

The Influence of the Dark Triad of Personality Traits on the Competitiveness of Selected Educators

Dr. Frederick Edward T. Fabella¹, Dr. Charlie Manalili Santos²

¹FEU Roosevelt, Cainta, Rizal, Philippines

²St. Jude College Dasmarinas, Cavite Inc. Philippines

Corresponding Author: Dr. Frederick Edward T. Fabella

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ABSTRACT

In 2020, there were 7.2 million jobless Filipinos which may have been mostly caused by the lockdowns imposed during the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. In the education sector, more than 800 private schools closed which affected the employment of over 4,000 educators. Although the unemployment rate in 2023 has since gone down to 4.8 per cent, this experience may have left a lasting effect on job seekers in general and on those in the teaching profession in particular. This study aimed to investigate whether the pandemic's impact on the loss of employment of educators have altered their mindset in terms of career competitiveness and whether the Dark Triad of Personality Traits plays a role in this. The objective of this study was to investigate the existence of relationships between the Dark Triad of Personality Traits and Cooperation and Competition. The respondents who volunteered for this study were 44 educators who teach in different levels at several schools located in various areas of Metro Manila. The Cooperative/Competitive Strategy Scale (CCSS) as well as the Short Dark Triad (SD3) instruments were administered on the respondents. The CCSS results showed that the respondents exhibited high Cooperation and moderate Competition. The SD3 results revealed that the respondents possess moderate Machiavellianism, moderate Narcissism and low Psychopathy. A significant moderate positive relationship was established between Machiavellianism and Competition. This implies that as the respondents' Machiavellianism

increases, their Competition moderately increases and vice versa. In addition, a significant moderate inverse relationship between the respondents' age and their Psychopathy scores was found. This suggests that as the respondents' age increases, their Psychopathy tends to decrease moderately and vice versa.

Key words: *Dark Triad, Machiavellianism, Narcissism, Psychopathy, Cooperation, Competition*

INTRODUCTION

In 2020, the Philippine government imposed the enhanced community quarantine which apparently put 75 per cent of the national economy to a halt. This caused the unemployment rate to reach 17.6 per cent or 7.2 million jobless Filipinos¹. In the education sector, approximately 10,000 students transferred to public schools². It is estimated that over 800 private schools closed during the lockdown³. This was due to the downturn of the economy when parents who lost their jobs could no longer finance their children's education in private schools⁴. As of February of 2023, the unemployment rate has since gone down to 4.8 per cent⁵.

During the pandemic, many people were grateful to just simply be employed in the face of the widespread business closures, layoffs, reductions in salary and the ensuing uncertainty. A lot of people were on survival

mode and waiting to see what will happen next. But presently, there is now a turnover trend as a result of an increase in job openings, which is indicative of a job supply and demand phenomenon⁶. And job seekers may be competing more to keep their jobs or to find better ones.

A competition is an extrinsic incentive. It motivates an individual to act in order to obtain an external reward⁷. From a biological point of view, competition is a natural result of evolution. All life forms must compete for finite resources such as nourishment, habitation and a mate. Biological competition may be the source of a human being's tendency to compete. However, competitiveness as a psychological trait has very little to do with survival. Healthy competitive levels may increase one's self-esteem and life satisfaction. It may also become a source of motivation to exert more effort towards a goal⁸.

There are individuals who seem to be motivated by competition, whereas there are those who are not. People who are motivated by competition may have the following reasons: (1) the need to win, (2) a reason or opportunity to improve oneself and (3) as a motivation for higher performance⁹. Some would see competition as a drive for power. Others would see competition as a useful tool in the everyday lives of individuals¹⁰.

The Social Comparison Theory by Leon Festinger asserts that people assess their own personal and social worth by evaluating how they compare to others¹¹. Social comparison is perhaps a significant source of human competitive behavior¹².

In order to see whether an individual's competitiveness in one's career is healthy and helpful, an employee should ask himself the following questions: (1) does your company culture promote and reward competitiveness? (2) are you being fair? (3) what has been the consequences of your competitiveness? (4) are you still focused on teamwork, team well-

being and team success? (5) are you performing well in your work¹³?

Cultures that value competition tend to promote competitiveness among its people. Competitiveness may be seen as a measure of an individual's yearning to exceed others. A person with a high degree of competitiveness will tend to perceive a social situation as a competition, whether or not there will be an apparent winner in the end. The person's rivals may not even be aware that they are competing. But when an individual believes that he must win no matter the cost which could burn himself out or cause social alienation or when his competitiveness results in distress or disrupts daily functioning, these are signs that professional help should be sought⁸.

As established by the aforementioned article that competitiveness may become unhealthy, a psychological construct called the Dark Triad Personality has been recognized as a collection of individual traits that have not before been represented such as one's manipulative and exploitative characteristics and could be an underlying reason for such competitiveness. A person with a Dark Triad Personality tends to lack the desire for normal helpful social interaction exhibited through empathy, compassion and a moral compass. These individuals possess a constant need for fulfillment even at the expense of others¹⁴.

The Dark Triad Personality consists of three traits namely, Narcissism, subclinical Psychopathy and Machiavellianism. Narcissism is seen as a constant concern for one's self. Narcissists find it difficult to form and maintain healthy relationships which require putting the needs of others first. Subclinical Psychopathy is similar to antisocial personality in which remorse is lacking in an individual. However, they exhibit signs of antisocial behavior less frequently and to a lower degree. Machiavellianism is named after Niccolo Machiavelli who wrote "The Prince" where the well-known theme of the

ends justify the means is written. Machiavellianism is manifested by being very manipulative and deceitful but does so in a not-so-obvious manner¹⁵.

A study on the Dark Triad of Personality revealed that both Narcissism and Psychopathy were negatively correlated with preferences for serious romantic relationships¹⁶. All three Dark Triad Personality traits were also found to relate positively with cyberbullying behavior, but Psychopathy was established as the real predictor of cyberbullying¹⁷. And in another study, both Psychopathy and Machiavellianism were correlated with low self-control¹⁸. Furthermore, individuals who have high Psychopathy and Machiavellianism have been shown to perceive their workplace as competitive¹⁹.

It is for the aforementioned connection established between the Dark Triad of Personality and Competitiveness that this study was conducted. As educators were among those hard hit by the loss of employment caused by the pandemic, they were chosen to be the focus of this study. The Dark Triad Personality traits of the respondents was measured using the Short Dark Triad (SD3)²⁰ while the Cooperative/Competitive Strategy Scale (CCSS)²¹ was used to assess their levels of cooperation and competition.

Specifically, this study sought to address the following research questions:

What are the respondents' levels of Cooperation and Competition as measured by the CCSS?

What are the respondents' levels of the Dark Triad of Personality traits of Narcissism, Machiavellianism and Psychopathy as measured by the SD3?

Is there a significant relationship between the respondents' levels of Cooperation and Competition and their levels of Narcissism, Machiavellianism and Psychopathy?

METHODOLOGY

The respondents who volunteered for this study were 44 educators from various schools located in different areas of Metro Manila. 31 were females while 13 were males. Their mean age was 36.07 years old. 1 teaches pre-primary, 9 teach elementary, 14 teach high school, 6 teach senior high school, 13 teach college and 1 teaches special education. 1 has been teaching for less than a year, 7 have been teaching for 1 to less than 3 years, 13 have been teaching for 3 to less than 6 years, 5 have been teaching for 6 to less than 9 years, 10 have been teaching for 9 to less than 12 years, 7 have been teaching for 12 to less than 15 years and 1 has been teaching for 21 to less than 24 years. The Dark Triad Personality traits of the respondents was measured using the Short Dark Triad (SD3)²⁰. The SD3 is a 27-item, 5-point Likert scale instrument that measures the respondent's levels of Narcissism (items 1-9), Machiavellianism (items 10-18) and subclinical Psychopathy (items 19-27). Items 11, 15, 17, 20 and 25 are reverse scored. The Cooperative/Competitive Strategy Scale (CCSS)²¹ was used to assess the respondent's levels of cooperation and competition. The CCSS is a 19-item, 7-point Likert scale instrument which measures the respondent's Cooperation (1-8) and Competition (9-19).

RESULTS

The following tables present the data gathered and the statistical computations used to answer the research questions.

Table 1: Sex of the Respondents

Sex	Frequency
Male	13
Female	31

Table 2: Marital Status of the Respondents

Marital status	Frequency
Single	18
Married	26

Table 3: Levels Taught by the Respondents

Level Taught	Frequency
Pre-primary	1
Elementary	9
High school	14
Senior high school	6
College	13
Special Education	1

Table 4: Years of Teaching Experience of the Respondents

Years of Teaching Experience	Frequency
Less than 1	1
1 to less than 3	7
3 to less than 6	13
6 to less than 9	5
9 to less than 12	10
12 to less than 15	7
21 to less than 24	1

Table 5: Scale of Interpretation for Items of CCSS Cooperation and Competition

Range	Verbal Interpretation
1.000 – 2.000	Never
2.001 – 3.000	Rarely
3.001 – 4.000	Seldom
4.001 – 5.000	Sometimes
5.001 – 6.000	Often
6.001 – 7.000	Always

Table 6: Scale of Interpretation for Total Weighted Means of CCSS Cooperation and Competition

Range	Verbal Interpretation
1.000 – 3.000	Low
3.001 – 5.000	Moderate
5.001 – 7.000	High

Table 7: CCSS Cooperation Item Weighted Means

Item	Weighted Mean N=44	Verbal Interpretation
1. Individual success can be achieved while working with others	6.023	Always
2. Joint effort is the best way to achieve success	6.023	Always
3. To succeed, one must cooperate with others	6.318	Always
4. Success is only achieved through individual effort	3.273	Seldom
5. Success is best achieved through cooperation rather than through competition	6.046	Always
6. In the end, cooperation with others is not compatible with success	3.023	Seldom
7. Shared efforts can lead to both individual and group success	6.364	Always
8. I enjoy working with others to achieve joint success	6.023	Always
Total weighted mean	5.386	High Cooperation

Table 8: CCSS Competition Item Weighted Means

Item	Weighted Mean N=44	Verbal Interpretation
9. It is important to me to do better than others	3.546	Seldom
10. Success is not very important to me	2.955	Rarely
11. By achieving success I also get other things which are important to me	6.160	Always
12. To succeed, one must compete against others	2.410	Rarely
13. People who succeed are more likely to have satisfying lives	6.091	Always
14. Success is something I am willing to work hard for	6.568	Always
15. I enjoy the challenge of competing against others to succeed	3.500	Seldom
16. The rewards of success outweigh the costs	4.318	Sometimes
17. Success is my major goal in life	5.955	Often
Total weighted mean	4.649	Moderate Competition

Table 9: Scale of Interpretation for SD3 Dark Triad Personality Traits

Range	Verbal Interpretation
1.000 – 1.800	Strongly disagree
1.801 – 2.600	Disagree
2.601 – 3.400	Neither agree nor disagree
3.401 – 4.200	Agree
4.201 – 5.000	Strongly agree

Table 10: Scale of Interpretation for Total Weighted Means of the SD3 Dark Triad Personality Traits

Range	Verbal Interpretation
1.000 – 2.333	Low
2.334 – 3.666	Moderate
3.667 – 5.000	High

Table 11: SD3 Dark Triad Personality Traits: Machiavellianism Item Weighted Means

Item	Weighted Mean N=44	Verbal Interpretation
1. It's not wise to tell your secrets.	4.091	Agree
2. I like to use clever manipulation to get my way.	2.955	Neither agree nor disagree
3. Whatever it takes, you must get the important people on your side.	3.500	Agree
4. Avoid direct conflict with others because they may be useful in the future.	3.500	Agree
5. It's wise to keep track of information that you can use against people later.	2.636	Neither agree nor disagree
6. You should wait for the right time to get back at people.	2.682	Neither agree nor disagree
7. There are things you should hide from other people because they don't need to know.	4.364	Strongly agree
8. Make sure your plans benefit you, not others.	3.227	Neither agree nor disagree
9. Most people can be manipulated.	2.660	Neither agree nor disagree
Total weighted mean	3.290	Moderate Machiavellianism

Table 12: SD3 Dark Triad Personality Traits: Narcissism Item Weighted Means

Item	Weighted Mean N=44	Verbal Interpretation
10. People see me as a natural leader.	3.091	Agree
11. I hate being the center of attention.	2.660	Neither agree nor disagree
12. Many group activities tend to be dull without me.	2.273	Disagree
13. I know that I am special because everyone keeps telling me so.	3.227	Agree
14. I like to get acquainted with important people.	3.727	Agree
15. I feel embarrassed if someone compliments me.	3.068	Neither agree nor disagree
16. I have been compared to famous people.	2.068	Disagree
17. I am an average person.	2.886	Neither agree nor disagree
18. I insist on getting the respect I deserve.	2.727	Neither agree nor disagree
Total weighted mean	2.859	Moderate Narcissism

Table 13: SD3 Dark Triad Personality Traits: Psychopathy Item Weighted Means

Item	Weighted Mean N=44	Verbal Interpretation
19. I like to get revenge on authorities.	1.886	Disagree
20. I avoid dangerous situations.	2.977	Neither agree nor disagree
21. Payback needs to be quick and nasty.	2.114	Disagree
22. People often say I'm out of control.	1.773	Strongly disagree
23. It's true that I can be mean to others.	2.523	Disagree
24. People who mess with me always regret it.	2.500	Disagree
25. I have never gotten into trouble with the law.	2.136	Disagree
26. I enjoy having sex with people I hardly know	2.523	Disagree
27. I'll say anything to get what I want.	2.091	Disagree
Total weighted mean	2.280	Low Psychopathy

Table 14: CCSS Cooperation and SD3 Machiavellianism

Pearson r computation	
X Values $\Sigma = 237$ Mean = 5.386 $\Sigma(X - Mx)^2 = SSx = 12.588$	X and Y Combined N = 44 $\Sigma(X - Mx)(Y - My) = 2.535$ R Calculation $r = \Sigma((X - My)(Y - Mx)) / \sqrt{(SSx)(SSy)}$ $r = 2.535 / \sqrt{(12.588)(10.178)} = 0.224$
Y Values $\Sigma = 144.778$ Mean = 3.29 $\Sigma(Y - My)^2 = SSy = 10.178$	
r = 0.224 The P-Value is .143818. The result is not significant at $p < .05$.	

Table 15: CCSS Cooperation and SD3 Narcissism

Pearson r computation	
X Values $\Sigma = 237$ Mean = 5.386 $\Sigma(X - Mx)^2 = SSx = 12.588$	X and Y Combined N = 44 $\Sigma(X - Mx)(Y - My) = -0.221$ R Calculation $r = \Sigma((X - My)(Y - Mx)) / \sqrt{(SSx)(SSy)}$ $r = -0.221 / \sqrt{(12.588)(7.614)} = -0.0226$
Y Values $\Sigma = 125.778$ Mean = 2.859 $\Sigma(Y - My)^2 = SSy = 7.614$	
r = -0.0226 The P-Value is .88728. The result is not significant at $p < .05$.	

Table 16: CCSS Cooperation and SD3 Psychopathy

Pearson r computation	
X Values $\Sigma = 237$ Mean = 5.386 $\Sigma(X - Mx)^2 = SSx = 12.588$	X and Y Combined N = 44 $\Sigma(X - Mx)(Y - My) = 2.527$ R Calculation $r = \Sigma((X - My)(Y - Mx)) / \sqrt{(SSx)(SSy)}$ $r = 2.527 / \sqrt{(12.588)(9.419)} = 0.232$
Y Values $\Sigma = 100.333$ Mean = 2.28 $\Sigma(Y - My)^2 = SSy = 9.419$	
r = 0.232 The P-Value is .129678. The result is not significant at $p < .05$.	

Table 17: CCSS Competition and SD3 Machiavellianism

Pearson r computation	
X Values Σ = 204.545 Mean = 4.649 Σ(X - Mx)2 = SSx = 15.63	X and Y Combined N = 44 Σ(X - Mx)(Y - My) = 4.68 R Calculation r = Σ((X - My)(Y - Mx)) / √((SSx)(SSy)) r = 4.68 / √((15.63)(10.178)) = 0.3711
Y Values Σ = 144.778 Mean = 3.29 Σ(Y - My)2 = SSy = 10.178	
r = 0.3711	
The P-Value is .013138. The result is significant at p < .05. This indicates that for the respondents of this study, there is a significant moderate positive relationship between their Competition scores and their Machiavellianism scores.	

Table 18: CCSS Competition and SD3 Narcissism

Pearson r computation	
X Values Σ = 204.545 Mean = 4.649 Σ(X - Mx)2 = SSx = 15.63	X and Y Combined N = 44 Σ(X - Mx)(Y - My) = 1.188 R Calculation r = Σ((X - My)(Y - Mx)) / √((SSx)(SSy)) r = 1.188 / √((15.63)(7.614)) = 0.1089
Y Values Σ = 125.778 Mean = 2.859 Σ(Y - My)2 = SSy = 7.614	
r = 0.1089	
The P-Value is .481643. The result is not significant at p < .05.	

Table 19: CCSS Competition and SD3 Psychopathy

Pearson r computation	
X Values Σ = 204.545 Mean = 4.649 Σ(X - Mx)2 = SSx = 15.63	X and Y Combined N = 44 Σ(X - Mx)(Y - My) = 1.13 R Calculation r = Σ((X - My)(Y - Mx)) / √((SSx)(SSy)) r = 1.13 / √((15.63)(9.419)) = 0.0931
Y Values Σ = 100.333 Mean = 2.28 Σ(Y - My)2 = SSy = 9.419	
r = 0.0931	
The P-Value is .547783. The result is not significant at p < .05.	

Table 20: Age and CCSS Cooperation

Pearson r computation	
X Values Σ = 1587 Mean = 36.068 Σ(X - Mx)2 = SSx = 2378.795	X and Y Combined N = 44 Σ(X - Mx)(Y - My) = -8.784 R Calculation r = Σ((X - My)(Y - Mx)) / √((SSx)(SSy)) r = -8.784 / √((2378.795)(12.588)) = -0.0508
Y Values Σ = 237 Mean = 5.386 Σ(Y - My)2 = SSy = 12.588	
r = -0.0508	
The P-Value is .747213. The result is not significant at p < .05.	

Table 21: Age and CCSS Competition

Pearson r computation	
X Values Σ = 1587 Mean = 36.068 Σ(X - Mx)2 = SSx = 2378.795	X and Y Combined N = 44 Σ(X - Mx)(Y - My) = -29.037 R Calculation r = Σ((X - My)(Y - Mx)) / √((SSx)(SSy)) r = -29.037 / √((2378.795)(15.63)) = -0.1506
Y Values Σ = 204.545 Mean = 4.649 Σ(Y - My)2 = SSy = 15.63	
r = -0.1506	
The P-Value is .331122. The result is not significant at p < .05	

Table 22: Age and SD3 Machiavellianism

Pearson r computation	
X Values $\Sigma = 1587$ Mean = 36.068 $\Sigma(X - Mx)^2 = SSx = 2378.795$	X and Y Combined N = 44 $\Sigma(X - Mx)(Y - My) = -44.538$ R Calculation $r = \frac{\Sigma((X - My)(Y - Mx))}{\sqrt{(SSx)(SSy)}}$ $r = -44.538 / \sqrt{(2378.795)(10.178)} = -0.2862$
Y Values $\Sigma = 144.778$ Mean = 3.29 $\Sigma(Y - My)^2 = SSy = 10.178$	
r = -0.2862 The P-Value is .059834. The result is not significant at $p < .05$.	

Table 23: Age and SD3 Narcissism

Pearson r computation	
X Values $\Sigma = 1587$ Mean = 36.068 $\Sigma(X - Mx)^2 = SSx = 2378.795$	X and Y Combined N = 44 $\Sigma(X - Mx)(Y - My) = -32.242$ R Calculation $r = \frac{\Sigma((X - My)(Y - Mx))}{\sqrt{(SSx)(SSy)}}$ $r = -32.242 / \sqrt{(2378.795)(7.614)} = -0.2396$
Y Values $\Sigma = 125.778$ Mean = 2.859 $\Sigma(Y - My)^2 = SSy = 7.614$	
r = -0.2396 The P-Value is .118183. The result is not significant at $p < .05$.	

Table 24: Age and SD3 Psychopathy

Pearson r computation	
X Values $\Sigma = 1587$ Mean = 36.068 $\Sigma(X - Mx)^2 = SSx = 2378.795$	X and Y Combined N = 44 $\Sigma(X - Mx)(Y - My) = -49.73$ R Calculation $r = \frac{\Sigma((X - My)(Y - Mx))}{\sqrt{(SSx)(SSy)}}$ $r = -49.73 / \sqrt{(2378.795)(9.419)} = -0.3322$
Y Values $\Sigma = 100.333$ Mean = 2.28 $\Sigma(Y - My)^2 = SSy = 9.419$	
r = -0.3322 The P-Value is .027686. The result is significant at $p < .05$. This indicates that for the respondents of this study, there is a significant moderate inverse relationship between their age and their psychopathy scores.	

DISCUSSION

Based on Table 7, it can be seen that the total weighted mean yielded a verbal interpretation of high Cooperation. In Table 8, it can be observed that the total weighted mean resulted in a verbal interpretation of moderate Competition.

In Table 11, the total weighted mean produced a verbal interpretation of moderate Machiavellianism. Based on Table 12, it can be seen that the total weighted mean yielded a verbal interpretation of moderate Narcissism. In Table 13, it can be observed that the total weighted mean resulted in a verbal interpretation of low Psychopathy.

Pearson r computations between Cooperation and the three Dark Triad domains are presented in Tables 14, 15 and 16. The resulting r values

revealed no significant relationships between Cooperation and Machiavellianism, Narcissism and Psychopathy.

In Table 17, the Pearson r computation produced an r value indicating a significant moderate positive relationship between their Competition scores and their Machiavellianism scores. This implies that for these respondents, as their Competition scores increase, their Machiavellianism scores moderately increase and vice versa.

Pearson r computations between Competition and Narcissism and Psychopathy are presented in Tables 18 and 19, respectively. The resulting r values revealed no significant relationships between Competition and Narcissism and Psychopathy.

Tables 20 and 21 show the Pearson r computations between the respondents' age and their Cooperation and Competition. The r values revealed that there is no relationship between age and Cooperation and Competition.

In Tables 22 and 23, Pearson r computations between the respondents' age and their Machiavellianism and Narcissism scores are presented. Based on the r values yielded, it was established that no relationships exist between the respondents' age and their Machiavellianism and Narcissism scores.

In Table 24, the Pearson r computation resulted in an r value that indicates a significant moderate inverse relationship between the respondents' age and their Psychopathy scores. This implies that as the respondents' age increases, their Psychopathy tends to decrease moderately and vice versa.

CONCLUSIONS

For the respondents of this study, they exhibit high Cooperation and moderate Competition. As for the Dark Triad of Personality, it was found that they possessed moderate Machiavellianism, moderate Narcissism and low Psychopathy.

A significant moderate positive relationship was established between the respondents' Competition scores and their Machiavellianism scores. It can therefore be inferred that as the respondents' Competition scores increase, their Machiavellianism scores moderately increase and vice versa. These two variables can therefore influence one another in a positive direction.

In addition, a significant moderate inverse relationship between the respondents' age and their Psychopathy scores was found. Based on this, it can be inferred that as the respondents' age increases, their Psychopathy tends to decrease moderately and vice versa.

The results of this study have shown that for the respondents, Machiavellianism moderately influences their competitiveness in a positive

direction. Furthermore, as their age increases their Psychopathy moderately decreases.

Declaration by Authors

Ethical Approval: The authors state that the ethical standards of research were strictly followed, the informed consent of all the research participants was obtained, their responses were acquired anonymously and the data gathered was used purely for the purpose of making this study.

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