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Personality in Norm and in Pathology**FEATURES OF THE "DARK TRIAD" AND PROFESSIONAL  
MOTIVATION OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS**

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**Abstract**

The article discusses the features of negative personality traits ("dark triad": non-clinical narcissism, Machiavellianism and non-clinical psychopathy) in students studying in the direction of special (defectological) education. The article is devoted to the study of the influence of negative personality traits on further professional activity. Short Dark Triad Questionnaire (SD3), designed to diagnose three negative personality traits (machiavellianism, non-clinical narcissism, and non-clinical psychopathy) was used to examine personality traits. Subjective assessment of career success was diagnosed using the author's questionnaire. The structure of personality disorder indicators was diagnosed by the DSM-5technoqe.Second-year students have higher scores on the "non-clinical narcissism" scale. The 2nd year students are more focused on social interaction, open to new knowledge and competence development. In 4th year, the score for 'Machiavellianism' is more pronounced. Research has shown that only narcissism is associated with extraversion, openness and self-regulation. The features of the manifestation of personality traits that are most important for the development of professional motivation were identified.

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## 1. Introduction

Nowadays, university education provides quality professional competences for career building. In many countries the demand for human capital is increasing, which requires an increase in educational achievement, which largely depends on the personal traits of students (Lutz & Samir, 2011). In education, there is a great interest in high levels of competencies acquired by students during their studies (Papadopoulos et al., 2013). This contributes to the competitiveness of students (Orsini et al., 2016).

In modern psychological studies career success is considered from two points of view - through objective indicators (specialist status, income) and assessments of subjective satisfaction with career and life in general. Professional success is considered through the following indicators: socio-demographic indicators (gender, age, level of professional training, level of education) and personality traits.

Personality traits are conventionally divided into positive and negative traits. Positive traits include: neatness, thrift, unselfishness, politeness, loyalty, politeness, discipline, kindness, friendliness, sociability, responsibility, responsiveness, punctuality, determination, self-criticism, modesty, courage, justice, hard work, tolerance, respect for people, confidence, persistence, honesty, self-esteem, sense of humor, patience, empathy, morality, sincerity, judgement, purposefulness, optimism, cheerfulness, etc.

Negative personality traits include: authoritarianism, aggressiveness, greed, apathy, sloth, indifference, irresponsibility, impersonality, ruthlessness, inconsideration, talkativeness, talkativeness, windiness, power hunger, suggestibility, vulgarity, stupidity, pride, greed, cruelty, forgetfulness, dependence, envy, incompetence, boredom, malice, spoilt, laziness, deceitfulness, hypocrisy, flattery, curiosity, pettiness, vindictiveness, insolence, arrogance, annoyance, narcissism, carelessness, resentfulness, limitedness, panicking, vulgarity, irritability, wastefulness, jealousy, self-interest, self-reliance, weakness, cowardice, vanity, obstinacy, egoism, etc.

The combination and expression of not only positive but also negative personality traits can have a certain impact on students' motivation in learning, as well as on the success of career building and psychological and pedagogical assistance in professional life (Kornienko et al., 2018).

Positive traits in professional life are often given more attention. The impact of students' negative personality traits is poorly known. It is therefore relevant to investigate the negative personality traits of students of special needs who have to work with persons with disabilities

## 2. Problem Statement

In describing negative personality traits, many studies include the concept of the "dark triad". Among the traits of the "dark triad" - negative personality traits - the features most often considered are non-clinical narcissism, Machiavellianism and non-clinical psychopathy (Paulhus & Williams, 2002). Each of these three traits can be seen as an independent element, but together they complement each other and are interrelated constructs (Egorova & Sitnikova, 2014).

Each of the "dark triad" constructs under study has a rather complex and understudied structure. The term "narcissism" is used in various fields of psychological science - in clinical psychology, in psychotherapy and counselling, in psychological treatment and in the psychology of individual differences (Raskin & Hall, 1979). According to the Diagnostic Statistical Manual of the American

Psychiatric Association (DSM-IV), narcissism includes the following characteristics: 1) an exaggerated sense of self-importance; 2) persistent fantasies of unquestionable future success, which may appear in various guises - in the form of boundless power, epochal discoveries, unearthly beauty or ideal love; 3) demonstrativeness as a manifestation of the need for adoration and admiration; 4) inadequate responses to criticism; 5) expectation of special attitude and privileges without understanding that others expect the same response; 6) shameless use of others for realization of their desires and achievement of their goals; 7) polar attitude towards other people (either idealization or contempt); 8) lack of understanding of other people's emotions, lack of empathy.

In the psychology of personality differences, narcissism ("non-clinical narcissism") is seen as a stable personality trait that varies within the norm and influences patterns of interpersonal relationships and performance.

Research on non-clinical psychopathy began in the late 19th century and has historically been linked to research on sociopathy. A set of traits characteristic of sociopathy was also used to describe non-clinical psychopathy: the ability to attract other people, the ability to make a good impression, insincerity, lack of regret and remorse, lack of obligation, propensity for antisocial behavior, inability to learn from one's own mistakes, pathological egocentrism, poverty of the emotional sphere. Egorova and Sitnikova (2014) write that the most widespread is the two-factor model of psychopathy which includes the reduced emotionality or primary psychopathy (egoism, coldness, low anxiety, fearlessness, ruthless use of others, propensity to manipulative behavior) and asocial behavior or secondary psychopathy (instability, antisocial life style).

Four factors of non-clinical psychopathy have been derived from all the studies undertaken - interpersonal interaction style (arrogance and tendency to deceive), emotional response style (poverty of emotional life), lifestyle (impulsivity and irresponsibility) and behavior style (tendency to delinquency). As a rule, maladaptiveness is always indicated as a characteristic feature of psychopathy, both clinical and non-clinical. Thus, based on its characteristics, non-clinical psychopathy interferes with the formation of a well-functioning self-concept, the establishment of normal interpersonal relationships and, basic to our study, interferes with the professional adaptation of the individual.

The term "Machiavellianism" originated with Nicola Machiavelli's treatise *The Sovereign*. Machiavellianism includes manipulation and exploitation of others, a cynical disregard for morality, a focus on self-interest and mendacity. Machiavellianism also implies emotional coldness, amorality and a tendency to manipulate others by resorting to flattery and deception.

In the article «Do Bad Guys Get Ahead or Fall Behind?» describes the relationship between Dark Triad scores and career success. Based on the research, individuals with high levels of Machiavellianism follow three core values: a belief in the effectiveness of manipulative tactics in dealing with others, a cynical view of human nature, and a moral view that places convenience above principles (Spurk et al., 2015).

A study by Dalal and Nolan (2009) showed that narcissism was positively related to objective measures of career, Machiavellianism was positively related to both objective and subjective measures, and psychopathy was negatively related to both objective and subjective measures of professional success.

The task of higher education institution is to ensure that the formation of professional motivation and personality traits in the course of studies would guarantee success in further professional activities and competitiveness in the modern labor market. In our study conducted in 2019, we can see that adequate motives for studying at university, namely the acquisition of knowledge and the formation of professionally important qualities, prevail among third- and fourth-year students of the Institute of Education and Practical Psychology at Chelyabinsk State University. While in the younger, second-year students, the motive of obtaining a diploma predominates (Ovchinnikov et al., 2020). In the above study, the authors also identified two significant environmental factors in the development of professional motivation among students of the Institute of Education and Practical Psychology at Chelyabinsk State University:

- Factor "Content of education" (acquisition of knowledge; form of study; content of disciplines; teacher's interest in the discipline material taught and obtaining a diploma).
- Factor "Attractiveness of university" (attractiveness of university).

It has been established that third- and fourth-year students consider Chelyabinsk State University more attractive and modern than second-year students. This is manifested in such environmental factors as high satisfaction with the form of study, content of disciplines, support of the educational process, learning activities in general.

Thus, by the older years of study at the Institute of Education and Practical Psychology, professional motivation for learning increases, expressed in such motives as the acquisition of knowledge and the formation of professionally important qualities. Also, such environmental factors as: "Content of education" and "Attractiveness of university". The results of this study testify not only to the professional "maturation" of students by the last, final year of the Institute of Education and Practical Psychology, but also to the quality of teaching in Chelyabinsk State University, which lies in the quality of knowledge received by students and in instilling love for the chosen profession by teachers.

Thus, there is a problem in university to identify the factors influencing professional motivation. Despite the faculty's efforts to improve students' learning and professional motivation, the personal factors influencing students' motivation are not sufficiently identified. A possible reason for this problem is that not only positive but also negative personality traits form successful professional motivation. Therefore, our research aimed at studying the traits of "dark triad" in students can help to solve this situation.

### **3. Research Questions**

Closely related to the concept of professional motivation is the concept of professionally important qualities of students who are future professionals in the field of psychological and pedagogical assistance. This issue is particularly acute in the field of defectology. The structure of professionally important qualities of defectologists, in our opinion, can be represented by several interrelated components:

- the operational-motivational component, which is a personal value in the implementation of professional activities in the field of defectology;

- cognitive component, which includes general theoretical and practical knowledge of psychological and pedagogical assistance, its various methods and approaches, mastery of the means of pedagogical influence;
- the behavioral component, which includes the availability of various organizational, communicative and reflective skills;
- affective component, which implies the ability to master one's experiences and regulate them in stressful situations, as well as in decision-making situations (Khutorskoi, 2002).

It can be observed that competences determine the forms of professional activity implementation, but its content will be determined by professionally important qualities.

Yakovleva (2009) considers the unity of professionally important qualities and competences of a specialist as the conceptual basis of professional competence. The most important quality that determines the professionalism of a defectologist is the readiness to provide psychological and pedagogical assistance to persons with disabilities, which is composite and includes tolerance, empathy and optimism (Yakovleva, 2009).

A study that includes all the traits of the dark triad would therefore make an important conceptual contribution as to which career outcomes the dark triad can be positively related to. Furthermore, it is also important to know how people with dark personality traits perform in career advancement, because career success represents a major desired outcome in life and work for most people. In our study, the questions raised were: 1. How are the features of the "dark triad" related to the professional motivation of special (defectology) education students? 2. What features of personality traits manifestation are most important for the development of professional motivation?

#### **4. Purpose of the Study**

The aim of this study was to extend the study of personality and professional motivation by analyzing whether non-clinical narcissism, non-clinical psychopathy and Machiavellianism can influence (negatively and positively) professional motivation and, by extension, career.

#### **5. Research Methods**

The Short Dark Triad Questionnaire (SD3), designed to diagnose three negative personality traits (Machiavellianism, non-clinical narcissism and non-clinical psychopathy) was used to examine personality traits. Subjective assessment of career success was diagnosed using the author's questionnaire.

The study of "dark" personality characteristics in the context of trait theory emerged in the interdisciplinary space - at the intersection of clinical and differential psychology interests. The structure of personality disorder indicators was diagnosed by the DSM-5 (The Personality Inventory for DSM-5), includes Negative Emotionality (with the facets of emotional lability, tendency to experience anxiety, restricted affectivity, loss of safety in separation, hostility, perseveration, and subservience) (Egorova et al., 2017).

These subclinical traits offer advantages in the short term of relationships with others, e.g., high Machiavellianism is associated with manipulative strategies in relationships and avoidance of maintaining long-term contact. Such claims and research raise the question of how are carriers of the "dark triad" perceived as a result or process of interaction with them?

The study was conducted on the basis of the federal state budgetary educational institution of higher education "Chelyabinsk State University". The sample consisted of 58 persons aged from 18 to 21 years, 69 (92%) of whom were girls and 6 (8%) boys; the average age was 20.3 years  $\pm$  1.84. All subjects were 2nd, 3rd, 4th year students who voluntarily agreed to participate in the study. The first year was not included in the study, as it was at the stage of adaptation to the new learning conditions. The following methods were chosen for the study in students of the Institute of Education and Practical Psychology of Chelyabinsk State University:

1. The "Dark Triad" method of researching negative personality traits (Egorova et al., 2015).
2. The questionnaire aimed at studying the factors of students' professional motivation.

Statistical processing was carried out using SPSS 20.0 software package

## 6. Findings

The findings of this study are shown in Table 1. The Dark Triad scale of non-clinical narcissism received a score of 25.8 $\pm$ 5.74 in the 2nd year, with an increase in narcissism during adolescence associated with a 'loss of epistemological innocence' - a transition from a dualistic to a relativistic model of thinking. The non-clinical psychopathy scale was high in Year 3 with a score of 21.92 $\pm$ 3.28 while the Machiavellianism scale was high in Year 4 with a score of 32.12 $\pm$ 2.9.

**Table 1.** Descriptive statistics of participants and variables

Variable	Total N=58	Variable	Total N=58
The value of a university	4th year 2,25 $\pm$ 1,85	Knowledge acquisition	4th year 1,98 $\pm$ 1,73
	3rd year 2,71 $\pm$ 0,88		3rd year 1,8 $\pm$ 0,77
	2nd year 1,99 $\pm$ 0,74		2nd year 2,03 $\pm$ 0,99
Form of education	4th year 1,93 $\pm$ 1,83	Support from the supervisor	4th year -0,16 $\pm$ 1,83
	3rd year 1,99 $\pm$ 0,84		3rd year 2,12 $\pm$ 1,01
	2nd year 1,42 $\pm$ 0,83		2nd year 1,80 $\pm$ 0,79
Content of the course	4th year 1,83 $\pm$ 1,69	Narcissism	4th year 21 $\pm$ 3,22
	3rd year 1,58 $\pm$ 0,73		3rd year 23,61 $\pm$ 4,5
	2nd year 1,73 $\pm$ 0,95		2nd year 25,8 $\pm$ 5,74
Interest in the discipline	3rd year 1,9 $\pm$ 1,02	Machiavellianism	3rd year 30,76 $\pm$ 3,4
	2nd year 1,91 $\pm$ 0,78		2nd year 26,8 $\pm$ 4,32
	4th year 1,81 $\pm$ 1,63		4th year 20,62 $\pm$ 1,5
Getting a degree	3rd year 1,08 $\pm$ 0,93	Psychopathy	3rd year 21,92 $\pm$ 3,28
	2nd year 2,09 $\pm$ 0,67		2nd year 20,48 $\pm$ 4,74

According to the data, the compared groups differed statistically significantly ( $P < 0.01$ ) on the "Machiavellianism" scale, as well as on the "narcissism" scale ( $P < 0.05$ ). No statistically significant differences were found between the groups on the "non-clinical psychopathy" scale ( $P > 0.05$ ).

The statistics for the Kruskal - Wallis test are shown in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Statistics of participants and variables according to Kruskal - Wallis test

Grouping rate	N	Average grade	HI square	Asymp. value
Machiavellianism		Machiavellianism		
4 <sup>th</sup> year	8	44,31	4 <sup>th</sup> year	8
3 <sup>rd</sup> year	14	37,96	3 <sup>rd</sup> year	14
2 <sup>nd</sup> year	36	22,92	2 <sup>nd</sup> year	36
Narcissism		Narcissism		
4 <sup>th</sup> year	88	20,25	4 <sup>th</sup> year	88
3 <sup>rd</sup> year	14	24,61	3 <sup>rd</sup> year	14
2 <sup>nd</sup> year	36	33,46	2 <sup>nd</sup> year	36
Psychopathy		Psychopathy		
4 <sup>th</sup> year	8	27,88	4 <sup>th</sup> year	8
3 <sup>rd</sup> year	14	32,96	3 <sup>rd</sup> year	14
2 <sup>nd</sup> year	36	28,51	2 <sup>nd</sup> year	36

A comparison of the Dark Triad and the questionnaire showed that the total scores on the Dark Triad narcissism scale were positively related to such factors of the university satisfaction questionnaire as university prestige, form of study and teacher interest in the discipline taught ( $p < 0.05$ ), data are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Statistics of participants and variables by Spearman's test correlations

	The knowledge motive	The motive of prof.	Graduation motive	University prestige	Form of education	Social Dis	Teacher interest	Knowledge value	
Narc	Correlation coefficient	-,091	,196	<b>,284*</b>	,094	<b>,291*</b>	,173	<b>,330*</b>	,205
	Value (2-way)	,498	,141	<b>,031</b>	,485	<b>,027</b>	,195	<b>,011</b>	,122

## 7. Conclusion

Thus, the study revealed a number of patterns of professional motivation in university students and personality traits of the "dark triad".

It has been revealed that senior students of the "Special (defectology) education" direction at Chelyabinsk State University have a stronger value of higher education institution and form of education (students are studying on a full-time basis). The 2nd year students need the support of their tutor more. Second-year students have higher scores on the "non-clinical narcissism" scale. Research has shown that only narcissism is associated with extraversion, openness and self-regulation. It can be assumed that 2nd year students are more focused on social interaction, open to new knowledge and competence development, as well as they have a more pronounced motive to obtain a diploma, the form of learning, interest in the discipline depends more on the interest of the teacher in the read discipline.

In 4th year, the score for 'Machiavellianism' is more pronounced. Machiavellianism has no clinical equivalent, unlike narcissism and psychopathy. Machiavellianism is expressed in desires, cognitions and influences behavior. Machiavellian desires represent self-promotion and self-protection, impulse control.

Machiavellianism in behavior can be characterized by: antagonistic behavior, detachment, manipulation. Manipulation is one of the main elements of the Machiavellian personality and can manifest itself in tactical manipulation, in flexible adaptation as well as in special manipulation tactics such as emotional manipulation, persuasion, self-disclosure, which can have a positive effect when working with children with disabilities.

Each of the features of the "dark triad" can manifest differently in professional interests and the probability of encountering a person who displays Machiavellianism in the field of service delivery is quite high (Kowalski et al., 2018). Therefore, it can be assumed that the features of the "dark triad" personality traits of defectology students identified as a result of the study have a practical basis and are to some extent necessary for professional activities in the field of special (defectology) education.

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