

See discussions, stats, and author profiles for this publication at: <http://www.researchgate.net/publication/280527144>

Size the day: The time perspectives of the Dark Triad

ARTICLE *in* PERSONALITY AND INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES · NOVEMBER 2015

Impact Factor: 1.86 · DOI: 10.1016/j.paid.2015.06.035

READS

18

2 AUTHORS:



Béla Birkás

University of Pécs

16 PUBLICATIONS 76 CITATIONS

[SEE PROFILE](#)

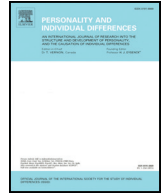


Arpad Csatho

University of Pécs

27 PUBLICATIONS 330 CITATIONS

[SEE PROFILE](#)



Short Communication

Size the day: The time perspectives of the Dark Triad

Béla Birkás, Árpád Csathó*

Institute of Behavioral Sciences, University of Pécs, Szigeti str. 12, Pécs 7624, Hungary



ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 27 April 2015

Received in revised form 17 June 2015

Accepted 20 June 2015

Available online xxxx

Keywords:

Dark Triad
Life history theory
Time perspectives
ZTPI

ABSTRACT

Recent empirical findings on the Dark Triad and Life History Theory suggest that the behaviors linked to the Dark Triad are dominantly characterized by a fast life strategy with increased motivation to acquire short-term benefits and prioritize situations with immediate rewards. Current studies have also suggested that time perspectives could be one of the psychological mediators between actual behavior and life history strategies assuming that a present-oriented attitude is associated with fast life strategies. In line with this suggestion, we predicted to find associations between time perspectives and the Dark Triad traits. The prediction was investigated by self-reports. In accordance with the predictions, the results showed positive associations of the Dark Triad traits with the present-oriented time perspectives. In addition, unlike Narcissism, Machiavellianism and Psychopathy were found to be related to a negative view of the past. Our study provides the first evidence for significant associations between Dark Triad personality and time perspectives.

© 2015 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

The Dark Triad personality (DT) refers to three interrelated constructs of Machiavellianism, subclinical psychopathy, and subclinical narcissism (Paulhus & Williams, 2002). Several socially-aversive features frame the common basis of the Dark Triad traits, like callousness, being manipulative (Jones & Paulhus, 2011), low level of honesty–humility (Lee & Ashton, 2005), diminished self-control (Jonason & Tost, 2010), selfishness, inability to delay gratification (Birkás, Csathó, Gács, & Bereczkei, 2015; Brumbach, Figueredo, & Ellis, 2009), and exploitation (McDonald, Donnellan, & Navarrete, 2012). These characteristics have been shown to be associated dominantly with a fast life history strategy (Jonason, Koenig, & Tost, 2010).

According to the Life History Theory (LHT), specific personality traits, together with various behavioral strategies, regulate behavioral adaptation to various environmental (ecological and/or social) condition encountered during childhood (Brumbach et al., 2009). While unpredictable conditions tend to produce *fast* strategies, more predictable environments may produce *slow* strategies (Kaplan & Gangestad, 2005). Fast life strategies might favor risk-taking behavior (Griskevicius, Tybur, Delton, & Robertson, 2011; Kállai, Rózsa, Kerekes, Hargitai, & Osváth, 2009), a higher frequency of mating with early start, and little investment in social relationships and offsprings (Belsky, Steinberg, & Draper, 1991). Furthermore, recent studies have shown a significant association between negative childhood experiences (e.g. parent–child relationship and family functioning) and the

presence of DT traits (Jonason, Lyons, & Bethell, 2014; Láng & Birkás, 2014; Láng & Lénárd, 2015). Consequently, the Dark Triad, to some extent, can be considered a personality indicator of a fast life history strategy (e.g., Gladden, Figueredo, & Jacobs, 2009).

Time perspective (TP) can be defined as a psychology dimension of time emerging from cognitive processes by which personal experiences are automatically partitioned into time frames of past, present and future (Zimbardo & Boyd, 1999). TP might be central to life history strategies (Chisholm, Quinlivan, Petersen, & Coall, 2005): It has a fundamental influence on the interpretation of life events, and the decisions about the current and future allocations of resources. More particularly, while slow life strategy is suggested to be associated with future orientation, fast life history strategy might rather be associated with present-oriented time perspectives (Del Giudice, 2014). In line with this, in a recent study, future time perspective was found to be a significant indicator of long-term mating orientation and less sexual experiences, whereas present orientation was associated with short-term mating orientation and with more sexual experiences (Ponzi et al., 2015). In addition, the exposure to harsh, unpredictable environments in childhood was shown to make individuals more present-oriented (Kruger, Reischl, & Zimmerman, 2008).

In summary, the above findings suggest that the Dark Triad could be associated with specific time perspectives. More specifically, it is plausible to predict that each DT trait associates with the present-oriented TPs. Furthermore, deriving from the malevolent childhood experiences, it is also predictable that individuals with greater DT traits adopt negative attitudes about the past. In the current study, for the first time in the literature, we tested these predictions by using self-report instruments that assess for the Dark Triad, and the time perspectives.

* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: arpad.csatho@aok.pte.hu (Á. Csathó).

2. Method

2.1. Participants

Participants were 171 (61 men) under-, and postgraduate students aged between 18 and 34 years ($M = 23.44$, $SD = 4.49$). All of the participants provided written consent.

2.2. Measures and procedure

The Short Dark Triad Questionnaire (SD3) (Jones & Paulhus, 2014) was used to assess the Dark Triad construct. The SD3 is a 27-item self-report scale that measures Machiavellianism, Psychopathy and Narcissism with 9 items for each subscale ranging from a minimum score of 9 to a maximum score of 45 (for this sample: Machiavellianism: $M = 28.42$, $SD = 5.85$; Psychopathy: $M = 19.90$, $SD = 5.28$; Narcissism: $M = 25.42$, $SD = 5.08$). All three subscales demonstrated acceptable internal consistency in the current study (Cronbach's α : Machiavellianism = .71; Psychopathy = .66; Narcissism = .64).

The Zimbardo Time Perspective Inventory (ZTPI) is a 56-item self-report measure with five subscales measuring different past, present and future time perspectives on a 5-point Likert type scale (Orosz & Lukács, 2013; Zimbardo & Boyd, 1999). The ZTPI involves motivational, emotional, and cognitive aspects of TP with items referring to beliefs, preferences and values, which are associated to the personal conceptualization of time of the individual. The *Past-negative* factor ($M = 3.00$, $SD = .80$) is characterized by an embittered, negative view of the past, which has an impact on the interpretation of the present (e.g., "I've taken my share of abuse and rejection in the past"). The *Past-positive* factor ($M = 3.42$, $SD = .70$) reflects on sentimental and nostalgic attitudes of the past (e.g., "Happy memories of good times spring readily to mind"). Individuals characterized by a *Present hedonistic* TP ($M = 3.23$, $SD = .56$) are living for the moment. Thus, this factor refers to a strong preference of immediate rewards and excitement with ignoring future consequences ("I find myself getting swept up in the excitement of the moment"). The *Present fatalistic* dimension ($M = 2.73$, $SD = .66$) is defined by the belief in fate, more specifically, that the future is pre-ordained. This TP leads to the resignation of present actions ("My life path is controlled by forces I cannot influence"). *Future* TP ($M = 3.45$, $SD = .63$) promotes planning for future aims and prospect of achievements ("I'm able to resist temptations when I know that there is work to be done"). All five subscales demonstrated good internal consistency (Cronbach's α : .85, .80, .81, .72 and .82, respectively).

3. Results

In order to examine the associations of time perspectives with the Dark Triad traits, first, bivariate correlations were performed between the scores for each trait and the scores for each ZTPI subscale (see Table 1). To probe the unique contribution of the different TPs

predicting the Dark Triad we also conducted three multiple linear regression analyses. More specifically, Machiavellianism, Psychopathy and Narcissism were separately regressed on the predictors of the five ZTPI scales. Former studies indicated gender differences in scores on the DT traits and in present orientation, as well as age differences were shown in short-term behavioral strategies (see Jonason et al., 2010; Kruger et al., 2008). Therefore, age and gender were entered as second block of predictors at each regression analysis.

All three Dark Triad traits were positively and independently associated with present-oriented TPs. More specifically, Machiavellianism was significantly associated with the Present-fatalistic TP, whereas Psychopathy and Narcissism were significantly related to the Present-hedonistic TP suggesting that individuals who score high on these two traits tend to obtain rather short-term goals.

In line with our second prediction, both Machiavellianism and Psychopathy were significantly and positively associated with the Past-negative TP indicating that former negative life experiences might underline the short-term behavioral strategies of these two DT traits. Narcissism showed no reliable correlation with Past-negative TP.

Furthermore, as an additional support for our predictions, Psychopathy was found to be significantly and negatively associated with future orientation suggesting that individuals who score high on Psychopathy tend to ignore the future consequences of their actions.

4. Discussion

The present study addressed the question of how time perspectives are associated with Dark Triad traits. Taking our findings together, each of the DT traits appeared to be strongly related to present-oriented TPs. This finding is in a good agreement with the findings shown by former studies on the fast life strategy, decreased self-control and increased impulsiveness of the Dark Triad. More specifically, Psychopathy and Narcissism were associated with the Present-hedonistic TP suggesting that individuals possessing these traits tend to live for the moment, and claim for immediate rewards. Machiavellianism was associated with the Present-fatalistic TP, with a sense that the future is controlled by fate rather than by one's own actions (Zimbardo & Boyd, 1999). This fatalistic view of the present for Machiavellianism might be related to Machiavellians' cynical view and distrust of others. With other words, Machiavellians assume that they must exploit and manipulate others otherwise they will be exploited (Christie & Geis, 1970). Thus, Machiavellians' actions are rather motivated by avoiding possible exploitation by others, than by their own goals. Importantly, however, at the behavioral level, individuals with present-oriented TPs appear to be relatively similar. For instance, both Present-hedonistic and Present-fatalistic TPs were reported to be related to sensation seeking, lying, and stealing (see Zimbardo & Boyd, 1999). These behaviors are typically related to short-term (i.e. faster) strategies, and found to be representative for the Dark Triad.

The positive associations of Machiavellianism, and Psychopathy with the Past-negative TP suggest that individuals higher on these traits tend to focus more on their negative, rather than on their positive past experiences. This association is clearly in line with recent findings about that the Dark Triad traits are in strong relation to negative childhood experiences. That is, the past-negative view might be underlined by the unpredictable and harsh childhood environment leading to a fast life history strategy and a more present-oriented attitude. Present orientation could mediate the effect of negative experiences in predicting short-term behavioral strategies (Kruger et al., 2008). Additionally, Psychopathy showed a negative association with the Future TP suggesting a more pronounced discount of future consequences for this DT trait.

In summary, the current study reveals the time perspectives of the Dark Triad. Our findings, first in the literature, show that all three DT traits are related to present-oriented perspectives, and Machiavellianism and Psychopathy are associated with a despondent

Table 1
Correlations and regression coefficients (in brackets) between the Dark Triad and the five time perspectives assessed by the Zimbardo Time Perspective Inventory.

	r (β)		
	Machiavellianism	Psychopathy	Narcissism
Future orientation	-.06 (-.02)	-.28** (-.17*)	.05 (.15)
Present-fatalistic	.27** (.20*)	.25** (-.01)	-.02 (-.02)
Present-hedonistic	.04 (-.06)	.35** (.29**)	.26** (.32**)
Past-positive	-.03 (.10)	-.12 (-.02)	.11 (.03)
Past-negative	.30** (.21*)	.31** (.24**)	-.09 (-.12)
R^2	.15**	.25**	.11**

Note: R^2 is for R-squared effect size for regression analysis. All regressions were controlled for age and gender.

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$

view of the past as well. Accordingly, in line with several former studies, Dark Triad individuals appear to hold less value in delayed rewards. However, for Machiavellianism and Psychopathy, the former negative experiences also appear to significantly affect the actual behavioral strategies creating a faster life strategy with a strong preference for short-term payoffs.

Finally, in recent studies some aspects of the DT (e.g. Leadership/Authority and Primary psychopathy) have shown to be related to slower life strategies (Jonason, Jones, & Lyons, 2013; McDonald et al., 2012). To investigate the associations of these DT subfactors with time perspectives might, however, require further examinations with questionnaires being more distinctive for these specific aspects of the Dark Triad.

Acknowledgment

The present scientific contribution is dedicated to the 650th anniversary of the foundation of the University of Pécs, Hungary. The study was supported by the Hungarian Scientific Research Fund (Nr. 101762).

References

- Belsky, J., Steinberg, L., & Draper, P. (1991). Childhood experience, interpersonal development, and reproductive strategy: An evolutionary theory of socialization. *Child Development, 62*, 647–670.
- Birkás, B., Csathó, Á., Gács, B., & Bereczkei, T. (2015). Nothing ventured nothing gained strong associations between reward sensitivity and two measures of Machiavellianism. *Personality and Individual Differences, 74*, 112–115.
- Brumbach, B. H., Figueredo, A. J., & Ellis, B. J. (2009). Effects of harsh and unpredictable environments in adolescence on the development of life history strategies: A longitudinal test of an evolutionary model. *Human Nature, 20*, 25–51.
- Chisholm, J. S., Quinlivan, J. A., Petersen, R. W., & Coall, D. A. (2005). Early stress predicts age at menarche and first birth, adult attachment, and expected lifespan. *Human Nature, 16*, 233–265.
- Christie, R., & Geis, F. (1970). *Studies in Machiavellianism*. New York: Academic Press.
- Del Giudice, M. (2014). An evolutionary life history framework for psychopathology. *Psychological Inquiry, 25*, 261–300.
- Gladden, P. R., Figueredo, A. J., & Jacobs, W. J. (2009). Life history strategy, psychopathic attitudes, personality, and general intelligence. *Personality and Individual Differences, 46*, 270–275.
- Griskevicius, V., Tybur, J. M., Delton, A. W., & Robertson, T. E. (2011). The influence of mortality and socioeconomic status on risk and delayed rewards: A life history theory approach. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 100*, 1015–1026.
- Jonason, P. K., Jones, A., & Lyons, M. (2013). Creatures of the night: Chronotypes and the Dark Triad traits. *Personality and Individual Differences, 55*, 538–541.
- Jonason, P. K., Koenig, B. L., & Tost, J. (2010). Living a fast life: The Dark Triad and life history theory. *Human Nature, 21*, 428–442.
- Jonason, P. K., Lyons, M., & Bethell, E. (2014). The making of Darth Vader: Parent–child care and the Dark Triad. *Personality and Individual Differences, 67*, 30–34.
- Jonason, P. K., & Tost, J. (2010). I just cannot control myself: The Dark Triad and self-control. *Personality and Individual Differences, 49*, 611–615.
- Jones, D. N., & Paulhus, D. L. (2011). Differentiating the Dark Triad within the interpersonal circumplex. In L. M. Horowitz, & S. Strack (Eds.), *Handbook of interpersonal psychology: Theory, research, assessment, and therapeutic interventions* (pp. 249–268). New York: Wiley.
- Jones, D. N., & Paulhus, D. L. (2014). Introducing the short Dark Triad (SD3): A brief measure of dark personality traits. *Assessment, 21*, 28–41.
- Kállai, J., Rózsa, S., Kerekes, Z., Hargitai, R., & Osváth, A. (2009). A temperament dependent dimension: Psychometric properties of the sensitivity to punishment and sensitivity to reward questionnaire (SPSRQ) on Hungarian sample. *Mentálhigiéné és Pszichoszomatika, 10*, 153–172.
- Kaplan, H., & Gangestad, S. (2005). Life history theory and evolutionary psychology. In D. M. Buss (Ed.), *The handbook of evolutionary psychology* (pp. 68–95). John Wiley and Sons.
- Kruger, D. J., Reischl, T., & Zimmerman, M. A. (2008). Time perspective as a mechanism for functional developmental adaptation. *Journal of Social, Evolutionary, and Cultural Psychology, 2*, 1–22.
- Láng, A., & Birkás, B. (2014). Machiavellianism and perceived family functioning in adolescence. *Personality and Individual Differences, 63*, 69–74.
- Láng, A., & Lénárd, K. (2015). The relation between memories of childhood psychological maltreatment and Machiavellianism. *Personality and Individual Differences, 77*, 81–85.
- Lee, K., & Ashton, M. C. (2005). Psychopathy, Machiavellianism, and narcissism in the Five Factor Model and the HEXACO model of personality structure. *Personality and Individual Differences, 38*, 1571–1582.
- McDonald, M. M., Donnellan, M. B., & Navarrete, C. D. (2012). A life history approach to understanding the Dark Triad. *Personality and Individual Differences, 52*, 601–605.
- Orosz, G., & Lukács, F. (2013). Career indecision from the perspective of time orientation. *Annales Universitatis Paedagogicae Cracoviensis. Studia Psychologica, 6*, 126–141.
- Paulhus, D. L., & Williams, K. M. (2002). The Dark Triad of personality: Narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy. *Journal of Research in Personality, 36*, 556–563.
- Ponzi, D., Henry, A., Kubicki, K., Nickels, N., Wilson, M. C., & Maestriperi, D. (2015). The slow and fast life histories of early birds and night owls: Their future-or present-orientation accounts for their sexually monogamous or promiscuous tendencies. *Evolution and Human Behavior, 36*, 117–122.
- Zimbardo, P. G., & Boyd, J. N. (1999). Putting time in perspective: A valid, reliable individual-differences metric. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 77*, 1271–1288.