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Academic Incivility: Can the Dark Triad Personality Traits Predict Academic Entitlement?

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Walden University

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Melissa Foley

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Walden University
2020

Abstract

Academic Incivility: Can the Dark Triad Personality Traits Predict Academic

Entitlement?

by

Melissa Foley

MS Applied Psychology, Walden University, 2016

MS Forensic Psychology, Walden University, 2014

BS Criminal Justice, Harrison College, 2012

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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Abstract

Academic entitlement is a view held by students that can cause dissent and student incivility. Academic entitlement can be driven by various factors, including the personality traits of the Dark Triad (personality traits of Machiavellianism, psychopathy, and narcissism). Other researchers have examined the relationship between these traits and academic entitlement, but further research on this subject is needed. Adams' equity theory, which proposes that people experience distress when they identify as either under- or over-rewarded individuals, provided the theoretical foundation for this study. Using a quantitative approach, 160 participants were recruited using online methods and asked to complete a survey comprised of the Academic Entitlement Scale, the Short Dark Triad Scale, and the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale. Hierarchical multiple regression was used to examine the relationship between the data gathered on the Dark Triad personality traits and academic entitlement. The results indicated Machiavellianism and psychopathy traits contained in the Dark Triad personalities do predict academic entitlement. This knowledge promotes positive social change by providing educators and support staff with insight into the millennial generation of students. A greater understanding of the link between personality traits allows professors and support staff to mitigate these behaviors by adapting their teaching styles to diminish the chance of academic-entitled behaviors to manifest.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

Academic entitlement can pose challenges in an educational setting, causing dissent among students and professors. One origin of this attitude may be the personality traits of Machiavellianism, psychopathy, and narcissism, also known as the *Dark Triad* (Turnipseed & Cohen, 2015). Determining whether these traits can predict academic entitlement could empower professors and support staff to mitigate these behaviors, thereby reducing staff burnout and promoting better learning environments for students. As such, this study constitutes an attempt to explore whether the Dark Triad personality traits can predict academic entitlement behaviors in students. Based on the results, readers will be able to differentiate individual traits and their relationship to academic entitlement behaviors. This chapter includes a presentation of the contextual background and the issues prompting the need for this study. Furthermore, it contains a discussion of the purpose of the study and an outline of the research questions, the nature of the study, operational definitions, assumptions, significance, and expected limitations of the study.

Background

The Dark Triad personality traits consist of Machiavellianism, psychopathy, and narcissism. All three traits have been discovered in individuals who display an attitude centered on “getting ahead” rather than “getting along” (Goodboy & Frisby, 2014). While identified as individual constructs by Paulhus and Williams (2002), all these traits contain socially aversive aspects of human personalities and encompass behaviors, such as engaging in manipulation, exploitation, and deceptive tactics, in pursuit of selfish gains.

These aspects have pervasive implications, including unethical intentions, the rationalization of unethical behaviors, impulsiveness, and aggressiveness (Goodboy & Frisby, 2014).

Academic entitlement, as defined by Morrow (1994), refers to a person's propensity to expect academic success without taking personal responsibility for such achievements. This phenomenon has been classified as an independent construct from psychological entitlement since it only occurs in academic settings, whereas psychological entitlement can occur across several domains (Greenberger, Lessard, Chen, & Farruggia, 2008). Academically entitled behaviors can manifest themselves in the form of students demanding credit for unfinished work or exhibiting anger about low grades for subpar work.

While not unique to any generation, academic-entitled behaviors are most prominent in the millennial generation (Elias, 2017). The millennial generation is also currently the most prominent generation entering higher education institutes (Giambatista, Hoover, & Tribble, 2017). Members of the millennial generation, those born between the years of 1981 and 1996 (Dimock, 2019), have received both increased and ongoing attention as well as positive reinforcement from society during their formative years. Millennials have been rewarded not based on their performance but on their participation, creating a sense of entitlement (Elias, 2017). During their academic careers, this attitude translates to an expectation of receiving positive reinforcement simply for attending class, in line with Morrow's (1994) definition of academic entitlement.

The entitled attitude can be furthered by the consumerism-driven belief that the student is the customer (Singleton-Jackson, Jackson, & Reinhardt, 2010). Since they are paying for a service – in this case, education – they think that they should be satisfied with it. Some students also believe that they are entitled to certain goods that the university provides, such as grades, regardless of their capability and competence (Singleton-Jackson et al., 2010). This type of attitude devalues academic achievement by removing the significance of learning: Students no longer need to learn to succeed; they merely need to pay tuition (Singleton-Jackson et al., 2010).

In the first known study associating academic entitlement with the Dark Triad personality traits, Turnipseed and Cohen (2015) investigated the role of the traits in the prediction of academic entitlement. The researchers aimed to determine the extent to which Machiavellianism, psychopathy, and narcissism independently influenced and predicted academic entitlement (Turnipseed & Cohen, 2015). The current study is an extension of their work. I utilized an alternative measure of the Dark Triad personalities with a more diverse sample population.

Problem Statement

Academic entitlement produces increased academic dishonesty, lower levels of self-esteem and academic success, and lower college-related self-efficacy (Turnipseed & Cohen, 2015). In addition, Chowning and Campbell (2009a) asserted that this attitude might result in student incivility, which, if unchallenged, can further amplify entitlement beliefs. Upon noticing this belief, professors may take the path of least resistance, rewarding these students by yielding to their demands (Chowning & Campbell, 2009a).

The Dark Triad personalities consist of Machiavellianism, psychopathy, and narcissism (Chowning & Campbell, 2009a). Machiavellianism is characterized by interpersonal manipulations, often involving deceit and flattery (Ain, Carre, Fantini-Hauwel, Baudouin, & Besche-Richard, 2013). Machiavellian individuals are cynical and aloof, and they traditionally have amoral viewpoints that promote their own goals or interests (Carre, Fantini-Hauwel, Baudouin, & Besche-Richard, 2013). Psychopathy is characterized by a lack of empathy, instrumental and reactive aggression, the manipulation of others, and grandiosity (Gregory et al., 2015). Narcissism is distinguished by behaviors, such as increased grandiosity, an inflated view of self, and a heightened feeling of individualism and uniqueness (Piff, 2014). Turnipseed and Cohen (2015) asserted that the Dark Triad personality traits could be linked to various aspects of academic entitlement; however, their sample population notably lacked diversity, warranting further research.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to improve the awareness of the role that the Dark Triad personality traits play in academic entitlement as well as related constructs of externalized responsibility and entitled expectations. I used the data gathered to investigate the Dark Triad traits individually as predictors of academic entitlement. Previous research was expanded upon through the use of a more diverse population sample, an alternative measure of the Dark Triad personality traits, and the addition of a measure for social desirability bias.

Theoretical Framework

In the equity theory, Adams (1963) stated that people compare challenges on two dimensions: inputs and outputs. Adams categorized inputs as contributions that an individual makes to a situation, and outputs as what a person obtains from a situation. Equity theory proposes that there should be a proportional relationship between inputs and outputs or between work and reward; if these are not in proportion, it leads to inequalities (Adams, 1963). When the allocators, or students, recognize an inequality, they become motivated to restore equality, and efforts to restore equality can come in the form of incivility (Hook & Cook, 1979).

Birkas, Csatho, Gacs, and Bereczkei (2014) conducted a study linking the traits of the Dark Triad to equity theory, specifically to reward sensitivity. The researchers found that Machiavellian behaviors may be characterized by a strong penchant for rewards. The findings of their study also suggested that Machiavellians' behavioral motivation traits (e.g., amoral manipulation, interpersonal tactics, and desire for control) may be related positively to reward sensitivity and negatively to punishment sensitivity.

Furthermore, Woodley and Allen (2014) suggested that Machiavellianism and psychopathy may influence the perception of equity. They found that these traits were more outcome driven, and individuals with these characteristics gave as little as possible while trying to gain the most from their organizations (Woodley & Allen, 2014). Behaviors, such as those identified by Birkas et al. (2014) and Woodley and Allen, may distort how students perceive equity, furthering the possibility that these personality types can predict academic entitlement.

Equity theory has also been linked to academic entitlement in the form of reactions to perceived unfairness (Miller, 2013). Researchers have also used the theory to examine how individuals respond to the perceived fairness of satisfaction and rewards. Academically entitled behaviors are a result of perceived unfairness (Morrow, 1994). For example, if a student fails, it must be the result of the curriculum or the professor, not the student; therefore, the professor is perceived to have been unfair, causing the student distress. How the student perceives equity may be based on personality traits, such as those in the Dark Triad.

Research Questions

Research Question 1: Do Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy predict academic entitlement?

H₀1: Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy, as measured by the Short Dark Triad Scale, do not predict academic entitlement, as measured by the Academic Entitlement Scale.

H₁1: Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy, as measured by the Short Dark Triad Scale, predict academic entitlement, as measured by the Academic Entitlement Scale.

Research Question 2: Do Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy predict the entitled expectation dimension?

H₀2: Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy, as measured by the Short Dark Triad Scale, do not predict the entitled expectation dimension, as measured by the Academic Entitlement Scale.

H₁₂: Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy, as measured by the Short Dark Triad Scale, predict the entitled expectation dimension, as measured by the Academic Entitlement Scale.

Research Question 3: Do Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy predict the externalized responsibility dimension?

H₀₃: Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy, as measured by the Short Dark Triad Scale, do not predict the externalized responsibility dimension, as measured by the Academic Entitlement Scale.

H₁₃: Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy, as measured by the Short Dark Triad Scale, predict the externalized responsibility dimension as measured by the Academic Entitlement Scale.

Nature of the Study

For this study, I used a quantitative, correlational approach. Employing a cross-sectional survey design and the Academic Entitlement Scale developed by Chowning and Campbell (2009b), I measured an individual's inclination to hold a belief of deserved academic success without taking personal responsibility in achieving that success (see Miller, 2013). Entitled expectations were measured through five statements, while externalized responsibility was measured through 10 statements (see Miller, 2013). The Short Dark Triad scale, created by Jones and Paulhus (2014b), was used to assess for the presence of the Dark Triad personality traits. The survey method allowed me to make inferences about the Dark Triad personality traits and academic entitlement. Participants were at least 18 years of age. Students of any academic field were recruited through an

online crowdsourcing method and administered a questionnaire via the online survey service.

Definitions

The following is a list of the operational definitions used in this study:

Academic entitlement: A person's propensity to expect academic success without taking personal responsibility for achieving it. An independent construct from psychological entitlement, academic entitlement only occurs in an academic environment (Morrow, 1994).

Dark Triad personality traits: These characteristics constitute a set of socially aversive personalities, including Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy (Chowning & Campbell, 2009b).

Entitled expectations: This measurement allows a researcher to evaluate students' expectations of different courses and professors (Chowning & Campbell, 2009b).

Externalized responsibility: This concept concerns students' perceived level of responsibility (or lack thereof) for their own academic success (Chowning & Campbell, 2009b).

Machiavellianism: This personality construct involves a skepticism of others' willingness to cooperate; the need to achieve goals through immoral behaviors, such as manipulation, deception, or exploitation; a strong desire to control others; and a tendency to focus on external performance regardless of the impact on others (Christie & Geis, 1970).

Narcissism: This personality construct is characterized by a grandiose sense of self-importance, a sense of uniqueness, a lack of empathy, arrogance, envy, and a tendency to exploit others (American Psychiatric Association, 2013).

Psychological entitlement: A pervasive and constant sense that an individual deserves more than others and remains consistent across varied situations (Campbell, Bonacci, Shelton, Exline, & Bushman, 2004).

Psychopathy: This personality construct relates to irresponsible, impulsive, manipulative, thrill-seeking, and antisocial behaviors. Psychopaths use charm to manipulate people, are unable to show empathy, and lack regret or guilt (Cleckley, 1988).

Social desirability bias: This concept concerns the tendency of participants to respond to questions in a way they deem to be more socially acceptable than their true answers in an attempt to portray themselves in a more socially favorable manner (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960a).

Assumptions

There were several assumptions underlying this study. It was assumed that there would be a broad sample of academically entitled students and that there would be a broad sample of students with the Dark Triad personality traits. I also assumed participants were able to understand the questions of the survey and were qualified to answer them. Another assumption was that the participants answered truthfully. Finally, I assumed that the sample represented the general population.

Delimitations

There were two delimitations for this study. First, the origins of academic entitlement were not addressed. Because I only examined whether the Dark Triad personality traits can predict academic entitlement in this study, its origins were not relevant and would have expanded the scope and length of the study unnecessarily. Second, participants were over the age of 18 years old for several reasons (e.g., most individuals under this age are not attending universities).

Limitations

The limitations of this study included the possibility that using a crowdsourced method may impede generalization because participants may demonstrate a unique set of qualities not fully representative of the general population. Because the crowdsourced method is a relatively new tool for gathering online data, the recruited participants may reflect a younger, more technically advanced population. In addition, this was a correlational study. Correlational studies do not allow the researcher to assume causation; therefore, only a relationship between the variables was determined.

Finally, individuals with the Dark Triad personality traits may see themselves in a more favorable light (Chowning & Campbell, 2009a); therefore, their answers to the survey may be distorted. For this reason, I used the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale (see Crowne & Marlowe, 1960b). While this was once the benchmark assessment, the scale was developed in the 1960s and, as such, may not result in an accurate indication of social desirability today. Despite the age of the assessment, Lambert,

Arbuckle, and Holden (2016) found the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale to perform as effectively as new scales.

Significance

This unique study expands researchers' understanding of the correlation between the Dark Triad personality traits and academic entitlement. Turnipseed and Cohen (2015) suggested that further investigation was necessary to address the primary limitation of their study: the lack of diversity in their sample. They also recommended that future research should use a different measure of the Dark Triad personality traits to support their findings. The findings of this study provide insight for educators and support staff into the personality traits that may be associated with academic entitlement. By identifying these behaviors, professors and educational staff may be able to reduce burnout by implementing alternative methods of managing student incivility. If entitled behaviors are identified, professors could stress the role that students play in their own success. Professors and educational staff may also be able to preempt students' incivility by clearly communicating the expectations to the students (Goodboy & Frisby, 2014; Jiang, Tripp, & Hong, 2017)).

The findings of this study contribute to positive social change by increasing the understanding of the relationship between the Dark Triad personality traits and academic entitlement. Education is a means for social change; therefore, finding methods to improve student success, reduce professor burnout, and avoid academic entitlement behavior may aid in achieving educational goals. The findings of this study provide educators and support staff with the knowledge necessary to identify entitled individuals

more efficiently and, hence, utilize positive reinforcement of appropriate behaviors based on personality characteristics.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to improve the awareness of the role that the Dark Triad personality traits play in academic entitlement. The Dark Triad personality traits consist of Machiavellianism, psychopathy, and narcissism (Chowning & Campbell, 2009a). These traits are socially aversive in nature and may impact professor and student relationships; therefore, finding methods to improve student success and reduce professor burnout can positively affect social change.

Forthcoming chapters contain a more detailed description of the Dark Triad personality traits and academic entitlement. The subsequent chapters include an analysis of whether these traits can predict academic entitlement, the variables that were measured in this prediction, and a rationale for the measurements used. A review of the literature and a description of the research methodology are presented in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3, respectively.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter consists of an outline of the differences between the unique constructs of narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy as well as the constructs of academic entitlement, including externalized responsibility and entitled expectations. I also discuss the negative consequences of the Dark Triad personality traits and the effects of social desirability bias on response styles. The theoretical framework is also introduced.

Content and Search Strategy

I used scholarly, peer-reviewed articles and books as a basis for this literature review. Terms used in the literature search included *Machiavellianism*, *psychopathy*, *narcissism*, *Dark Triad*, *academic entitlement*, *equity theory*, *equity sensitivity theory*, *social desirability*, *social desirability bias*, and *personality disorders*. The electronic psychological databases searched were PsycTESTS, ProQuest, PsycINFO, PsycARTICLES, and ScienceDirect, which were accessed through Google Scholar and the Walden University Library. The peer-reviewed articles retrieved had been published within the last 10 years prior to the start of this research, with the primary literature providing a foundation for the theory and history of constructs.

Theoretical Framework

In the equity theory, Adams (1963) posited that people compare challenges on two dimensions: inputs and outputs. Adams categorized inputs as contributions and outputs as rewards. When inputs and outputs are not proportional, inequalities occur.

Equity theory suggests that there should be a relationship of proportion between inputs and outputs or between work and rewards (Adams, 1963). Adams identified four times when inequality transpires: when perceived inequality causes stress, when the inequality causes a person to diminish it, when the quality of tension corresponds to the dimension of the disparity, and when the intensity of the motivation to moderate the inequality resembles the perceived inequality (Lazaroiu, 2015).

When students perceive inequality, they may perceive themselves to be in a state of imbalance (Adams, 1963). This imbalance may lead to incivility and a collapse in student-faculty relations (Adams, 1963). The greater the perceived inequality, the more motivated students become to diminish it in order to restore balance; this equilibrium may be reached through means that are not conducive to learning, including decreasing inputs by reducing productivity and effort or increasing input by cheating to achieve the desired outcomes (Adams, 1963). Other methods include complaining to other students, communicating negative messages regarding the instructor, or attempting to persuade the instructor (Goodboy & Frisby, 2014).

Whereas Adams's equity theory assumes that individuals are uniformly sensitive to equity, in their equity sensitivity theory, Huseman, Hatfield, and Miles (1987) asserted that individuals differ in how strongly they endorse equality norms. Huseman et al. suggested that demographic and psychological traits may influence an individual's sensitivity to equality. Individuals react to equity or inequity based on their preference for balance, which is influenced by their internal traits (Huseman, Hatfield, & Miles, 1987). Where individuals fall on this equity scale determines how they react to inequitable

treatment; the more significant the perceived inequality, the greater their distress becomes, and the harder they tend to work to restore equity (Huseman, Hatfield, & Miles, 1987).

Huseman et al. (1987) argued that there are three classes of individuals within the continuum. The first is *benevolents*, who prefer their input and output (i.e., the effort they make and the reward granted) to be less than the input and output of others. Benevolents would rather be under rewarded, and they feel guilty when they are over- or equitably rewarded. The second is *equity sensitives*, who prefer their input and output to be equal to others'. Equity sensitives feel guilt when overrewarded and distress when under rewarded. The third class is *entitleds*, who prefer their output to exceed others' output, while their input remains equivalent. Entitleds feel distressed when equitably or under rewarded and satisfied when overrewarded.

Woodley and Allen (2014) associated the traits of the Dark Triad, specifically traits involving reward sensitivity and dysfunction impulsivity, with equity sensitivity theory. They found that Machiavellianism and psychopathy have implications for how equity is perceived. Both Machiavellians and psychopaths were found to be less likely to focus on inputs and more motivated to obtain as much out of a situation as possible while contributing as little as possible (Woodley & Allen, 2014). Furthermore, Miller (2013) applied equity sensitivity theory in order to adapt a measure of work entitlement to a measure of academic entitlement. I used this theory in the current study to examine how an individual responds to the perceived fairness of satisfaction and rewards.

Entitlement

Entitlement refers to what individuals perceive that they deserve, but scholars in various fields have defined the term differently. For instance, legal scholars have defined entitlement as a person's legal rights (Campbell et al., 2004). Marketing scholars have defined entitlement as the importance of the expectations of their customers (Campbell et al., 2004). Political science scholars defined entitlement as the self-determination and free expression fundamental to a democratic system of government (Campbell et al., 2004). Psychological entitlement refers to people's beliefs that they deserve more than others and are consistent across varying situations (Campbell & Buffardi, 2007).

The concept of entitlement has existed for decades but lacked examination as a scientific construct. Naumann, Minsky, and Sturman (2002) became frustrated with the lack of a standard definition in their research in the field of management. They studied the uses of entitlement perceptions across several disciplines and developed a typology that identifies entitlement. They found that there was an agreement across all fields that entitlement is related to what individuals perceive they deserve.

Tomlinson (2013) furthered this research by synthesizing prior research from multiple disciplines. The author separated an integrative conceptualization of entitlement beliefs from trait entitlement, arguing that entitlement beliefs are a malleable state of an individual, while trait entitlement is a stable attribute (Tomlinson, 2013). Entitlement beliefs can be influenced by situational factors and are affected by trait entitlement, the latter acting as an intensifier (Tomlinson, 2013). Tomlinson also suggested that entitlement beliefs can be categorized as legitimate or excessive. Legitimate entitlement

is supported by an individual's status, whereas excessive entitlement is founded on beliefs that exceed legitimate entitlement (Tomlinson, 2013).

Entitlement is identified as a core trait of narcissism in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders-III (DSMIII)*; American Psychiatric Association, 1980). Raskin and Hall (1981) further validated the link between entitlement and narcissism during the development of the Narcissistic Personality Inventory. Furthermore, Morf and Rhodewalt (2001) discussed the extent of entitlement beliefs in narcissists and the idea that entitlement is a consistent trait in the self-regulatory process. More recently, Stanley, Wygant, and Sellbom (2013) linked entitlement with psychopathy and Machiavellianism. While validating the Triarchic Psychopathy Measure, the researchers associated psychopathy with low levels of conscientiousness and agreeableness. Additionally, they identified narcissistic feelings of entitlement and low levels of empathetic responses to others as traits of both personalities.

Conversely, researchers have argued that entitlement results from a cultural phenomenon (Lerner, 1987). Lerner (1987) claimed that entitlement differs from deserving because deserving is based on what is earned, while entitlement is a belief about unearned rewards. Judgments about what a person deserves are founded on cultural beliefs and rules (Lerner, 1987). Twenge, Zhang, and Im (2004) discovered that young U.S. citizens believe that outside forces control their lives, finding that the younger generations, fostering the notion of an external locus of control, believe that there is little they can do to change the world around them.

Entitlement has its academic origins in equity theory as it relates to business studies (Allen, Allen, Karl, & White, 2015). Employees who conclude that they are under rewarded compared to other coworkers exhibit certain behaviors, such as not cooperating with coworkers, reducing their work input and output, and sabotaging their coworkers' production abilities to regain equity (Allen et al., 2015). The balance of equity includes similarities in pay, promotions, and benefits as well as time exerted (Allen et al., 2015).

Employees who perceive themselves as under rewarded also take cognitive approaches to try and balance their feelings of inequity (Allen et al., 2015). Under rewarded employees may look for other coworkers whom they consider more appropriate for comparison with themselves (Allen et al., 2015). They may also decide to transfer to another job or part of the company in hopes of balancing their perception of equity (Allen et al., 2015).

Academic Entitlement

In recent years, research on academic entitlement has increased. Many of these researchers have concentrated on causes of or explanations for the surge in academic entitlement and the development of reliable and valid ways to measure this phenomenon (Achacoso, 2002; Chowning & Campbell, 2009a; Frey, 2015; Greenberger et al., 2008). However, much of this research has yielded inconsistent results. Achacoso (2002) reported that males scored lower on the Academic Entitlement Scale than females. Conversely, Greenberger et al. (2008) found females scored lower. Nevertheless, according to Chowning and Campbell (2009a), females in their study experienced lower

levels of externalized responsibility than males. The differences in measures and definitions are probably the reason for these inconsistencies (McLellen & Jackson, 2017).

Academic entitlement was defined by Morrow (1994) as an individual's propensity to expect academic success without taking personal responsibility for such achievements. Academically entitled behaviors can manifest themselves in the form of demanding credit for unfinished work or exhibiting anger about low grades on subpar work. Academic entitlement has been classified as an independent construct from psychological entitlement, since academic entitlement only occurs in the academic setting, while psychological entitlement can occur across several domains (Greenberger et al., 2008).

The millennial generation has had continuous attention and positive reinforcement (Elias, 2017). This generation has received rewards unrelated to performance; rather, rewards have been based on participation, creating a sense of entitlement (Elias, 2017). These beliefs have carried over into academia, with the members of this generation expecting to receive positive reinforcement simply for attending class (Elias, 2017). Academic entitlement is furthered by the students' ideas of themselves as consumers or customers (Singleton-Jackson et al., 2010). Some students believe that, because they are paying for a service, they should be satisfied with that service, while others also believe they are entitled to certain goods that the university provides, such as grades (Singleton-Jackson et al., 2010). This type of culture defeats academic achievement by removing the significance of learning from the learner. No longer do students need to learn to achieve success; they merely need to pay tuition (Singleton-Jackson et al., 2010).

Morrow (1994) argued that the philosophy of academic entitlement threatens the goal of educational achievement. The author stated that entitlement assumes achievement, and a culture grounded in entitlement delegitimizes academic achievements through incivility. Entitlement means that a student's success lies within the system and not the student; if an individual fails, it is because of the instructor, the institution, or the curriculum. Other researchers have agreed with Morrows' viewpoint, asserting that entitled students fail to comprehend their role in falling short academically (Barrett & Scott, 2014; Goodboy & Frisby, 2014).

Moreover, entitled students do not accept responsibility for their academic achievement (Goodboy & Frisby, 2014). Barrett and Scott (2014) affirmed reports from professors that academically entitled behaviors have inhibited their abilities to teach. They found that these behaviors resulted in the professors altering their classroom practices to accommodate these behaviors (e.g., they lowered their classroom expectations).

In an attempt to further define academic entitlement, Achacoso (2002) described this phenomenon as a dichotomous construct containing a belief variable, or attitude, and an action variable, or behavior. Achacoso invented a scale to measure students' perceived sense of entitlement in negotiations and expectations. Entitled negotiations or actions, for example, are when the student demands a certain grade or negotiates a grade with professors (Achacoso, 2002). Entitled expectations or attitudes include students' beliefs that they are entitled to a higher grade without putting adequate effort into the work (Achacoso, 2002).

Similarly, Greenberger et al. (2008) defined academic entitlement with examples of attitudes that instructors may encounter among students. These attitudes included expectations of high grades for ordinary effort and demands for grades from professors. While definitions vary, there is a consistent theme that academic entitlement includes behaviors and actions from students who expect to receive more than they deserve, as exhibited by their performance or personal responsibilities within the classroom.

Extending the work of Morrow (1994), Chowning and Campbell (2009a) classified academic entitlement into two distinct constructs. The first is externalized responsibility, which is the expectation of high grades without personal responsibility for these grades. The second construct is entitled expectations, which are inflexible expectations about grades and professors' behaviors. The researchers validated a self-report scale for academic entitlement that uses a two-factor structure: one measuring externalized responsibility and the other measuring entitled expectations (Chowning & Campbell, 2009a).

Goodboy and Frisby (2014) extended this research by examining the relationship between students' individual beliefs and academic orientations and their expressions of dissent. They identified three types of distinct dissent reactions that students exhibit when unsatisfied with their instructors or education (indicative of a high level of academic entitlement): expressive, rhetorical, and vengeful dissent. The first, expressive dissent, describes situations where students vent their frustrations to others to feel better about their classes. This type of dissent can include venting to family, classmates, and others. Rhetorical dissent refers to an attempt by a student to persuade the instructor to remedy

the perceived problem. Finally, vengeful dissent is when a student communicates negative and damaging messages about the instructor in an attempt to damage his or her reputation or credibility. These reactions occur when the student perceives a triggering agent, such as unfair grading or testing. Goodboy and Frisby concluded that vengeful dissent is more likely to occur when the student perceives unfair interpersonal treatment. They also found that students who engage in vengeful dissent had a tendency towards entitlement.

In addition, Goodboy and Frisby (2014) determined that students with an external locus of control believe that events occur due to luck, fate, or chance, or that they are controlled by other such outside forces. Conversely, students with an internal locus of control believe that events are a result of their own behavior. This finding further validates those of Twenge et al. (2004), who demonstrated that students with an external locus of control achieve less in school and cannot delay gratification, while an internal locus of control is more often associated with higher achievement in school.

Greenberger et al. (2008) identified that academic entitlement is associated with aggression, greed, the inability to forgive, low self-esteem, and an external locus of control. They examined the potential causes of academic entitlement and found that parenting practices that lead to inflated self-esteem may encourage the development of such an attitude (Greenberger et al., 2008). Some parents with high achievement expectations for their children also used social comparisons to motivate them, further encouraging academic entitlement as a coping strategy. Greenberger et al. also discovered that this parenting style may cause achievement anxiety in children. Later,

when they enroll in university, their grades may decline due to greater demands at this level of education. In addition, greater diversity in the student population was also shown to trigger academic entitlement behaviors (Greenberger et al., 2008). Finally, students scoring higher in academic entitlement more often had parents who expected them to outshine other students, providing materialistic rewards when they did so (Greenberger et al., 2008). These rewards served as extrinsic motivation, emphasizing grades over learning, which in turn caused higher anxiety about grades (Greenberger et al., 2008).

The study described above produced staggering numbers indicating a surge in academic entitlement. The researchers reported that 66% of students believed that just trying hard should earn them a high grade. In addition, 40% of students surveyed thought that they should receive a “B” grade for simply completing most of the reading assigned in the course. Twenty-three percent believed that their professor should respond to an e-mail the same day it was sent, and 16.5% believed that it was acceptable to take a phone call during class.

Technological advancements have contributed to the rise in behaviors associated with academic entitlement (Lockett, Trocchia, Noel, & Marlin, 2017). For example, the ubiquitous use of email has allowed students previously unavailable access to their professors (Greenberger et al., 2008), and the advent of anonymous course evaluations has led (especially pre tenure) professors to use strategies to appear more likable, such as lenient grading and less harsh methods of discipline. In one study by Tabachnick et al. (1991), 22% of academic psychologists reported creating easier courses to ensure

popularity amongst students. These behaviors have been shown to reinforce academic entitlement.

Grade inflation may also play a role in academic entitlement by giving students the impression that they can achieve higher grades with less work. In another large-scale study by Kuh and Hu (1999) reported an increase in average grades at selective liberal arts colleges, research universities, and selective state universities. One contributing factor was changes in student characteristics.

Dark Triad

The Dark Triad personality traits consist of Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy (Paulhus & Williams, 2002). All three involve behaviors that relate to manipulation, exploitation, and deceptive tactics in pursuit of selfish gains. Other common aspects include coldness, self-promotion, aggression, and disagreeableness.

Whether the three personalities are part of one all-encompassing construct has long been debated by researchers. McHoskey, Worzel, and Szyarto (1998) asserted that Machiavellianism and psychopathy are the same personality construct, suggesting that the two should be integrated. They argued that personality psychologists, clinical psychologists, and social psychologists had been studying the same construct, but under different names. Thus, the Machiavellian Scale (MACH-IV; Christie & Geis, 1970) should also be used as the global measure of psychopathy (McHoskey et al., 1998).

Conversely, Paulhus and Williams (2002) contended that the personalities, while overlapping, constitute unique and warranted separate measures. The researchers termed these characteristics the “Dark Triad” and argued that, while they share many similarities,

there is only one constant attribute between them. Paulhus and Williams also found that psychopathy and narcissism were correlated with openness and extraversion, and both psychopathy and Machiavellianism were negatively associated with conscientiousness. They also reported that psychopathy was the only trait low on neuroticism. Furthermore, narcissism correlated the most with self-enhancement, while Machiavellianism did not correlate with it. The only constant in all three was the presence of low agreeableness (Paulhus & Williams, 2002).

Moreover, Jonason and Krouse (2013) discovered correlations between the Dark Triad and the emotional deficits of limited empathy, dysfunction in emotional awareness, interpersonal relating, and social attachment. Jonason and Krouse also found that each trait was associated with a pattern of emotional deficit. Narcissism correlated with difficulties in identifying feelings and limited emotional empathy. Psychopathy correlated with difficulty describing feelings, limited overall empathy, and externally oriented thinking (the latter also having a correlation with Machiavellianism). These deficits may play a role in the disposition of individuals with the Dark Triad traits and their levels of social awareness.

Jonason, Lyons, Baughman, and Vernon (2014) expanded upon the uniqueness of Dark Triad traits by identifying specific aspects of each trait involving deception. The study indicates that narcissism is linked to lying for self-gain and a self-reported skill in lying. Psychopathy and Machiavellianism are linked to telling lies for no reason, and Machiavellianism is associated with telling white lies. The researchers also investigated the link between the traits and intrasexual and intersexual deception tactics, finding

evidence that the differences of deception in sexes were, to a degree, a function of the individual differences in the Dark Triad traits (Jonason et al., 2014).

The Dark Triad personality traits have been empirically linked to a comprehensive range of negative outcomes, including criminality, infidelity, aggressiveness, hostility, counterproductive work behaviors, and dysfunction in personal and professional relationships (O'Boyle et al., 2012). Conversely, these traits can also offer people the means to secure their place within groups and gain status. The severity of each trait determines the extent of the maladaptive behaviors exhibited.

Machiavellianism

The concept of Machiavellianism is derived from the writings of Niccolò Machiavelli, a 16th-century Italian diplomat, philosopher, writer, and politician. Machiavelli has often been referred to as the father of modern political science. In treatise *The Art of War* (Machiavelli, 2009), Machiavelli wrote that dishonesty and the killing of innocents are normal and effective methods in politics. Machiavelli accepted the immorality of powerful men who use deceitfulness and manipulation to maintain power. Machiavelli viewed people as mistrusting, malevolent, and self-serving (Hunter, Gerbing, & Boster, 1982). In *The Prince* (Machiavelli, 2008), Machiavelli imparted advice on how to attain and stay in power. Lacking in honor, decency, and trust, Machiavelli's writing represents a strategy that regards others as a means to personal gain (Wilson, Near, & Miller, 1996).

In the first published personality measure based on Machiavelli's principles, Christie and Geis (1970) defined the four characteristics of Machiavellianism. The first is

skepticism of others' willingness to cooperate. The second is a need to achieve goals through immoral behaviors such as manipulation, deception, or exploitation. The third is a strong desire to control others. Finally, Machiavellian individuals have a desire for status, focusing on external performance regardless of the impact on others. Christie and Geis recognized three domains within Machiavellianism: tactics, views, and morality.

While individuals with Machiavellian characteristics are more likely to make ethically questionable choices and endorse a negative view of people, they tend to engage less frequently in extremely negative forms of antisocial behaviors (Kilduff & Galinsky, 2017). While such individuals are skillful manipulators, their emotional intelligence is not as strong as their conception of self suggests (Dahling, Whitaker, & Levy, 2009). Furthermore, Lyons and Aitken (2010) found that the emotionally detached social style of Machiavellian individuals renders distant and low-quality relationships. Jones and Paulhus (2010a) ascertained that individuals who are more Machiavellian than narcissistic or psychopathic are less prone to become aggressive when provoked. However, they tend to engage in more counterproductive interpersonal work behaviors.

Kilduff and Galinsky (2017) studied the relationship between rivalry and Machiavellianism. They examined whether exposure of a rival would increase Machiavellianism and its inherently unethical behaviors in a person, and they discovered that those confronted with a rival could temporarily change their worldview (Kilduff & Galinsky, 2017). A mere encounter with a rival, whether in direct competition or not, can amplify Machiavellian traits, leading to cutthroat behaviors, a loss of moral identity, and other related unethical behaviors.

Christie and Geis (1970) suggested that for Machiavellians to manipulate others successfully, they must be free of psychopathology. In an investigation of Machiavellianism as a multidimensional construct, Monaghan, Bizumic, and Sellbom (2015) explored the associations between Machiavellianism and psychopathology, using the Machiavellian dimensions of tactics and views. They compared the dimensions with the six psychopathological constructs of depression, anxiety, fear, thought dysfunction, externalizing psychopathology, and impulsivity (Christie & Geis, 1970). The Machiavellian construct of morality was not included in their study, as previous research was unable to replicate Christie and Geis' original factor model that included morality. Monaghan et al. challenged their findings through a partially supported hypothesis that Machiavellianism is associated with psychopathology. They determined that the views dimension significantly predicted psychopathology in all six domains, and the tactics dimension significantly predicted externalizing psychopathology (Monaghan et al., 2015).

More recently, Bekiari and Spanou (2018) examined Machiavellianism in students in higher education. Using social network analysis, the researchers were able to identify Machiavellian differences through sex, socio-economic status, traveling habits, Internet usage, and friend selection, as well as the types of students targeted by highly Machiavellian individuals (Bekiari & Spanou, 2018). They also discovered that business administration students were the most Machiavellian (Bekiari & Spanou, 2018).

Narcissism

Narcissism is a term derived from Narcissus in Greek mythology, who believed that no one was good enough for him. He was eventually punished by Nemesis, the goddess of retribution, who made him fall in love with his image. Narcissus found himself paralyzed by his own reflection in a pool of water and eventually died (Brunell & Davis, 2016). Ellis (1898) first introduced the concept of narcissism into the psychological literature in 1898, describing a sexual tendency to be absorbed in self-admiration.

In 1914, Freud coined the term “narcissism,” asserting that the adoration of oneself and the belief of oneself as an object of sexual desire exists in all humans from birth. Freud posited that, at some point, this belief becomes directed outward toward an object (Freud, 1957). According to Freud, narcissism is a process of self-management, involving internalized social norms and values that control the individual by directing desires.

In the 1970s, two separate studies brought the concept of narcissism into mainstream psychology. Kohut published *The Analysis of Self: A Systematic Approach to the Psychoanalytic Treatment of Narcissistic Personality Disorders* in 1971, and, in 1975, Kernberg published *Borderline Conditions and Pathological Narcissism*. These two authors held that narcissism is a treatable, pathological condition. Research eventually led to a measure of narcissism in 1979: The Narcissistic Personality Inventory (Tyler, 2007), which in turn led to the inclusion of Narcissistic Personality Disorder in the *DSM-III* in 1980.

Characteristics of narcissism include a belief that an individual is special and unique, as well as an exaggeration of one's talents. Narcissists are exploitive, often arrogant and self-centered, and have a lack of empathy for others. The *DSM-V* definition requires an individual to exhibit at least five of the following nine behaviors in order to be diagnosed as a narcissist: a grandiose logic of self-importance; fantasies of infinite success, brilliance, beauty, control, or idyllic love; a desire for unwarranted admiration; a sense of entitlement; interpersonally oppressive behavior; a credence that he or she is extraordinary and exceptional and can only be understood by people of the same caliber; a complete lack of empathy; a resentment of others or a conviction that others are resentful of him or her; and egotistical and conceited behaviors or attitudes (American Psychiatric Association, 2013).

Several researchers have acknowledged an increase in narcissistic traits in recent generations. Twenge and Foster (2010) reported a significant increase in narcissism amongst American college students, according to the Narcissistic Personality Inventory, between 1982 and 2009. Furthermore, comparing students from before 1987 with students in 2008, Stewart and Bernhardt (2010) identified higher rates of narcissistic traits in students assessed in 2008.

Narcissists have been found to be hypersensitive to negative feedback and have fragile self-concepts (Giambatista, Hoover, & Tribble, 2017). When confronted with disconfirming feedback that is unfavorable to their self-image, they can become embarrassed or angry. These emotions can produce aggressive behaviors toward the source of the perceived threat. Blame for their failures can be directed toward teammates,

professors, or even textbooks. Narcissists often fail to correct flaws or learn from feedback.

Narcissists see professional and academic excellence as a doorway to power and status. This excellence can be highly valued, registering as a challenge (Camargo, Lima, Lima, Cunha, & Colauto, 2017). Narcissists are sensitive to comparison with their peers' performance levels due to their strong aversion to social comparison. They are also more likely not to feel shame or guilt, making them more likely to commit acts of dishonesty and cheating.

While most studies claim that narcissistic traits are disadvantageous, Papageorgiou et al. (2018) discovered a positive correlation between narcissism and academic achievement. They found that individuals with greater narcissism traits had greater mental tenacity, which had a positive correlation with academic achievement. They associated this mental tenacity with stronger grades in literacy than mathematics even more so in higher education than lower levels of education.

Psychopathy

Psychopaths exhibit behaviors of irresponsibility, impulsivity, manipulation, and thrill-seeking, and they are often antisocial. They use charm to manipulate others. Psychopaths are unable to show empathy or feel regret or guilt. German society used the term psychopathy in the late 19th century to describe individuals who were aggressive and exhibited irresponsible behaviors.

First systematically described by Cleckley in 1941 (Cleckley, 1988), the notion of psychopathy is controversial and highly subjective. It is often mistaken as an anti-social

personality disorder (Buzina, 2012), a personality disorder that lacks the callous-unemotional traits of psychopathy (Anton, Baskin-Sommers, Vitale, Curtin, & Newman, 2012). Cleckley originally listed 21 features for a diagnosis of psychopathy, which he reduced to 16 in 1976. These consist of the absence of nervousness or psychoneurotic manifestation, superficial charm and high intelligence, the absence of delusions or other thought disorders, lack of reliability, lack of remorse or shame, mendacity and dishonesty, inadequately motivated asocial behavior, pathological self-centeredness and inability to love, poor decisions and lack of ability to learn from experience, lack of ability to establish emotions, lack of accountability in general interpersonal relations, lack of insight, mismatched behavior while intoxicated versus not intoxicated, lack of life plans, impersonal and damaging sex life, and attempts at suicides.

According to Cleckley (1988), psychopaths frequently participate in high-risk situations that a normal person would not. They often appear to be intelligent and are not accepting of others' opinions of them. They also evaluate themselves poorly regarding dynamic and real experiences. Psychopaths do not devise long-term objectives and often fail to develop a life plan. The American Psychiatric Association (1952) described psychopaths as individuals who do not benefit from either punishment or experience. They do not respect social norms, and they are disloyal and often disagreeable. Psychopaths also exhibit emotional immaturity, often rationalizing their behaviors. Psychopathy is distinguished from antisocial personality disorder, as psychopathy traits include low levels of anxiety and callous-unemotional traits (Anton et al., 2012).

More recently, psychopathy has been positively correlated with cognitive empathy but negatively correlated with emotional empathy (Owens, McPharlin, Brooks, & Fritzon, 2018). Furthermore, the deficits in psychopaths' moral judgment have been found to be caused by deficits in moral intuitions that inform moral decision making (Marshall, Watts, Frankel, & Lilienfeld, 2017). In line with Cleckley's (1976) finding that psychopathy is correlated with intelligence, Ben-Yaacov and Glicksohn (2018) identified a positive correlation between higher intelligence and interpersonal psychopathic tendencies among non-incarcerated females.

Dark Triad Personality Traits and Academic Entitlement

People exhibiting academic entitlement and the Dark Triad characteristics share a number of similar characteristics. For example, both involve exploitive and manipulative behavior, a need for recognition, a lack of empathy, grandiosity, deception, callousness, and impulsivity. Most of the available literature on the topic explores the relationship between narcissism and academic entitlement. Greenberger et al. (2008) related narcissism to academic entitlement, noting elevated scores in narcissistic characteristics on commonly used academic entitlement scales. In 2009, Chowning and Campbell positively correlated narcissism with externalized responsibility and exploitive traits of academic entitlement. Whatley, Wasieleski, Breneiser, and Wood (2019) explored how gender classification, self-esteem, and narcissism relate to academic entitlement. They found that males reported higher levels of academic narcissism.

In the only known study of the association between academic entitlement and the Dark Triad, Turnipseed and Cohen (2015) investigated the role of the traits in the

prediction of academic entitlement. They aimed to determine the extent to which Machiavellianism, psychopathy, and narcissism independently influence academic entitlement (Turnipseed & Cohen, 2015). Their study consisted of 169 volunteer university students studying business, who completed both the Academic Entitlement Scale by Chowning and Campbell (2009b) and the Dark Triad Concise Measure by Jonason and Webster (2010). Controlling for gender, age, and race, Turnipseed and Cohen found that externalized responsibility was correlated with narcissism, psychopathy, Machiavellianism, and gender. In addition, Machiavellianism and narcissism were both correlated with entitled expectations. Moreover, males scored higher in externalized responsibility, narcissism, psychopathy, and Machiavellianism (Turnipseed & Cohen, 2015).

While Turnipseed and Cohen's (2015) study revealed significant insights, it had one important limitation; sampling data only from business students may have produced results unique to business education. Moreover, the researchers recommended that future research should use a different measure of the Dark Triad personality traits, stating that the results may differ or present the personalities in a new light with a different measure (Turnipseed & Cohen, 2015).

Social Desirability Bias

Social desirability bias is the tendency of respondents to provide an answer that is more socially acceptable than their true answers may be. Individuals who respond in a socially desirable fashion attempt to present themselves in an overly favorable light. This type of response reflects an overrepresentation of self-inflating statements and a rejection

of socially undesirable statements. Often found in responses to self-report measures, social desirability bias can significantly distort the data gathered. This distortion can produce misleading results by inflating, attenuating, or moderating variable relationships, as well as increasing measurement error. Without recognizing social desirability bias, a study may reach unwarranted and impractical conclusions regarding psychological traits (Fisher, 1993).

In 1960, Crowne and Marlowe identified the need to analyze response distortion in self-reports. They determined that average individuals do not always behave in a socially desirable manner; however, some provide more socially desirable responses than the average population. While measures already existed to counteract this effect, they were based on the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory and did not analyze social desirability responses unrelated to pathological symptoms (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960a).

Recently, Kowalski, Rogoza, Vernon, and Schermer (2018) investigated the relationship between the Dark Triad, self-monitoring, and social desirability bias. They found that narcissism correlated with an increase in bias due to its associated behavior of needing to be admired (Kowalski et al., 2018). Machiavellianism had a weaker correlation to social desirability bias, as predicted since Machiavellians are less focused on attaining social impressions, concentrating rather on their own desired goals (Kowalski et al., 2018).

A measure of social desirability bias is important in this research for two reasons; the proposed study will rely on self-reporting measures, and the Dark Triad personality

traits are often associated with socially malevolent behaviors. Thus, the social desirability scale will be used in this study to identify the influences of social desirability bias on participants' answers. By including this measure, the current study builds on Turnipseed and Cohen's (2015) work.

Summary

Despite a growing body of literature on academic entitlement, there is still a lack of empirically based knowledge around its behavioral, demographic, and psychological correlates. The current study has been constructed in such a way to fill this gap in the literature by extending the work of Turnipseed and Cohen (2015), the only researchers to examine the relationship between the Dark Triad personality traits and academic entitlement. The current study provides further evidence for the psychological correlates of academic entitlement by factoring in social desirability bias. In the following chapter, I outline the structure and methodology of the current study, as well as the scales used in clarifying how the variables were investigated.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

Academic entitlement can be extremely challenging in an educational setting. Identifying whether the Dark Triad personality traits can predict academic entitlement could allow professors and support staff to mitigate these behaviors, which may lead to reduced staff burnout and promote better learning environments for students. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the Dark Triad personality traits as predictors of academic entitlement as defined by Chowning and Campbell (2009b). In this chapter, I provide an introduction to and rationale for the research design of the study, sampling method, methodology, and ethical procedures.

Research Design

I used a quantitative research approach to examine the relationship between the independent variables of Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy and the dependent variable of academic entitlement. The method also included a measure of social desirability bias to identify the extent of socially desirable responses among the participants. A social desirability bias measure allowed for the identification of how prevalent social desirability was in the responses. Using a quantitative approach using a survey to gather data was appropriate for this study because a survey permits an investigation of the relationship between variables. Surveys are also an inexpensive, rapid, and flexible method for gathering data.

I employed a correlational design in this study, A correlational design allows the researcher to observe associations between naturally occurring variables, unlike an

experimental design, which allows the researcher to monitor the effect of an introduced change (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Since I intended to identify the correlation between the variables of the Dark Triad personality traits and academic entitlement rather than any causation, a correlation design was appropriate.

Methodology

Sampling Strategy and Procedures for Recruitment

The voluntary participants in this study included individuals aged 18 years old and older who resided in the United States. Volunteers were enrolled in a college or university on a full- or part-time basis at the time of participation. They were registered users of an online crowdsourced site, an online service that utilizes human intelligence, or workers, to complete tasks (see Amazon, 2014). Participation was strictly voluntary, and participants could opt out of the study by choosing not to finish the survey.

Sample Size

I determined the sample size through a power analysis and a comparison of sample sizes in previous, related research. However, since only one study currently exists on the topic, previous sample sizes were limited. Therefore, I used G*Power, a power analysis program, to determine the necessary sample size. With the standard parameters of a hierarchical multiple regression for social science research as defined by Cohen (1988), an effect size of 0.15 (i.e., medium), an error of probability of 0.05, and a power of 0.95, G*Power indicated a total sample size of 146. The original study by Turnipseed and Cohen (2015) used a sample size of 169 with a standard deviation of 4.9; they did not include any information in the article as to how they derived these numbers.

Procedures and Data Collection

Volunteers agreed to participate in this study by visiting a link to the survey provided in an online crowdsourced website. I included informed consent in the survey to explain the nature of the study, potential benefits, and possible risks. Demographic information was also collected, including age, gender, and school (see Appendix A). The survey was comprised of the Short Dark Triad Scale (see Appendix B; Jones & Paulus, 2014b), the Academic Entitlement Scale (see Appendix C; Chowning & Campbell, 2009b), and the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale (see Appendix D; Crowne & Marlowe, 1960b).

An online cloud-based survey company was used to administer the survey. This method provided an easy, inexpensive online approach for conducting surveys. This service provided guaranteed security with Transport Layer Security cryptographic protocols, data encryption, physical controls at data centers, multifactor authentication, and System and Organization Control 2 accredited data centers (SurveyMonkey, 2018).

Instrumentation

Three instruments were used in this study: The Short Dark Triad Scale (Jones & Paulus, 2014b), the Academic Entitlement Scale (Chowning & Campbell, 2009b), and the Social Desirability Scale (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960b). These instruments are available for educational and research purposes without the need for direct permission (Chowning & Campbell, 2009b; Crowne & Marlowe, 1960b; Jones & Paulus, 2014b). I used the surveys to measure participants' traits related to the Dark Triad, the effects on academic entitlement, and the presence of social desirability bias.

Short Dark Triad

Jones and Paulhus (2014a) developed the Short Dark Triad Scale after determining that the individual measures of each personality were extensive. Even using the briefest versions of the construct's measures, the total number of items amounts to 65, which renders measurement impractical when time and space are limited. Shorter measures also reduce the risk of participants not completing the scales due to length. The Short Dark Triad Scale uses 27 five-point Likert scale items to measure Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy, with nine items per construct. The responses range from 1 (*Disagree Strongly*) to 5 (*Agree Strongly*).

Jones and Paulhus (2014a) determined that the only other measure of the Dark Triad traits, the Dirty Dozen Scale (Jonason & Webster, 2010), was too short, with only four questions per construct, bringing into question the validity of the measure. Maples, Lamkin, and Miller (2014) compared the two measures and found that the Short Dark Triad Scale yielded data more consistent with the original measures.

Rationale. Due to the lack of questions, some have criticized the ability of the scale to match the reliability of the measures. Jones and Paulhus (2014a) included the Dirty Dozen Scale (Jonason & Webster, 2010) in their study, finding weaker correlations to the corresponding standard facets. This was especially notable regarding the correlation between the Dirty Dozen Scale and the Self-Reported Psychopathy Scale-III, where only antisocial behavior and manipulation were positive predictors. This suggests the full range of psychopathy is not covered in the Dirty Dozen Scale.

Reliability and validity. In creating the Short Dark Triad Scale, Jones and Paulhus (2014a) designed four distinct studies to examine its reliability and validity. In the first two studies, they found that the final 27 items matched appropriately with longer measures after a structural analysis. Study Number 3 established that the subscales corresponded with the longer standard measures, and Study Number 4 validated the subscales of the Short Dark Triad Scale against informant ratings.

The first step of item reduction was to extract the first unrotated principle components for each of the three domains, removing eight items that failed to load (Jones & Paulhus, 2014a). They then conducted an exploratory factor analysis on the remaining items, removing four items that double loaded with other domains. They then conducted a primary component analysis on the remaining items, resulting in a total of 27 items. Machiavellianism correlated positively with psychopathy ($r = .50$) and with narcissism ($r = .18$). Psychopathy correlated with narcissism ($r = .34$). All three values were significant ($p < .001$). The subscales provided modest reliabilities, Machiavellianism ($\alpha = .17$), psychopathy ($\alpha = .77$), and narcissism ($\alpha = .74$).

The second study was a cross-validation of the Short Dark Triad scales where a new sample of participants was provided the final 27 items and an exploratory structural equation modeling was conducted to validate the three factors. The results of the second study showed the psychometric properties of the Short Dark Triad Scale appeared strong across samples with root mean square error of approximation = .04, comparative fit index = .93, Tucker-Lewis index = .91.

The third study was a concurrent validation against standard measures. This study included the Short Dark Triad Scale (Jones & Paulhus, 2014b), and the standard dark triad measures of the Self-Report Psychopathy III Scale (Neumann & Pardini, 2014), the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (Rasking & Hall, 1979), and the MACH-IV (Christie & Geis, 1970). Also included was the Dirty Dozen (Jonason & Webster, 2010) for comparison as it is the only other measure of the Dark Triad personalities to date, and the Interpersonal Personality Item Pool – Interpersonal Circumplex (Markey & Markey, 2009) because previous research showed that standard measures of the Dark Triad fall in the low nurturance quadrant and the high dominance quadrant of the Interpersonal Personality Item Pool – Interpersonal Circumplex (Markey & Markey, 2009).

The results of the third study showed the SD3 (Jones & Paulhus, 2014a) had clear correspondence with their criterion counterparts. The authors also looked to see if the SD3 (Jones & Paulhus, 2014a) was measuring subscales in a balanced way. They broke the gold standard measures down into the respective facets: the MACH-IV (Christie & Geis, 1970) was broken down into manipulative tactics and cynical worldviews; the NPI (Rasking & Hall, 1979) was broken down into exploitive/entitlement and leadership/authority; and the SRP-III (Neumann & Pardini, 2014) was broken down into its four facets of manipulation (i.e., callous affect, erratic lifestyle, and antisocial behavior). This method allowed the researchers to determine if the SD3 (Jones & Paulhus, 2014b) correlated strongly with the facets of each gold standard measure. Their study showed the Short Dark Triad Scale (Jones & Paulhus, 2014b) subscales correlated strongly with all facets of the scale it was intended to with each of the subscales

correlating .68 or better with the standard equivalent. When disattenuated for measurement error, the correlations ranged from .82 to .92.

Study 4 was an informant perceptions study included to further validate the Short Dark Triad Scale (Jones & Paulhus, 2014b) correlations. Since self-reports are known to have some validity concern, corroboration by close relatives or friends is a credible method for self-report validation by identifying instances of socially desirable responding and providing greater intercorrelation than self-reports alone (McCrae & Weiss, 2007). The study included 65 participants with 65 informants. Alpha reliabilities were .71 for narcissism, .77 for Machiavellianism, and .80 for psychopathy

Maples et al. (2014) examined the convergent, discriminant, incremental, and criterion validity scores of the Dirty Dozen (Jonason & Webster, 2010) and Short Dark Triad (Jones & Paulhus, 2014b) scales, determining that the Short Dark Triad Scale had stronger convergent and incremental validity in relation to the gold-standard measures. However, they found the Short Dark Triad narcissism scale primarily assesses the grandiose traits of the construct, while the Dirty Dozen scale captured both grandiose and vulnerable traits. Jones and Paulhus (2014a) found that the grandiose trait is the key element in the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (the measure to which the Short Dark Triad Scale is compared; Rasking & Hall, 1979).

Academic Entitlement Scale

The Academic Entitlement Scale by Chowning and Campbell (2009b) is a 15-item self-report, with a 7-point Likert scale that measures academic entitlement. It includes two facets of academic entitlement: externalized responsibility with 10 items

and entitled expectations with five items. Possible responses consist of strongly disagree, disagree, somewhat disagree, neither agree nor disagree, somewhat agree, agree, and strongly agree.

Rationale. This is the only measure of academic entitlement that includes the subtraits of entitled expectations and externalized responsibility, the variables that were the focus of Turnipseed and Cohen's (2015) study.

Reliability and validity. Chowning and Campbell (2009a) developed this scale as a more specific measure of academic entitlement than previous scales. Chowning and Campbell considered individual and situational factors that previous scales failed to assess. They established its reliability and validity through four different studies. Studies 1 and 2 involved a series of questionnaires that included the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (Rasking & Hall, 1979) the Psychological Entitlement Scale (Campbell, et al., 2004), the State-Trait Grandiosity Scale (Rosenthal, Hooley, & Steshenko, 2003), the Need for Cognition Scale (Cacioppo & Petty, 1984), the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965), and the Spheres of Control Scale (Paulhus, 1983) with the purpose of identifying potential items for an academic entitlement scale. Extracting 31 possible factors, Chowning and Campbell then removed items that either did not load highly or loaded on multiple factors, leaving 15 items in two subscales: 10 for externalized responsibility ($\alpha = 0.81$) and five for entitled expectations ($\alpha = 0.62$). The two subscales correlated with each other at $r(440) = 0.21, p < .001$ but were not summed together since they represent distinct constructs.

After testing for internal consistency, the third study focused on the ability of the scale to predict students' behaviors. Combined with the academic entitlement measure, the subscales of academic entitlement were a significant predictor in each model. The externalized responsibility subscale significantly predicted likelihood ratings for appropriateness items. Students were more likely to engage in behaviors they had rated as appropriate. Students with an externalized sense of responsibility were less likely to engage in appropriate behaviors and rated appropriate items as less suitable than their nonentitled peers.

The entitled expectation subscale also significantly predicted likelihood ratings for inappropriate behaviors. Study 3 demonstrated the predictive validity of the subscales and the factor structure of the scale. Participants were able to identify between appropriate and inappropriate responses ($M = 3.53$, $SD = 0.81$ versus $M = 2.43$, $SD = 0.79$, respectively), $t(383) = -16.07$, $d = 1.37$, $p < .001$. Study 4 addressed the limitations of the first three studies due to the self-reporting measures used. Through an experimentally manipulated situation, participants completed an academic task and evaluated their ability. They also evaluated the individual who administered and scored the academic task. The scores on the two subscales possessed internal consistency ($\alpha = .71$ and $\alpha = .66$, respectively) and were not significantly correlated, $r(118) = 0.15$, $p = 0.109$.

Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale

The social desirability scale by Marlowe and Crowne (1960b) is a forced-choice, true-or-false, 33-item scale that detects intentional misrepresentation, or socially

desirable responding in self-reports. Included items were selected for their socially desirable content and low probability of occurrence. Higher scores indicate that the respondent has answered in an unrealistically favorable manner; lower scores indicate a more realistic response style.

Rationale. This scale was created in 1960 and was known as the benchmark for social desirability bias measurement, apart from pathological implications. While there are shorter versions of the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale (Crowne & Marlow, 1960a), the original version was used for this study as its internal consistency is the strongest. The scale is free to use for educational and research purposes.

Reliability and validity. The scale has endured years of rigorous use. As of 2007, it has been used in over 1,000 different studies with diverse populations (Beretvas, Meyers, & Leite, 2002). It has also been subjected to many external validity and reliability studies. Computed on the 39 subjects with a mean age of 24.4 years, with a range of 19 to 46 years of age, internal consistency coefficient for the final scale, using Kuder-Richardson formula 20 is 0.88. The test-retest correlation 1month interval was 0.89.

Johnson, Fendrich, and Hubbell (2002) investigated the validity of the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale during an epidemiological study of drug use among adults in Chicago, Illinois. Their study included the 10-item version of the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale. With over 600 Chicago residents aged 18 to 40 included, they found the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale to be valid. Johnson et al. discovered respondents who under reported cocaine use scored higher on the

Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale. Those who over reported cocaine use was found to have lower scores on the desirability scale.

Tatman, Swogger, Love, and Cook (2009) investigated the psychometric properties of the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale among adult male sexual offenders. They found strong internal consistency estimates, discriminant, and convergent validity, and test re-test reliability with a sample of 247 sexual offenders. Cronbach alpha scores of .85 were generated.

One concern regarding the scale is that the questions were based on social characteristics from the 1960s; however, social norms have changed in the decades since. Despite these differences, the scale has been shown to perform as effectively as many newer scales. Lambert, Arbuckle, and Holden (2016) compared the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale (Crowne & Marlow, 1960b) with the Balanced Inventory of Desirable Responding, created by Paulhus in 1998. They found the former was as accurate, if not better, at identifying social desirability bias compared to the Impression Management Scale used in the Balanced Inventory of Desirable Responding (Paulhus, 1998).

Beretvas et al. (2002) investigated the reliability generalization of the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale and found this tool to be reliable across a diverse population. Beretvas et al. did, however, determine the tool to be unacceptable in populations under 18 years of age, possibly since the questions contained were irrelevant to this age group. They also found varying scores between males and females, with

female scores showing stronger internal consistency and reliability (Beretvas et al., 2002).

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Research Question 1: Do Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy predict academic entitlement?

H₀1: Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy, as measured by the Short Dark Triad Scale, do not predict academic entitlement, as measured by the Academic Entitlement Scale.

H₁1: Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy, as measured by the Short Dark Triad Scale, predict academic entitlement, as measured by the Academic Entitlement Scale.

Research Question 2: Do Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy predict the entitled expectation dimension?

H₀2: Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy, as measured by the Short Dark Triad Scale, do not predict the entitled expectation dimension, as measured by the Academic Entitlement Scale.

H₁2: Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy, as measured by the Short Dark Triad Scale, predict the entitled expectation dimension, as measured by the Academic Entitlement Scale.

Research Question 3: Do Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy predict the externalized responsibility dimension?

*H*₀₃: Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy, as measured by the Short Dark Triad Scale, do not predict the externalized responsibility dimension, as measured by the Academic Entitlement Scale.

*H*₁₃: Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy, as measured by the Short Dark Triad Scale, predict the externalized responsibility dimension as measured by the Academic Entitlement Scale.

Data Analysis

Hierarchical multiple regression permits the researcher to demonstrate whether variables of interest can explain a statistically significant amount of variance in the dependent variables after accounting for all other variables (Petrocelli, 2003).

Hierarchical modeling uses the building of successive linear regression models, with each one adding more predictors. This type of research design permits the researcher to determine whether the newly introduced variable shows a significant improvement in variance to the dependent variable.

The first step of hierarchical regressions included the control variables of age, gender, and race to identify differences in academic entitlement between the control variables. Step two added the dimensions of Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy to identify how these variables interacted with the control variables. Step three included the social desirability scale to determine the effects of socially desirable responding.

Data gathered from the online survey company were downloaded and imported into Version 21 of IBM Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), a software package used for statistical analysis. This was used to test the hypothesis and descriptive statistics. The independent variables of Machiavellianism, psychopathy, and narcissism were compared to the dependent variables of academic entitlement, including entitled expectations and externalized responsibility.

Threats to Validity

Threats to validity included the use of self-reports which have been shown to provide data that are more socially desirable. Individuals may answer questions less truthfully than with other data gathering methods, producing data that may appear more socially desirable (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Participants may also not have the reflective ability to identify accurate responses. Another threat to internal validity is the use of an online crowdfunded website since members of this site may not be representative of the general population.

Ethical Considerations

This was a carefully planned study, where human life was not put at risk or harm. A description of the study was provided to the Walden University Internal Review Board. When approval was granted, data were coordinated and collected. The Internal Review Board approval # is 09-26-19-0371842. Surveys included informed consent forms and were electronically distributed. All research was conducted in accordance with the American Psychological Association Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct (American Psychological Association, 2013). Participation was entirely

voluntary, and participants were able to withdraw at any time by not completing the survey.

Data gathered through the online survey website were exported to Microsoft Excel spreadsheets and then entered into SPSS. Only I maintained and had access to the spreadsheets, and no identifiable names were collected in the data. Data will be held per the terms of Walden University. Walden University requires all data gathered during research to be held for no less than 5 years after the completion of a doctoral study (Walden University, 2011).

Summary

In this study, I examined the relationship between the Dark Triad personality traits of Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy, as well as those of academic entitlement, including externalized responsibility and entitled expectations. I also included a social desirability scale to identify the effects of socially desirable reporting often found in self-reporting measures. This approach was able to provide evidence of whether socially desirable responding was prevalent in responses. The Academic Entitlement Scale (Chowning & Campbell, 2009b) and the Short Dark Triad Scale (Jones & Paulhus, 2014b) was administered along with demographic questions. Hierarchical multiple regression analysis was used to process data in order to identify whether a relationship exists.

The intent and purpose of the study were presented to Walden University's Internal Review Bboard. Upon approval, the study was conducted with ethical

considerations monitored throughout. In the following chapter, I will present the results of the study.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this quantitative study was to examine the relationship between the Dark Triad personality traits of Machiavellianism, psychopathy, and narcissism and academic entitlement. In this study, I also investigated the effects of socially desirable responding. This study was an extension of a study conducted by Turnipseed and Cohen (2015). This study was designed to answer three research questions and corresponding hypotheses. In the following chapter, I present the results of the study.

Results

I reached the desired number of participants within 48 hours of beginning recruitment, for a total of 160 participants. Eighty-five participants identified as male, 72 identified as female, and two identified as other, with one participant not identifying a gender. The majority of the respondents were between the ages of 31-40 years old ($n = 53$), followed by ages 25-30 years old ($n = 49$). Forty-one percent of respondents were in their senior year of education ($N=67$). Twenty-two percent of the respondents were in their sophomore year of school ($N=35$). Business students provided the most responses ($N=50$), followed by Social & Behavioral Sciences ($N=21$). The majority of respondents (62.5%) identified as Caucasian, non-Hispanic, followed by 18.1% of the respondents identifying as African American. Complete demographic descriptive statistics can be found in Tables 1 through 4.

Table 1

What gender do you identify most with?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	85	53.1	53.5	53.5
	Female	72	45.0	45.3	98.7
	Other	2	1.3	1.3	100.0
	Total	159	99.4	100.0	
Missing	System	1	.6		
Total		160	100.0		

Table 2

What is Your Age?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18-24	38	23.8	23.8	23.8
	25-30	49	30.6	30.6	54.4
	31-40	53	33.1	33.1	87.5
	41-45	11	6.9	6.9	94.4
	46-50	5	3.1	3.1	97.5
	51 or Over	4	2.5	2.5	100.0
	Total	160	100.0	100.0	

Table 3

What Year of College/University are You In?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Other (please specify)	20	12.5	12.6	12.6
	Freshman	13	8.1	8.2	20.8
	Sophomore	35	21.9	22.0	42.8
	Junior	24	15.0	15.1	57.9
	Senior	67	41.9	42.1	100.0
	Total	159	99.4	100.0	
Missing	System	1	.6		
Total		160	100.0		

Table 4

What School of College/University are You In?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Other (please specify)	10	6.3	6.3	6.3
	Agriculture, Natural Resources, Life Sciences	8	5.0	5.0	11.3
	Business	50	31.3	31.3	42.5
	Engineering	19	11.9	11.9	54.4
	Fine Arts	10	6.3	6.3	60.6
	Health	7	4.4	4.4	65.0
	Liberal Arts and Sciences	19	11.9	11.9	76.9
	Medicine	6	3.8	3.8	80.6
	Nursing	4	2.5	2.5	83.1
	Social & Behavioral Sciences	21	13.1	13.1	96.3
	Undecided	6	3.8	3.8	100.0
Total		160	100.0	100.0	

I conducted a descriptive statistics analysis for the variables of interest that were included in the analysis. The results of the analysis can be found in Table 5. Table 6 provides the results of a correlation analysis that was also conducted to examine the relationship between gender, age, ethnicity, Machiavellianism, narcissism, psychopathy, academic entitlement, and social desirability.

Table 5

Descriptive Statistics

	Min	Max	Range	Median	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Gender	1	3	2	1	1.488	0.525
Age	1	6	5	2	2.461	1.176
Ethnicity	0	7	7	1	1.84	1.41
Machiavellianism	1	5	4	3	2.82	1.32
Narcissism	1	5	4	4	3.461	1.176
Psychopathy	1	5	4	2	2.382	1.235
Academic entitlement	1	6.467	5.467	3.667	3.825	1.11

Note. * Indicates $p < .05$; ** indicates $p < .01$. *M* and *SD* are used to represent mean and standard deviation, respectively.

Table 6

Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations with Confidence Intervals

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Narcissism	0.22	0.34							
Machiavellianism	0.34	0.36	.29* [.01, .53]						
Psychopathy	0.31	0.38	-.02 [-.30, .26]	.74** [.57, .84]					
Academic Entitlement	0.31	0.39	.05 [-.23, .33]	.79** [.65, .88]	.82** [.70, .90]				
Age	0.13	0.36	-.13 [-.40, .16]	-.37** [-.59, -.10]	-.42** [-.63, -.16]	-.49** [-.67, -.24]			
Gender	0.10	0.38	-.48** [-.67, -.23]	-.57** [-.73, -.34]	-.59** [-.75, -.38]	-.53** [-.71, -.30]	-.07 [-.34, .22]		
Ethnicity	0.19	0.34	-.20 [-.45, .09]	-.36* [-.58, -.08]	-.12 [-.39, .17]	-.22 [-.47, .06]	-.31* [-.54, -.03]	.03 [-.25, .31]	

Note. * Indicates $p < .05$; ** indicates $p < .01$. *M* and *SD* are used to represent mean and standard deviation, respectively. Values in square brackets indicate the 95% confidence interval for each correlation. The confidence interval is a plausible range of population correlations that could have caused the sample correlation (Cumming, 2014).

In order to determine the appropriate analyses, I conducted tests to examine whether the following specific assumptions were met: normality, homoscedasticity, and linearity. The homoscedasticity assumption was not violated ($p = 0.473$). To test the linearity assumption, I plotted the residuals against the dependent variable in the model (i.e., academic entitlement). The residuals for each of the three predictor variables matched the dependent variable in a linear pattern, suggesting linearity was not violated (see Figure 1). To test the normality assumption, I plotted the distribution of residuals. The figure revealed a normal distribution of residuals, suggesting this assumption was not violated (see Figure 2). Given that the linearity assumption was not violated, linear regression analyses were used to test the hypotheses.

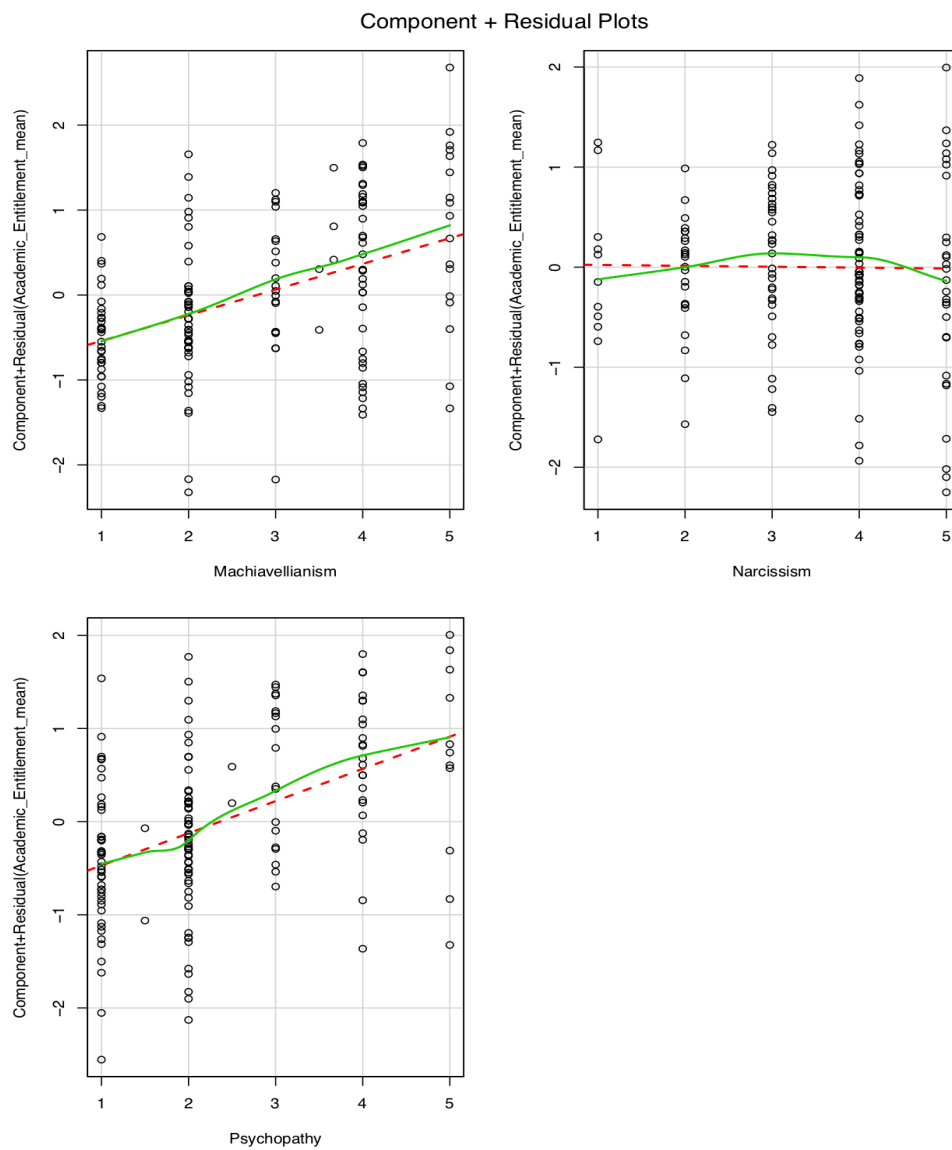


Figure 1. Component and residual plots.

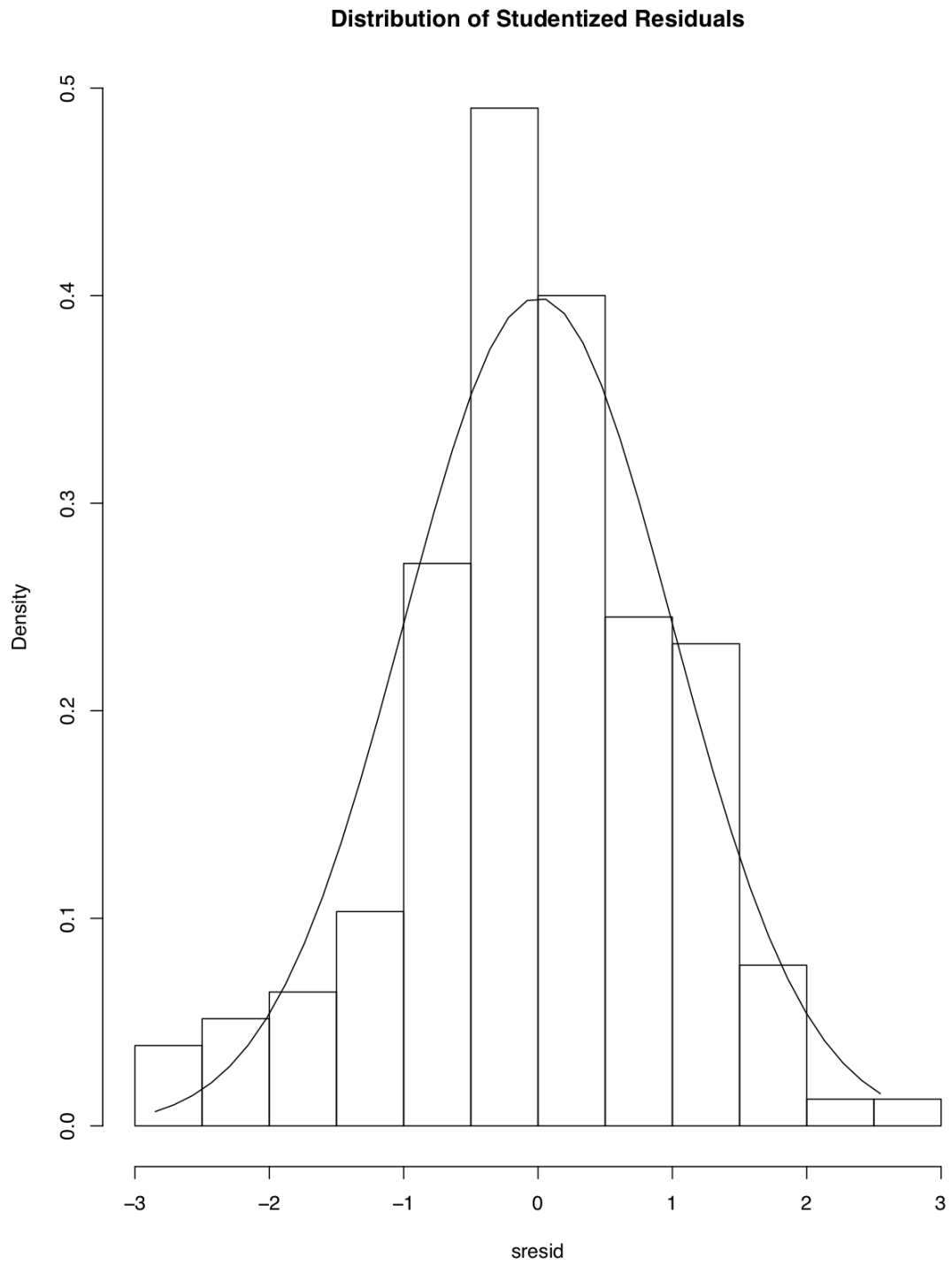


Figure 2. Distribution of studentized results.

For the main analysis, I used hierarchical regression to test the main research questions. The first step of hierarchical regressions included the control variables of age, gender, and race to identify differences in academic entitlement between the control variables. The analysis revealed that demographics alone did not significantly predict academic entitlement, $R^2 = .02$, $CI [.00, .08]$ (see Table 7).

Table 7

Demographic Regression Results Using Academic Entitlement Mean as the Criterion

Predictor	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i> 95% CI [LL, UL]	<i>beta</i>	<i>beta</i> 95% CI [LL, UL]	<i>sr</i> 2	<i>sr</i> ² 95% CI [LL, UL]	<i>r</i>	Fit
(Intercept)	4.26**	[3.62, 4.90]						
gender	-0.20	[-0.53, 0.12]	- 0.11	[-0.27, 0.06]	.0 1	[.00, .08]	-.11	
age	-0.11	[-0.26, 0.04]	- 0.11	[-0.27, 0.06]	.0 2	[-999., -999..]	-.13	
ethnicity	0.01	[-0.11, 0.13]	- 0.11	[-0.27, 0.06]	.0 0	[-999., -999..]	.01	
								$R^2 = .028$ 95% CI [.00, .08]

Note. * indicates $p < .05$; ** indicates $p < .01$. A significant *b*-weight indicates the beta-weight and semi-partial correlation are also significant. *b* represents unstandardized regression weights; *beta* indicates the standardized regression weights; *sr*² represents the semipartial correlation squared; *r* represents the zero-order correlation. *LL* and *UL* indicate the lower and upper limits of a confidence interval, respectively.

Step 2 tested Hypothesis 1: Do the Dark Triad personality traits predict academic entitlement? I added Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy to the regression. By adding these predictors, the model accounts for additional deviation from the mean of 58.52, and it was a statistically significant change according to the corresponding *F* statistic and *p* value. The R^2 increased by 0.41 in Model 2. Model 2 also revealed that both Machiavellianism ($\beta = .26, p < .05$) and psychopathy ($\beta = .33, p < .05$) significantly predicted academic entitlement. The higher someone was on Machiavellianism and psychopathy, the higher they were on academic entitlement.

Narcissism did not significantly predict academic entitlement, CI [-0.13, 0.10]; therefore, Null Hypothesis 1 can be rejected. The full regression results of Model 2 can be found in Table 8.

Table 8

Regression Results Using Academic Entitlement Mean as the Criterion

Predictor	<i>B</i>	<i>b</i> 95% CI [LL, UL]	<i>beta</i>	<i>beta</i> 95% CI [LL, UL]	<i>sr</i> ²	<i>sr</i> ² 95% CI [LL, UL]	<i>r</i>	Fit
(Intercept)	2.65**	[1.95, 3.34]						
Gender	-0.05	[-0.30, 0.21]	-0.03	[-0.16, 0.11]	.00	[.28, .51]	-.11	
Age	-0.10	[-0.22, 0.01]	-0.03	[-0.16, 0.11]	.01	[-999.., -999..]	-.13	
Ethnicity	-0.02	[-0.12, 0.08]	-0.03	[-0.16, 0.11]	.00	[-999.., -999..]	.01	
Machiavellianism	0.26**	[0.14, 0.38]	-0.03	[-0.16, 0.11]	.07	[-999.., -999..]	.54**	
Narcissism	-0.02	[-0.13, 0.10]	-0.03	[-0.16, 0.11]	.00	[-999.., -999..]	.11	
Psychopathy	0.33**	[0.20, 0.46]	-0.03	[-0.16, 0.11]	.11	[-999.., -999..]	.58**	
								<i>R</i> ² = .429**
								95% CI [.28,.51]

Note. * indicates $p < .05$; ** indicates $p < .01$. A significant *b*-weight indicates the beta-weight and semi-partial correlation are also significant. *b* represents unstandardized regression weights; *beta* indicates the standardized regression weights; *sr*² represents the semi-partial correlation squared; *r* represents the zero-order correlation. *LL* and *UL* indicate the lower and upper limits of a confidence interval, respectively.

To further understand the relationship between Machiavellianism, narcissism, psychopathy and the two dimensions of academic entitlement (i.e., entitled expectation and externalized responsibility), I ran two additional regression analyses. Regressing entitled expectation on Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy revealed that age, Machiavellianism ($\beta = .26, p < .05$) and psychopathy ($\beta = .31, p < .05$) significantly predicted entitled expectation. The higher someone was on Machiavellianism and psychopathy, the higher they were on entitled expectation. Narcissism did not

significantly predict entitled expectations. The full regression results can be found in Table 9.

Next, regressing Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy on externalized responsibility revealed that Machiavellianism ($\beta = .27, p < .05$) and psychopathy ($\beta = .35, p < .05$) significantly predicted externalized responsibility. The higher someone was on Machiavellianism and psychopathy, the higher they were on externalized responsibility. Neither narcissism nor age significantly predicted externalized responsibility. The full regression results can be found in Table 11. Hypotheses 2 and 3 could be partially rejected because 2 of the 3 Dark Triad dimensions significantly predicted both entitled expectation and externalized responsibility, the two dimensions of academic entitlement.

Table 9

Regression Results Using Entitled Expectations as the Criterion

Predictor	<i>B</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>beta</i>	<i>beta</i>	<i>sr</i> ²	<i>sr</i> ²	<i>r</i>	Fit
		95% CI [LL, UL]		95% CI [LL, UL]		95% CI [LL, UL]		
(Intercept)	2.48**	[1.71, 3.26]						
Gender	0.01	[-0.27, 0.30]	0.01	[-0.13, 0.15]	.00	[.21, .45]	-.07	
Age	-0.12	[-0.24, 0.01]	0.01	[-0.13, 0.15]	.01	[-999., -999..]	-.14	
Ethnicity	-0.00	[-0.11, 0.11]	0.01	[-0.13, 0.15]	.00	[-999., -999..]	.03	
Machiavellianism	0.26**	[0.12, 0.39]	0.01	[-0.13, 0.15]	.06	[-999., -999..]	.50**	
Narcissism	0.01	[-0.13, 0.14]	0.01	[-0.13, 0.15]	.00	[-999., -999..]	.13	
Psychopathy	0.31**	[0.17, 0.46]	0.01	[-0.13, 0.15]	.09	[-999., -999..]	.53**	
								<i>R</i> ² = .365**
								95% CI[.21,.45]

Note. * indicates $p < .05$; ** indicates $p < .01$. A significant *b*-weight indicates the beta-weight and semi-partial correlation are also significant. *b* represents unstandardized regression weights; *beta* indicates the standardized regression weights; *sr*² represents the semi-partial correlation squared; *r* represents the zero-order correlation. *LL* and *UL* indicate the lower and upper limits of a confidence interval, respectively.

Table 10

Regression Results Using Externalized Responsibility as the Criterion

Predictor	<i>B</i>	<i>b</i> 95% CI [LL, UL]	<i>beta</i>	<i>beta</i> 95% CI [LL, UL]	<i>sr</i> ²	<i>sr</i> ² 95% CI [LL, UL]	<i>r</i>	Fit
(Intercept)	2.90**	[2.10, 3.69]						
gender	-0.14	[-0.44, 0.15]	-0.07	[-0.20, 0.07]	.00	[.23, .47]	-.15	
age	-0.08	[-0.21, 0.05]	-0.07	[-0.20, 0.07]	.01	[-.999.., -.999..]	-.10	
ethnicity	-0.05	[-0.16, 0.06]	-0.07	[-0.20, 0.07]	.00	[-.999.., -.999..]	-.03	
Machiavellianism	0.27**	[0.12, 0.41]	-0.07	[-0.20, 0.07]	.06	[-.999.., -.999..]	.50**	
Narcissism	-0.05	[-0.19, 0.09]	-0.07	[-0.20, 0.07]	.00	[-.999.., -.999..]	.07	
Psychopathy	0.35**	[0.20, 0.50]	-0.07	[-0.20, 0.07]	.10	[-.999.., -.999..]	.55**	
								<i>R</i> ² = .385** 95% CI [.23,.47]

Note. * indicates $p < .05$; ** indicates $p < .01$. A significant *b*-weight indicates the beta-weight and semi-partial correlation are also significant. *b* represents unstandardized regression weights; *beta* indicates the standardized regression weights; *sr*² represents the semi-partial correlation squared; *r* represents the zero-order correlation. *LL* and *UL* indicate the lower and upper limits of a confidence interval, respectively.

In Step 3, I included the social desirability scale as a predictor to determine the effects of socially desirable responding. The inclusion of social desirability only increased the R^2 by an additional .01 and was not a significant predictor of academic entitlement, CI [-2.18, 0.24]. The full information for the three model comparisons can be found in Table 11.

Table 11

Hierarchical Regression Model Comparison

Model	Res.Df	RSS	<i>df</i>	Sum of Sq	<i>F</i>	Pr(>F)
1	138	141.76	NA	NA	NA	NA
2	135	83.246	3	58.518	31.987	***
3	134	81.714	1	1.532	2.513	0.115

Note. * indicates $p < .05$; *** indicates $p < .001$.

Summary

In this study, I examined the relationship between the Dark Triad personality traits of Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy as well as those of academic entitlement, including externalized responsibility and entitled expectations. I also included a social desirability scale to identify the effects of socially desirable reporting often found in self-reporting measures. This approach may provide evidence of whether socially desirable responding is prevalent in responses.

The results of the hierarchical regression show that demographics alone do not predict academic entitlement. Social desirability was also not a significant predictor of academic entitlement. However, 2 of the 3 Dark Triad personality traits — Machiavellianism and psychopathy — do significantly predict academic entitlement, such that the higher a person was on Machiavellianism and psychopathy, the higher they were on academic entitlement. In the following chapter I will provide the interpretation of the findings, the limitations of the study, recommendations for future research, implications of the study.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusion, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between the Dark Triad personality traits of Machiavellianism, psychopathy, and narcissism as predictors of academic entitlement. According to Campbell et al. (2004), young adults are more entitled and superficial than ever. These behaviors affect current classroom settings, defeating academic achievement by removing the significance of learning from learners (Campbell et al., 2004). These behaviors are manifested by increased dissent from students, their inability to accept responsibility for academic achievements, and their tendency to blame professors and institutions for their failures (Goodboy & Frisby, 2014). Finding ways to diminish these behaviors enables professors to promote better learning environments and reduce academic staff burnout. In this chapter, I discuss the results of the study, implications, potential limitations, and recommendations for future research.

Interpretation of the Findings

Following the foundation provided by Turnipseed and Cohen (2015), in this extension study I expanded their results by using a different measure of the Dark Triad personality traits and by recruiting students from any educational discipline. The Short Dark Triad Scale was used to measure the Dark Triad personality traits, while the recruitment process used a crowdsource method open to any student in any school discipline. These modifications were the recommendations provided by the researchers of the original study.

As discussed in the literature review, recent research in academic entitlement has concentrated on causes of or explanations for the surge in academic entitlement (Achacoso, 2002; Chowning & Campbell, 2009a; Frey, 2015; Greenberger et al., 2008). In the current study, I focused on predictions of academic entitlement. Findings from the current study reveal a partial relationship between the Dark Triad personality traits as a predictor of academic entitlement.

Inconsistent with prior research, the findings of the current study reveal that demographics alone do not predict academic entitlement. Achacoso (2002) found that males score lower on an academic scale than females, while Greenberger et al. (2008) found that females score lower on academic entitlement scales. Turnipseed and Cohen (2015) found that males score higher on academic entitlement. Contrary to these findings, the results of the current study show no significant relationship between gender and academic entitlement.

Furthermore, I did not find narcissism to be a predictor of academic entitlement in this study. This result contradicts many studies on academic entitlement. Papageorgiou et al. (2018) found a positive correlation between narcissism and academic achievement, and Greenberger et al. (2008) noted elevated scores in narcissistic characteristics on commonly used academic entitlement scales. Whatley et al. (2019) found that males have higher levels of academic narcissism. Moreover, in the original study, Turnipseed and Cohen (2015) found narcissism to be correlated with externalized responsibility and entitled expectations.

Using Chowning and Campbells' (2009b) Academic Entitlement Scale, I did find a correlation between Machiavellianism and psychopathy as predictors of academic entitlement in this study. Machiavellianism and psychopathy were found to be predictors of academic entitlement in both the entitled expectations and the externalized expectations domains. Moreover, since a self-report scale was used to explore the socially adverse traits of the Dark Triad personalities in this study, a social desirability measure was included to identify the effects of socially desirable responding. Kowalski et al. (2018) found that narcissism is correlated with an increase in socially desirable responding bias due to its associated behavior of the need for admiration. However, the results of the current study did not indicate a correlation between social desirability responding and academic entitlement.

Academic Entitlement

As discussed in the literature review, researchers have found conflicting results when investigating the demographics of academic entitlement. Some studies have found males score lower on academic entitlement, and other studies have found females score lower on academic entitlement (Achacoso, 2002; Greenberger et al., 2008; Turnipseed & Cohen, 2015). The findings of the current study add to the conflict. The results of the current study show no significant relationship between gender and academic entitlement. Furthermore, the results of the current study indicate that students with higher scores in Machiavellianism and psychopathy also score higher in academic entitlement. Notably, narcissism did not significantly predict academic entitlement.

The conflicting results may be due to the use of an online crowdsourced method of recruitment. It is plausible that method of recruitment in the current study may have factored into these results. The population of the online crowdsourced method used consists of younger, more highly educated individuals and more female than male respondents (see Ross, Zaldivar, Irani, & Tomlinson, 2009). The population available on the crowdsourced website has been found to be in the lower levels of annual income but resembles more of a leading Internet user (Ross et al., 2009). It is possible that the difference in demographics in the crowdsourced population may only be a somewhat representation of the U.S. population.

Externalized Responsibility

In this study, I found that 2 of the 3 dimensions of the Dark Triad personalities—Machiavellianism and psychopathy—predict externalized responsibility. Accordingly, the higher a student's score is on Machiavellianism and psychopathy, the more likely they are to exhibit externalized responsibility. The results are partially consistent with Turnipseed and Cohens's (2015) findings that Machiavellianism, psychopathy, and narcissism predict the externalized responsibility dimension of academic entitlement. The findings of the current study did not indicate a correlation between narcissism and externalized responsibility.

The inconsistencies between the results of the current study and the study by Turnipseed and Cohen (2015) may be because of the use of a different measure of the Dark Triad personality traits. The Short Dark Triad scale only measures the grandiose traits of narcissism and not the vulnerable traits of narcissism. Narcissistic vulnerability is

characterized by emptiness, the conscious experience of helplessness, shame, and low self-esteem (Pincus et al., 2009). Narcissistic vulnerability has also been linked with social avoidance to cope with threats to the self (e.g., by shamefully retreating when the needed admiration is not likely or the ideal self-presentation is not forthcoming; Pincus et al., 2009). Dickinson and Pincus (2003) argued that grandiose narcissists are less prone to chronic emotional consequences of threats to entitled expectations than their counterparts, vulnerable narcissists. The researchers identified emotional consequences as low self-esteem, interpersonal fearfulness, and distress.

Entitled Expectations

Regressing entitled expectation on Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy revealed that Machiavellianism and psychopathy significantly predict entitled expectation. Narcissism did not significantly predict entitled expectations. This discrepancy with the original study that found narcissism to predict academic entitlement may potentially be due to the use of a different measure of the Dark Triad personality traits.

While examining the convergent, discriminant, incremental, and criterion validity scores of the Dirty Dozen and the Short Dark Triad Scale, Maples et al. (2014) found that the Short Dark Triad Scale primarily assessed the grandiose traits of narcissism, while the Dirty Dozen scale captured both grandiose and vulnerable characteristics. The entitled expectations dimension focuses on students' expectations of their professor, including grading strategies and policies (Maples et al., 2014). The entitled expectations subscale includes questions, such as "My professor must be entertaining to be good." The

inadequacy of measurement on the vulnerable traits of narcissism may have caused this inconsistency.

Social Desirability

In this study, I also measured social desirability responding due to the socially aversive behaviors included in the Dark Triad personality traits. Social desirability bias can significantly distort the data gathered, especially when using a self-report scale (Kowalski et al., 2018). Using a social desirability scale reduces the possibility of measurement error (Kowalski et al., 2018). The results of the current study reveal no significance with the inclusion of the social desirability scale into the regression.

Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

This study had several limitations that may affect the generalizability of results. In this study, I used a different measure of the Dark Triad personality traits than the original study by Turnipseed and Cohen (2015). The results regarding the effect of the Dark Triad personalities on academic entitlement are significantly different than the original study. This difference may be because of the assessment tool itself; hence, future research should investigate alternative measures of the Dark Triad personality traits. A replication study should also be conducted to determine if similar results can be achieved.

Another limitation was that the recruitment process in this study included an online crowdsourcing marketplace designed to allow researchers to outsource their needs to a workforce that completes tasks virtually. This crowdsourced method may include individuals who may have false identities, which can substantially distort research findings (Sharpe Wessling, Huber, & Netzer, 2017). While there are ways to mitigate

falsehoods, these were not included in this study. Future researchers can implement a two-factor study to minimize the tendency of respondents to falsify information.

Moreover, future researchers should include strategies to remove economic motives that drive respondents to misrepresent themselves and to include a second survey process only for those who have truthfully represented themselves without financial motivation.

The final limitation involving the recruitment process that may affect generalizability was the utilization of a recruitment method that is rather new and not widely used. The crowdfunded method is relatively new and includes respondents who are younger and more technically savvy than the general population. Future researchers should investigate other methods of data collection that are more relevant to the general population.

Implications

As initially predicted, the results of this study further the research on academic entitlement. The results have implications for social change at various levels. As research on academic entitlement is limited, additional research was needed. If professors can identify socially aversive personalities, they can improve student success by mitigating these behaviors before student dissent begins. The findings of this study reinforce the evidence that individuals with socially aversive personalities, such as Machiavellianism and psychopathy, are higher in academic-entitled behaviors. With this knowledge, professors can implement behavior modification strategies to decrease student dissent. Professors can provide clear guidelines and expectations before incivility occurs (Jiang et al., 2017). Furthermore, reducing student dissent and incivility can reduce professors'

burnout because uncivil behaviors require more sustained effort from professors (Lippmann, Bulanda, & Wagenaar, 2009).

By furthering research on academic entitlement, the findings of this study provide professors the means to identify and address aversive behaviors before these behaviors disrupt the learning environment. Professors and support staff can respond more effectively to students exhibiting entitled behaviors by including clear expectations on syllabi. Professors and support staff can include explicit instruction that grade reviews are welcome on the syllabi or graded papers, but the results can either raise or lower grades. By doing so, professors can establish consequences to a reevaluation of the student's work. Furthermore, professors can resocialize students by explaining their philosophy of teaching at the beginning of the course, focusing on a joint venture of learning. Providing a joint venture concept allows students to assume responsibility for their own learning and efforts (Jiang et al., 2017).

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between the Dark Triad personality traits as predictors of academic entitlement. The findings of this study extend the previous research of Turnipseed and Cohen (2015); although, the results of the current analysis are only partially consistent with those of the original studies. The Dark Triad personality traits can predict academic entitlement, including the dimensions of entitled expectations and externalized responsibility. The current study also confirms that socially aversive personalities, such as those comprising the Dark Triad, can significantly impact learning environments.

Notably, the findings of this study add to the inconsistencies identified in the literature review in Chapter 2. Although the results of this study contradict many of the results of extant research on academic entitlement, I was able to address gaps in the literature regarding the Dark Triad personalities as predictors of academic entitlement by identifying areas where further research is needed. I hope that this study prompts further investigation into the individual characteristics of each of the personality traits comprising the Dark Triad personalities.

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Appendix A: Demographic Questions

1. What gender do you identify most with?
 - Male
 - Female
 - Other

2. What is your age?
 - 18-24
 - 25-30
 - 31-40
 - 41-45
 - 46-50
 - 51 or Over

3. What year of school are you in?
 - Freshman
 - Sophomore
 - Junior
 - Senior
 - Other (Please specify)

4. What school of college are you in?
 - Agriculture, Natural Resources, Life Sciences
 - Business
 - Engineering
 - Fine Arts
 - Health
 - Liberal Arts and Sciences
 - Medicine
 - Nursing
 - Pharmacy
 - Social & Behavioral Sciences
 - Undecided
 - Other (Please specify)

5. Are you currently enrolled full time or part time?
 - Full time
 - Part time

6. What is your ethnicity?
- Caucasian, non-Hispanic
 - African American
 - Hispanic/Latino
 - Native American/Alaskan Native
 - Asian/Pacific Islander
 - Multi-Racial
 - Not listed (please specify)
 - Decline to answer

Appendix B: Short Dark Triad

Short Dark Triad
Responses

1. Disagree strongly
2. Disagree
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Agree
5. Agree strongly

Instructions: Please indicate how much you agree with each of the following statements

1. It's not wise to tell your secrets.
2. I like to use clever manipulation to get my way.
3. Whatever it takes, you must get the important people on your side.
4. Avoid direct conflict with others because they may be useful in the future.
5. It's wise to keep track of information that you can use against people later.
6. You should wait for the right time to get back at people.
7. There are things you should hide from other people to preserve your reputation.
8. Make sure your plans benefit yourself, not others.
9. Most people can be manipulated.
10. People see me as a natural leader.
11. I hate being the center of attention.
12. Many group activities tend to be dull without me.
13. I know that I am special because everyone keeps telling me so.

14. I like to get acquainted with important people.
15. I feel embarrassed if someone compliments me.
16. I have been compared to famous people.
17. I am an average person.
18. I insist on getting the respect I deserve.
19. I like to get revenge on authorities.
20. I avoid dangerous situations.
21. Payback needs to be quick and nasty.
22. People often say I'm out of control.
23. It's true that I can be mean to others.
24. People who mess with me always regret it.
25. I have never gotten into trouble with the law.
26. I enjoy having sex with people I hardly know.
27. I'll say anything to get what I want.

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Appendix C: Academic Entitlement Scale

Academic Entitlement Scale

Responses:

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Somewhat Disagree
4. Neither agree nor disagree
5. Somewhat agree
6. Agree
7. Strongly agree

Instructions: Please indicate how much you agree with each of the following statements:

1. It is unnecessary for me to participate in class when the professor is paid for teaching, not for asking questions.
2. If I miss class, it is my responsibility to get the notes.
3. I am not motivated to put a lot of effort into group work, because another group member will end up doing it.
4. My professors are obligated to help me prepare for exams.
5. Professors must be entertaining to be good.
6. I believe that the university does not provide me with the resources I need to succeed in college.
7. Most professors do not really know what they are talking about.
8. My professor should reconsider my grade if I am close to the grade I want.
9. I should never receive a zero on an assignment that I turned in.

10. If I do poorly in a course and I could not make my professor's office hours, the fault lies with my professor.
11. I believe that it is my responsibility to seek out the resources to succeed in college
12. For group assignments, it is acceptable to take a back seat and let others do most of the work if I am busy.
13. For group work, I should receive the same grade as the other group members regardless of my level of effort.
14. My professors should curve my grade if I am close to the next letter grade.
15. Professors are just employees who get money for teaching

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Appendix D: Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale

Social Desirability Scale

Listed below are a number of statements concerning personal attitudes and traits. Read each item and decide whether the statement is *true* or *false* as it pertains to you personally.

Items

1. Before voting I thoroughly investigate the qualifications of all the candidates.
2. I never hesitate to go out of my way to help someone in trouble.
3. It is sometimes hard for me to go on with my work if I am not encouraged.
4. I have never intensely disliked anyone.
5. On occasion I have had doubts about my ability to succeed in life.
6. I sometimes feel resentful when I don't get my way.
7. I am always careful about my manner of dress.
8. My table manners at home are as good as when I eat out in a restaurant.
9. If I could get into a movie without paying and be sure I was not seen I would probably do it.
10. On a few occasions, I have given up doing something because I thought too little of my ability.
11. I like to gossip at times.
12. There have been times when I felt like rebelling against people in authority even though I knew they were right.
13. No matter who I'm talking to, I'm always a good listener.
14. I can remember "playing sick" to get out of something.
15. There have been occasions when I took advantage of someone.

16. I'm always willing to admit when I make a mistake.
17. I always try to practice what I preach.
18. I don't always find it particularly difficult to get along with loud mouthed, obnoxious people.
19. I sometimes try to get even rather than forgive and forget.
20. When I don't know something I don't at all mind admitting it.
21. I am always courteous, even to people who are disagreeable.
22. At times I have really insisted on having things my own way.
23. There have been occasions when I felt like smashing things.
24. I would never think about letting someone else be punished for my wrongdoings.
25. I never resent being asked to return a favor.
26. I have never been irked when people expressed ideas very different from my own.
27. I never make a long trip without checking the safety of my car.
28. There have been times I was quite jealous of the good fortune of others.
29. I have almost never felt the urge to tell someone off.
30. I am sometimes irritated by people who ask for favors of me.
31. I have never felt that I was punished without cause.
32. I sometimes think when people have a misfortune they only got what they deserved.
33. I have never deliberately said something that hurt someone's feelings.

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