



(RESEARCH ARTICLE)



# Dark triad traits, gender, and leadership effectiveness among private sector employees

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## Abstract

In today's complex organizational landscape, understanding the dynamics of effective leadership is crucial for long-term success. A key area of inquiry in this realm involves exploring how personality traits shape leadership behavior and outcomes. One prominent set of traits garnering attention is the Dark Triad, comprising narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy, characterized by manipulative tendencies, lack of empathy, and self-interest. This paper synthesizes existing research on the Dark Triad, highlighting its manifestations, prevalence, and implications for leadership effectiveness. It also examines the role of gender in shaping these relationships, drawing on studies exploring gender differences in Dark Triad traits and their impact on leadership outcomes. Furthermore, the paper delves into specific traits within the Dark Triad, such as narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy, discussing their historical context, behavioral manifestations, and organizational implications. This study aims to explore how dark triad personality intersect with leadership effectiveness among 200 employees aged 20-50 residing in, India. Short Dark Triad Personality Test (SD3) by Jones & Paulhus (2013) and The Dhar and Pethe Leadership Effectiveness Scale (DLES) by Dhar and Pethe were employed as tools in the study. The analysis of the data was done using IBM SPSS. The findings offer insights into the real-world dynamics of dark triad traits and leadership effectiveness in contemporary urban workplaces. The study found that the Dark Triad, including psychopathy, narcissism, and Machiavellianism, doesn't impact a leader's leadership effectiveness in the private sector. It also found no correlation between gender and leadership efficacy. However, further research is needed to explore additional variables and validate these findings in diverse professional environments.

**Keywords:** Dark Triad Personality; Machiavellianism; Narcissism; Psychopathy; Leadership Effectiveness

## 1. Introduction

In the modern and intricate world of organizations, grasping the nuances of effective leadership is crucial for long-term success. At the heart of this endeavor lies the examination of personality traits that can shape leadership behaviors and results. Recent attention has focused on the Dark Triad, which encompasses narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy. These characteristics are defined by deceptive behaviour, a lack of empathy, and a preoccupation with one's personal interests.

The dark triad refers to a cluster of three adverse personality traits, including Machiavellianism, subclinical narcissism, and psychopathy. (Paulhus and Williams 2002). While each of these negative personality traits within the dark triad is unique, they also have the potential to coexist and be present in the same individual. Individuals exhibiting the dark triad personality type have often been linked to inclinations towards violence and criminal behavior. Even in less extreme cases, these traits typically indicate self-serving, manipulative, and low-empathy conduct.

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Dark triad personalities desire power and tend to achieve powerful positions easily due to their ruthlessness and manipulative abilities. Their lack of emotion and conscience allows them to deceive and manipulate people without hesitation as they move up the hierarchy. Additionally, their charisma and charm often attract the admiration and support of ordinary individuals who are swayed by their confidence and assertiveness.

Researchers have consistently observed that the dark triad personality traits tend to be more prevalent in men compared to women. Some scholars attribute this gender difference to cultural notions of masculinity and femininity, particularly citing negative sexist stereotypes as potential contributors to the manifestation of dark triad traits in men.

Some research suggests leaders exhibiting high levels of Dark Triad traits present notable challenges for organizations. For example, narcissistic leaders may resort to unethical conduct, which can tarnish the organization's image and undermine trust among stakeholders. Machiavellian leaders are prone to employing manipulative strategies that can negatively impact employee welfare and satisfaction. Similarly, psychopathic leaders may engage in risky behaviors that threaten the stability of the organization.

Research indicates that Dark Triad traits may not always have uniformly negative effects in leadership roles. According to a study (Stelmokienė, Vadvilavičius, 2022), transformational leadership has been identified as a potential mediator, mitigating the adverse effects of Dark Triad traits and resulting in positive outcomes such as enhanced employee commitment and improved leadership efficacy. Furthermore, narcissistic leaders, characterized by their elevated confidence and charm, have the ability to motivate teams and propel them toward ambitious objectives. Similarly, Machiavellian leaders, known for their strategic acumen, demonstrate adeptness in navigating complex organizational dynamics.

Narcissism, among the trio of dark traits constituting the dark triad personality, is often prone to misdiagnosis, likely more so than the other two traits. Narcissism entails an inflated self-view, a deficiency in empathy towards others, and a craving for excessive admiration. (Psychology Today, 2019). Throughout history, narcissistic individuals have consistently emerged as influential figures shaping society, whether during periods marked by military conquest, religious fervor, political upheaval, or business-driven social transformation. Examples include Napoleon Bonaparte, Mahatma Gandhi, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Jack Welch, and George Soros. These individuals possess exceptional strategic abilities and a desire to effect significant change, often leaving a lasting impact. While sought after for their boldness in navigating societal shifts, there's a risk of narcissism becoming counterproductive when individuals lack self-awareness and grounding influences, leading to unrealistic ambitions and attributing setbacks solely to external factors. (Maccoby, 2014)

Narcissistic individuals exert a detrimental influence on organizational culture by either neglecting to implement robust policies or actively choosing not to enforce existing ones. These policies often pertain to ethical conduct, conflicts of interest, gender pay equity, teamwork promotion, and fostering civility and respect among employees. Consequently, unethical and non-collaborative behaviors may go unchecked, leading to a culture where such actions are rewarded rather than discouraged. Such practices have long-lasting repercussions for the organization. A lack of collaboration impedes collective achievements, hindering employees' opportunities for learning, growth, and skill development.

Additionally, when leaders consistently claim credit for successes while deflecting blame onto others for failures, employee morale suffers, and their self-assurance diminishes. Overall, these behaviors contribute to a toxic organizational environment detrimental to productivity and employee well-being. (Butts, 2020)

Machiavellianism, derived from the principles espoused by Renaissance philosopher Niccolò Machiavelli in his renowned work "The Prince," encapsulates a personality type characterized by adept manipulation and strategic deceit. Machiavellians are perceived as skilled deceivers, adept at navigating social interactions with an air of apparent transparency while cunningly pursuing their own interests. Machiavelli's insights into statecraft provide a framework for understanding the Machiavellian personality, emphasizing the significance of presenting oneself as forthright while employing subtle forms of manipulation to achieve desired outcomes. (Loggins, 2022)

Throughout history, leaders such as Joseph Stalin and Richard Nixon have embodied Machiavellian characteristics in their approach to governance. Stalin utilized strategic manipulation to control both allies and adversaries, maintaining dominance through a regime characterized by fear and deceit. Similarly, Nixon's involvement in the Watergate scandal illustrates the Machiavellian tactics employed to preserve political power. In contemporary contexts, Machiavellianism is evident in corporate scandals like the Enron debacle of the early 2000s. Senior executives exhibited Machiavellian behaviors by engaging in deceptive practices and manipulating accounting regulations for personal benefit, ultimately resulting in the downfall of the company. (Parker, 2023)

Leaders with high Machiavellian traits demonstrate acute situational awareness and adeptness in manipulating social dynamics. They possess persuasive abilities, employing charm and deceit to influence others as needed. Their leadership style is marked by adaptability, allowing them to tailor their strategies and tactics according to the circumstances and individuals involved. Additionally, these leaders exhibit strategic thinking, often planning several steps ahead and effectively navigating obstacles. However, their priorities tend to revolve around personal or organizational gain, occasionally disregarding ethical considerations and the well-being of others.

Previous research in the organizational context has indicated that Machiavellianism is associated with various outcomes. These include reduced levels of organizational citizenship behavior, diminished job satisfaction, increased turnover rates, and heightened instances of counterproductive work behavior. (Gkorezis et al., 2015)

Psychopathy, akin to narcissism, is a term frequently used colloquially, often without adherence to its clinical definition. The defining traits of psychopathy include egocentric and grandiose behavior, along with a notable absence of empathy and conscience. Psychopaths often exhibit charisma, charm, and adeptness in manipulating individual interactions. (Lipman, 2013)

Psychopaths possess several abilities that mask their true nature. Firstly, they excel at quickly assessing and understanding people, discerning their preferences, motivations, weaknesses, and vulnerabilities. Secondly, many psychopaths exhibit impressive verbal communication skills, often appearing more adept than they truly are due to their lack of social inhibitions, enabling them to engage in conversations with ease. Lastly, they are skilled in impression management, utilizing their insights into others' psyches and their superficial yet convincing verbal fluency to adapt their behavior to suit various situations and advance their own agendas effectively. (Babiak and Hare, 2006)

Leaders exhibiting Dark Triad traits, particularly psychopathy, can wield significant influence with profound consequences. In corporate settings, they may initially achieve success through decisive actions, yet their leadership often results in a toxic workplace environment, characterized by frequent employee turnover and ethical misconduct. In political and military arenas, such leaders have the potential to inflict substantial harm, fostering oppressive regimes, inciting conflicts, and perpetrating human rights abuses.

The study explored the relationship between psychopathy and leadership effectiveness, considering gender differences. While moderate levels of psychopathy were linked to higher leadership effectiveness, excessive psychopathy decreased effectiveness. Psychopathic tendencies had a stronger influence on leader emergence and effectiveness in men compared to women. Additionally, behaviors associated with psychopathy may align more with traditional male gender roles, affecting their leadership perception. A U-shaped pattern was observed, indicating that moderate psychopathy levels were most conducive to effective leadership. (Landay, Harms, & Credé, 2019)

Leadership effectiveness, as defined by Yukl (2013), implies guiding both individual and group endeavors to comprehend and impact people towards accomplishing mutual aims. Chemers (2000) defines leadership as the act of exerting social influence to gain backing in reaching shared objectives. A leader's performance is influenced by organizational factors, individual behaviors, and interpersonal interactions.

Effective leadership emphasizes selfless dedication that benefits the organization. Employees find meaning in leaders' sacrificial behavior, inspiring them to pursue their own ambitions. Research interest has grown in understanding the organizational impact and outcomes of leaders' renunciative actions (Avolio & Locke, 2002). According to Lowe et al. (1996), effective leadership fosters commitment, drive, and high achievement levels in employees by demonstrating personal sacrifice.

Leadership effectiveness involves shaping a vision for the organization, gaining commitment from members, and keeping them focused on achieving it (Conger, 1999). Leaders can demonstrate their significance to organizational success through personal sacrifices (Jacobson & House, 2001).

The choice of private sector employees in Kolkata as the population for studying the relationship between dark triad traits and leadership effectiveness is justified on several grounds. Firstly, Kolkata serves as a significant economic center in India, hosting a diverse array of private sector organizations spanning various industries. By focusing on this population, the study can delve into the nuanced dynamics of dark triad traits and leadership within the context of real-world workplace scenarios prevalent in contemporary urban environments. Additionally, Kolkata's private sector encompasses a wide range of industries, offering the opportunity to explore how dark triad traits may manifest differently across sectors and their impact on leadership effectiveness. This diversity not only enriches the study but also provides insights applicable to a broad spectrum of organizations. Furthermore, conducting research among

private sector employees in Kolkata holds practical implications, offering valuable insights for organizational practices such as HR strategies, leadership development programs, and organizational policies aimed at improving leadership effectiveness and mitigating the negative effects of dark triad traits. With an accessible population and potential for comparative analysis with other regions or sectors, studying private sector employees in Kolkata aligns with the research objectives and promises to yield meaningful findings with relevance to both academia and industry.

### **1.1. Rationale and Purpose**

The purpose of the study is to investigate the connections among private sector employees' Dark Triad qualities, gender, and performance as leaders. It stems from an increasing curiosity about the ways in which personality traits—specifically, the Dark Triad of narcissism, psychopathy, and Machiavellianism—affect the efficacy of leadership in organizational settings. Furthermore, it is imperative to explore the role of gender in these links given the gaps in the literature that currently exist about the possible influence of gender on the impact of Dark Triad qualities on leadership outcomes. In order to influence organizational interventions and leadership development initiatives, the study aims to get important insights into the complex relationships between personality traits, gender dynamics, and leadership effectiveness in the private sector through this investigation.

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## **2. Material and Method**

### **2.1. Research Design**

Using a descriptive approach to characterize dark triad personality, leadership effectiveness, and gender distribution among private organization employees. Employed quantitative methods to measure and analyze the variables.

### **2.2. Problem Statement**

This study aims to explore the relationship between Dark Triad personality traits (specifically narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy), gender, and leadership effectiveness among private sector employees. It addresses the gap in the literature regarding the impact of personality traits, particularly the Dark Triad, on leadership outcomes, while also investigating how gender may moderate these relationships. By examining these factors, the study seeks to enhance understanding of the complex dynamics of personality, gender, and leadership effectiveness in organizational contexts, thus informing leadership development strategies and organizational interventions.

#### *Objectives of the study*

To investigate the relationship between Dark Triad Personality and Leadership Effectiveness in the light of gender difference.

To assess how dark triad traits influence leadership effectiveness among private sector employees.

### **2.3. Hypotheses**

H01- There is no significant relationship between dark triad personality and Leadership Effectiveness.

H02- There is no significant relationship between Narcissism and Leadership effectiveness.

H03- There is no significant relationship between Machiavellianism and Leadership effectiveness

H04- There is no significant relationship between Psychopathy and Leadership effectiveness

H05- There is no significant relationship between dark triad personality and Leadership Effectiveness in the light of gender differences

H06- There is no significant influence of Dark triad traits on leadership effectiveness among private sector employees.

### **2.4. Operational Definition**

#### *2.4.1. Dark Triad Personality Traits*

For the purpose of this study, Dark Triad personality traits refer to specific antisocial personality characteristics, namely narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy.

#### *2.4.2. Leadership Effectiveness*

Leadership effectiveness is defined as the perceived effectiveness of an individual in a leadership role within the private sector organization.

## 2.5. Variables

### 2.5.1. Independent Variables

- Dark Triad Personality Traits (Narcissism, Machiavellianism, Psychopathy)
- Gender (Male, Female)

### 2.5.2. Dependent Variable

- Leadership Effectiveness

## 2.6. Criteria

### 2.6.1. Inclusion Criteria

Eligible participants must be currently employed by a private

company, aged between 20 and 50, fluent in English, and have a minimum of 6 months of work experience. Additionally, participants must be working in Kolkata.

### 2.6.2. Exclusion Criteria

Participants who are younger than 20 or older than 50 and those not employed in a private organization are ineligible for participation in the study.

## 2.7. Sample and Techniques

The research involved 200 participants exclusively drawn from Private sector employees aged between 20 and 50 residing in Kolkata. Data collection was facilitated through an online survey comprising two questionnaires. Given the non-probabilistic nature of the study, a convenient sampling technique was employed.

## 2.8. Scales Used

Short Dark Triad Personality Test (SD3):

A 27-item test was created by Jones and Paulhus (2013) with the goal of evaluating the "dark triad" of socially awkward characteristics: psychopathy, narcissism, and Machiavellianism. Each item is rated by respondents using a five-point Likert-type scale. On this scale, a number of 1 represents the most extreme negative emotion, and a value of 5 represents the greatest positive response. As a result, the respondent's degree of agreement is indicated by the rating of each item on a scale from 1 to 5. In order to guarantee precise assessment of the structures being evaluated, reverse scoring is also employed to items 11, 15, 17, 20, and 25.

The Dhar and Pethe Leadership Effectiveness Scale (DLES)

The Dhar and Pethe Leadership Effectiveness Scale was put together in 2003 and has 41 items total across eleven areas. Five-point Likert scales are used to evaluate these things. Summated scoring is used in this scale, where the most severe negative response is given a value of 1, and the highest positive response is given a value of 5. As a result, the degree of agreement for each item is measured on a scale of 1 to 5, where 5 represents the highest level of agreement and 1 the lowest.

## 2.9. Data Analysis

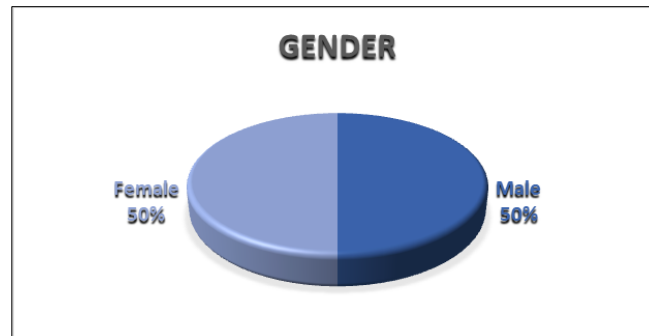
The relationship between the dark triad qualities and leadership effectiveness was evaluated using Spearman's Rank Correlation, and the impact of these traits on leadership effectiveness was determined using regression analysis. Moreover, gender differences in the variables under investigation were examined using t-tests. IBM SPSS was utilized to perform the analysis.

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## 3. Result

A total of 200 individuals took part in the study, with an equal distribution of 100 male and 100 female participants. The participants fell within the age range of 21 to 50 years. All participants were employed in the private sector and were based in Kolkata, reflecting a diverse range of occupational backgrounds within this geographic area.

The Short Dark Triad Personality Test (SD3) and The Dhar and Pethe Leadership Effectiveness Scale were administered to the participants to assess their personality traits and leadership effectiveness, respectively. These measures were chosen due to their relevance to the research objectives and their established reliability and validity in previous studies.



**Figure 1** Representation of Gender

H0<sub>1</sub>- There is no significant relationship between Dark triad personality and Leadership Effectiveness.

**Table 1** Descriptive statistics and Correlation coefficients for study variables

	<b>Variables</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
1.	Dark Triad Traits	91.00	18.883	_	
2.	Leadership Effectiveness	162.20	35.993	0.100	_

\*\*P < 0.01 level (2-tailed); \*P < 0.05; N= 200;

The linear relationship between the Dark Triad Traits and Leadership Effectiveness factors was assessed using Spearman's rank correlation.

From table 4.2.1, it can be observed that the is Spearman's rank correlation coefficient .100 which would mean that the two variables have a positive correlation with one another. Hence with the increase in the level of dark triad traits may also result in an increase in the level of leadership effectiveness or vice versa

The results of the analysis showed that the correlation between leadership effectiveness and dark triad traits is not statistically significant, as the significant value is higher than significance level of 0.05. The null hypothesis, "There is no significant relationship between Dark Triad Traits and Leadership Effectiveness" is accepted, which means that there is may not be a probability that the two variables are connected in this study.

H0<sub>2</sub>- There is no significant relationship between Narcissism and Leadership effectiveness.

**Table 2** Descriptive statistics and Correlation coefficients for study variables.=

	<b>Variables</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
1.	Narcissism	30.27	7.063	_	
2.	Leadership Effectiveness	162.02	35.953	0.106	_

\*\*P < 0.01 level (2-tailed); \*P < 0.05; N= 200;

The Spearman's rho correlation coefficient was calculated to evaluate the relationship involving Narcissism, a trait under the variable "Dark Triad Traits," and Leadership Effectiveness. The correlation coefficient obtained was .106, indicating a positive relationship between the two variables. This suggests that as leadership effectiveness increases, there may be a tendency for narcissistic trait to also increase, or vice versa.

Given that the p-value is greater than 0.05 and the correlation coefficient is not statistically significant, it seems likely that narcissism and leadership effectiveness are related by coincidence. The null hypothesis, which contends that there is no meaningful correlation between narcissism and leadership effectiveness, is thus accepted. The implication is that,

among our population, narcissism and leadership effectiveness do not statistically significantly correlate. It's important to remember that correlation does not imply causation, and more investigation is required to fully understand the type and direction of this association.

H0<sub>3</sub>- There is no significant relationship between Machiavellianism and Leadership effectiveness

**Table 3** Descriptive statistics and Correlation coefficients for study variables

	<b>Variables</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
1.	Machiavellianism	31.92	7.213	-	
2.	Leadership Effectiveness	162.02	35.953	0.099	-

\*\*P < 0.01 level (2-tailed); \*P < 0.05; N= 200;

The Spearman's rho correlation coefficient was computed to assess the relationship between Machiavellianism, a trait under the variable "Dark Triad Traits," and Leadership Effectiveness. The correlation coefficient obtained was ( $r_s = .099$ ), indicating a positive relationship between the two variables. This suggests that as Leadership Effectiveness increases, there may be a tendency for Machiavellianism traits to also increase, or vice versa.

The p-value is .164 at a significance level of 0.05, then the correlation would not be considered statistically significant. This means that there may be no probability of correlation between the two variables. It's advisable to interpret such results cautiously and consider the context and practical implications of the correlation. As a result, we agree with the hypothesis that Machiavellianism and Leadership Effectiveness have no relevant connection.

H0<sub>4</sub>- There is no significant relationship between Psychopathy and Leadership effectiveness

**Table 4** Descriptive statistics and Correlation coefficients for study variables

	<b>Variables</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
1.	Psychopathy	28.82	6.082	-	
2.	Leadership Effectiveness	162.02	35.953	-0.034	-

\*\*P < 0.01 level (2-tailed); \*P < 0.05; N= 200;

The link between Psychopathy, an attribute which falls under the category of "Dark Triad Traits," and Leadership Effectiveness has been evaluated using the Spearman's rho correlation coefficient.

The correlation coefficient obtained was, -0.34, indicating a negative relationship between the two variables. This suggests that as leadership effectiveness increases, there may not be a tendency for psychopathic trait to also increase, or vice versa.

With a p-value greater than 0.05, the correlation coefficient is not statistically significant, indicating that the association between leadership effectiveness and psychopathy is most likely the result of chance. It follows that there is no substantial link between psychopathy and effective leadership, and we so accept the null hypothesis. This suggests that in our demographic, there isn't a statistically significant relationship between psychopathy and effective leadership. Correlation does not always indicate causality; thus, more investigation is necessary to fully understand the nature and direction of this relationship.

H0<sub>5</sub>- There is no significant relationship between Dark triad personality and Leadership Effectiveness in the light of gender differences.

A t-test was implemented to ascertain whether a statistically significant difference exists between the male and female populations with respect to the means of Dark Triad Traits and Leadership Effectiveness.

For the dark triad trait variable, the mean score for males was 92.38 with a standard deviation of 19.899, while for females, the mean score was 89.62 with a standard deviation of 17.803. This suggests that, on average, males tend to have slightly higher scores on the dark triad traits compared to females, although the difference is not substantial.

**Table 5** t-test result comparing males and females on Dark Triad Trait and Leadership Effectiveness

	Variables	Male		Female		T	C
		M	SD	M	SD		
1.	Dark Triad Traits	92.38	19.899	89.62	17.803	1.034	
2.	Leadership Effectiveness	163.56	41.734	160.47	29.185	0.607	

\*\*P < 0.01 level (2-tailed); \*P < 0.05; N= 200;

In terms of leadership effectiveness, the mean score for men was 163.56 with a standard deviation of 41.734, while the mean score for women was 160.47 with a standard deviation of 29.185. This suggests that, on average, men tend to be slightly more successful leaders than women, while the difference is not profound.

The t-test values for dark triad traits and leadership effectiveness were calculated as 1.034 and 0.607, respectively. These values represent the significance of the difference between the means of the two groups. A t-test value close to 0 suggests that there is no significant difference between the means of the two groups, while a larger value indicates a greater difference.

The t-test results for leadership effectiveness and the dark triad qualities in this case are both somewhat low, suggesting that there is not a statistically significant disparity between the means of males and females on these variables. We thus accept the null hypothesis, indicating that there is no discernible difference in the dark triad characteristics and leadership efficacy between males and females.

H<sub>06</sub>- There is no significant influence of Dark triad traits on leadership effectiveness among private sector employees.

**Table 6** Regression Coefficients for Predicting Influence of Dark Triad Personality on Leadership Effectiveness

Variable	R	R square	Adjusted R Square	Sig F Change	B Value	Beta Value
Leadership Effectiveness	0.104 <sup>a</sup>	0.011	0.006	0.143	-0.198	-0.104

The results of the simple linear regression analysis indicate the relationship between dark triad traits and leadership effectiveness.

The correlation coefficient between the efficacy of leadership and the dark triad features is 0.104, as indicated by the derived R value. The correlation between these two variables appears to be very weakly positive, based on the value.

The R square value, also known as the coefficient of determination, is 0.011. This indicates that only approximately 1.1% of the variance in leadership effectiveness can be explained by dark triad traits. In other words, dark triad traits have a very limited influence on leadership effectiveness, as most of the variability in leadership effectiveness is not accounted for by these traits.

In order to more accurately measure the explanatory power of the model, the modified R-square value is used, which modifies the R-square value based on the number of predictors in the model, is 0.006. This suggests that when considering the complexity of the model, the explanatory power of dark triad aspects on leadership effectiveness is even lower.

The regression model's overall significance is evaluated using the significance F change value, which comes out at 0.143. The statistical significance of the regression model as a whole is shown by this number, implying that the dark triad attributes may not be a reliable indicator of leadership effectiveness.

The B value, or unstandardized coefficient, is -0.198. This indicates the slope of the regression line, suggesting that for every one-unit increase in dark triad traits, there is a corresponding decrease of 0.198 units in leadership effectiveness. However, this coefficient is very small, further emphasizing the weak influence of dark triad traits on leadership effectiveness.



The Beta value, or standardized coefficient, is -0.104. This value indicates the standardized effect size of dark triad traits on leadership effectiveness. A Beta value close to zero suggests that dark triad traits have little to no standardized influence on leadership effectiveness.

Overall, these findings suggest that the impact of dark triad qualities on leadership effectiveness is very minimal and statistically insignificant, hence the null hypothesis is accepted, which suggests that there is no significant influence of Dark triad traits on leadership effectiveness among private sector employees.

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#### 4. Discussion

Varied findings emerged from the study, which sought to understand the relationship between Dark Triad Traits, Gender, and Leadership Effectiveness among personnel in the private sector. At first, there was a positive but statistically insignificant link between Dark Triad Traits and Leadership Effectiveness, according to the Spearman's rank correlation coefficient. This implies that while there may be a propensity for people with higher Dark Triad Traits to be more successful leaders, or vice versa, there was not enough evidence to support the significance of this link. As a result, the null hypothesis, which holds that there is no meaningful correlation between leadership effectiveness and dark triad traits, was maintained.

Further examination of the individual components of the Dark Triad - Narcissism, Machiavellianism, and Psychopathy - revealed similar patterns. While positive correlations were observed between these traits and Leadership Effectiveness, none reached statistical significance. This indicates that traits such as narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy may coexist with leadership effectiveness to some extent, but their impact may not be substantial or consistent across the population studied.

The gender discrepancies were assessed using the independent sample t-test in Dark Triad Traits and Leadership Effectiveness and it revealed no significant disparities between males and females. Although slight variations were observed in the means of Dark Triad Traits and Leadership Effectiveness between genders, these differences were not statistically significant. Therefore, it can be inferred that gender may not play a significant role in influencing Dark Triad Traits or Leadership Effectiveness among private sector employees in this study.

Additionally, the simple linear regression analysis further supported these findings by demonstrating a very weak and statistically insignificant relationship between Dark Triad Traits and Leadership Effectiveness. The regression model showed that only a negligible amount of the variance in Leadership Effectiveness could be explained by Dark Triad Traits, further highlighting the limited influence of these traits on leadership effectiveness in the private sector.

To summarize, the results indicate that among employees in the private sector, the Dark Triad Traits (psychopathy, narcissism, and Machiavellianism) have no effect on leadership effectiveness. Furthermore, it appears that in this situation, gender has no discernible impact on the degrees of Dark Triad Traits or Leadership Effectiveness. Our understanding of the complex relationships that exist between gender, leadership effectiveness, and personality characteristics in organizational settings is improved by these observations. However, further research is warranted to explore additional factors that may contribute to Leadership Effectiveness and to validate these findings in diverse workplace environments.

In a study titled "Can Dark Triad Traits in Leaders Be Associated with Positive Outcomes of Transformational Leadership: Cultural Differences," researchers discovered that characteristics of leaders connected to the dark triad had a significant direct negative impact on leadership effectiveness. Specifically, the study revealed that leaders exhibiting dark triad traits were predominantly evaluated less favorably in terms of leadership effectiveness. This suggests that leaders with attributes connected to the dark triad, such as psychopathy, Machiavellianism, and narcissism, were perceived as less effective in their leadership roles. (Judge et al., 2009)

This finding is relevant to the current study, it aligns with the observation that dark triad traits have a weak and statistically insignificant influence on leadership effectiveness among private sector employees. Both studies highlight the detrimental impact of dark triad traits on leadership outcomes, particularly in terms of effectiveness. Therefore, understanding the implications of these traits in leadership roles is crucial for organizations aiming to cultivate positive work environments and enhance leadership effectiveness.

Initial perceptions of narcissism in leaders and managers often evolve over time, uncovering interpersonal relationship deficiencies, overinflated perceptions of leadership capabilities, and diminished effectiveness. This observation underscores the importance of understanding the evolving nature of narcissistic traits in leadership roles, particularly

in relation to interpersonal dynamics, self-perception, and overall effectiveness. It aligns with the discussion on dark triad traits, gender, and leadership effectiveness among private sector employees, emphasizing the need to recognize and address the negative impact of narcissistic tendencies on leadership outcomes and organizational success.

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## 5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the assessment of the relationship between Dark Triad Traits, Gender, and Leadership Effectiveness among private sector employees revealed nuanced findings. Despite initial indications of a positive association between Dark Triad Traits and Leadership Effectiveness, further examination demonstrated that this relationship was not statistically significant, leading to acceptance of the null hypothesis. Similarly, while traits such as narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy showed correlations with Leadership Effectiveness, none reached statistical significance.

Moreover, gender differences in Dark Triad Traits and Leadership Effectiveness were not significant, suggesting that gender may not play a substantial role in influencing these factors within the studied context. The regression analysis further supported these findings by revealing a weak and statistically insignificant connection between Dark Triad Characteristics and Leadership Effectiveness.

However, these results should be considered alongside findings from other studies, such as the one highlighting the detrimental impact of dark triad traits on leadership effectiveness. This suggests that while the current study did not find significant effects, there may still be negative consequences associated with these traits in leadership roles.

Furthermore, the evolving nature of perceptions of narcissism in leaders underscores the importance of recognizing and addressing negative traits in leadership, particularly regarding interpersonal dynamics and overall effectiveness. Organizations aiming to cultivate positive work environments and enhance leadership effectiveness should consider the implications of dark triad traits and prioritize strategies for mitigating their potential negative impacts.

In essence, while this research adds to a more profound comprehension between personality traits, gender, and Leadership Effectiveness within organizational settings, further research is warranted to explore additional factors and validate these findings across diverse workplace environments.

### *Limitations*

The discussion provides insightful information about how Dark Triad Traits, Gender, and Leadership Effectiveness relate to one another in the private sector workforce. Nonetheless, there are a few shortcomings that must be noted. Initially, if the sample is not typical of the larger population, the features of the sample may limit the universality of the results. Furthermore, the validity of the results may be impacted by the likelihood of self-report bias and social desirability bias when evaluating Dark Triad Traits and Leadership Effectiveness through self-report measures. Longitudinal research is therefore required to clarify the temporal correlations between these factors, as the cross-sectional form of the study makes it impossible to draw conclusions about causality. Furthermore, other personality qualities or contextual elements that can equally affect leadership effectiveness are ignored due to the analysis's narrow focus on Dark Triad traits. Finally, the potential for publication bias in the literature could skew the interpretation of the overall findings. It is vital to acknowledge these constraints in order to appropriately construe the findings of the investigation and steer further research endeavors concerning this field.

### *Future implications*

The outcomes of this investigation have several ramifications for further studies and methodologies. Firstly, further research is warranted to explore additional factors that may influence Leadership Effectiveness and to validate the findings across diverse workplace environments. Longitudinal studies could provide insights into the dynamic nature of Dark Triad Traits and their impact on leadership outcomes over time. Additionally, exploring the role of organizational culture and leadership development programs in mitigating the negative effects of dark triad traits could inform interventions aimed at fostering positive work environments and enhancing leadership effectiveness. From a practical standpoint, organizations should consider implementing screening measures to identify individuals with high levels of Dark Triad Traits during the recruitment and selection process. Furthermore, leadership training programs could incorporate modules aimed at developing self-awareness and interpersonal skills, helping leaders mitigate the negative effects of narcissistic tendencies and improve overall effectiveness. Overall, understanding the implications of Dark Triad Traits in leadership roles is crucial for organizations striving to cultivate positive work environments and optimize leadership effectiveness.

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## Compliance with ethical standards

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### *Disclosure of conflict of interest*

The authors affirm no conflict of interest.

### *Statement of informed consent*

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

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