THE RELATIONSHIP OF DARK TRIAD AND JOB SATISFACTION AMONG HELPING PROFESSIONALS

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Abstract:
Background: While the personality of helping professionals has been the subject of research for quite some time, the approach towards this has changed over this period. While most research (e.g. Bakker et al., 2006; Mlcák & Záskodná, 2008) focuses more on adaptive personality traits - the so called „bright side“ (Oluf & Furnham, 2015) -, less attention was paid to the fact that, as with every person, a helping professional possesses, to some degree, maladaptive personality traits, or a „dark side“. The job attitude of the helping professional results from two motivating factors detected in the workers in human services; one is perceived satisfaction and a positive feeling from helping others (Kopřiva, 1997); the other is a desire for power and control over the client (Guggenbuhl-Craig, 2007). The question that naturally arises is whether the helping profession can satisfy even the darker needs of the worker if it follows that perceived job satisfaction does not necessarily have to be related only to the granting of aid, but may also be due to such darker motivation.

Aim: The aim of the present study was to examine the relationship of three aversive personality traits: Machiavellianism, narcissism and psychopathy - nowadays known by experts as the Dark Triad (Paulhus & Williams, 2002) - with work satisfaction on a sample of helping professionals - pedagogical workers, healthcare workers, rescue workers and social workers.

Method: The study was conducted on a sample of 151 participants from different sectors of the helping professions (M_age = 37.13; SD = 11.83). Females represented 71.5% of all respondents (N = 108), aged 19 to 65 (M_age = 38; SD = 12.6). Males represented the remaining 28.5% of respondents (N = 43), aged 20 to 62 (M_age = 34.9; SD = 9.5). Four groups of helping professionals were identified: pedagogical workers (PG) - kindergarten teachers, elementary school teachers, secondary school teachers (47.7%); healthcare workers (HC) - doctors, nurses, physiotherapists, sanitary workers, dental technicians (21.9%); rescue workers (RS) - policemen, firemen, rescuers, soldiers (23.8%); social workers (SW) – social workers, psychologists, special pedagogues (6.6%).

A convenience and purposive sampling method was used. The Slovak version of Short Dark Triad - SD3 (Jones & Paulhus, 2014; Čopková, in review) and the Slovak version of Job Satisfaction Survey (Spector, 1985; Mesárošová, 2016) were administered. The Slovak version of Short Dark Triad consists of 27 items that saturate three subscales – Machiavellianism, narcissism, psychopathy. Each dimension consists of 9 items. The respondent responds to a 5-point likert scale (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree). The indicators of the internal consistency of the scales expressed by the McDonald’s omega coefficient were as follows - ω_m = 0.745; ω_n = 0.619; ω_p = 0.792. Slovak version of Job satisfaction survey is based on the original Job satisfaction survey (Spector, 1985; Mesárošová, 2016), which is aimed at capturing job satisfaction in the humanitarian sectors, so its use is suitable for a sample of helping professionals. It contains 36 items. The respondent answers on a 6-point scale (1 = strongly disagree; 6 = strongly agree). Nine factors of job satisfaction are saturated with four items in the questionnaire, and these are distributed across the – pay, promotion, supervision, benefits, rewards, conditions, co-workers, nature of work, and communication. The indicators of internal consistency of the scales expressed by
the McDonald’s omega coefficient were satisfactory: $\omega_{f1} = 0.807; \omega_{f2} = 0.629; \omega_{f3} = 0.826; \omega_{f4} = 0.659; \omega_{f5} = 0.713; \omega_{f6} = 0.602; \omega_{f7} = 0.722; \omega_{f8} = 0.791; \omega_{f9} = 0.776; \omega_{f10} = 0.899$. Results: Significant negative relationships were identified between Machiavellianism and satisfaction with co-workers ($r = -0.342^{**}$), nature of work ($r = -0.162^{*}$), communication ($r = -0.343^{**}$). Narcissism had a significant positive relationship with the satisfaction with promotion ($r = 0.224^{**}$), but had a negative significant relationship with satisfaction with co-workers ($r = -0.262^{**}$) and communication ($r = -0.173^{*}$). Psychopathy had negative significant relationships with satisfaction with supervision ($r = -0.224^{**}$), co-workers ($r = -0.296^{**}$), the nature of work ($r = -0.306^{**}$) and communication ($r = -0.236^{**}$). Machiavellianism ($r = -0.227^{**}$) and psychopathy ($r = -0.173^{*}$) have a significant negative relationship with overall job satisfaction. The Dark Triad had only very weak relationships with those elements of work related to financial and non-financial remuneration, such as pay, benefits and rewards. The analysis of the relationship between the Dark Triad and working conditions led to the same results. The Dark Triad concept predicted a 38.2% variation in job satisfaction among helping professionals. The regression analysis indicated that the Dark Triad significantly predicted overall job satisfaction ($F(3/147) = 3.013; p = 0.032; R^2 = 0.058$), satisfaction with co-workers ($F(3/147) = 8.093; p <0.001; R^2 = 0.142$), communication ($F(3/147) = 6.842; p <0.001; R^2 = 0.123$), promotion ($F(3/147) = 3.437; p = 0.019; R^2 = 0.066$) and the nature of work ($F(3/147) = 5.438; p = 0.001; R^2 = 0.100$).

Conclusion: In spite of some limits, we consider the results of our study to be beneficial as they have shown that helping professionals, who are automatically expected to be selfless and prosocial, also have some aversive personality traits, which may be a significant element in how helping professional consider individual elements of their work satisfaction. Therefore, it is equally important and interesting to consider how the aversive traits of helping professionals are related to their job satisfaction. In particular, the clarification of the predictive strength of the Dark Triad traits in relation to helping professionals’ job satisfaction is a valuable finding of our research.

**Key words:** Dark triad. Machiavellianism. Narcissism. Psychopathy. Job satisfaction. Helping professionals.

**Introduction**

Helping professions are represented by a wide variety of professions in our society, the main aim of which is to help others improve their physical or mental health, protect or help them on their way to recovery and direct their lives towards a steadier path. Personality characteristics such as kindness, empathy, patience, willingness or flexibility seem to be effective predictors in the helping process (BACP, 2018; Heinonen et al., 2012; Wampold & Carlson, 2011). The personality of a helping professional has been the subject of research for quite some period, but the approach has changed over time. While most research (e.g. Bakker et al., 2006; Mlcák & Záskodná, 2008) focus more on adaptive personality traits - the so-called „bright side“ (Oluf & Furnham, 2015) -, less attention was paid to the fact that, as with every person, a helping professional possesses, to some degree, maladaptive personality traits, or a „dark side“. This has led us to contrast the classic approach to personality study represented by the Big Five theory (Oluf & Furnham, 2015) with the Dark Triad concept (Paulhus & Williams, 2002; Čopková & Araňošová, in preparation). The essence of this idea was the assumption that the job attitude of the helping professional results from two motivating factors detected in the workers in human services; the perceived satisfaction and positive feeling from helping others (Kopřiva, 1997), and the desire for power and control over the client (Guggenbuhl-Craig, 2007). The question that naturally arises is whether the helping profession can satisfy even the darker needs of the worker; as it follows that perceived job satisfaction does not necessarily have to be related only to the granting of aid, but may also be due to such darker motivation. This is the reason why our study, through using a sample of helping professionals, aimed to answer the question about the relationship between the dark personality traits known as the Dark Triad – Machiavellianism, narcissism and psychopathy –, and job satisfaction.
The Dark Triad and Helping Professions

Although the phenomenon of the Dark Triad (Paulhus & Williams, 2002) is a relatively new concept when compared to classical personality theories, its individual components – Machiavellianism, narcissism and psychopathy – have been much longer examined by experts. While the concepts of narcissism and psychopathy are based on clinical literature and are still perceived as personality disorders in diagnostic systems, the construct of Machiavellianism has a completely different story as it originates in philosophy (Furnham et al., 2013; Wilson, Near & Miller, 1996).

The reason why this model was conceptualized was the previous approach focused more separately on the negative personality traits. This created a significant contrast to models such as the Big Five, which is primarily focused on the brighter side of personality (Oluf & Furnham, 2015), and additionally conceptualizes it into a certain system of personality traits. Machiavellianism, narcissism and psychopathy do not have a common origin in research. Present findings point out that despite a different basis, the personality characteristics in the Dark Triad concept share certain common characteristics, such as self-assertion, emotional coldness, lack of honesty, absence of humility, a socially mischievous character with behavioral tendencies to support oneself, insincerity and aggression (Lee & Ashton, 2005; Paulhus & Williams, 2002). Machiavellianism is characterized by emotional separation and a tendency to manipulate in order to achieve personal goals regardless of others (Al Aïn, Carré, Fantini-Hauwel, Baudouin, & Besche-Richard, 2013). Narcissism is characterized by exaggerated self-love, inflated self-confidence, a sense of importance and superiority over others, an extremely positive but at the same time vulnerable self-image (Morf & Rhodenwalt, 2001). Psychopathy is characterized by high impulsiveness, excitement-seeking, low empathy, low anxiety (Paulhus & Williams, 2002), lack of concern for others, lack of guilt and remorse and emotional shallowness (Forsyth & O'Boyle, 2012). However, it must be emphasized that in all three aversive traits we are talking about subclinical features. That is, the behavior of individuals exhibiting these characteristics is not extreme enough to attract the attention of clinical psychologists or psychiatrists.

The work of a helping professional is defined as an interaction between a professional and a client. The aim of this interaction is supporting the growth or resolution of an individual's physical, psychological or intellectual problems and improving his or her condition in many ways (Graf, Sator, & Spranz-Forgasy, 2014). Thus, helping professions are also characterized as helping an individual through a helping worker using their interpersonal relationship (Kopřiva, 1997). Géringová (2011) considers doctors, medical staff, psychologists, social workers, psychotherapists, educators, speech therapists and, in a certain way, policemen, rescuers or firefighters to be workers in the helping professions. Those seeking help - whether from doctors, social workers, psychologists or others – are automatically put in a subordinate role to the assisting person. Selingson's (1992) findings suggest that narcissism is often a preferred personality structure in psychologists. Bakir et al. (2003) pointed to the reality where people within the healthcare professions commonly experience recklessness, egoism, and a greater interest in themselves than in the welfare of the patient. Bucknall et al. (2015) identified significantly higher narcissism in surgeons, and psychopathy in nurses. Pegrum and Pearce (2015) reported significant psychopathy in surgeons and, surprisingly, pediatricians. Bratek et al. (2015) report low levels of Machiavellianism in professional care practitioners, but pointed out the dynamics of Machiavellianism in practice, as higher levels of Machiavellianism in their study were reported by medical trainees compared to experienced doctors. The authors suggested the level of Machiavellianism declined with the length of practice. In their work, Adams and Maykut (2015) discussed the potential dangers of inappropriate care of nurses and
other medical staff if they had dark features. Lenkov, Rubtsova, and Nizamova (2018) recorded the highest incidence of dark personality traits among university teachers. More detailed results showed a significantly higher level of psychopathy among elementary and secondary school teachers. In the case of Machiavellianism and narcissism, university teachers have the highest results. It is important to note that, for example, police officers’ traits, such as stress-resistance, low anxiety, courage or high self-confidence, are welcomed features due to the difficulty of the profession, and despite it being characteristic of subclinical psychopathy. Those traits work as a protection against the traumatic experiences of police work (Babiak, 1995).

The Dark Triad and Job Satisfaction

The study of job satisfaction among helping professions is of great importance for the quality of the work itself, the productivity and the performance of the professional, which in turn affects the satisfaction of the clients with the care provided. Therefore, job satisfaction is an essential part of occupational psychology research, expressing the extent of how people like their work (Spector, 1997). This construct clearly includes the emotional aspect of work-relatedness, which is dependent on many phenomena occurring in the workplace. In a number of research studies nurses have stated their job satisfaction as depending on: the relationships at the workplace, the interaction quality with co-workers, the satisfaction with the care they have provided, the working culture, the perceived sense of work, the work content, the salary, the financial and non-financial benefits and, last, but not least, the tolerance of the organization and supervision of neglectful behavior of other employees in the organization (Dockery & Barns, 2005; Dockery & Barns, 2005; Gurková, 2012; Kožuchová & Vargová, 2015; Mcneese-Smith, 1999). For social workers, the perceived significance of the work, importance of the work and the length of practice in relation to acquiring a sense of competence over the years in this profession, played an important role in job satisfaction (Hricová, Nezkusilová & Mesárošová, 2017). Carers were satisfied with the positive team communication, the team's cohesiveness and its effectiveness (Vermeira et al., 2017). Within the teaching profession, the possibility of advancement among university teachers has proved to be an important factor of job satisfaction (Chmelárová & Prekopová, 2012; Lukáčová, 2013); for secondary school teachers it was the rewards and opportunity to work with young people (Chmelárová & Prekopová, 2012; Sharma & Joyti, 2009). For the police, the nature of work, satisfaction with the leader, and quality interaction with co-workers were important (Lokesh, Patra, & Venkatesan, 2016). Fleury, Grenier, and Bamvita (2017) carried out a job satisfaction study with social workers, psychologists, psychotherapists and nurses, where the benefit of the team proved to be key to overall job satisfaction.

The intention of occupational psychologists dealing with aspects of the interaction between personality and work initially drew attention to research into the positive aspects of personality, which are suitable predictors of work behavior and performance (Bolton, Becker & Barber, 2010). Only in recent times has research begun to focus more on the pathological aspects of personality in the workplace, due to the sometimes catastrophic consequences of working behavior or the amount of illegal behavioral manifestations in the workplace. For this reason there is an increased interest of researchers in the negative impact of dark personality traits on work behavior (Jonason, Slomski, & Partyka, 2012; O'Boyle et. al., 2012; Spain, Harms, & LeBreton, 2013). However, there are contrasting opinions saying that darker side of personality does not always have to work in a destructive way in the workplace (Judge & Le Pine, 2007). In the Abbas and Kant study (2017), employees with higher narcissism levels also showed a higher level of job satisfaction compared to colleagues whose subclinical narcissism levels were lower. It is probably related to the fact that narcissists are generally optimistic about their personal performance at work, but collaboration with others is beyond the spectrum of their
interests that are broadly and personally oriented (Williams & Williams, 2017). Another study (Benson, Jordan, & Christie, 2016) showed the negative impact of lower job inclusion of narcissists on their job satisfaction. Here, lower job satisfaction was reflected in a lower willingness to engage in group behavior and negative responses to the role of the subordinate. This is also based on the assumption that narcissistic workers consider themselves to be overqualified and therefore believe that it is best for them to hold senior roles (Benson, Jordan, & Christie, 2016). Power is very important to narcissists, so Mead et al. (2018) assume that narcissists tend to abuse this power at work. The performance of the helping profession automatically accumulates this power in their hands and ensures the satisfaction of the need for power.

Bakir et al. (2003) showed a lower job satisfaction of Machiavellist physicians compared to the general population. The authors suggested an immediate explanation; the older the doctors are, the lower the score of Machiavellism is and, therefore, job satisfaction increases, which is predicted through their increasing position at work and thus the financial income - which is particularly important for Machiavellists. The findings of the negative correlation of Machiavellianism and job satisfaction are not only related to the medical profession, but also exist in various other occupations (Wilson, Near, & Miller, 1996) outside human services. Gamble and Topol (1987) recorded higher Machiavellianism scores in women who reported less job satisfaction than men with lower Machiavellianism rates. Another important finding that explains why Machiavellists are dissatisfied at work is research examining Machiavellists as subordinate. The authors proceeded from the assumption that their great interpersonal tactics provide Machiavellists with the unlimited possibility of manipulation with their supervisor for subsequent greater control of the workplace. They found that there was a negative correlation in satisfaction with the supervisor as they are likely to be conflicting in such a relationship, even more so with those superiors they consider to be better than themselves (Walter, Anderson & Martin, 2005).

Based on an analysis of the relationship between psychopathy and job satisfaction, Boddy (2011) concluded that job satisfaction is decreasing with increasing psychopathy. This is also because people with higher psychopathic characteristics derive less social reward than those with lower psychopathic scores (Foulkerson et al., 2014).

O’Boyle et al. (2012), who dealt with psychopathy and work behavior, suggest that such individuals can prosper in jobs that require them to behave rationally and ruthlessly. The nature of the work that provides freedom, risk, excitement, power or the possibility of practicing irresponsible behavior is an attraction for them. Subclinical psychopaths, through the emotional coldness that characterizes them, act with little concern for the welfare of others. In addition, they are emotionally cold towards others, including co-workers and their superiors, and unless the situation is beneficial for their own interest, psychopaths do not show real interest in others. Because of their problematic behavior, subclinical psychopaths often do not receive organizational rewards such as salary increases or higher positions (O’Boyle et al., 2012; Spain, Harms, & Lebreton, 2013), which can greatly affect their overall job satisfaction. However, employees with higher psychopathy scores have been observed, and positively evaluated their communication skills, strategic thinking or creativity. Therefore, it is not surprising that such individuals usually hold management positions within organizations. Therefore Babiak, Neumann, and Hare (2010) assume that a distinctive blend of psychopathy may be compatible with good performance and job satisfaction.

In formulating the research aim, we proceeded from the design of a conceptual model of antecedents and consequences of job satisfaction and dissatisfaction, which was proposed by Ghazazzi (2008). According to this concept, the antecedents of job satisfaction are motivation, social influence, life satisfaction, values and personality. It is here that we find the meeting point and justification for conducting research that would examine the relationship between the
features of the Dark Triad and job satisfaction. An equally crucial fact that supported the idea of examining this relationship in a sample of helping professionals was that in addition to commitment and personal well-being, organizational citizenship behavior is an important consequence of job satisfaction, which includes essential behavioral elements for the helping profession, such as altruism, courtesy, sportsmanship, or conscientiousness (George & Jones, 2008). It follows from the above that low job satisfaction can negatively affect the performance of the helping professional, which due to its nature can put the client at risk.

In this context, we have set as the aim of this study the examination of the relationship between the Dark Triad traits and job satisfaction among helping professionals – namely pedagogical workers, healthcare workers, rescue workers and social workers.

**Method**

**Sample**

The research sample consisted of 151 participants from different sectors of the helping professions. Their age ranged from 19 to 65 (M\_age = 37.13; SD = 11.83). Females represented 71.5\% of all respondents (N = 108), aged 19 to 65 (M\_age = 38; SD = 12.6). Males represented the remaining 28.5\% of respondents (N = 43), aged 20 to 62 (M\_age = 34.9; SD = 9.5). The duration of the respondents’ practice ranged from 1 to 42 years with an average value of 12.74 years (SD = 11.74). Due to the broader spectrum of representatives of various helping professions, we have merged some professions into larger groups for further analysis according to the key focus of the particular profession. Four groups were identified in this way: pedagogical workers (PG) - kindergarten teachers, elementary school teachers, secondary school teachers (47.7\%); healthcare workers (HC) - doctors, nurses, physiotherapists, nurses, sanitary workers, dental technicians (21.9\%); rescue workers (RS) - policemen, firemen, rescuers, soldiers (23.8\%); social workers (SW) - social workers, psychologists, special pedagogues (6.6\%). The convenience and purposive sampling method were used.

**Measures**

*Short Dark Triad* (Čopková, in review). The scale is a Slovak version based on the original Short Dark Triad (Jones & Paulhus, 2014). It consists of 27 items that saturate the three subscales - Machiavellianism ("Most people can be manipulated.") narcissism ("I insist on getting the respect I deserve.") and psychopathy ("I like to get revenge on authorities."). Each dimension consists of 9 items. The respondent responds to a 5-point likert scale (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree). For each of the subscales, the score is calculated separately as the sum of the points indicated by the respondent. There are 5 reverse coded items in the questionnaire, which must be reversed before calculating the final score. The indicators of the internal consistency of the scales expressed by the McDonald’s omega coefficient were as follows - ωₙₐₘ = 0.745; ωₙ = 0.619; ωₚ = 0.792. *Job satisfaction survey* (Mesárošová, 2016). The questionnaire is a Slovak version based on the original Job satisfaction survey (Spector, 1985), which is aimed at capturing job satisfaction in the humanitarian sectors, so its use is suitable for a sample of helping professionals. It contains 36 items, respondent answers to a 6-point scale (1 - strongly disagree; 6 - strongly agree). Nine factors of job satisfaction are saturated with four items in the questionnaire, and these are distributed across the questionnaire. The nine factors by which the questionnaire determines job satisfaction are: pay (F1) ("I think I am fairly rewarded for the work I do."), promotion (F2) ("In my job, promotion opportunities are really weak."), supervision (F3) ("My supervisor performs his/her work competently."), benefits (F4) ("I'm not satisfied with the benefits I get."), rewards (F5) ("When I do a good job, I get the deserved recognition."), conditions (F6) ("We have a lot of internal rules and procedures that
complicate quality work. "), co-workers (F7) ("I like the people I work with."), nature of work (F8) ("Sometimes I feel that my work is meaningless.") and communication (F9) ("Communication at our workplace is good."). Before calculating the final score, 18 items are reverse coded and must be reversed. In addition to the final score for the entire questionnaire - overall job satisfaction (JSS) – one can also work with a score of individual factors saturating the questionnaire.

The indicators of internal consistency of the scales expressed by the McDonald’s omega coefficient were satisfactory - $\omega_{f1} = 0.807$; $\omega_{f2} = 0.629$; $\omega_{f3} = 0.826$; $\omega_{f4} = 0.659$; $\omega_{f5} = 0.713$; $\omega_{f6} = 0.602$; $\omega_{f7} = 0.722$; $\omega_{f8} = 0.791$; $\omega_{f9} = 0.776$; $\omega_{jss} = 0.899$.

**Procedure**

The questionnaires were submitted to respondents in the period March- April 2019 in an electronic version created in the Google Docs-Form web application. Respondents were informed that completing the questionnaire is voluntary, without financial compensation and anonymous, and that data will only be processed in the framework of this research study. All respondents expressed their agreement to participate in the research. It took around 15 minutes to fill out the questionnaire. The collected data were analysed in IBM SPSS Statistics 21 and IBM Amos 23 software.

There were no missing data in the dataset. Testing the normality of data distribution using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test showed that the data are normally distributed (p$\geq$0.05). Descriptive indicators of the normality of data distribution indicated that the value of the skewness and kurtosis did not exceed the criterion $> \pm 1$. The internal consistency was determined using Cronbach's alpha (Cronbach $\alpha$). The obtained data were described using other descriptive indicators (mean, standard deviation). The relationships between variables were tested by Pearson correlation coefficient; complex relationships between variables were tested by multiple linear regression and structural equation modeling (SEM).

**Results**

In the first step of the analysis, we have examined the relationship between Dark Triad traits and job satisfaction factors for helping professionals. The correlation analysis revealed several significant relationships. The exact values of the correlation coefficients are shown in the table (Table 1).

**Table 1: Correlation matrix of Short Dark Triad and Job Satisfaction Scale**

|        | MACH 26.13 | SD 6.42 | NAR 22.82 | SD 4.90 | JSS 18.34 | SD 6.56 |
|--------|------------|---------|-----------|---------|-----------|---------|
| **F1 – pay** | 11.15 | 5.05 | -0.088 | 0.064 | 0.051 |
| **F2 - promotion** | 11.69 | 4.10 | 0.004 | **0.224** | 0.136 |
| **F3 – supervision** | 17.04 | 5.00 | -0.149 | 0.143 | -**0.224** |
| **F4 – benefits** | 12.32 | 4.36 | -0.021 | 0.030 | -0.070 |
| **F5 – rewards** | 12.28 | 4.83 | -0.102 | 0.058 | -0.052 |
| **F6 – conditions** | 12.72 | 3.56 | -0.109 | 0.092 | -0.007 |
| **F7 – co-workers** | 17.20 | 4.19 | -0.342** | -0.262** | -0.296** |
| **F8 – nature of work** | 19.39 | 3.99 | -0.162* | -0.100 | -0.306** |
| **F9 - communication** | 16.55 | 4.72 | -0.343** | -0.173* | -0.236** |
| **Job satisfaction** | 130.33 | 25.7 | -0.227** | -0.088 | -0.173* |

*MACH=Machiavellianism; NAR=narcissism; PSY=psychopathy; M=mean; SD=standard deviation; *p<0.05; **p<0.01
Significant negative relationships were identified in Machiavellianism and satisfaction with co-workers, nature of work, and communication. Narcissism had a significant positive relationship with the satisfaction with promotion, while narcissism had a negative significant relationship with satisfaction with co-workers and communication. Psychopathy had negative significant relationships with satisfaction with supervision, co-workers, the nature of work and communication. Machiavellianism and psychopathy have a significant negative relationship with overall job satisfaction. The Dark Triad had very weak relationships with those elements of work that relate to financial and non-financial remuneration, such as pay, benefits and rewards. The analysis of the relationship between the Dark Triad and working conditions led to the same results.

Based on these relationships, we were interested in the extent to which we can consider the Dark Triad and its individual components as predictors contributing to the variability of job satisfaction and its individual factors. Therefore we analyzed the data by multiple linear regression, where the basic model consisted of three independent variables - the aversive traits of Machiavellianism, narcissism and psychopathy. The results of multiple regression analysis suggested a total of 5 significant models. The Dark Triad explained 5.8% variability in overall job satisfaction (F(3/147) = 3.013; p = 0.032; $R^2 = 0.058$); 6.6% of promotion (F(3/147) = 3.437; p = 0.019; $R^2 = 0.066$); 14.2% of co-workers (F(3/147) = 8.093; p <0.001; $R^2 = 0.142$); 10% of nature of work (F(3/147) = 5.438; p = 0.001; $R^2 = 0.100$) and 12.3% of communication factor (F(3/147) = 6.842; p <0.001; $R^2 = 0.123$). Table 2 presents results of regression analysis in detail.

### Table 2: Regression analysis

|        | $R^2$ | β   | t    | p    |
|--------|-------|-----|------|------|
| F1 - pay | 0.026 | MACH | -0.178 | -1.823 | 0.07 |
|        |       | NAR  | 0.094  | 0.958  | 0.34 |
|        |       | PSY  | 0.092  | 0.894  | 0.37 |
| F2 - promotion* | 0.066 | MACH | -0.147 | -1.540 | 0.13 |
|        |       | NAR  | 0.246  | 2.546  | 0.01* |
|        |       | PSY  | 0.080  | 0.797  | 0.43 |
| F3 - supervision | 0.052 | MACH | -0.040 | -0.423 | 0.67 |
|        |       | NAR  | -0.023 | -0.238 | 0.81 |
|        |       | PSY  | -0.190 | -1.866 | 0.06 |
| F4 - benefits | 0.011 | MACH | -0.001 | -0.013 | 0.99 |
|        |       | NAR  | 0.093  | 0.936  | 0.35 |
|        |       | PSY  | -0.118 | -1.141 | 0.26 |
| F5 - rewards | 0.011 | MACH | -0.098 | -0.995 | 0.32 |
|        |       | NAR  | -0.019 | -0.196 | 0.84 |
|        |       | PSY  | 0.009  | 0.088  | 0.93 |
| F6 - conditions | 0.021 | MACH | -0.121 | -1.237 | 0.22 |
|        |       | NAR  | -0.094 | -0.950 | 0.34 |
|        |       | PSY  | 0.105  | 1.020  | 0.31 |
| F7 - co-workers* | 0.142 | MACH | -0.236 | -2.578 | 0.01* |
|        |       | NAR  | -0.088 | -0.953 | 0.34 |
|        |       | PSY  | -0.127 | -1.313 | 0.19 |
| F8 - nature of work* | 0.099 | MACH | -0.027 | -0.293 | 0.77 |
|        |       | NAR  | 0.093  | 0.985  | 0.33 |
|        |       | PSY  | -0.342 | -3.443 | <0.001** |
| F9 - communication* | 0.123 | MACH | -0.303 | -3.267 | <0.001** |
|        |       | NAR  | 0.006  | 0.067  | 0.95 |
|        |       | PSY  | -0.082 | -0.845 | 0.40 |
| Job satisfaction* | 0.058 | MACH | -0.200 | -2.083 | 0.04* |
|        |       | NAR  | 0.053  | 0.553  | 0.58 |
|        |       | PSY  | -0.098 | -0.972 | 0.33 |

*MACH=Machiavellianism; NAR=narcissism; PSY=psychopathy; *p<0.05; **p<0.01*
The results presented above led us to the idea of testing the acquired data more comprehensively. By analyzing the relationship between the Dark Triad and job satisfaction among helping professionals, we tried to answer the question of how the features of the Dark Triad contribute to perceived job satisfaction in individual spheres, which are represented by factors F1 - F9. We tested the hypothetical model by using structural equation modeling, but the indicators of model fit did not reach the necessary values (Table 3). By analyzing other indicators that helped us identify sources of low model fit, we modified the hypothetical model by adding four covariations to the indicator residues that, according to theoretical assumptions, seemed to be the most appropriate (pay - rewards; promotion – benefits; supervision – communication; co-workers - communication).

By re-testing the new modified model, we were able to obtain better model fit values (Table 3). However, the values of the individual parameters still do not reach the ideal value.

| model          | N    | χ²     | df | p      | χ²/df | CFI  | TLI  | RMSEA | SRMR |
|----------------|------|--------|----|--------|-------|------|------|-------|------|
| Model          | 151  | 267.156| 53 | <0.001 | 5.041 | 0.666| 0.585| 0.164 | 0.132|
| Modified model | 151  | 165.108| 49 | <0.001 | 3.370 | 0.819| 0.756| 0.125 | 0.117|

According to the modified model, the Dark Triad features explained 38.2% ($R^2 = 0.382$) variations of job satisfaction factors in helping professionals. The following figure (Figure 1) presents a modified model with standardized parameter estimates.
The primary aim of the presented study was to examine the nature of the relationship between the features of the Dark Triad – Machiavellianism, narcissism and psychopathy – to job satisfaction among helping professionals – pedagogical workers, healthcare workers, rescue workers and social workers. Although the performance of the helping profession and the personality of the helping professionals are automatically associated with positive personality traits, such as empathy, compassion, willingness to help and dedication, (BACP, 2018; Heinonen et al., 2012; Kusý, 2020; Wampold & Carlson 2011), the helping professions also dispose by job specific elements that either require some degree of depersonalisation or directly encourage a person who has considerable reserves in the above-mentioned positive qualities to choose this profession. This suggests that aversive personality traits could be detected in helping professionals as well. The basic starting point of these ideas was the fact that the help of a helping professional is sought by the person who is experiencing the problem situation (Kopřiva, 1997), which places him/her in a subordinate position to the professional who gains power over situation (Guggebnbuhl-Craig, 2007). It is the accumulation of power and its demonstration that is one of the basic needs and tendencies of people exhibiting the features of the Dark Triad, and the functions of the

**Discussion and conclusion**

The primary aim of the presented study was to examine the nature of the relationship between the features of the Dark Triad – Machiavellianism, narcissism and psychopathy – to job satisfaction among helping professionals – pedagogical workers, healthcare workers, rescue workers and social workers. Although the performance of the helping profession and the personality of the helping professionals are automatically associated with positive personality traits, such as empathy, compassion, willingness to help and dedication, (BACP, 2018; Heinonen et al., 2012; Kusý, 2020; Wampold & Carlson 2011), the helping professions also dispose by job specific elements that either require some degree of depersonalisation or directly encourage a person who has considerable reserves in the above-mentioned positive qualities to choose this profession. This suggests that aversive personality traits could be detected in helping professionals as well. The basic starting point of these ideas was the fact that the help of a helping professional is sought by the person who is experiencing the problem situation (Kopřiva, 1997), which places him/her in a subordinate position to the professional who gains power over situation (Guggebnbuhl-Craig, 2007). It is the accumulation of power and its demonstration that is one of the basic needs and tendencies of people exhibiting the features of the Dark Triad, and the functions of the

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**Figure 1: Modified model – standardized estimates**

![Diagram of the relationship between Dark Triad features and job satisfaction.](image)

_MACH=_Machiavellianism; _NAR=_narcissism; _PSY=_psychopathy
helping professions clearly provides an opportunity (Bakir et al., 2003, Bucknall et al., 2015; Selingson, 1992).

Testing the relationship between Dark Triad features and job satisfaction factors has yielded several significant results. These suggest that individuals with higher levels of Machiavellistic features are significantly less satisfied with supervision, co-workers, the nature of work, workplace communication, and overall job satisfaction. Bakir et al. (2003) obtained similar results; they identified lower job satisfaction among Machiavellian doctors as compared to the general population. Walter, Anderson and Martin (2005) also pointed out the dissatisfaction of the Machiavelists with their leaders, which they explained by perceiving him/her as competition. A similar source suggests their dissatisfaction with co-workers, as pointed out by Vecchio (2000). The nature of the work in which a helping professional is expected to raise the patient's needs beyond their own needs, according to Bakir et al. (2003) encourages dissatisfaction. In our research, higher narcissism has been associated with greater satisfaction with promotion, but with less satisfaction with co-workers and workplace communication. Our results don’t meet the findings of Abbas and Kant (2017) who found that employees with higher narcissism levels showed higher level of job satisfaction, because we did not find any significant relationship among narcissism and overall job satisfaction. According to Benson, Jordan and Christie (2016), they consider themselves to be overqualified and therefore believe that it is better for them to get senior roles, which is reflected in their unwillingness to engage in behavior beneficial to the group. The most significant relationships were in the case of psychopathy, positively associated with the promotion and negatively with satisfaction with supervision, co-workers, nature of work, communication in the workplace and overall job satisfaction. This result corresponds to that of Boddy (2011), who also points out that job satisfaction decreases with increasing psychopathy. According to O’Boyle et al. (2012) people with psychopathic features need work whose nature allows them freedom, risk, excitement, power or the possibility of practicing irresponsible behavior. They also show emotional coolness towards colleagues and superiors (O’Boyle et al., 2012).

We find it rather interesting that the features of the Dark Triad had no relationship with satisfaction with those aspects of work connected with financial and non-financial rewards. Conversely, satisfaction with those aspects of work that require social interaction was in a significantly negative relationship with the Dark Triad. However, this result is fully consistent with the fact that individuals with these features increasingly appear to be emotionally cold, busy, superior or overly-confident when in contact with others (Al Aïn et al., 2013; Forsyth & O’Boyle, 2012; Lee & Ashton, 2005; Morf & Rhodenwalt, 2001; Paulhus & Williams, 2002).

According to our results, the Dark Triad significantly contributes to the prediction of overall job satisfaction of helping professionals at the rate of 5.8% (of which 2.8% is Machiavellianism), satisfaction with promotion is at 6.6% (of which 4.1% is narcissism), satisfaction with co-workers is at 14.2% (of which 3.9% is Machiavellianism), the nature of work is at 10% (of which 7.2% is psychopathy) and satisfaction with communication in the workplace is at 12.3% (of which 6.3% is Machiavellianism). Taking a closer look at the components of the Dark Triad, we can conclude that Machiavellianism significantly predicted overall job satisfaction, which corresponds to the findings of Bakir et al. (2003); satisfaction with co-workers and communication in the workplace, where we refer to similar results as Vecchio (2000). Looking at the essence of the social functioning of a Machiavellistic personality, these results are not surprising. Given the desire to manipulate and tendency to exploit other people for their own benefit (Al Aïn et al., 2013), it is not surprising that Machiavellianism appears to be an important predictor of those factors of job satisfaction related to social interaction. The other two components of the Dark Triad are different, focusing on other aspects of job satisfaction. Quite predictably, narcissism has proven to be a predictor of job satisfaction, reflecting the character of narcissists as personalities who show signs of
inflated self-confidence, a sense of importance and superiority over others (Morf & Rhodenwalt, 2001). This result reflects the egocentrism of narcissists; with a focus on themselves. Psychopathy significantly predicted satisfaction with the nature of work, reflecting psychopaths' lack of interest in social interaction and emotional shallowness; they do not address themselves or others, they are more coldly focused on the performance of the profession (Forsyth & O'Boyle, 2012).

Although the complex model of Dark Triad and job satisfaction relations indicated a 38.2% rate of Dark Triad’s contribution to the variation of job satisfaction factors, the model fit indicators did not reach the required value. This result can be justified by an insufficiently large research set, although opinions on this parameter differ in literature; the most common operation is with at least 200 cases (Kline, 2011), while a sample of 100-150 cases is required to be sufficiently large (Tabachnik & Fidell, 2001), it is not exceptional to encounter relatively small samples that are considered sufficient to be used with this method (e.g. 5-10 cases / parameter; Kline, 2011). Another factor could be the diversity of helping professions in the research set. As already mentioned, while some professions, such as health professionals are expected to have empathy and a human approach (Géringová, 2011), firefighters or police officers also appreciate their ability to cut emotionally from the situation (Babiak, 1995).

We perceive some limitations to our study in the representation of individual types of helping professions, which forced us to merge them into larger groups with a similar focus. Another problem may be the very categorization of helping professions; since not everyone includes professions such as a fireman or a police officer. It should also be borne in mind that in some helping professions, to some extent, it is considered desirable that its practitioners carry cooler and more detached personality traits (Babiak, 1995). While interpreting the results we have to keep in mind that we did not examine the relationship of job satisfaction and Dark Triad in the context of other important variables that might influence this relationship. Also, the context of the research was very specific. It means that our results are hard to generalize. Further options for improvement are discussed below. In spite of these limitations, we consider the results of our study to be beneficial, as they have shown that assisting workers, who are automatically expected to be selfless and prosocial, also have some aversive personality traits, which may be a significant element in the individual elements of their work satisfaction. Therefore, it is equally important and interesting to consider how the averse features of the practitioner of the helping profession are related to their satisfaction with the job. In particular, the clarification of the predictive power of the Dark Triad traits in relation to the job satisfaction of helping professionals is a valuable result. In the future it is important, in our opinion, to deal with specific helping professions in relation to the features of the Dark Triad; to focus on one group of helping professionals and collect more homogeneous data in this regard, and look in detail at the potential risks that individuals exhibiting averse personalities pose to their clients. We highly support the idea of appropriate selection in high schools and universities of aspirants who wish to work in the helping professions, because we consider the present practice during interviews as insufficient. In Slovakia there is weak emphasis on examining the personality of helping professionals or the students in these kind of fields. Furthermore, the employers should pay more attention to their employees. Currently, unfortunately, there is weak or little control of the approach of helping professionals in regards to their clients, for example in monitoring their way of communication.
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