who just can't handle the truth.

Highly unattractive : __1__ : __2__ : __3__ : __4__ : __5__ : Highly attractive

Rate the likelihood that you would consider the above individual as a potential romantic partner.

Highly unlikely :__1__ : __2__ : __3__ : __4__ : __5__ : Highly likely

Profile 10

I tend to be quite reserved. I take much pleasure in relaxing and having some peace and quiet to myself. Sometimes we all need to just slow down and get away from the hustle and bustle of the world. I like to remain composed and humble. I generally keep my opinions to myself as it's not always something people want to hear. I understand that each person has their own opinions and I would never want to overstep in any way.

Highly unattractive : __1__ : __2__ : __3__ : __4__ : __5__ : Highly attractive

Rate the likelihood that you would consider the above individual as a potential romantic partner.

Highly unlikely :__1__ : __2__ : __3__ : __4__ : __5__ : Highly likely

Profile 11

I tend to keep to myself as the only person you can trust in this world is yourself. I would never share my intentions with anyone unless it benefits me in some way, whether it's by lying or manipulating others, it's the only way to get ahead in life. I truly believe that everyone has a vicious streak, and when the opportunity arises, it will come out. Some people just get lazy or short-sighted to achieve their desired results. People tend to only work hard when forced to do so.

Highly unattractive : __1__ : __2__ : __3__ : __4__ : __5__ : Highly attractive

Rate the likelihood that you would consider the above individual as a potential romantic partner.

Highly unlikely :__1__ : __2__ : __3__ : __4__ : __5__ : Highly likely

Profile 12

I'm am what you call an open book. I'm always myself around others as I want people to know me for who I really am. I am generally very trusting of others. I am open about my thought and opinions as I like to help others in any way I can - using and manipulating others will never do any good. I believe we are all good people who sometimes make bad choices. We are all capable of great things and I like to think we can all help each other get there by being good, honest people.

Highly unattractive :__1__ : __2__ : __3__ : __4__ : __5__ : Highly attractive

Rate the likelihood that you would consider the above individual as a potential romantic partner.

Highly unlikely :__1__ : __2__ : __3__ : __4__ : __5__ : Highly likely

Profile 13

I love engrossing myself in new activities and tasks. I believe that I am a good leader and have a natural ability to influence others. I always know what to do and I am certain I am good as people always remind me. I like to be in power where I can assert my authority and I expect a lot from others. I aspire to be something great in the eyes of the world. I will not feel a sense of fulfilment until I get everything I deserve.

Highly unattractive :__1__ : __2__ : __3__ : __4__ : __5__ : Highly attractive

Rate the likelihood that you would consider the above individual as a potential romantic partner.

Highly unlikely :__1__ : __2__ : __3__ : __4__ : __5__ : Highly likely

Profile 14

I prefer keeping to myself, doing my own thing, and avoid any kind of group tasks. I don't particularly view myself as leader material as I am not very influential. I tend to get embarrassed when people commend me. Power is not something I seek; I don't have a problem following orders. I simply take pleasure in doing things for other people. I just wish to just be fairly happy. I take my pleasures as they come.

Highly unattractive :__1__ : __2__ : __3__ : __4__ : __5__ : Highly attractive

Rate the likelihood that you would consider the above individual as a potential romantic partner.

Highly unlikely :__1__ : __2__ : __3__ : __4__ : __5__ : Highly likely

Profile 15

I am driven by my focus and determination, whereas others may give up and move on – not that they would be of concern to me. I am confident in my abilities and I trust my judgement. I don't get caught up in emotions as emotional display only shows weakness. I like things done my way, which is winning but I don't feel it is my responsibility to do the heavy work. And as the saying goes "it's my way or the high way". If I must bend the truth here or there, then so be it. It's not something I would feel remorseful for, it won't hurt anyone.

Highly unattractive :__1__ : __2__ : __3__ : __4__ : __5__ : Highly attractive

Rate the likelihood that you would consider the above individual as a potential romantic partner.

Highly unlikely :__1__ : __2__ : __3__ : __4__ : __5__ : Highly likely

Profile 16

I am an ambitious determined person. Although, sometimes it's easier to give up, but I try my best to keep pushing forwards and to maintain the same focus and motivation in others. It's not always easy trying to figure out if we're making the right or wrong decisions, so sharing with others makes things feel less daunting. As the saying goes, "a problem shared is a problem halved". I think that as long as we all help each other out, we can all succeed. Winning isn't everything.

Highly unattractive :__1__ : __2__ : __3__ : __4__ : __5__ : Highly attractive

Rate the likelihood that you would consider the above individual as a potential romantic partner.

Highly unlikely :__1__ : __2__ : __3__ : __4__ : __5__ : Highly likely

Profile 17

I like to live life as if I was playing a game of chess, different pieces constantly on the move with careful thought and judgement, invariably planning and creating new tactics and plan of action. I tend to overtake my peers as it provides me power over the situation. Sometimes to get what you really want from others, tell them what they want to hear – flattery always helps! Honesty may not always be the best policy. I suppose it's impossible to be good in all respects.

Highly unattractive :__1__ : __2__ : __3__ : __4__ : __5__ : Highly attractive

Rate the likelihood that you would consider the above individual as a potential romantic partner.

Highly unlikely :__1__:__2__:__3__:__4__:__5__: Highly likely

Profile 18

I am an easy-going person and take life as it comes. We only have so much control over things, so I like to work at things in the best way I can. I look to others with open arms, with trust and kindness, as I would hope to be welcomed. I think we can all help each other out – life isn't a race. It is always best to be honest and straight with people as lying and greediness will get you nowhere. Honesty is always the best policy.

Highly unattractive :__1__:__2__:__3__:__4__:__5__: Highly attractive

Rate the likelihood that you would consider the above individual as a potential romantic partner.

Highly unlikely :__1__:__2__:__3__:__4__:__5__: Highly likely

Profile 19

I am a very active person, a go-getter; I will take on any dare and will do almost anything. People love me for my enthusiasm and charisma. I like when people admire me. I want to be somebody important, someone people look up to. Respect is very important to me and I expect to be treated with the respect that is due to me. I see myself as a good leader and highly influential. I take responsibility for my own decisions as I always know what I'm doing.

Highly unattractive :__1__:__2__:__3__:__4__:__5__: Highly attractive

Rate the likelihood that you would consider the above individual as a potential romantic partner.

Highly unlikely :__1__:__2__:__3__:__4__:__5__: Highly likely

Profile 20

I am a generally cautious person, so I prefer to stick to what I know. Whether that makes me boring or uninteresting, I am not very concerned about how others see me. I don't have to be admired or seen as important. People will respect me if I am deserving of it, but it's not something I hold much value to. It makes no difference to me if I am a leader or not, plus I don't see myself as very influential. Sometimes, I am not even sure what I am doing.

Highly unattractive :__1__:__2__:__3__:__4__:__5__: Highly attractive

Rate the likelihood that you would consider the above individual as a potential romantic partner.

Highly unlikely :__1__:__2__:__3__:__4__:__5__: Highly likely

Profile 21

I am a person who leaps before I look, as oppose to sitting idle analysing my every action. Any mistake along the way can solve itself. I enjoy pushing boundaries, taking risks and jumping into action. I enjoy drama, excitement, passion, but not for the emotional thrill, but because its stimulating. I don't like routine and structure. I'm expected to abide by rules that I don't even understand so it's best not to listen to those people. Anyways, rules are made to be broken. I prefer a more hands-on approach and I will stick to doing things my way, whether people like it or not.

Highly unattractive : __1__ : __2__ : __3__ : __4__ : __5__ : Highly attractive

Rate the likelihood that you would consider the above individual as a potential romantic partner.

Highly unlikely : __1__ : __2__ : __3__ : __4__ : __5__ : Highly likely

Profile 22

Life is a precious thing. I wouldn't want to risk it all for a brief moment of excitement. It's important to be tentative and cautious of the decisions we make. I hate that after feeling of having made a big mistake and consumed full of regret. I think it's much safer keeping inside the box, doing what I know best. I enjoy routine and structure, as it keeps things in order. I am always very respectful of my superiors as they know what's best.

Highly unattractive : __1__ : __2__ : __3__ : __4__ : __5__ : Highly attractive

Rate the likelihood that you would consider the above individual as a potential romantic partner.

Highly unlikely : __1__ : __2__ : __3__ : __4__ : __5__ : Highly likely

Profile 23

Knowledge is a powerful thing to have these days. It provides me the strength to survive and confront new experiences. Therefore, I am generally better and faster at understanding things than other people as I always consider the costs and benefits of every situation. I always like to be on top of my game, and with growing knowledge, I can use others to my advantage. I tend to keep my knowledge to myself as it's hard to know who you can truly trust in this world.

Highly unattractive : __1__ : __2__ : __3__ : __4__ : __5__ : Highly attractive

Rate the likelihood that you would consider the above individual as a potential romantic partner.

Highly unlikely :__1__:__2__:__3__:__4__:__5__: Highly likely

Profile 24

Knowledge is a valuable thing to have in life. It gives me the strength to move forward, to grow and better myself as a person. It enables me to be more logical and sensible. It heightens my understanding of certain aspects of my life as I am learning each day. I am more competent, honest, and genuine with others as I strongly value the importance of equality and fair treatment. Not only can I help myself, but I can help others.

Highly unattractive :__1__:__2__:__3__:__4__:__5__: Highly attractive

Rate the likelihood that you would consider the above individual as a potential romantic partner.

Highly unlikely :__1__:__2__:__3__:__4__:__5__: Highly likely

Section 3: Personality profile

Rate each item on a scale of 1 (disagree strongly) to 7 (agree strongly) as you think it applies to you.

	Disagree strongly					Agree strongly	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1.I tend to manipulate others to get my way.							
2.I tend to lack remorse.							
3.I tend to want others to admire me.							
4.I tend to be unconcerned with the morality of my actions.							
5.I have used deceit or lied to get my way.							
6.I tend to be callous or insensitive.							
7.I have used flattery to get my way.							
8.I tend to seek prestige or status.							
9.I tend to be cynical.							
10.I tend to exploit others toward my own end.							
11.I tend to expect special favours from others.							
12.I want others to pay attention to me.							

2.3. Debriefing form

Thank you for your participation! This form will inform you about the background of the study to help you understand what is being researched.

The purpose of the study was informed to be an evaluation of personality descriptions. Specifically, this study investigates attraction to personality traits including narcissism, psychopathy and Machiavellianism. These are known as the Dark Triad (Paulhus & Williams, 2002). To protect the integrity of this research, it was not possible to present all the details of this study at the beginning of the procedure.

As previously informed, participation is voluntary and after reading the debriefing form withdrawal is still possible by exiting the window. All your responses during the survey will be destroyed.

Lastly, it would be very helpful if each participant could forward the survey to anyone who meets the criteria of being over 18 and single/not romantically involved. The success of this research depends on getting enough persons to participate, so it would be sincerely appreciated. It would be particularly useful if you could forward it to someone of a different age group. I would also like to ask that you do not share the full background of this study to future participants before their participation as it may bias the data.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions about the study. My email is

XXXXX

If you have experienced any difficult emotions before, during, or after completion of the questionnaire, below are links to organisations that can assist you in your time of need.

Aware www.aware.ie

Jigsaw www.jigsaw.ie

Samaritans www.samaritans.org