Management of Stress Resilience at Work Place: The Evolutionary Genetics of Dark Triad Personality

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ABSTRACT

Stress is defined as a physical, chemical or emotional factor that causes bodily or mental tension and may be an aspect in disease causation. It is also described as a state resulting from a stress; especially one of bodily or mental strain emanating from factors that tend to alter an existing equilibrium. Stress is a necessary and common problem associates with human life. It has very undesirable consequences in the emotional, mental and physical well-being of an individual which leads to decreased quality of life and poor organisational performance. People have personality traits that make disagreeable or difficult to deal with them. They may be volatile, arrogant or domineering. Apart from this, other behaviours and characteristics can be seriously damaging and displays toxic combination of these traits and can undermine his colleagues in lasting way and can potentially poison and destroy a team. The present study is focused on "Dark Traid" personality theory. Psychologists have identified three different traits of "Dark Triad" theory i.e. Narcissism, Machiavellianism and psychopathy. The study is mainly descriptive in nature and will explore the three elements of the Dark Triad and identify the behaviors associated with each of them. Also, it explains how they might impact the workplace and create work stress.

Keywords: Management, Personality, People, Dark triad, Stress, Resilience, Workplace.

INTRODUCTION

The world has changed under globalisation and expansion of the information technology. The corporate world has not been the same in the recent years. After 1990s, India has also entered the corporatized and globalised world as a major player. More importantly, highly skilled Indian youth have entered the scene. A number of Indian companies also came up which employed professionals from various fields in a large number. It is all too well-known how these highly paid, skilled professionals undergo stress at work place which eventually affects their mental and physical well-being. It is more evident in the Indian context as there has always been a pressure on working men and women to justify the multiple roles they have to play, sometimes, against their own wishes and likings. Stress mostly result from an imbalance between demands being mad upon an individual and the resources available to help that individual cope with the demands (Murthy et al., 2023).

Dr. Hans Selye, one of the pioneering authorities on the concept of stress described stress as "the rate of all wear and tear caused by life". He defined stress as "a state of psychological and physiological imbalance resulting from the disparity between situation demand and the individual ability and motivation to meet those needs". According to him the stress is a non-specific response of the body to any demand for change. (Hans Selye-2009). According to other Authors such as (Bensor and Casey, 2006 Matta et al., 2022) stress is an automatic physical response to any stimuli that require to adjust to change.

To reduce the negative effects of stress on physical and psychological health, understanding the nature of the relationship between stress and illness and the forces that moderate this relationship is crucial. A number of factors have emerged through research that appear to moderate the negative effects of stress on physical and psychological health, much of health promotion research began to focus on identifying those resistant factors that contribute to long term health. The focus shifted from psychopathology and weaknesses caused by stress towards strengths that might assist individuals in their daily functioning and promote their wellbeing. As a result, the individual remains healthy and strong even in high stress situations.

The current study concerns with the stress resilience among the management personnel in health care and banking organisations. It is associated with high turnover among health care and banking professional with high levels of strain and stress and low levels of work satisfaction or job autonomy. People of variety background and field as well as experience join the healthcare and banking sector with an attitude to deliver the better target. In the present scenario with the globalization, privatization and liberalisation there have been drastic change in the health and financial environment. With advancement of new technology, change in new leadership with new rules and new expectations, limited training in the new work task and above all high target have shown to be the sources of strain and stress.

Due to the work environment in health care and banking, professionals have been facing daily stress in order to achieve high target work related stressors have been defined as any work situation perceived by the participants are threatening the situation and individuals coping abilities. The inherent factors include long working hours, excessive work load, target, interpersonal conflict with other staffs and threat of malpractice litigation, these factors lead to the classification of work place stressors often faced into three classes or categories namely organization stressors task characteristics and social factors. Besides organization stressors often include communication problems between workers and higher authorities problems with team worker, role antiquity and administrative factor.

Research on resilience theory shows that it is imperative to manage immediate environment and promote protective factors while addressing demands and stressors that the individual faces. The word resilience is often used on its own to represent overall acceptability or adaptability and coping, but it can be broken down into categories or type psychological resilience refers to the ability to mentally withstand or adopt to uncertainty, challenges and advrrsity. People who exhibit psychological resilience develop coping strategies and capabilities that enable them to remain calm and focused during a crisis and move on without long-term consequences.

The dark triad personality traits are three closely related yet independent personality traits that all have a somewhat malevolent connotation. The three traits are machiavellianism (a manipulative attitude), narcissism (excessive self-love), and psychopathy (lack of empathy). The dark triad has traditionally been assessed with three tests different tests, each of which had been developed individually. Most commonly, the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI) was used as the measure of narcissism, the MACH-IV for machiavellianism and the Self-Report Psychopathy Scale (SRP) for psychopathy. Format differences between these (multiple choice versus scale rating) complicated administration and analysis. The Short Dark Triad was developed in 2011 by DelroyPaulhus and Daniel Jones to provide a more uniform assessment and also to trim down the total length.

The dark triad has already been well-studied. First discovered by DelroyPaulhus and Kevin Williams in 2002, the dark triad of personality consists of narcissism (entitled self-importance), Machiavellianism (strategic exploitation and deceit) and psychopathy (callousness and cynicism). While these three traits had traditionally been studied mostly among clinical populations (e.g., criminals), Paulhus and Williams showed that each of these traits are clearly on a continuum—we are all at least a little bit narcissistic, Machiavellian and psychopathic.

The Dark Triad is a phrase you're unlikely to have heard around the workplace, but it is one of the "buzzwords" in the world of psychology. It refers to three distinct but related personality traits: narcissism, Machiavellianism and psychopathy.

- **Narcissism:** narcissism comes from the Greek myth of Narcissus, a hunter who fell in love with his own reflection in a pool of water, and drowned. Narcissistic people can be selfish, boastful, arrogant, lacking in empathy, and hypersensitive to criticism.

- **Machiavellianism:** the word comes from the renowned 16th century Italian politician and diplomat Niccolo Machiavelli. He earned notoriety when his 1513 book, "The Prince," was interpreted as an endorsement of the dark arts of cunning and deceit in diplomacy. Traits associated with Machiavellianism include duplicity, manipulation, self-interest, and a lack of both emotion and morality.

- **Psychopathy:** personality traits associated with psychopathy include a lack of empathy or remorse, antisocial behavior, and being manipulative and volatile. It's important to note that there is a distinction between psychopathic traits and being a psychopath, with its commonly held association with criminal violence.
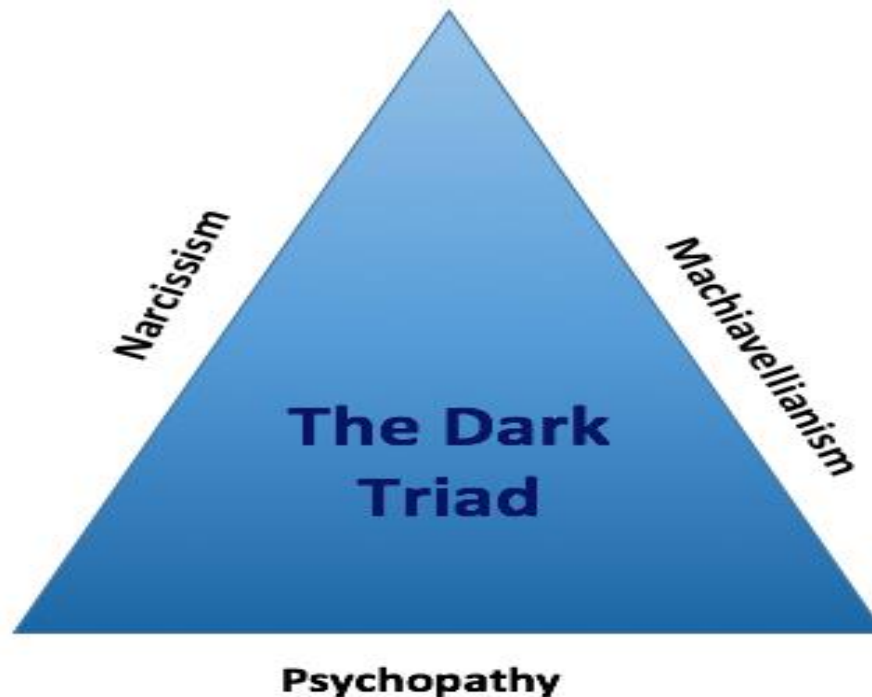

Fig.1: The aspects of Dark Triad

Source: Laura Harris Wikimedia (CC BY-SA 4.0)

Measures of all three constructs two brief measures are now dominating Dark Triad research. One is the Dirty Dozen (Jonason& Webster, 2010). Emphasizing brevity, the Dirty Dozen includes only four items to tap each triad member. Jonason and colleagues have carried out a series of studies to support its validity (e.g., Jonason& Kavanagh, 2010). Although some researchers have found it to be useful (e.g., Rauthmann, 2012), others have been critical (e.g., Leeet al., forthcoming; Miller &Lynam, 2012; Paulhus& Jones, forthcoming; Rauthmann, forthcoming).The other popular measure is the Short Dark Triad (SD3; Jones &Paulhus, forthcoming). This 27-item instrument has been employed successfully by a number researchers(e.g., Arvan, 2012; Baughman, Dearing, Giammarco, & Vernon, 2012; Giammarco, Atkinson, Baughman, Veselka, & Vernon, forthcoming; Holzman, 2011; Lee et al., forth-coming). In the initial paper, the SD3 authors presented five studies, including informant validation of all three subscales. Direct comparisons with the Dirty Dozen indicate broader predictive power for the SD3 (Egan, 2012; Jones &Paulhus, forthcoming; Leeet al., forthcoming).Two other measures have yet to be used in published research. One is the Dark Triad Screening Measure(MacNeil, Whaley, & Holden, 2007). That instrument was designed to provide subscales with minimal overlap. Their confirmatory factor analysis successfully replicated a 3-factor structure. The other unpublished instrument is the Mini-Markers of Evil (Harms, Roberts, &Kuncel, 2004). This 57-item instrument is constructed entirely of trait adjectives. Its three subscales show concurrent validity with the standard measures of the Dark Triad.

Manage People with Dark Triad Traits

If a member of team is exhibiting Dark Triad personality traits, we can experiencepsychologist's stress that there are many subtleties and gradations of personality types, and the behaviors associated with them can change from day to day. But for management of these type of personality, we need to address negative behaviors to maintain harmony and productivity within the team.

Coping with Anger

Team member with psychopathic traits may be prone to anger and aggression, and must defuse such situations speedily. Often, the signs of normal anger are easy to spot, for example a raised voice, a flushed face and sweating. But some people try to suppress their anger, which can then show itself in "passive aggressive"ways such as sulking or ignoring people.There are a number of strategies we can use when dealing with Angry People. It's important to stay safe if we feel threatened – leave the room immediately if necessary. If we're dealing with someone's ongoing anger issues, distance yourself emotionally from his behavior, and try to identify the cause of his rage with Questioning Techniques and Active Listening.

Dealing with Bullying

Sometimes anger can spill over into bullying. At a simple level this can include verbal abuse or threatening behavior, but it can often be more subtle and include unnecessary criticism, belittling someone, or spreading malicious rumors. Bullying on team is just as important to support the victim as it is to confront the bully and hold her accountable. Bullying on Teamoutlines a step-by-step strategy to help manage situations.

The Impact of Dark Triad Traits at Work

It's difficult to find anything positive to say about the impact Dark Triad traits would have in the workplace. Someone with such a psychological make-up would probably display an undesirable behavior, such as being aggressive, volatile, selfish, and deceitful, or a combination of such traits. In his 2013 paper, The Dark Side of Personality at Work, Dr Seth Spain, assistant professor at Binghampton University School of Management in New York, said there was evidence of a "fairly robust relationship between Machiavellianism and unethical decision-making in organizations."

Research by DelroyPaulhus and Kevin Williams, psychologists at the University of British Columbia, argue that tendencies associated with narcissism, Machiavellianism and psychopathy often overlap, but the three are nevertheless separate entities. Further research found common correlations between them were dishonesty and a lack of humility.And a study specifically looking at the Dark Triad at work claims that employees with its character traits are "toxic." In some instances, they lead men in particular to be more aggressive in workplace relationships, or try to influence people or events more forcefully.

However, there is evidence that narcissism, at least initially, can come across in relatively positive, desirable ways. A narcissist will often make an effort with her appearance and seem to be charming and friendly. She may well be conscientious and achievement-oriented – as that will also reflect well on her. But, in time, her constant "me, me, me" tendency may become wearing on people around her.

Results and discussion

The Stress test is conducted among a total of 1000 individuals by creating a website. Individuals only coming under the category of health and banking are allowed to access the test. By giving them certain questions the evaluation of the amount of stress in their working conditions was done. Those who scored 5 in it, are considered as totally stress, tension and anxiety free. Individuals who scored 4 are considered as stress and anxiety free. Those persons who scored 3 are considered as stressful. Those who scored 2 and 1 are considered to have a lot of tension, stress and anxiety in their life. The result is shown in Figure 1 of stress test.
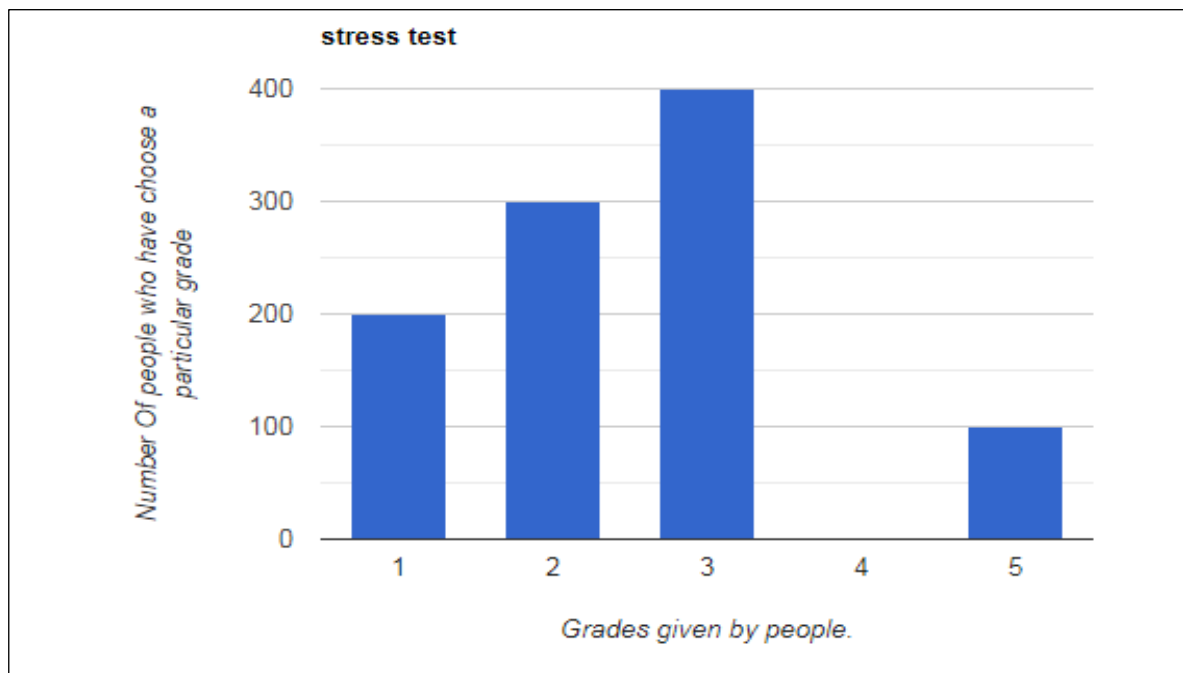
Figure 1 : Results of stress test after sample test

Another question was asked in the website is about positive thinking. Positive thinking / speculation assists with pressure in the board and can even improve one's wellbeing. Working on defeating negative self-talk will keep one stress free. As a result, it is observed that 500 individuals scored 4 which specified that they are happy with their occupation. The graphical representation is shown in Figure 2.
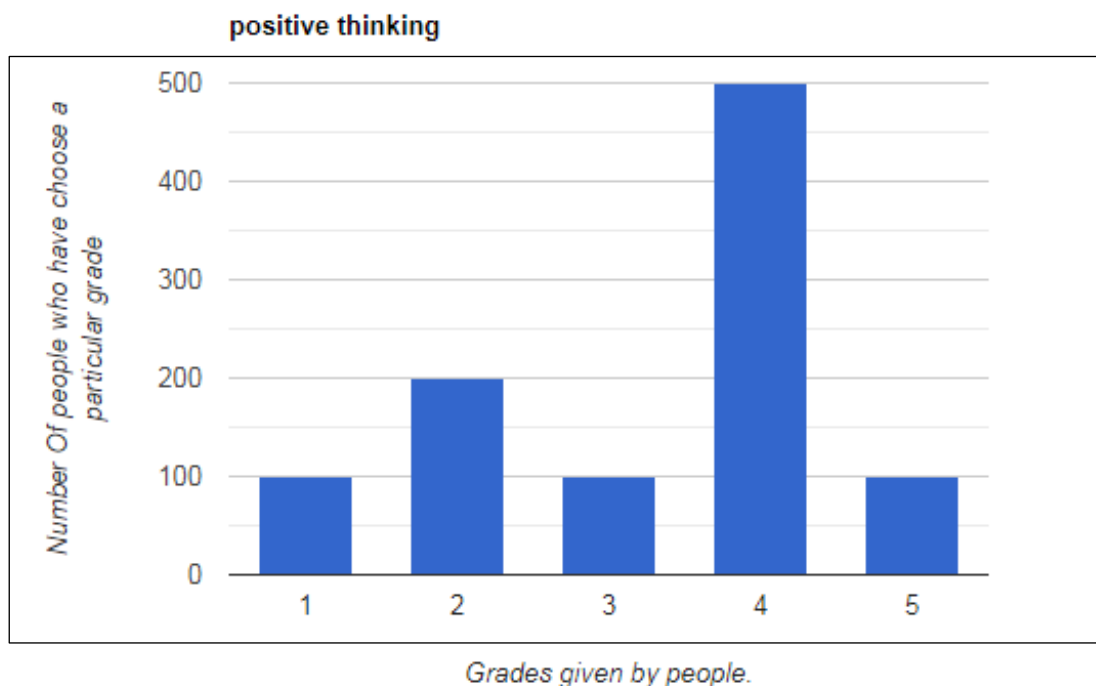

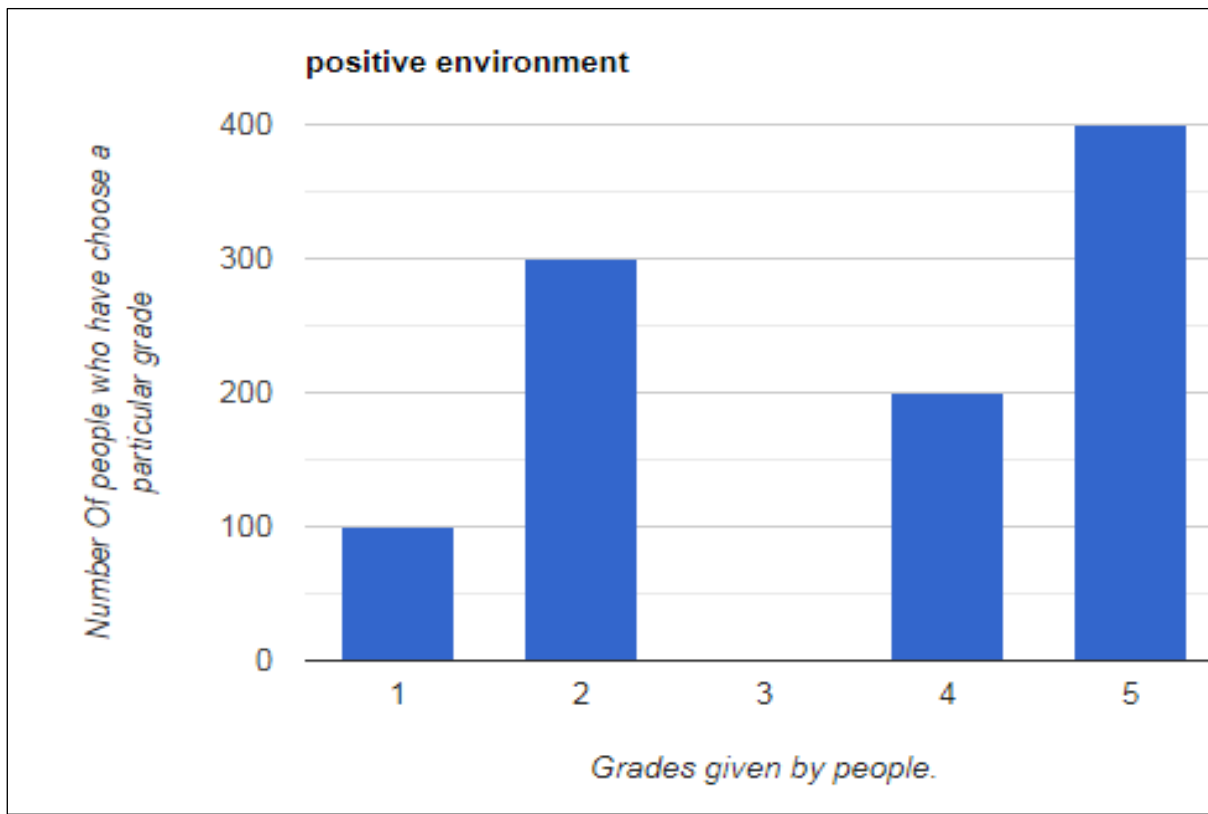Figure 2 : Results obtained for positive thinking

Figure 3 : Results of positive Environment

Positive environment around a person reflects how his surrounding is. Positive environment helps to do works easily and also creates a positive vibe mentioned in Figure 3.
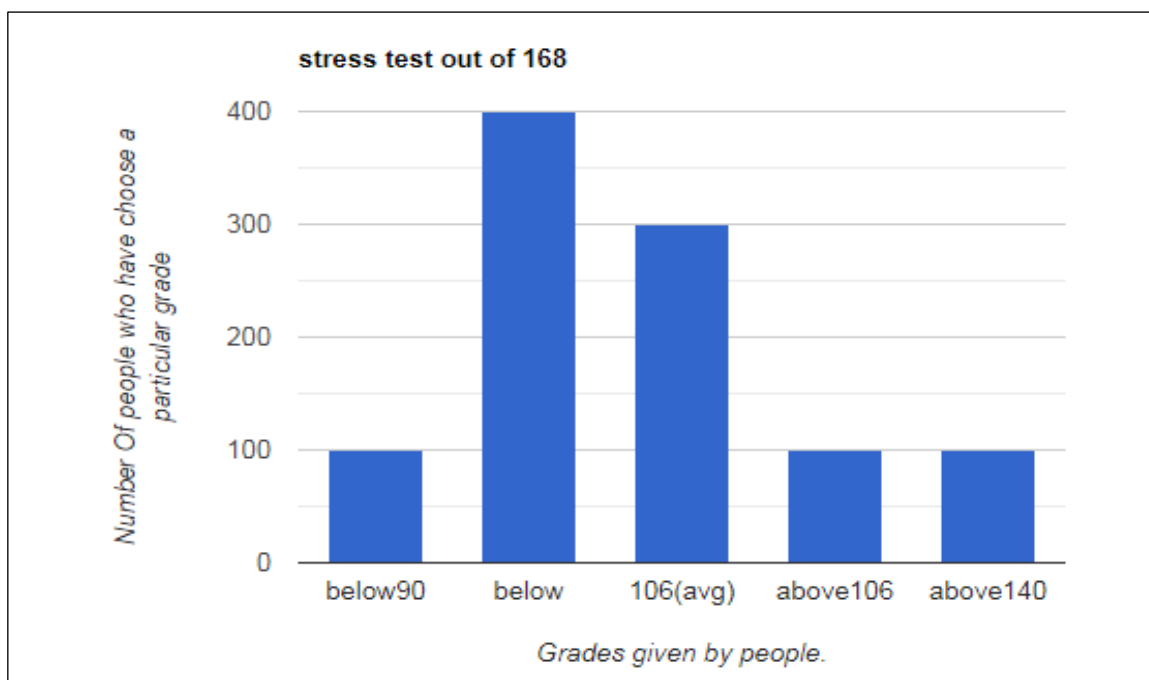

Figure 4: Overall scores of the total survey

A total of 42 questions were asked with maximum 4 marks and minimum 1 mark. 106 marks is found to be an average of all the marks. The scores are mentioned in Figure 4.

CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The dark triad was positively correlated with being younger, being male, being motivated by power, instrumental sex, achievement and affiliation (but not intimacy), having self-enhancement values, immature defense styles, conspicuous consumption, selfishness and viewing their creative work and religious immortality as routes to death transcendence. The dark triad was negatively correlated with life satisfaction, conscientiousness, agreeableness, self-transcendent values, compassion, empathy, a quiet ego, a belief that humans are good and a belief that one's own self is good.

The dark triad also showed positive correlations with a variety of variables that could facilitate one's more agentic-related goals. For instance, the dark triad was positively correlated with utilitarian moral judgment and the strengths of creativity, bravery and leadership, as well as assertiveness, in addition to motives for power, achievement and self-enhancement. Also, an unexpected correlation between the dark triad and curiosity was found, which was localized primarily to the embracing ("I like to do things that are a little frightening," "I prefer jobs that are excitingly unpredictable") and deprivation ("It disturbs me when I don't understand a solution," "It bothers me if I don't know a word") forms of curiosity. The construct of resilience has become popular within research and practice due to organisations' increasing need to effectively adapt and overcome challenges in banking and health sector managerial personnel's.

There are definitely limitations of our studies, and lots of areas for future research extending and developing our work. Nevertheless, we hope our research helps balance the force in personality psychology. Yes, everyday psychopaths exist. But so do everyday saints, and they are just as worthy of research attention and cultivation in a society that sometimes forgets that not only is there goodness in the world, but there is also goodness in each of us as well.

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