



The Dark Triad and sexual harassment proclivity[☆]



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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 18 July 2015

Received in revised form 28 September 2015

Accepted 29 September 2015

Available online xxxx

Keywords:

Dark Triad

Narcissism

Psychopathy

Machiavellianism

Sexual harassment

ABSTRACT

Recent research concerning sexual harassment has highlighted important individual differences in the tendency to engage in these behaviors. The present studies extend these findings by examining the connections between the Dark Triad of personality traits (i.e., narcissism, psychopathy, and Machiavellianism) and sexual harassment proclivity. Study 1 ($N = 642$ Israeli community members) revealed that the Dark Triad traits had unique positive associations with sexual harassment tendencies. Similar results emerged for Study 2 ($N = 1909$ Israeli community members) such that each of the Dark Triad traits had a unique positive association with the proclivity to engage in sexual harassment. In addition, Study 2 revealed differences in the connections that the Dark Triad traits had with perceived likelihood estimates concerning whether targets would be victims or perpetrators of sexual harassment. Discussion focuses on the implications of these results for understanding the links between Dark Triad personality traits and sexual harassment.

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It is unfortunately common for individuals to experience sexual harassment (i.e., unwanted and inappropriate sexual behaviors that range from verbal comments to rape; see McDonald, 2012, for a review). Sexual harassment is prevalent in both employment contexts (e.g. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 1999, United States Merit Systems Protection Board, 1995) and educational settings (e.g., American Association of University Women, 2001). For example, 44% of female and 19% of male federal employees report that they have been sexually harassed at work (United States Merit Systems Protection Board, 1995). The negative consequences of sexual harassment have been clearly documented and include issues such as poor psychological adjustment, physical health problems, low levels of job satisfaction, and low levels of organizational commitment (e.g., Fitzgerald, 1993). The consequences of sexual harassment are not confined to the individual targets of these acts because there are substantial organizational and societal costs as well. For example, it was estimated that sexual harassment cost the United States government more than \$320 million between 1992 and 1994 (United States Merit Systems Protection Board, 1995).

Researchers have attempted to expand our understanding of sexual harassment in recent years by examining the potential causes of this behavior including beliefs (e.g. Key & Ridge, 2011, Pryor, 1987), cognitive mechanisms (e.g., Pryor & Stoller, 1994), and organizational practices (e.g., Fitzgerald, 1993) that may promote sexual harassment. One approach to understanding sexual harassment is to examine personality features that are shared by those who have either engaged in these behaviors in the past or demonstrate a willingness to consider engaging in these behaviors in the future (e.g., Lee, Gizzarone, & Ashton, 2003). For example, individuals who possess low levels of honesty-humility (according to both self-report and peer-report) tend to be more likely to engage in sexual harassment (Lee et al., 2003). This avenue of research is important because it may help identify risk factors that increase the likelihood that individuals will engage in these behaviors which may, in turn, lead to particular intervention strategies. Research concerning the links between personality features and sexual harassment may also have theoretical implications for our understanding of sexual harassment (i.e., what are the psychological processes that contribute to sexual harassment?) as well as shedding new light on the function of the personality features involved (e.g., Lee et al., 2003).

Given the connection between sexual harassment and the willingness to exploit others (e.g., Lee et al., 2003), we focused our investigation on the Dark Triad of personality (i.e., narcissism, psychopathy, and Machiavellianism; Paulhus & Williams, 2002). This constellation of personality traits is characterized by a willingness to exploit and manipulate others, callousness, disagreeableness, deceitfulness, egocentrism, lack of honesty-humility, empathy deficits, and a focus on agentic goals (e.g., Jones & Paulhus, 2011). The Dark Triad predicts a

[☆] We would like to thank the research assistants of Sapir Academic College, Israel, for their invaluable assistance in gathering the data and the participants who participated so willingly.

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wide array of behaviors and interpersonal tendencies (see Furnham, Richards, & Paulhus, 2013, for a review). Although the Dark Triad traits are usually viewed as socially undesirable and often linked with poor moral development (Arvan, 2013; Campbell et al., 2009), counterproductive work behaviors (O'Boyle, Forsyth, Banks, & McDaniel, 2012) and problematic interpersonal relationships (e.g., Rauthmann, 2012), it is important to note that these traits may be at least somewhat beneficial in certain areas of life (e.g., short-term mating; Holtzman & Strube, 2011; Jonason, Li, Webster, & Schmitt, 2009). Previous results suggest the intriguing possibility that the Dark Triad traits may represent specialized psychological adaptations that allow individuals to exploit particular niches within society (e.g. Jonason, Foster, McCain, & Campbell, 2015, Jonason, Jones, & Lyons, 2013). For example, individuals with high levels of the Dark Triad traits tend to report relatively high numbers of sexual partners and preferences for relationships that require little commitment (e.g. Jonason, Luévano, & Adams, 2012, Jonason et al., 2009). The Dark Triad traits have also been found to be associated with deceptive and manipulative mating behaviors such as mate poaching and infidelity (e.g. Jonason & Buss, 2012, Jonason, Li, & Buss, 2010). The unique aspects of narcissism (i.e., malevolent behaviors associated with a grandiose identity), psychopathy (i.e., malevolent behaviors associated with impulsivity), and Machiavellianism (i.e., malevolent behaviors associated with long-term strategies) may increase reproductive fitness within “dark niches” through their links with particular forms of exploitive strategies (e.g. Jonason & Buss, 2012, Jonason & Kavanagh, 2010, Jonason, Valentine, Li, & Harbeson, 2011, Jonason et al., 2009).

Relatively little is known about the connections between the Dark Triad personality traits and sexual harassment but previous research has established that these traits are connected with aspects of sexual aggression (e.g. Figueredo, Gladden, Sisco, Patch, & Jones, 2015, Jones & Olderbak, 2014). For example, each of the Dark Triad traits is associated with sexual coaxing (Jones & Olderbak, 2014). However, only narcissism (e.g., Bushman, Bonacci, van Dijk, & Baumeister, 2003) and psychopathy (e.g., Jones & Olderbak, 2014) have been found to be associated with sexual coercion. Taken together, these results suggest that individuals with high levels of narcissism are sometimes willing to resort to sexual coercion when they believe they have been deprived of a “deserved” sexual experience, whereas individuals with high levels of psychopathy are willing to use antisocial tactics (including aggression) to take advantage of perceived sexual opportunities. The connections that narcissism and psychopathy have been found to have with sexual coercion are consistent with the argument that these personality traits may be psychological adaptations that promote the use of behaviors such as sexual aggression.

Research has found important similarities between sexual aggression and sexual harassment which includes considerable overlap in the perpetrators of these acts (Pryor, 1987). It has also been suggested that both sexual aggression and sexual harassment may have similar antecedents (e.g., Lee et al., 2003). This suggests that the Dark Triad traits may facilitate exploitive social and sexual strategies that include sexual harassment. For example, sexual harassment may be conceptualized as an opportunistic mating strategy that involves manipulation and exploitation. The similarities between sexual coaxing and sexual harassment suggest that each of the Dark Triad personality traits may be associated with the proclivity to engage in sexual harassment.

Previous research has often suggested that the Dark Triad traits facilitate a “male” mating strategy focused on short-term encounters and exploitation (e.g. Jonason et al., 2009, Jonason et al., 2010). Similarly, sexual harassment is often considered in terms of male perpetrators and female targets even though research has clearly shown that women also engage in sexual harassment, although less often than do men (e.g., American Association of University Women, 2001). Given the relative lack of research concerning the factors that may help us understand which women are likely to engage in sexual harassment, we decided to examine the associations that

Dark Triad personality traits have with sexual harassment proclivity in both men and women.

1. Overview and predictions

Our goal for the present studies was to examine the associations that the Dark Triad personality traits had with sexual harassment proclivity for both men and women. We expected narcissism and psychopathy to be associated with sexual harassment proclivity given their established connections to sexual aggression (e.g. Figueredo et al., 2015, Jones & Olderbak, 2014). Our prediction concerning the link between Machiavellianism and sexual harassment proclivity was less certain because Machiavellianism is often not associated with sexual attitudes and behaviors after controlling for its overlap with narcissism and psychopathy (e.g., Jonason et al., 2012). However, there are some indications that Machiavellianism may be related to sexual aggression (McHoskey, 2001) even though it may not explain or predict it (Champion, 2002). Although we did not have a clear prediction for Machiavellianism, we included it for exploratory purposes and reportorial completeness.

2. Study 1

Study 1 focused on the associations that the Dark Triad traits had with sexual harassment proclivity. Instead of focusing on actual perpetrators of sexual harassment, we measured the proclivity of community members to engage in sexual harassment and correlated this proclivity with the Dark Triad traits. This allowed us to identify connections between the Dark Triad traits and sexual harassment proclivity in a relatively broad sample of Israeli community members.

2.1. Method

2.1.1. Participants and procedure

Our sample consisted of 642 Israeli community members (285 men, 357 women) who responded to personal requests posted by undergraduate research assistants at a university in Israel. These requests were made via social media (e.g., Facebook) and asked for volunteers to take part in a study concerning personality. Participants were adults with an average age of 28.86 years ($SD = 9.45$) and all of the participants had more than 12 years of formal education with the average number of years being 13.02 ($SD = 1.81$). Participants completed measures of the Dark Triad personality features and sexual harassment proclivity via a secure website. All of the questionnaires used in the present study were administered in Hebrew after being translated from the original English versions using the back-translation method.

2.2. Measures

2.2.1. Narcissism

The current study employed the 40-item version of the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI; Raskin & Hall, 1979). The NPI is a well validated measure of narcissistic personality features in the general population (Paulhus & Williams, 2002). Items on the NPI are presented in a forced-choice format such that participants must choose between a narcissistic and a non-narcissistic statement for each item (e.g., “I really like to be the center of attention” vs. “It makes me uncomfortable to be the center of attention”). The score for the NPI was calculated by the summing the items for which participants selected the narcissistic option. The internal consistency for the NPI was $\alpha = .86$ for the present study.

2.2.2. Psychopathy

Psychopathy was measured via the Self-Report Psychopathy Scale (SRP-III; Paulhus, Hemphill, & Hare, 2012) which is intended to serve as a measure of psychopathy in the general population. The version of

the SRP-III employed in the current study consists of 34 items (e.g., “I sometimes enjoy hurting the people who care for me”; Mahmut, Menictas, Stevenson, & Homewood, 2011). Participants indicated their level of agreement with each statement using scales ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). The internal consistency for the SRP-III was $\alpha = .89$ for the present study.

2.2.3. Machiavellianism

Machiavellianism was assessed via the MACH-IV (Christie & Geis, 1970). The MACH-IV consists of 20 items (e.g., “The best way to handle people is to tell them what they want to hear”) and was developed to measure manipulative and deceitful tendencies as well as cynical and immoral beliefs. For each item on the MACH-IV, participants rated their level of agreement with each item using scales ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). The internal consistency for the MACH-IV was $\alpha = .72$ for the present study.

2.2.4. Sexual harassment proclivity

The proclivity to engage in sexual harassment was assessed using the Sexual Harassment Proclivities scale (Bartling & Eisenman, 1993). The Sexual Harassment Proclivities scale consists of 10 items (e.g., “Women often are flattered by sexual advances by their co-workers”) and was developed to measure the tendency to engage in behaviors that may contribute to hostile environment harassment such as repeated sexual advances. Hostile environment harassment is a type of sexual harassment that is often more subtle than quid pro quo sexual harassment (i.e., overt offers of exchanges that involve sexual favors). Participants rated their level of agreement with each item on the Sexual Harassment Proclivities scale using scales that ranged from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). The internal consistency for this instrument was $\alpha = .80$ for the present study.

2.3. Results

Men and women had similar scores for narcissism ($M_{Men} = 9.22$, $M_{Women} = 9.45$; $t[640] = 0.57$, $p = .57$) and psychopathy ($M_{Men} = 2.56$, $M_{Women} = 2.58$; $t[640] = 0.53$, $p = .59$) in the present study. However, sex differences emerged for Machiavellianism ($M_{Men} = 2.70$, $M_{Women} = 2.57$; $t[640] = 3.88$, $p < .001$, $d = .31$) and sexual harassment proclivity ($M_{Men} = 2.81$, $M_{Women} = 2.64$; $t[640] = 3.04$, $p = .002$, $d = .24$) such that men reported higher scores than women for Machiavellianism and sexual harassment proclivity. The descriptive statistics and intercorrelations for the Dark Triad and sexual harassment proclivity are presented separately for men and women in Table 1 because of these sex differences. Examination of the correlation matrices revealed that each of the Dark Triad personality features were positively associated with sexual harassment proclivity for men but only psychopathy and Machiavellianism were associated with sexual harassment proclivity for women.

We conducted a moderated multiple regression analysis to determine whether the associations that the Dark Triad personality features had with sexual harassment proclivity were moderated by the sex of

the participant. This regression analysis also allowed us to determine the unique contribution of each of the Dark Triad personality features to the prediction of sexual harassment proclivity while controlling for the other Dark Triad personality features (see Furnham, Richards, Rangel, & Jones, 2014, for an extended discussion of this approach for examining outcomes associated with the Dark Triad). Sexual harassment proclivity was regressed on narcissism, psychopathy, Machiavellianism, and sex (0 = *female*, 1 = *male*). The main effects of the predictors were entered on Step 1 and the interactions of each Dark Triad personality feature with sex were entered on Step 2. The continuous predictor variables were centered prior to the computation of the interaction terms. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 2.¹ The results of this analysis revealed main effects for narcissism ($\beta = .08$, $t = 2.14$, $p = .03$, $d = .17$), psychopathy ($\beta = .20$, $t = 4.99$, $p < .001$, $d = .40$), Machiavellianism ($\beta = .15$, $t = 3.66$, $p < .001$, $d = .29$), and sex ($\beta = .10$, $t = 2.70$, $p = .007$, $d = .21$) such that higher levels of sexual harassment proclivity were reported by participants who possessed higher levels of the Dark Triad personality traits or were men. However, the main effects of Machiavellianism and sex were qualified by their two-way interaction ($\beta = .19$, $t = 3.36$, $p = .001$, $d = .27$). The predicted values for this interaction are presented in Fig. 1. Simple slopes tests found that the slope of the line representing the association between Machiavellianism and sexual harassment proclivity was significant for men ($\beta = .30$, $t = 5.04$, $p < .001$, $d = .40$) but not for women ($\beta = .03$, $t = 0.52$, $p = .60$). Taken together, these results reveal that the highest levels of sexual harassment proclivity were reported by men who possessed relatively high levels of Machiavellianism.²

2.4. Discussion

The results of Study 1 showed that narcissism and psychopathy had unique positive associations with sexual harassment proclivity for both men and women. In contrast, Machiavellianism had a unique positive association with sexual harassment proclivity for men but this

¹ We conducted supplementary analyses for both studies that utilized a Dark Triad composite that was created by standardizing and averaging the scores for each measure (based on the approach used by Jonason et al., 2009). The results revealed that the Dark Triad composite was positively associated with sexual harassment proclivity in both studies (Study 1: $\beta = .31$, $t = 8.32$, $p < .001$, $d = .66$; Study 2: $\beta = .30$, $t = 13.84$, $p < .001$, $d = .64$). However, the association that the Dark Triad composite had with sexual harassment proclivity was only moderated by sex in Study 1 ($\beta = .17$, $t = 3.38$, $p = .001$, $d = .27$) such that the association between the Dark Triad composite and sexual harassment proclivity was stronger for men ($\beta = .45$, $t = 8.37$, $p < .001$, $d = .86$) than it was for women ($\beta = .20$, $t = 3.84$, $p < .001$, $d = .39$). Additional analyses from Study 2 revealed main effects for the Dark Triad composite when predicting the likelihood that female targets would experience sexual harassment ($\beta = .11$, $t = 4.52$, $p < .001$, $d = .21$) and the likelihood that male targets would engage in sexual harassment ($\beta = .19$, $t = 8.08$, $p < .001$, $d = .37$).

² We also considered the possibility that the Dark Triad traits may mediate sex differences in sexual harassment proclivity. We tested this indirect effects model using a bootstrapping technique (e.g., Preacher & Hayes, 2008). This bootstrapping technique involves creating an empirical representation of the population by continuously resampling from the empirical sample in order to mimic the original sampling process. For the current analyses this resampling process was repeated 5,000 times and the path coefficients were recorded for each of these resamples. The 5,000 sample estimates of the indirect association were used to generate a 95% bias corrected confidence interval for the relative indirect effects that is considered significant if it excludes zero. We tested our multiple mediational hypotheses using an SPSS macro (Preacher & Hayes, 2008) that facilitates estimation of the indirect effect using a bootstrap technique to obtain confidence intervals. This approach allows us to assess the extent to which each of the Dark Triad traits mediated the association between sex and sexual harassment proclivity in the presence of the other potential mediators. Body surveillance and body shame were positively correlated with each other and shared similar associations with appearance contingent self-worth and appearance self-esteem so using a multiple mediator model to simultaneously analyze the variables allowed us to distinguish the unique mediational capacities of these variables which may otherwise have been attributed to their overlap (Preacher & Hayes, 2008). Machiavellianism was found to mediate the association between sex and sexual harassment proclivity in both studies (Study 1: $\beta = .02$, 95% CI [.01, .06]); Study 2: $\beta = .02$, 95% CI [.01, .04]). However, narcissism and psychopathy did not mediate the association that sex had with sexual harassment proclivity in either study.

Table 1
Study 1: Intercorrelations and descriptive statistics.*

	1	2	3	4
1. Narcissism	–			
2. Psychopathy	.04	–		
3. Machiavellianism	.14**	.38**	–	
4. Sexual harassment proclivity	.11*	.26**	.25**	–
<i>M</i>	9.35	2.57	2.63	2.71
<i>SD</i>	5.04	0.53	0.43	0.71

Note. Correlations for men are presented below the diagonal and correlations for women are presented above the diagonal.

* $p < .01$.

** $p < .001$.

Table 2
Study 1: Regression of sexual harassment proclivity on the Dark Triad personality features and sex.

	R^2	ΔR^2	β
<i>Step 1</i>	.11***	.11***	
Narcissism			.08*
Psychopathy			.20***
Machiavellianism			.15***
Sex			.10**
<i>Step 2</i>	.13***	.02***	
Narcissism \times Sex			.06
Psychopathy \times Sex			-.01
Machiavellianism \times Sex			.19***

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

association was not significant for women. These results suggest that the Dark Triad traits are associated with the propensity to engage in sexual harassment.

3. Study 2

The purpose of Study 2 was to replicate and extend the results of Study 1. We attempted to replicate the results of Study 1 by examining whether the Dark Triad traits were associated with sexual harassment proclivity in an even larger sample of Israeli community members. We extended the results of Study 1 by also examining whether the Dark Triad traits were associated with perceptions concerning the risk that female targets would experience sexual harassment and that male targets would engage in sexual harassment.

3.1. Method

3.1.1. Participants and procedures

Our sample consisted of 1909 Israeli community members (855 men, 1054 women) who responded to personal requests posted by undergraduate research assistants at a university in Israel. These requests were made via social media (e.g., Facebook) and asked for volunteers to take part in a study concerning personality. Participants were adults with an average age of 26.18 years ($SD = 8.25$) and all of the participants had more than 12 years of formal education with the average number of years being 12.66 ($SD = 1.51$). Participants completed measures of the Dark Triad personality features and sexual harassment proclivity via a secure website. Participants were also asked to view a series of color head and shoulder full-face photographs from the Productive Aging Laboratory (Minear & Park, 2004). Participants viewed

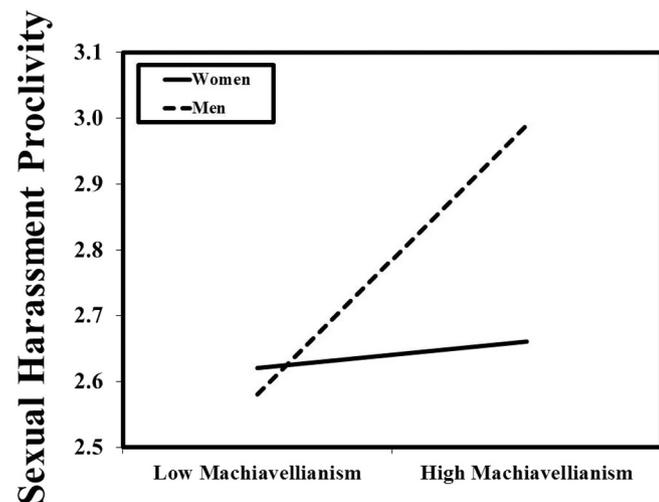


Fig. 1. Predicted values for sexual harassment proclivity illustrating the interaction of sex and Machiavellianism at values that are one standard deviation above and below its mean.

photographs of 5 female targets and 5 male targets between the ages of 18 and 29 who were smiling. Participants were asked to evaluate the female targets with regard to the likelihood that they would experience sexual harassment and the male targets with regard to the likelihood that they would engage in sexual harassment. Participants received no information about the targets other than their photographs. All of the questionnaires used in the present study were administered in Hebrew after being translated from the original English versions using the back-translation method.

3.2. Materials

Participants in Study 2 completed the same measures of narcissism ($\alpha = .86$), psychopathy ($\alpha = .87$), Machiavellianism ($\alpha = .71$), and sexual harassment proclivity ($\alpha = .82$) that were used in Study 1. In addition, the participants in Study 2 were asked to evaluate the likelihood that the female targets would experience sexual harassment (“This woman is likely to experience sexual harassment”) using scales that ranged from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*) and the likelihood that the male targets would engage in sexual harassment (“This man is likely to engage in sexual harassment”) using scales that ranged from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*).

3.3. Results

Men and women had similar scores for psychopathy ($M_{Men} = 2.69$, $M_{Women} = 2.67$; $t[1,907] = 0.97$, $p = .33$) and the perceived likelihood that male targets would engage in sexual harassment ($M_{Men} = 2.57$, $M_{Women} = 2.61$; $t[1,907] = 0.99$, $p = .32$). However, sex differences emerged for narcissism ($M_{Men} = 10.64$, $M_{Women} = 9.69$; $t[1,907] = 4.10$, $p < .001$, $d = .19$), Machiavellianism ($M_{Men} = 2.77$, $M_{Women} = 2.70$; $t[1,907] = 4.02$, $p < .001$, $d = .17$), sexual harassment proclivity ($M_{Men} = 2.96$, $M_{Women} = 2.89$; $t[1,907] = 2.08$, $p = .04$, $d = .09$), and the perceived likelihood that female targets would experience sexual harassment ($M_{Men} = 2.81$, $M_{Women} = 3.19$; $t[1,907] = 8.71$, $p < .001$, $d = .41$) such that men reported higher scores than women for narcissism, Machiavellianism, and sexual harassment proclivity but women believed that female targets were at greater risk for experiencing sexual harassment. The descriptive statistics and intercorrelations for the Dark Triad and sexual harassment proclivity are presented separately for men and women in Table 3 because of these sex differences. Examination of the correlation matrices revealed that each of the Dark Triad personality features was positively associated with sexual harassment proclivity for both men and women.

3.4. The Dark Triad and sexual harassment proclivity

As in Study 1, a moderated multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine whether the associations that the Dark Triad personality features had with sexual harassment proclivity were

Table 3
Study 2: Intercorrelations and descriptive statistics.*

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Narcissism	–					
2. Psychopathy	.12*	–				
3. Machiavellianism	.21*	.41*	–			
4. Sexual harassment proclivity	.11*	.27*	.24*	–		
5. Likelihood of female targets being sexually harassed	-.01	.15*	.08*	.12*	–	
6. Likelihood of male targets Engaging in sexual harassment	.03	.19*	.17*	.09*	.49*	–
<i>M</i>	10.12	2.68	2.73	2.93	3.02	2.60
<i>SD</i>	5.07	0.49	0.41	0.75	0.95	0.87

Note. Correlations for men are presented below the diagonal and correlations for women are presented above the diagonal.

* $p < .001$.

Table 4
Study 2: Regression of sexual harassment proclivity on the Dark Triad personality features and sex.

	R ²	ΔR ²	β
<i>Step 1</i>	.10***	.10***	
Narcissism			.05*
Psychopathy			.20***
Machiavellianism			.15***
Sex			.03
<i>Step 2</i>	.10***	.00	
Narcissism × Sex			-.02
Psychopathy × Sex			.03
Machiavellianism × Sex			.01

p* < .05; *p* < .01; ****p* < .001.

moderated by the sex of the participant. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 4. Main effects emerged for narcissism ($\beta = .05, t = 2.31, p = .02, d = .11$), psychopathy ($\beta = .20, t = 8.44, p < .001, d = .39$), and Machiavellianism ($\beta = .15, t = 6.18, p < .001, d = .28$) such that higher levels of sexual harassment proclivity were reported by participants who possessed higher levels of the Dark Triad personality traits. Unlike the results for Study 1, the main effect of sex failed to emerge ($\beta = .03, t = 1.12, p = .26$) as did the interaction of Machiavellianism × sex ($\beta = .01, t = 0.15, p = .88$).

3.5. The Dark Triad and the perceived likelihood of targets being the victims and perpetrators of sexual harassment

The purpose of these analyses was to examine whether the Dark Triad personality features were associated with the perceived likelihood that female targets would experience sexual harassment and that male targets would engage in sexual harassment. To examine these associations we employed regression analyses that were similar to those used in our previous analyses. The results of these analyses are presented in Table 5.

3.5.1. Perceived likelihood that female targets will experience sexual harassment

The results of the analysis concerning the perceived likelihood that female targets will experience sexual harassment revealed main effects

Table 5
Study 2: Regression of likelihood of sexual harassment on the Dark Triad personality features, sexual harassment proclivity, and sex.*

	Likelihood of female targets being sexually harassed			Likelihood of male targets engaging in sexual harassment		
	R ²	ΔR ²	β	R ²	ΔR ²	β
<i>Step 1</i>	.07***	.07***		.05***	.05***	
Narcissism			-.03			-.01
Psychopathy			.12***			.14***
Machiavellianism			.03			.12***
Sexual Harassment Proclivity (SHP)			.10***			.03
Sex			-.20***			-.04
<i>Step 2</i>	.09***	.02***		.06***	.01***	
Narcissism × SHP			-.01			.00
Psychopathy × SHP			-.08***			-.04
Machiavellianism × SHP			.04			.05*
Narcissism × Sex			-.07*			-.06
Psychopathy × Sex			.05			.02
Machiavellianism × Sex			.08*			.05
SHP × Sex			.04			.10**
<i>Step 3</i>	.09***	.00		.06***	.00	
Narcissism × SHP × Sex			.01			.01
Psychopathy × SHP × Sex			-.01			.02
Machiavellianism × SHP × Sex			.00			-.03

* *p* < .05.
** *p* < .01.
*** *p* < .001.

for psychopathy ($\beta = .12, t = 5.03, p < .001, d = .23$), sexual harassment proclivity ($\beta = .10, t = 4.08, p < .001, d = .19$), and sex ($\beta = -.20, t = -9.15, p < .001, d = .42$) such that individuals rated female targets as being more likely to experience sexual harassment when they had high levels of psychopathy, high levels of sexual harassment proclivity, or were female. However, these main effects were qualified by the following two-way interactions which also emerged from the analysis: psychopathy × sexual harassment proclivity ($\beta = -.08, t = -3.19, p = .001, d = .15$), narcissism × sex ($\beta = -.07, t = -2.28, p = .02, d = .10$), and Machiavellianism × sex ($\beta = .08, t = 2.31, p = .02, d = .11$). The predicted values for the psychopathy × sexual harassment proclivity interaction are presented in Panel A of Fig. 2. Simple slopes tests found that the slope of the line representing the association between psychopathy and the likelihood of sexual harassment for female targets was significant for individuals with relatively low levels of sexual harassment proclivity ($\beta = .17, t = 4.46, p < .001, d = .20$) but not for individuals with relatively high levels of sexual harassment proclivity ($\beta = .02, t = 0.57, p = .57$). The association between sexual harassment proclivity and the perceived likelihood of sexual harassment for female targets was significant for individuals with low levels of psychopathy ($\beta = .14, t = 3.52, p < .001, d = .16$) but not for individuals with high levels of psychopathy ($\beta = -.01, t = -0.24, p = .81$). Taken together, these results reveal that individuals who possessed low levels of psychopathy and sexual harassment proclivity reported that female targets were the least likely to experience sexual harassment.

The predicted values for the narcissism × sex interaction are presented in Panel B of Fig. 2. Simple slopes tests found that the slope of the line representing the association between narcissism and the likelihood of sexual harassment for female targets was significant for men ($\beta = -.09, t = -2.67, p = .01, d = .12$) but not for women ($\beta = .02, t = 0.67, p = .51$). The association between sex and the perceived likelihood of sexual harassment for female targets was significant for individuals with high levels of narcissism ($\beta = -.26, t = -8.13, p < .001, d = .37$) as well as for individuals with low levels of narcissism ($\beta = -.15, t = -4.76, p < .001, d = .22$). Taken together, these results reveal that women rated female targets as being more likely to experience sexual harassment than did men. For women, their level of narcissism was not associated with their evaluations of the likelihood that female targets would experience sexual harassment but narcissism was negatively associated with these evaluations for men.

The predicted values for the Machiavellianism × sex interaction are presented in Panel C of Fig. 2. Simple slopes tests found that the slope of the line representing the association between Machiavellianism and the perceived likelihood of sexual harassment for female targets was significant for men ($\beta = .10, t = 2.73, p = .01, d = .13$) but not for women ($\beta = -.03, t = -0.81, p = .42$). The association between sex and the perceived likelihood of sexual harassment for female targets was significant for individuals with low levels of Machiavellianism ($\beta = -.26, t = -7.77, p < .001, d = .36$) as well as for individuals with high levels of Machiavellianism ($\beta = -.15, t = -4.41, p < .001, d = .20$). Taken together, these results reveal that women rated female targets as being more likely to experience sexual harassment than did men. For women, their level of Machiavellianism was not associated with their evaluations of the likelihood that female targets would experience sexual harassment but Machiavellianism was positively associated with these evaluations for men.

3.5.2. Perceived likelihood that male targets will engage in sexual harassment

The results of the analysis concerning the likelihood that male targets will engage in sexual harassment revealed main effects for psychopathy ($\beta = .14, t = 5.53, p < .001, d = .25$) and Machiavellianism ($\beta = .12, t = 4.57, p < .001, d = .21$) such that individuals rated male targets as being more likely to engage in sexual harassment when they had high levels of psychopathy or Machiavellianism. The main effect for Machiavellianism was qualified by its interaction with sexual

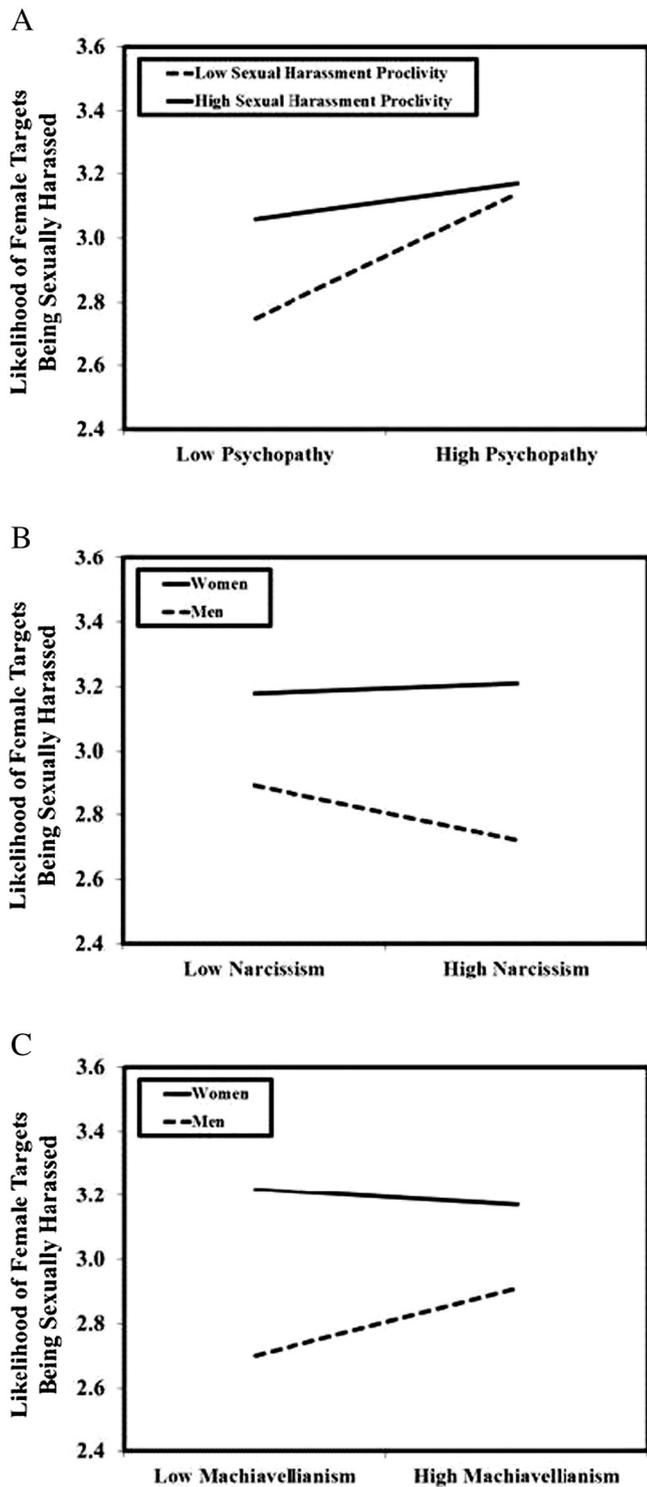


Fig. 2. Predicted values for the likelihood of female targets being sexually harassed illustrating the interaction of sexual harassment proclivity and psychopathy (Panel A), narcissism and sex (Panel B), and Machiavellianism and sex (Panel C).

harassment proclivity ($\beta = .05, t = 2.02, p = .04, d = .09$). The predicted values for this interaction are presented in Panel A of Fig. 3. Simple slopes tests found that the slope of the line representing the association between Machiavellianism and the perceived likelihood that male targets would engage in sexual harassment was significant for individuals with relatively high levels of sexual harassment proclivity ($\beta = .13, t = 3.13, p = .002, d = .14$) but not for individuals with relatively low levels

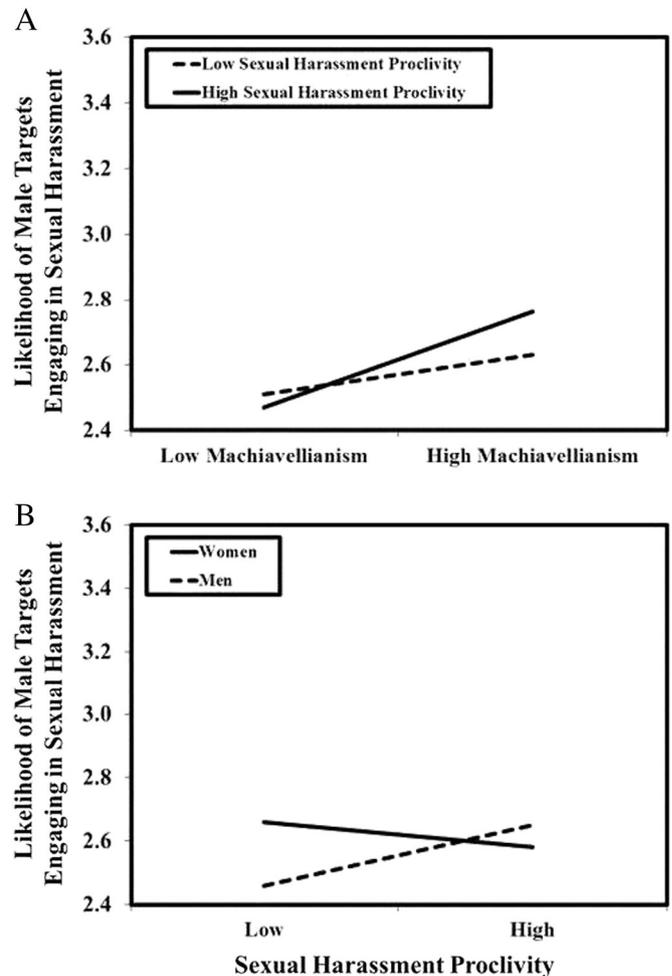


Fig. 3. Predicted values for the likelihood of male targets engaging in sexual harassment illustrating the interaction of Machiavellianism and sexual harassment proclivity (Panel A) and sexual harassment proclivity and sex (Panel B).

of sexual harassment proclivity ($\beta = .04, t = 0.94, p = .35$). The association between sexual harassment proclivity and the perceived likelihood that male targets would engage in sexual harassment was significant for individuals with high levels of Machiavellianism ($\beta = .09, t = 2.19, p = .03, d = .10$) but not for individuals with low levels of Machiavellianism ($\beta = .01, t = 0.23, p = .82$). Taken together, these results reveal that individuals who possessed high levels of Machiavellianism and sexual harassment proclivity reported that male targets were the most likely to engage in sexual harassment.

The interaction of sexual harassment proclivity \times sex also emerged from the analysis concerning the perceived likelihood that male targets would engage in sexual harassment. The predicted values for this interaction are presented in Panel B of Fig. 3. Simple slopes tests found that the slope of the line representing the association between sexual harassment proclivity and the likelihood of male targets engaging in sexual harassment was significant for men ($\beta = .11, t = 3.05, p = .002, d = .14$) but not for women ($\beta = -.04, t = -1.20, p = .23$). The association between sex and the likelihood of male targets engaging in sexual harassment was significant for individuals with low levels of sexual harassment proclivity ($\beta = -.11, t = -3.35, p = .001, d = .15$) but not for individuals with high levels of sexual harassment proclivity ($\beta = .03, t = 1.06, p = .29$). Taken together, these results revealed that men with low levels of sexual harassment proclivity rated male targets as being less likely to engage in sexual harassment than did men with high levels of sexual harassment proclivity or women (regardless of their level of sexual harassment proclivity).

3.6. Discussion

The results of Study 2 concerning sexual harassment proclivity were similar to the results for Study 1 such that each of the Dark Triad traits had unique positive associations with sexual harassment proclivity. However, the effect of sex was weaker in Study 2 such that it did not emerge as a main effect in the regression nor did it qualify the association that Machiavellianism had with sexual harassment proclivity as it did in Study 1.

The Dark Triad traits were associated with the perceived likelihood that female targets would experience sexual harassment. Individuals with low levels of psychopathy combined with low levels of sexual harassment proclivity perceived the female targets as being at relatively less risk for sexual harassment than individuals who possessed high levels of psychopathy and/or high levels of sexual harassment proclivity. Women perceived female targets as being at relatively high risk for sexual harassment regardless of their levels of narcissism or Machiavellianism. However, men perceived female targets as being more likely to experience sexual harassment when these men had levels of narcissism that were relatively low or when their levels of Machiavellianism were relatively high.

Psychopathy and Machiavellianism were positively associated with the perceived likelihood that male targets would engage in sexual harassment. The association between Machiavellianism and the perceived likelihood that male targets would engage in sexual harassment was especially strong for individuals with high levels of sexual harassment proclivity such that individuals with high levels of both Machiavellianism and sexual harassment proclivity believed that male targets were the most likely to engage in sexual harassment. The connection between sexual harassment proclivity and perceptions about the male targets engaging in sexual harassment were positive for men such that men with high levels of sexual harassment proclivity viewed the male targets as being as likely to engage in sexual harassment as did the women.

4. General discussion

The results of the present research provide support for connections between Dark Triad traits and sexual harassment tendencies. More specifically, the patterns of results across two large studies suggest that narcissism, psychopathy, and Machiavellianism have unique positive associations with sexual harassment proclivity. These results are consistent with the argument that the Dark Triad traits represent specialized psychological adaptations that allow individuals to exploit particular niches within society (e.g. Furnham et al., 2013, Jonason et al., 2015). More specifically, these results suggest that sexual harassment may serve as another manipulative mating strategy that individuals with high levels of the Dark Triad personality traits may employ along with behaviors such as sexual coercion (e.g., Jones & Olderbak, 2014), infidelity (Adams, Luevano, & Jonason, 2014), and mate poaching (Jonason et al., 2010).

The present studies had a number of strengths (e.g., large community samples) but it also had various limitations. The first limitation is the correlational nature of these studies which precludes an understanding of the causal nature of the relationship between the Dark Triad traits and sexual harassment proclivity. Although the assumption underlying the present studies was that the Dark Triad traits would predispose individuals to engage in sexual harassment, this cannot be established using the present data. For example, it is possible – but unlikely – that the proclivity to engage in sexual harassment leads to the development of Dark Triad features. It is also possible that Dark Triad traits and sexual harassment proclivity are influenced by another variable that was not assessed in the present study (e.g., harsh or unstable conditions during the earliest years of life). It may be helpful for future researchers who are interested in the link between the Dark Triad traits and sexual harassment to collect additional information concerning factors such as

early life experiences in order to clarify these connections. The second limitation of the present research is that all of the data collected were from self-report measures. This limitation may be important because participants may have distorted their responses in a socially desirable manner (e.g., denied that they may be inclined to engage in sexual harassment). This may have led to lower levels of sexual harassment proclivity that was actually the case for our participants. This is an important issue but it is likely that this sort of response distortion would have weakened the observed associations between the Dark Triad traits and sexual harassment proclivity. This suggests the possibility that the reported results may be an underestimate of the actual association between Dark Triad traits and the likelihood of engaging in sexual harassment. The third limitation is that this study was conducted using community members in Israel which may limit the extent to which these results can be generalized beyond that particular culture. That is, the extent to which the present results would replicate in other regions of the world is an open empirical question that should be addressed given the importance of gaining a better understanding of which individuals are most likely to engage in sexual harassment. The fourth limitation of the present research is that the sizes of some of the effects that we report were modest in their magnitude. For example, our regression model in Study 1 only explained 13% of the variability in sexual harassment proclivity. This suggests that there are almost certainly other factors beyond the Dark Triad that influence sexual harassment proclivity.

It is also important to acknowledge that despite the similar associations that the Dark Triad traits had with sexual harassment proclivity, it is possible that the situations that evoke sexual harassment – as well as the underlying motivations for engaging in sexual harassment – may differ for these traits. For example, the personal characteristics that facilitate sexual harassment (e.g., lack of empathy) would appear to be highly consistent with those characteristics possessed by individuals with high levels of psychopathy. In contrast to this simple and straightforward connection, the connection between narcissism and sexual harassment may be somewhat more complex. Baumeister, Catanese, and Wallace (2002) have argued that narcissistic men may prefer consensual sexual activities but they are willing to resort to sexual coercive behaviors when they are denied sexual access to women they desire. It is possible that similar patterns may emerge for sexual harassment such that narcissistic individuals may resort to sexual harassment when they have been rejected by the target of the harassment or believe they would likely be rejected by the target if they pursued him or her through more appropriate means. It is also possible that individuals with high levels of narcissism are especially likely to sexually harass subordinates when they are in positions of authority, either as a form of dominance display (e.g., Bohner, Weisbrod, Raymond, Barzvi, & Schwarz, 1993), or because the concepts of power and sex are linked together for these individuals as is the case for men who are likely to engage in sexual harassment (Bargh, Raymond, Pryor, & Strack, 1995).

5. Conclusion

The present study found connections between the Dark Triad traits and sexual harassment proclivity. More specifically, individuals who possessed higher levels of narcissism, psychopathy, and Machiavellianism reported being more inclined to engage in sexual harassment. The Dark Triad traits also had implications for perceiving targets as potential victims or perpetrators of sexual harassment. These findings suggest that the Dark Triad traits have similar associations with the perceived likelihood of engaging in sexual harassment for both men and women. However, the Dark Triad traits differed in their associations with perceptions of targets as potential victims or perpetrators of sexual harassment. These results extend our understanding of the link between the darker aspects of personality and sexual harassment.

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