Insert a joke about lawyers: Evaluating preferences for the Dark Triad traits in six occupations

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ABSTRACT

The current research examined how perceptions of the Dark Triad traits vary across occupations. Results from two studies (N_{TOTAL} = 933) suggested that participants believe it is acceptable, if not advantageous, for lawyers and musicians to be high in the Dark Triad traits. Participants, likewise, indicated that teachers should be high in narcissism but low in Machiavellianism and psychopathy. Potentially, the performative aspects of narcissism are considered an asset for teachers, while Machiavellianism and psychopathy are considered a liability. The findings further indicated that, regardless of the occupation in question, people high in a specific Dark Triad trait believe others should also be high in that same trait. All results are considered in the context of the attraction-selection-attrition model.

1. Introduction

Reviewing the adaptive benefits of the Dark Triad personality traits (i.e., Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy; Paulhus and Williams, 2002), Jonason, Webster, Schmitt, Li and Crysel (2012) drew attention to the apparent magnetism of people with *dark personalities* in the media. Examples cited by the authors included Gregory House of *House, M.D.*, who demonstrates Machiavellianism in his use of manipulation to conduct risky, yet often necessary, medical procedures; Tony Stark from *Iron Man*, who uses his self-interested narcissism to accrue money and status; and Dexter Morgan from *Dexter*, who uses his psychopathic depravity to murder serial killers. Beyond embodying the Dark Triad traits, these characters share a second unifying quality: They all seem well-suited for their jobs. The present study was aimed at exploring how the perception of job-fit varies as a function of the occupation in question and the person's levels of the Dark Triad traits. First, however, a discussion of the Dark Triad traits in the workplace is in order.

Lyons (2019) recently invoked the attraction-selection-attrition model (Schneider, 1987) to describe the disproportionate presence of the Dark Triad traits in certain occupations. The attraction-selection-attrition model suggests that the membership of an organization is determined by who is drawn to, chosen for, and retained in the organization. Applying the model to the Dark Triad, individuals high in Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy should seek out jobs that suit their personalities and be hired by (and not terminated from)

workplaces that are receptive towards people with those personalities. The extant research on the Dark Triad in the workplace is, as Lyons (2019) notes, somewhat limited, but it does appear that the Dark Triad influences an individual's vocational interests. In general, those high in Machiavellianism and psychopathy seem to dislike occupations that involve caring for others, while narcissism is associated with an interest in enterprising, artistic, and social vocations (Jonason et al., 2014; Kowalski et al., 2017; Schneider et al., 2017). Perhaps not coincidently, the three interests boasted by narcissists are those that also allow the opportunity for status-enhancement through the acquisition of economic, cultural, and social capital (Bourdieu, 1986). Those high in the Dark Triad traits also seem to gravitate towards different academic majors. Danish and German students enrolled in business-, management-, and economics-related majors appear to have elevated levels of the Dark Triad traits compared to students in other majors (Krick et al., 2016; Vedel and Thomsen, 2017).

Other than simply the result of differing interests, the finding that those with dark personalities are drawn to different majors may be partly attributable to the fact that they are attracted to and selected for occupations that, if not reward, tolerate these traits. By way of illustration, there is some evidence that subclinical narcissism may be beneficial to or at least compatible with leadership positions. People high in narcissism are more likely to emerge as leaders (Brunell et al., 2008; Nevicka et al., 2011)–perhaps owing to favourable first impressions (Paulhus, 1998; Rauthmann and Kolar, 2012) or a heightened level of extraversion (Grijalva et al., 2015). Despite taking more risks

and engaging in more capricious governing styles, CEOs perceived as being high in narcissism also appear to have no worse performance than CEOs perceived as low in narcissism (Chatterjee and Hambrick, 2007) and are more likely to endorse acts of status-enhancing corporate social responsibility (Myung et al., 2017; Petrenko et al., 2016). Similarly, narcissism in hedge fund managers is only associated with poor investment returns when the returns are penalized for the amount of risk involved (Brinke et al., 2018). Those high in narcissism also tend to have higher salaries (Jonason et al., 2018; O'Reilly et al., 2014) and have subordinates that report receiving higher salaries and a greater number of promotions (Volmer et al., 2016).

In contrast to narcissism, those with Machiavellian personalities appear categorically unfit for leadership positions. Employees of supervisors high in Machiavellianism are more likely to challenge the status quo in order to improve the business (Belschak et al., 2015), but this effect only appears when the leader is also charismatic. When perceiving themselves to be in a position of power, Machiavellian leaders also have the unfortunate tendency of abusing their subordinates (Wisse and Sleebos, 2016). Given that fact, it is not entirely surprising that employees with bosses high in Machiavellianism tend to have lower job satisfaction and greater emotional exhaustion, as do employees with bosses high in psychopathy (Volmer et al., 2016).

Outside of leadership positions, most evidence suggests that the Dark Triad traits are a liability when it comes to the workplace. A meta-analysis conducted by O'Boyle et al. (2012) indicated that Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy are all associated with behaving in ways counterproductive to the goals of the organization, such as stealing or abusing other employees. Although, there is some evidence suggesting that the subconstruct in question matters. A follow-up meta-analysis looking at the individual facets of narcissism revealed that aspects of narcissism characterized by leadership and authority were negatively associated with counterproductive workplace behaviours, whereas aspects of narcissism characterized by exploitativeness and entitlement were positively associated with counterproductive workplace behaviours (Grijalva and Newman, 2014). In the seminal paper introducing the *Organizational Machiavellianism Scale*, certain components of Machiavellianism were also associated with lower rates of counterproductive workplace behaviours (Kessler et al., 2010), but this measure has been accused of assessing features beyond the scope of Machiavellianism (Furnham et al., 2013). O'Boyle et al. (2012) also showed that Machiavellianism and psychopathy negatively influence ratings of workplace performance. Consistent with this finding, employees scoring high on Machiavellianism and psychopathy are more likely to cut corners at work Jonason and O'Connor (2017), use potentially disruptive tactics to get their way (Jonason, Slomski and Partyka, 2012), and, in the case of psychopathy, procrastinate (Lyons and Rice, 2014). Students high in the Dark Triad are also more likely to cheat and plagiarise (Nathanson et al., 2006; Williams et al., 2010), blame others for their poor academic performance (Turnipseed and Cohen, 2015), and believe acts of academic incivility (e.g., trying to dominate the classroom) are appropriate (Turnipseed and Landay, 2018). Machiavellian employees also seem to be perceived as less innovative by their supervisors (Wisse et al., 2015). Narcissistic employees are perceived to be more innovative by their supervisors, but this effect is only found when the supervisors are low in narcissism. The authors argue that this is primarily the result of narcissistic leaders being unwilling to share the proverbial spotlight with their employees.

Irrespective of the actual advantages and disadvantages conferred by the Dark Triad traits, however, the present study asks whether these traits are *perceived* as being especially compatible with or beneficial to specific occupations. Specifically, we examine differences in the perceived suitability of the Dark Triad traits in six occupations. If differences emerge, it is possible that organizations are selecting candidates high in the Dark Triad traits due to a perceived fit, without appreciating the potential for harm these individuals present. It is also possible that

the perception that those high in the Dark Triad traits are suited for particular jobs is a consequence of them actually being better suited for those jobs. To our knowledge, the present study is the first to examine whether the Dark Triad traits are perceived as being more acceptable in certain occupations.

A secondary aim of the present study was to investigate whether people with dark personalities believe, regardless of the occupation in question, that employees should also be high in the Dark Triad traits. Previous research has shown that the similarity-attraction effect (Byrne, 1961; Byrne et al., 1971)—the phenomenon in which people gravitate towards others who are similar to themselves—plays a role in an applicant's attraction to a company (Devendorf and Highhouse, 2008; Van Hoye and Turban, 2015). This research has primarily focussed on relatively innocuous personality traits (e.g., extraversion). It is yet unclear whether this effect holds for perceptions of the Dark Triad traits in an occupational context.

Research outside of an occupational context has provided mixed support for the idea that those high in the Dark Triad traits would be more attracted to or, at least, more accepting of similar traits in others. People with dark personalities appear to be more tolerant of politicians with dark personalities (Hart et al., 2018) and more forgiving of antagonistic traits in others (Lamkin et al., 2018). Narcissistic individuals also appear to be less critical of narcissism in others (Hart and Adams, 2014; Wallace et al., 2015), with this tolerance being partly explained by a perceived similarity with the target (Burton et al., 2017). These findings are somewhat tempered by interpersonal research showing that people high in the Dark Triad traits are not particularly interested in being friends or romantically involved with people similar to themselves (Jonason, Lyons, & Blanchard, 2015; Jonason & Schmitt, 2012).

Given the prior research, it is possible, although certainly not assured, that people high in the Dark Triad traits will endorse the presence of those same traits in hypothetical employees. Accounting for the self-report levels of the Dark Triad is necessary to avoid mistaken inferences, whereby differences in ratings are erroneously attributed to differences among occupations rather than differences among individuals. Accounting for these differences is also, however, an opportunity to make a novel contribution to the study of dark personality traits by examining the association between the self-report levels of the Dark Triad traits and perceptions of those same traits in an occupational context.

2. Study 1

2.1. Method

2.1.1. Participants

Five hundred undergraduate students at a large north-western university were awarded credit for completing the present study, which lasted approximately one hour. Following exclusion criteria outlined prior to data collection, we removed survey responses with response standard deviations under 0.5 ($n = 4$)–an indicator of straightlining–and response durations of under 10 minutes ($n = 13$)–an indicator of speeding. Participants who indicated that they were neither a woman nor a man were also excluded in order to create gender-specific groups that were large enough to compare ($n = 13$). The final sample included 470 participants (64.68% women) with ages ranging from 18 to 42 (M age = 19.78; SD age = 2.11).

2.1.2. Materials and procedures

Participants were required to consent to the terms of the study prior to participating. After completing the measures described below and other measures not relevant to the present study, participants were asked to provide demographic information, including their age and gender identity. At the end of the survey, participants were debriefed.

Self-report Dark Triad

Participants completed an abridged version of The Short Dark Triad

(Jones and Paulhus, 2014). The Short Dark Triad, when normally administered, contains 27 items. For the sake of brevity, we chose only the four items with the highest factor loadings from the original paper for each subscale. A total of twelve items were administered, four each for Machiavellianism ($\alpha = 0.60$; e.g., "You should wait for the right time to get back at people"), narcissism ($\alpha = 0.55$; e.g., "People see me as a natural leader"), and psychopathy ($\alpha = 0.67$; e.g., "People often say I'm out of control"). Participants responded using a 7-point Likert scale (1 = do not agree at all; 7 = agree very strongly).

Using a truncated version of the Short Dark Triad did seem to result in a lower than ideal internal consistency, a problem that would have potentially not arisen if we had used the widely-popular Dirty Dozen (Jonason and Webster, 2010). However, in order for the Dirty Dozen to achieve adequate internal consistency with 12 items, the breadth of the measured construct is somewhat narrowed and, consequently, prone to a kind of construct slippage when the shared effects of the Dark Triad traits are partialled out (see Vize et al., 2018). In choosing the Short Dark Triad over the Dirty Dozen, we were essentially sacrificing internal reliability for the sake of construct validity.

Evaluating the Dark Triad in six occupations

Participants responded to a similar set of Dark Triad items as used for the self-report section, but the items were adapted to assess the traits' suitability in the context of six occupations. The six occupations were selected to typify the six Holland Code categories (Holland, 1966): (1) a farmer representing realistic occupations (e.g., "I believe a farmer should be someone who believes it is not wise to tell their secrets"), (2) a physicist representing investigative occupations (e.g., "I believe a physicist should be someone who likes to get revenge on authorities"), (3) a musician representing artistic occupations (e.g., "I believe a musician should be someone who hates being the center of attention"), (4) a teacher representing social occupations (e.g., "I believe a teacher should be someone who likes to use clever manipulation to get their way"), (5) a lawyer representing enterprising occupations (e.g., "I believe a lawyer should be someone who believes people see them as a natural leader"), (6) and an accountant representing conventional occupations (e.g., "I believe an accountant should be someone who people say is out of control"). Participants responded using the same 7-point Likert scale used for the self-report ratings.

As shown in the diagonals of Table 2 and consistent with the self-report measure, the internal consistency of the Dark Triad traits appeared to suffer as a result of using the truncated measure. This was especially true for narcissism ($\alpha = 0.30$–0.60). A further investigation indicated that the lower Cronbach's alpha scores for narcissism were partly the result of including the single reverse-coded item. In order to avoid sacrificing validity, we retained the reverse-coded item. Even so, results were widely consistent even when the item was dropped.

2.2. Results and discussion

Descriptive statistics and gender comparisons can be found in Table 1. Zero-order correlations for the self-report Dark Triad traits and perceptions of the Dark Triad traits in the occupations can be found in Table 2. Generally consistent with previous research (Muris et al., 2017), men scored moderately higher in psychopathy than women ($g = -0.52$). The size of the correlations among the Dark Triad traits were also all in the expected range (Muris et al., 2017): There was a large relationship between Machiavellianism and psychopathy and a modest-to-large correlation between narcissism and Machiavellianism and between narcissism and psychopathy.

We constructed three sets of linear mixed-effects models, predicting the belief that people employed in the six occupations should be Machiavellian, narcissistic, and psychopathic. The participants' levels of the Dark Triad traits and the specific occupation in question were added as predictors to all models. Since prior work has shown robust gender-related differences in the Dark Triad traits (Muris et al., 2017), we also controlled for the potential influence of gender by adding it as a

Table 1
Descriptive statistics and gender comparisons for the self-report and occupational Dark Triad scores in Study 1.

| Trait | Mean (SD) | | | | |
	Overall	Women	Men	t	g
Self					
Psychopathy	1.90 (0.96)	1.72 (0.84)	2.24 (1.07)	−5.45*	−0.52
Farmer					
Psychopathy	2.13 (1.18)	1.91 (1.07)	2.52 (1.27)	−5.28*	−0.51
Physicist					
Psychopathy	2.12 (1.17)	1.92 (1.05)	2.49 (1.28)	−4.82*	−0.47
Musician					
Narcissism	4.81 (1.19)	4.97 (1.19)	4.54 (1.13)	3.84*	0.37
Psychopathy	2.90 (1.44)	2.73 (1.42)	3.22 (1.44)	−3.53*	−0.34
Teacher					
Narcissism	4.65 (1.03)	4.76 (0.99)	4.46 (1.07)	2.96	0.29
Psychopathy	1.80 (1.05)	1.61 (0.91)	2.14 (1.18)	−5.01*	−0.49
Lawyer					
Psychopathy	2.98 (1.30)	2.84 (1.29)	3.24 (1.28)	−3.21	−0.31
Accountant					
Psychopathy	2.02 (1.18)	1.82 (1.05)	2.39 (1.31)	−4.82*	−0.47

Note. Only significant differences are shown. * $p < .01$. P-values were adjusted for multiple comparisons using the Holm-Bonferonni method. g refers to Hedges' g.

Table 2
Intercorrelations for the self-report Dark Triad traits and perceptions of the Dark Triad traits in six occupations.

| Trait | Study 1 | | | Study 2 | | |
	1	2	3	1	2	3
Self						
1. Machiavellianism	**0.60**			**0.73**		
2. Narcissism	0.25**	**0.55**		0.26**	**0.68**	
3. Psychopathy	0.45**	0.29**	**0.67**	0.50**	0.34**	**0.73**
Farmer						
1. Machiavellianism	**0.72**			**0.81**		
2. Narcissism	0.20**	**0.30**		0.22**	**0.58**	
3. Psychopathy	0.62**	0.21**	**0.80**	0.63**	0.10	**0.76**
Physicist						
1. Machiavellianism	**0.69**			**0.81**		
2. Narcissism	0.12	**0.40**		0.19**	**0.55**	
3. Psychopathy	0.60**	0.09	**0.80**	0.66**	0.04	**0.79**
Musician						
1. Machiavellianism	**0.72**			**0.80**		
2. Narcissism	0.32**	**0.60**		0.30**	**0.77**	
3. Psychopathy	0.62**	0.27**	**0.81**	0.60**	0.12	**0.77**
Teacher						
1. Machiavellianism	**0.59**			**0.79**		
2. Narcissism	0.18*	**0.40**		0.09	**0.55**	
3. Psychopathy	0.47**	−0.17*	**0.78**	0.65**	−0.08	**0.76**
Lawyer						
1. Machiavellianism	**0.76**			**0.83**		
2. Narcissism	0.54**	**0.52**		0.63**	**0.71**	
3. Psychopathy	0.49**	0.24**	**0.63**	0.53**	0.34**	**0.70**
Accountant						
1. Machiavellianism	**0.65**			**0.83**		
2. Narcissism	0.19**	**0.35**		0.30**	**0.64**	
3. Psychopathy	0.61**	0.14	**0.83**	0.65**	0.19**	**0.78**

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$. Values along the diagonal are the Cronbach's αs for the corresponding variables. P-values were adjusted using the Holm-Bonferroni method.

predictor. In an effort to account for potential Type I error inflation resulting from participants making multiple ratings, we allowed the intercept for each model to vary by participant. Put simply, we expected that two ratings (e.g., a rating of Machiavellianism in a farmer and a rating of Machiavellianism in a lawyer) made by a single participant would be more similar than two ratings made by two separate participants. Preliminary results indicated that 34.00% of the variation in

perceptions of Machiavellianism (ICC = 0.34), 31.26% of the variation in perceptions of narcissism (ICC = 0.31), and 45.47% of the variation in perceptions of psychopathy (ICC = 0.45) could be attributed to the non-independence of these ratings. By allowing intercepts to vary by participant, these percentages were effectively zeroed out as far as the fixed effects were concerned.

2.2.1. Predicting perceptions of Machiavellianism

The addition of participant gender (χ^2(1, N = 2722) = 3.97, p = .046) improved prediction of perceptions of Machiavellianism, as did the the participants' levels of the Dark Triad traits (χ^2(3, N = 2722) = 106.48, p <.001) and the occupation in question (χ^2(5, N = 2722) = 924.01, p <.001). Using Satterthwaite's method to approximate degrees of freedom (Satterthwaite, 1946), we found that self-report Machiavellianism was associated with a moderate-to-large increase in the belief that people would benefit from being Machiavellian, regardless of the occupation in question, β = 0.24, t(458) = 7.55, SE = 0.03, p <.001. Likewise, narcissism was associated with a slight increase in the belief that people should be Machiavellian (β = 0.06, t(457) = 2.18, SE = 0.03, p = .030) and psychopathy was associated with a slight increase in the belief that people should be Machiavellian (β = 0.08, t(459) = 2.48, SE = 0.03, p = .013). Taken together, the results suggest that those high on all of the Dark Triad traits believe others should be Machiavellian, but this effect is particularly pronounced for those high in Machiavellianism.

A pairwise comparison of occupation means (Table 4) using Tukey's method (Tukey, 1949) further suggested that, after accounting for the self-report levels of the Dark Triad traits, participants believed lawyers should be the most Machiavellian of any of the occupations. Participants also indicated that musicians should be more Machiavellian than any other occupation, excluding lawyers.

2.2.2. Predicting perceptions of narcissism

When predicting evaluations of narcissism in the six occupations, the addition of participant gender (χ^2(1, N = 2722) = 13.11, p <.001), the Dark Triad traits (χ^2(3, N = 2722) = 39.48, p <.001) and the specific occupation in question (χ^2(5, N = 2722) = 836.01, p <.001) again improved model fit. On average, men believed people should be slightly lower in narcissism than women did, β = −0.11, t(456) = −3.75, SE = 0.03, p <.001. Narcissism was associated with a moderate increase in the belief that people should be narcissistic, β = 0.19, t(455) = 6.19, SE = 0.03, p <.001. No such relationship was found for Machiavellianism (p = .602), nor for psychopathy (p = .732).

As with Machiavellianism, it appears that being high in narcissism is associated with believing others should also be narcissistic. Using Tukey's method to again look at the occupation means while controlling for self-report levels Dark Triad traits (Table 4), it appears that participants believed lawyers should be more narcissistic than any other occupation and that musicians should be more narcissistic than any other occupation, except for lawyers.

2.2.3. Predicting perceptions of psychopathy

The addition of participant gender (χ^2(1, N = 2722) = 32.87, p <.001), the Dark Triad traits (χ^2(3, N = 2722) = 98.52, p <.001) and the specific occupation in question (χ^2(5, N = 2722) = 689.04, p <.001) again improved model fit when predicting perceptions of psychopathy. Being a man was associated with a slight increase in the belief that people should be psychopathic, β = 0.12, t(460) = 3.86, SE = 0.03, p <.001. Machiavellianism was also associated with a slight increase in the belief that people should be psychopathic (β = 0.11, t(461) = 3.21, SE = 0.03, p = .001), as was narcissism (β = 0.08, t(459) = 2.58, SE = 0.03, p = .010). Psychopathy was associated with a moderate increase in the belief that people should be psychopathic, β = 0.22, t(461) = 6.25, SE = 0.04, p <.001. Consistent with perceptions of Machiavellianism and narcissism, being high in psychopathy is associated with believing others should also be high in psychopathy.

Once again returning to the comparison of means (Table 4), participants believed that lawyers and musicians should be more psychopathic than any other job. However, given the rather low means (3.01 and 2.94, respectively) compared to that for Machiavellianism and narcissism, it is possible that participants are simply more tolerant of psychopathy in these occupations.

3. Study 2

In Study 1, we found that one's own level of Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy was the greatest predictor of believing others should also be Machiavellian, narcissistic, and psychopathic, respectively. We also found that lawyers and musicians are, if not rewarded for high levels of the Dark Triad traits, not condemned for high levels of the traits. Psychopathy, in contrast, was judged particularly harshly in the context of teachers. Study 2 aimed to directly replicate the findings of Study 1, using an untruncated version of the Short Dark Triad in an attempt to address the internal consistency issues encountered in Study 1.

3.1. Method

3.1.1. Participants

Undergraduate students (N = 499) were sampled from the same university as Study 1. Again, participants exhibiting straightlining (n = 9) and speeding (n = 22), as well as those identifying as neither a woman nor a man (n = 5), were excluded from analysis. The final sample comprised 463 participants (71.71% women), ranging in age from 18 to 44 (M age = 19.98; SD age = 3.09).

3.1.2. Materials and procedures
Self-report Dark Triad

Participants completed the full-version Short Dark Triad (Jones & Paulhus, 2014). The measure achieved better inter-item reliability than in Study 1 (Machiavellianism α = 0.73; narcissism α = 0.68; psychopathy α = 0.73). Participants responded using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = "Strongly disagree"; 5 = "Strongly agree"). A bidirectional Likert scale was used in lieu of the undirectional 7-point Likert scale used in Study 1 to allow for easier comparison with the existing literature.
Evaluating the Dark Triad in six occupations

Participants evaluated the items from the untruncated version of the Short Dark Triad in the same six occupations from Study 1. They responded using the same 5-point Likert scale used for the self-report measure of the Dark Triad. As with the self-report ratings, the internal consistency of the ratings of the six occupations improved (Table 2), particularly with respect to narcissism. Although not excellent, there was modest internal consistency for most assessments of the Dark Triad traits in others.

3.2. Results and discussion

Descriptive statistics and gender comparisons can be found in Table 3. Zero-order correlations for the self-report Dark Triad traits can be found in Table 2. Using the full Short Dark Triad, the differences between women and men's self-report scores were greater but in the same direction as Study 1: Men scored higher on Machiavellianism (g = −0.48), narcissism (g = −0.50), and psychopathy (g = −0.81). Intercorrelations between the self-report Dark Triad traits were also greater than those found in Study 1 but were still in line with previous estimates (Muris et al., 2017).

We again constructed three sets of linear mixed-effects models to predict the degree to which participants believed that each of the six occupations should be Machiavellian, narcissistic, and psychopathic. Participant gender, participant level of the Dark Triad traits, and the

Table 3
Descriptive statistics and gender comparisons for the self-report and occupational Dark Triad scores in Study 2.

Trait	Mean (SD)				
	Overall	Women	Men	*t*	*g*
Self					
Machiavellianism	2.90 (0.56)	2.83 (0.58)	3.08 (0.49)	− 4.70*	− 0.48
Narcissism	2.91 (0.53)	2.84 (0.55)	3.08 (0.46)	− 4.81*	− 0.50
Psychopathy	2.16 (0.56)	2.03 (0.51)	2.48 (0.57)	− 7.85*	− 0.81
Farmer					
Psychopathy	2.50 (0.52)	2.43 (0.51)	2.68 (0.51)	− 4.76*	− 0.49
Physicist					
Psychopathy	2.39 (0.57)	2.32 (0.57)	2.56 (0.54)	− 4.15*	− 0.43
Musician					
Psychopathy	2.69 (0.55)	2.64 (0.56)	2.84 (0.47)	− 4.03*	− 0.41
Teacher					
Machiavellianism	2.54 (0.60)	2.48 (0.61)	2.69 (0.55)	− 3.65*	− 0.38
Psychopathy	2.13 (0.56)	2.05 (0.54)	2.33 (0.57)	− 4.90*	− 0.51
Lawyer					
Psychopathy	2.85 (0.59)	2.79 (0.59)	3.00 (0.56)	− 3.71*	− 0.38
Accountant					
Machiavellianism	2.73 (0.65)	2.67 (0.65)	2.88 (0.63)	− 3.17	− 0.33
Psychopathy	2.34 (0.57)	2.28 (0.56)	2.50 (0.56)	− 3.92*	− 0.40

Note. Only significant differences are shown. * $p < .01$. P-values were adjusted for multiple comparisons using the Holm-Bonferonni method. *g* refers to Hedges' g.

occupation in question were all added as predictors. Linear mixed-effects models were again leveraged to account for participants making multiple non-independent ratings. An investigation of models estimating only the grand mean of the evaluation of Machiavellian, narcissistic, and psychopathy supported this choice: 30.44% of the variation in ratings of Machiavellianism (ICC = 0.30), 20.39% of the variation in ratings of narcissism (ICC = 0.20), and 37.44% of the variation in ratings of psychopathy (ICC = 0.37) could be attributed to participants making multiple ratings.

3.2.1. Predicting perceptions of Machiavellianism

With respect to predicting the belief that the six occupations should be Machiavellian, participant gender ($\chi^2(1, N = 2778) = 8.70, p = .003$), self-reported level of the Dark Triad traits ($\chi^2(3, N = 2778) = 97.50, p < .001$) and the specific occupation in question ($\chi^2(5, N = 2778) = 1115.86, p < .001$) all significantly improved model fit. Machiavellianism was the only Dark Triad trait associated with believing others should be Machiavellian. Specifically, Machiavellianism was associated with a moderate-to-large increase in the belief that people should be Machiavellian, $\beta = 0.26, t(463) = 8.39, SE = 0.03, p < .001$. Partially consistent with Study 1, it appears that those high in Machiavellianism believe others should also be high in Machiavellianism.

Using Tukey's method (Tukey, 1949) to compare the belief that a person should be Machiavellian across the six occupations (Table 4), we found participants believed lawyers should be more Machiavellian than

any other profession, and musicians should be more Machiavellian than any other profession, excluding lawyers. Participants also reported that teachers should be the least Machiavellian of all occupations tested. These results were largely consistent with Study 1.

3.2.2. Predicting perceptions of narcissism

The addition of the Dark Triad traits ($\chi^2(3, N = 2778) = 26.08, p < .001$) and the specific occupation in question ($\chi^2(5, N = 2778) = 797.23, p < .001$), likewise, improved the model fit for predicting evaluations of narcissism. The addition of participant gender ($\chi^2(1, N = 2778) = 1.18, p = .278$) did not significantly improve model fit and was subsequently dropped from the model. Narcissism was associated with a slight increase in the belief that people should be narcissistic, $\beta = 0.10, t(463) = 3.59, SE = 0.03, p < .001$. Machiavellianism was also associated with a slight increase in the belief that people should be narcissistic ($\beta = 0.09, t(463) = 3.06, SE = 0.03, p = .002$), while psychopathy was associated with a slight *decrease* in the belief that people should be narcissistic ($\beta = -0.07, t(463) = -2.38, SE = 0.03, p = .017$). Using the full measure of the Short Dark Triad, the relationship between self-report narcissism and evaluations of narcissism in others is weaker but still consistent with Study 1. There is also slight evidence that those high in psychopathy believe people shouldn't be narcissistic. Nevertheless, this effect was marginal and begs replication as the effect was not found in Study 1.

Consonant with Study 1, the results of the pairwise comparison (Table 4) indicated that participants believe lawyers and musicians should be more narcissistic than any other occupation, and teachers should be more narcissistic than farmers, physicists, and accountants.

3.2.3. Predicting perceptions of psychopathy

Concerning prediction of psychopathy, participant gender ($\chi^2(1, N = 2778) = 30.79, p < .001$), the self-report Dark Triad traits ($\chi^2(3, N = 2778) = 81.51, p < .001$) and the specific occupation in question ($\chi^2(5, N = 2778) = 787.86, p < .001$) improved model fit. Being a man was associated with a slight increase in the belief that people should be psychopathic, $\beta = 0.07, t(463) = 2.26, SE = 0.03, p = .024$. Narcissism was associated with a slight increase in the belief that people should be psychopathic ($\beta = 0.07, t(463) = 2.23, SE = 0.03, p = .026$), and psychopathy was associated with a moderate increase in the belief that people should be psychopathic ($\beta = 0.23, t(463) = 6.48, SE = 0.04, p < .001$). In other words, participants high in narcissism and psychopathy were more likely to believe that others should be high in psychopathy.

Participants also believed that lawyers should be more psychopathic than any other job, and musicians should be more psychopathic than any other occupation, other than lawyers (Table 4). This was followed by farmers, physicists and accountants, and, finally, teachers.

4. General discussion

Across two studies, relations among the self-reported Dark Triad traits and perceptions of those same traits in six occupations were

Table 4
Comparison of the Dark Triad traits in six occupations, controlling for self-report levels of the Dark Triad and collapsing across gender.

Trait	Farmer	Physicist	Musician	Teacher	Lawyer	Accountant
Study 1						
Machiavellianism	2.80	2.82	3.11$_a$	2.87	4.53$_b$	2.83
Narcissism	3.62	4.12$_b$	4.78$_d$	4.62$_c$	5.00$_e$	3.88$_a$
Psychopathy	2.17$_a$	2.17$_a$	2.94$_b$	1.83	3.01$_b$	2.06$_a$
Study 2						
Machiavellianism	2.76$_a$	2.69$_a$	2.91$_b$	2.55	3.56$_c$	2.74$_a$
Narcissism	2.98	3.17$_a$	3.51$_c$	3.30$_b$	3.51$_c$	3.03
Psychopathy	2.52$_b$	2.41$_a$	2.71$_c$	2.15	2.87$_d$	2.36$_a$

Note. Means in the same row that do not share a subscript are significantly different from one another.

explored. We asked (1) whether people high in the Dark Triad traits prefer others to also be high in the Dark Triad traits and (2) whether people believe that those working in certain occupations should be higher in the Dark Triad traits. With respect to the former, a consistent trend emerged in both studies: People believe others should be like them. Among the Dark Triad traits, self-reported Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy were the greatest independent predictors of the belief that others should be Machiavellian, narcissistic, and psychopathic, respectively. The relationship was greatest for Machiavellianism (β = 0.24 - 0.26), followed by psychopathy (β = 0.22 - 0.23), and, finally, narcissism (β = 0.10 - 0.19). In fact, there was only a slight-to-moderate correlation for narcissism in both studies. Although a narcissistic person may believe that a person's first priority should be themselves, they may also find narcissistic behaviours (e.g., bragging, selfishness) unpleasant or injurious to their own success, a notion supported by existing research (Adams et al., 2015). People high in Machiavellianism and psychopathy may, in contrast, see the strategism and hedonism of the respective traits as simply being the correct way for anyone to behave, regardless of its impact on the self. Rauthmann and Kolar (2012) have shown that laypeople believe Machiavellianism and psychopathy have negative consequences for the self and others, but it is yet unclear whether those high in Machiavellianism and psychopathy share this sentiment. In sum, it appears that the similarity-attraction effect (Byrne, 1961; Byrne et al., 1971) may extend, not only to positive personality traits in occupational contexts (e.g., Van Hoye and Turban, 2015), but to dark personality traits in occupational contexts as well.

Concerning evaluations of the Dark Triad among the six occupations, a second trend emerged. People believed that lawyers and, to a lesser extent, musicians should be higher in the Dark Triad traits than any of the other occupations tested. Potentially, the manipulation and deceit of Machiavellianism is perceived as beneficial for lawyers because participants call to mind attorneys weaponizing those same traits in the courtroom. The image of an attorney making an impassioned argument also illustrates why participants may believe lawyers should be narcissistic. Other than wanting to be the center of attention, being perceived as confident in oneself and one's argument would seem to be useful for a person who is trying to convince others of the veracity of their claims. At least with respect to witnesses, assuredness in court is associated with perceived credibility (Cramer et al., 2009; Erickson et al., 1978).

Musicians may also be perceived as benefitting from these more performative aspects of narcissism. Previous work has shown that celebrities tend to be higher in narcissism, although musicians were found to be the least narcissistic type of celebrity (Mark Young and Pinsky, 2006). Subsequent research has also suggested that narcissism may improve performance when there is an opportunity for glory (Roberts et al., 2018); an opportunity that would seem to be more prevalent in the field of music than the other occupations tested. In terms of Machiavellianism, it seems less probable, at least to the authors, that people believe musicians should be manipulative or cynical. Rather, we contend that people may just not care whether musicians are manipulative or cynical. In comparison to other jobs, such as accountants, where chicanery could result in disastrous consequences for the individual, the organization, or the organization's clients (e.g., the abuse of subordinates; Wisse and Sleebos, 2016), the consequences of a treacherous musician are not as immediately evident.

Another interesting difference was the finding that people somewhat endorse narcissism for teachers, but not Machiavellianism or psychopathy. Wanting to be the center of attention, seeing oneself as a natural leader, and even insisting on getting the respect they believe they deserve are all features of narcissism that appear reasonably useful for leading a classroom. Consistent with this notion, Friedman (2016) recently argued that people may become teachers because of "genuine narcissism", or a sense of self-importance combined with a demand for respect. Additional research has suggested that perceptions of an instructor's confidence and dominance (Ambady and Rosenthal, 1993), as well as an instructor's belief in their own abilities (Klassen and Tze, 2014), are associated with ratings of instructor effectiveness. Characteristics of Machiavellianism, such as believing it is unwise to share information, making sure plans benefit oneself and not others, and avoiding direct conflict, appear categorically unhelpful for teachers. Potentially due to their withholding of information, Machiavellian college instructors are perceived as having less expert knowledgeable, despite being perceived as having more legitimate power over their students (Teven, 2007). To our knowledge, characteristics of psychopathy—such as being perceived as out of control, gravitating towards dangerous situations, and enjoying having sex with strangers—remains unstudied in teachers. Nevertheless, these features would appear to range from not useful to downright criminal.

Taken together, the fact that perceptions of the Dark Triad traits differ depending on the occupation in question presents two possibilities when it comes to the attraction-selection-attrition model (Schneider, 1987). First, these traits may actually be beneficial in certain occupations. So rather than simply being attracted to different occupations due to differing interests, those high in the Dark Triad traits may be attracted to and selected for specific occupations because they actually are a valuable asset for the company. For example, law firms may hire people high in Machiavellianism because people high in Machiavellianism outperform their non-Machiavellian counterparts. A second possibility is that the traits are only perceived to be beneficial, but don't actually confer any benefit to the organization. For example, law firms may hire people high in Machiavellianism because they believe that people high in Machiavellianism outperform non-Machiavellians, while, in actuality, those high in Machiavellianism just make for a toxic workplace. In this case, organizations may actively select candidates that are inimical to the company's success. Researchers would be well-rewarded for examining these possibilities in future research.

Another area deserving of future investigation with respect to the present topic is the subscales of the Dark Triad traits. Not only would the use of full measures of the traits potentially improve the persistent internal consistency issues found in the present studies, it may also allow a more detailed understanding of how the traits are perceived in different occupations. Similar to the work showing that the relationship between narcissism and counterproductive workplace behaviours depends on the subscale in question (Grijalva et al., 2015), the component of the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (Raskin and Hall, 1979) concerning leadership may be perceived as a more favourable trait for teachers to have than exploitativeness. In like manner, the manipulative tactics component of the Mach-IV (Christie and Geis, 1970) may be perceived as being useful for lawyers. The rationale for a cynical worldview being useful is less clear, but being circumspect of the motives of the other side in an adversarial situation could help the individual cast the opponent in a bad light. Although exploring the Dark Triad as a unidimensional construct is a limitation of the present paper, we believed it was appropriate for an initial attempt at examining perceptions of the Dark Triad traits in the workplace.

In addition to using the full measures, future studies could test these relationships in different types of samples. The samples in the present study are prototypically WEIRD (Henrich et al., 2010), comprising predominantly young college students from a Western, educated, industrialized, rich, and democratic society. Not only does this limit the ability to generalize the results to other cultures, but it also introduces the possibility that participants have not been previously exposed to members of some of the occupations. For instance, undergraduate students have presumably had many opportunities to interact with teachers. The opportunity to interact with a lawyer is far less assured, and it is possible that participants may have relied on a caricaturistic fictional representation of a cunning lawyer to inform their understanding of what a lawyer should be. Of course, this is all speculative, but it does underscore the need to replicate the present findings using different

samples and to attempt to account for the participants' familiarity with the various professions.

5. Conclusion

The attraction-selection-attrition model (Schneider, 1987) proposes that the membership of an organization is determined, in part, by who is *attracted* to and *selected* for the organization. Across two studies, we investigated how the Dark Triad influences perceived fit with and selection for six occupations. First, we found, irrespective of the occupation, individuals high in one of the Dark Triad traits believe others should also be high in that same trait. As such, an interviewer high in the Dark Triad may hire a person with a dark personality due to a perceived fit with the organization's culture, as well as a belief that it is in some way proper to have a dark personality. Second, we showed that the Dark Triad traits may be perceived as being particularly advantageous for certain occupations, despite a panoply of existing evidence suggesting that their presence in the workplace is generally detrimental. Just as the Byronic heroes of fiction described at the outset seem well-suited for their respective professions, a dark personality may be viewed as an asset in specific, real-life contexts.

Declaration of Competing Interest

None.

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