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Evil Geniuses at Work: Does Intelligence Interact with the Dark Triad to Predict Workplace Deviance?


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ABSTRACT

Though a previous meta-analysis suggested that there was no direct relationship between the Dark Triad (DT) and intelligence, the existence of an indirect relationship between the two constructs was unknown. In this study, I explored the moderating role that intelligence plays in the DT - smart lying relationship. Non-significant findings were reported; intelligence did not moderate this association.

INTRODUCTION

- **Smart lying (SL):** Instances where individuals intentionally lie to get ahead of, or along with, others for their own gain. SLs are carefully thought out and can go undetected by others for a long time. Our criterion variable was operationalized by scores on a situational judgment test
- High levels of the DT, alone, can predict more deceptive, manipulative behaviour, including a higher likelihood of norm-breaking counterproductive work behaviours (CWB) that are conceptually similar to SL (O'Boyle, Forsyth, Banks, & McDaniel, 2012)
- According to O'Boyle, Forsyth, Banks, and Story (2013), there is no direct correlation between the DT and intelligence levels
- **Purpose:** Investigate whether intelligence interacts with the core of the DT in predicting the intent to lie intelligently at work, and if Machiavellianism is the most predictive subscale
- Further research on the DT in workplace contexts can improve selection processes so that CWBs can be reduced and employee satisfaction may be increased with the exclusion of highly callous hires

HYPOTHESES

- Intelligence will moderate the relationship between the DT composite and SL*
 - The nature of the moderation will be such that individuals with higher levels of intelligence will have a stronger relationship between the DT composite and SL, compared to those with a lower level of intelligence*
- Machiavellianism will predict SL above and beyond psychopathy alone*
 - Machiavellianism will predict SL above and beyond narcissism alone*

METHOD

PARTICIPANTS

- 40 undergraduate students recruited from the SONA pool (28 female, 12 male; mean age of 19.4 with a range of 17 to 23 years)

MEASURES

- **International Cognitive Ability Resource (ICAR;** Condon & Revelle, 2014). 16 items comprising letter and number series, matrix reasoning, 3D rotation, verbal reasoning, $\alpha = .81$
- **Short Dark Triad (SD3;** Jones & Paulhus, 2014). 27 items, 9 items each for Narcissism; Psychopathy; Machiavellianism, 5-point response scale, subscale $\alpha = .68$ to $.74$
- **Smart Lying Situational Judgment Test (SJT;** adapted from Conway, 2014). Created for this study, 7 items after item analysis, 5-point response scale

PROCEDURE

- Participants completed the online study on their own computers between February to March 2018
- Careless respondents were excluded according to recommended procedures (Meade & Craig, 2012)

RESULTS

REGRESSION MODEL FOR HYPOTHESIS #1

Table 1 Model testing whether intelligence moderates the relationship between DT and SL

Variable	β	B	ΔR^2	Overall R ²
Equation 1			.039	.039
Dark Triad Composite	.077	.082		
Intelligence	-.174	-.022		
Equation 2			.006	.045
Dark Triad Composite	.077	.082		
Intelligence	-.176	-.023		
Intelligence x Dark Triad Composite	.075	.030		

Note: N = 40. β = standardized regression weight; B = unstandardized regression weight; ΔR^2 = Change in R²-value due to adding variable to equation; overall R² = total variance predicted considering all variables in equation. All moderator and predictor variables were mean centered. *p < .05

REGRESSION MODEL FOR HYPOTHESIS #2

Table 2 Machiavellianism-moderated regression of psychopathy or narcissism onto smart lying

Variable	β	B	ΔR^2	Overall R ²
Equation 1			.013	.013
Psychopathy	.116	.083		
Equation 2			.012	.026
Psychopathy	.048	.035		
Machiavellianism	.130	.111		
Equation 3			.005	.005
Narcissism	-.070	-.071		
Equation 4			.035	.040
Narcissism	-.134	-.136		
Machiavellianism	.198	.169		

Note: N = 40. β = standardized regression weight; B = unstandardized regression weight; ΔR^2 = Change in R²-value due to adding variable to equation; overall R² = total variance predicted considering all variables in equation. All moderator and predictor variables were mean centered. *p < .05

SCALE RELIABILITIES

SJT	After item analysis, $\alpha = .560$
SD3 (all 27 items)	$\alpha = .838$
➤ Psychopathy	$\alpha = .793$
➤ Narcissism	$\alpha = .601$
➤ Machiavellianism	$\alpha = .692$

DISCUSSION

- Results are preliminary due to small sample size
- No support that intelligence moderates the DT – SL relationship
 - More intelligent participants may realize long-term SL can be self-defeating
- No support that Machiavellianism contributes more to the total variance within SL above and beyond narcissism or psychopathy alone
- The scale reliabilities of the SJT and narcissism are a serious consideration
- Moving forward, we should validate the SJT in other samples