

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BRIGHT AND DARK TRIADS IN A PERSON'S MOTIVATIONAL AND SOCIAL ORIENTATION

M. J. Rajabov,

Senior Lecturer (PhD), Department of Psychology, FDU

Keywords: Dark triad of personality, light triad of personality, narcissism, altruism, Machiavellianism, empathy, psychopathy, value system, motivation, psychological well-being, social orientation, personality behavior.

Abstract: This article examines contemporary psychological concepts - the dark and light triads of personality. The dark triad encompasses negative personality traits such as narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy, while the light triad comprises positive traits like altruism, empathy, and humanity. The article explores how this model enables understanding of individual behavior through sources of motivation and social orientation of the personality.

The complex and multifaceted structure of human personality is one of the core areas of study in psychology. The in-depth analysis of an individual's intrinsic traits, motivational factors, and interactions with the social environment holds significant importance within the scope of modern psychological approaches. Among these crucial frameworks, the concept of the "Dark" and "Bright" personality triads stands out as particularly noteworthy.

This model categorizes human personality traits along two opposing poles. The Dark Triad encompasses negative characteristics such as narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy, which are marked by egocentricity, manipulateness, and emotional detachment. Conversely, the Bright Triad represents positive and constructive behavioral patterns characterized by altruism, humanism, empathy, and moral responsibility—traits that are socially acceptable and valued.

The relevance of these two models lies primarily in their capacity to help understand, predict, and assess individual behavior and psychological well-being. The Dark Triad is associated with adverse social consequences, such as conflictual relationships, societal distrust, and moral deviance. In contrast, the Bright Triad serves as a foundation for social cooperation, harmony, human values, and psychological stability, fostering constructive interpersonal relationships and collective well-being.

Thus, the model of the Dark and Bright Triads of personality is applied not only in theoretical psychology but also in practical psychological activities—particularly in interpersonal relationships, organizational psychology, leadership, education, and social adaptation. By studying this concept, it becomes possible to deeply analyze the socio-psychological state of an individual's personality, distinguish between its negative and positive aspects, and develop effective strategies for optimizing interpersonal relationships.

The **Dark Triad** refers to three negative traits: narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy. This triad was first introduced by Paulhus and Williams (2002), who described these traits as being associated with egocentrism, manipulateness, and emotional coldness. Individuals with these characteristics tend to prioritize their self-interest, view others as tools for achieving their goals, and often cause conflicts in interpersonal relationships. Their behavior typically involves a competitive drive for power and dominance.

In contrast, the **Bright Triad**, developed by S. Kaufman and colleagues (2019), encompasses morally and socially valued traits such as trust in humanity, altruism, and empathy. Individuals

characterized by the Bright Triad value others, prioritize social stability and collaboration over personal gain, and exhibit behaviors linked to positive social interactions, peace-building, and humanistic principles.

Various studies indicate that the differences between the Dark and Bright Triads primarily lie in their sources of motivation and social orientations. Individuals exhibiting Dark Triad traits tend to see themselves as superior to others, pursue personal gain, and employ manipulative strategies. Their social orientation is utilitarian and focused on personal achievements.

Conversely, those with Bright Triad traits base their actions on a motivation to help others, foster understanding, and maintain social harmony. They are more inclined to make decisions guided by empathy and moral values. The fundamental distinctions between these two triads are clearly illustrated in the table below:

Dark Triad	Bright Triad
Characterized by egocentricity, manipulation, and emotional coldness.	Characterized by altruism, empathy, and moral integrity.
Focuses on personal gain and views others as tools to achieve goals.	Values others and considers their interests alongside personal goals.
May lead to negative social relationships, conflicts, and disputes.	Promotes positive social interactions, collaboration, and peace.

Individuals with Bright Triad traits base their actions primarily on a motivation to help others, understand them, and maintain social harmony. They make decisions infused with empathy and guided by moral values. In contrast, those with Dark Triad traits prioritize personal interests and the pursuit of power. The key differences between these two personality types can be observed through three main criteria:

1. Egocentric, manipulative, emotionally detached ↔ Altruistic, empathetic, and morally grounded

Individuals characterized by the Dark Triad are often egocentric, perceiving the world through a self-centered lens. They tend to treat others as tools to achieve their goals—a hallmark of Machiavellianism. These individuals often employ manipulative strategies to control the thoughts, emotions, or actions of others. Emotional detachment, associated with psychopathy, leads them to remain indifferent to the pain or feelings of others, resulting in superficial and transactional social connections.

In contrast, those with Bright Triad traits exhibit altruism, prioritizing the well-being of others over their own self-interest. They are empathetic, striving to understand others' emotions and responding with genuine care. Their moral approach often aligns with Kantian philosophy, emphasizing the idea of treating others as ends in themselves rather than as means to an end. This perspective fosters deep and meaningful interpersonal relationships.

2. Focuses solely on self-interest, viewing others as tools ↔ Values others and considers their interests

Individuals with Dark Triad traits typically center their actions around self-interest, often seeing others merely as instruments to achieve personal goals. This utilitarian approach to relationships can result in conflict and mistrust.

Conversely, individuals embodying the Bright Triad recognize the intrinsic value of others and integrate this understanding into their decision-making processes. They actively consider the needs and interests of others alongside their own, contributing to a sense of trust and mutual respect in their relationships.

Dark Triad individuals operate based on individualistic values, prioritizing their self-interest above all else. This tendency is particularly evident in narcissism, where individuals constantly seek recognition, dominance, and control over others. For such individuals, social relationships are often reduced to tools for personal gain, which can undermine the foundation of long-term, healthy social interactions.

In contrast, those with **Bright Triad** traits are inclined toward social justice and take others' interests into account. They prioritize the well-being of society or their group over their own personal gain. This approach is especially significant in the context of **prosocial behavior**, such as volunteering, helping others, forgiveness, and compassion. Bright Triad individuals actively strive to create supportive environments for others, often at the expense of their own immediate interests.

3. Can lead to negative social interactions, conflicts, and discord ↔ Promotes positive social interactions, cooperation, and peace

Dark Triad traits often result in strained relationships marked by tension, distrust, and conflict. The self-centered and manipulative tendencies inherent in these traits disrupt collaboration and foster divisiveness.

Conversely, Bright Triad traits encourage harmonious social dynamics by fostering trust, cooperation, and mutual respect. These individuals are more likely to engage in constructive interactions that strengthen community bonds and promote a peaceful, supportive environment.

Individuals characterized by the **Dark Triad** often contribute to negative social outcomes. Research indicates that such individuals are likely to:

- Engage in more conflict-prone relationships;
- Foster environments of distrust in the workplace;
- Disrupt teamwork and group cohesion;
- Exhibit a greater tendency toward psychological aggression.

In contrast, **Bright Triad** individuals support values that enhance social harmony. They tend to:

- Be more open to collaboration;
 - Strengthen emotional stability and peace within teams;
 - Build healthy social systems through forgiveness, trust, and compassion;
 - Demonstrate a willingness to resolve conflicts through compromise.
- As a result, these two triads are not merely psychological constructs but also critical factors in shaping social environments.

The analysis above demonstrates that the Dark and Bright Triads are intrinsically linked to an individual's role in society, behavior, and value systems. The Dark Triad emphasizes personal gain, competition, and conflict, while the Bright Triad promotes social stability, morality, and empathy, thereby improving interpersonal relationships. Both frameworks play a significant role in psychological balance and understanding them is a valuable tool for fostering a healthy and harmonious societal environment.

REFERENCES CITED

1. Bălan A.S., Ionescu M.C., Stan A. Light triad personality traits and coping strategies in teachers // *Current Trends in Natural Sciences*. 2023. Vol. 12. № 23. P. 150—159. DOI:10.47068/ctns.2023.v12i23.016
2. Bright Triad of Personality as an Indicator of Emotional Tolerance between Married Couples / H. Al-Dowsari, H. Al-Farraj, E.W. Meiri, W. Mistarihi // *Migration Letters*. 2023. Vol. 20(S8). P. 1370—1387. DOI:10.59670/ml.v20iS8.5470
3. Country-level correlates of the Dark Triad traits in 49 countries / P.K. Jonason, M. Żemojtel-Piotrowska, J. Piotrowski [et al.] // *Journal of Personality*. 2020. Vol. 88. № 6. P. 1252—1267. DOI:10.1111/jopy.12569
4. Dark and Light Triad: A cross-cultural comparison of network analysis in 5 countries / C. Ramos-Vera, A.G. O'Diana, A.S. Villena [et al.] // *Personality and Individual Differences*. 2023. Vol. 215. Article ID 112377. 10 p. DOI:10.1016/j.paid.2023.112377
5. Francis L.J., Crea G. Psychological predictors of professional burnout among priests, religious brothers, and religious sisters in Italy: The Dark Triad versus the Bright Trinity? // *Pastoral Psychology*. 2021. Vol. 70. № 4. P. 399—418. DOI:10.1007/s11089-021-00951-8

6. Investigate the mediating role of value orientation in predicting life satisfaction based on dark and light personality traits and emotional differentiation / B. Alipour Gourand, M. Azmoudeh, K. Esmailpour, S.D. Hosseini Nasab // *Sheenah Journal of Psychology and Psychiatry*. 2022. Vol. 9. № 2. P. 160—174. DOI:10.32598/shenakht.9.2.160
7. Johnson L.K.D. The Light Triad Scale: Developing and Validating a Preliminary Measure of Prosocial Orientation: master of Science degree in Psychology [Электронный ресурс]. London, 2018. 66 p. URL: <https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/etd/5515> (дата обращения: 11.09.2024).
8. Kajonius P.J., Persson B.N., Jonason P.K. Hedonism, Achievement, and Power: Universal values that characterize the Dark Triad // *Personality and Individual Differences*. 2015. Vol. 77. P. 173—178. DOI:10.1016/j.paid.2014.12.055
9. Khan I.U., Safdar U.K., Durrani M.Z. The light triad traits, psychological empowerment, creative self-efficacy, selfresilience and innovative performance in ict of Pakistan // *Gomal University Journal of Research*. 2021. Vol. 37. № 3. P. 297—310. DOI:10.51380/gujr-37-03-05
10. Musek J., Grum D.K. The bright side of personality // *Heliyon*. 2021. Vol. 7. № 3. Article ID e06370. 6 p. DOI:10.1016/j.heliyon.2021.e06370
11. Personality and pro-environmental engagements: the role of the Dark Triad, the Light Triad, and value orientations / G.K. Ucar, M.K. Malatyali, G.Ö. Planalı, B. Kanik // *Personality and Individual Differences*. 2023. Vol. 203. Article ID 112036. 6 p. DOI:10.1016/j.paid.2022.112036
12. Thajil K.M., AL-Abrow H. The effect of the bright triad on positive innovation in healthcare sector: The mediating role of emotional intelligence // *International Journal of Healthcare Management*. 2023. Vol. 17. № 2. P. 285—296. DOI:10.1080/20479700.2023.2177608
13. The bright side of the human personality: Evidence of a measure of prosocial traits / V.V. Gouveia, I.C.V. de Oliveira, A.S. de Moura Grangeiro, R.P. Monteiro, G.L. de Holanda Coelho // *Journal of Happiness Studies: An Interdisciplinary Forum on Subjective Well-Being*. 2021. Vol. 22. № 3. P. 1459—1480. DOI:10.1007/s10902-020-00280-2
14. The Malevolent Side of Human Nature: A Meta-Analysis and Critical Review of the Literature on the Dark Triad (Narcissism, Machiavellianism, and Psychopathy) / P. Muris, H. Merckelbach, H. Otgaar, E. Meijer // *Perspectives on Psychological Science*. 2017. Vol. 12. № 2. P. 183—204. DOI:10.1177/1745691616666070
15. Values and the dark side: Meta-analysis of links between Dark Triad traits and personal values / N. Petrov, V. Lim, A. Fillon, G. Feldman. Hong Kong: University of Hong Kong, 2020. 85 p. DOI:10.17605/OSF.IO/4Z27F
16. Yousefi R. Cross-validation of the Light Triad Personality Traits Model // *Journal of Modern Psychological Researches*. 2022. Vol. 17. № 66. P. 301—311. DOI:10.22034/jmpr.2022.15284