

# The Influence of the Dark Triad of Personality on Rape Myth Acceptance and Rape Supportive Attitudes: A Regression Analysis

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## ABSTRACT

*The Dark Triad, encompassing Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy, represents a socially malevolent personality constellation linked to apathy, sexual aggression, and rape cognitions. This study aimed to investigate the predictive relationship between Dark Triad traits and rape myth acceptance (RMA) and rape-supportive attitudes (RSA). Using social media, 101 adults from six races completed assessments for Dark Triad traits, RMA, and RSA. Multiple regression analyses revealed Machiavellianism positively predicted limited but significant variance in RMA (10.4%) and RSA (12.2%), while psychopathy was a significant positive predictor of RMA (29.7%) and RSA (31.2%). Narcissism had contrasting influences on RMA (9.9%) and RSA (91%). These findings support existing literature and suggest potential areas for further research in academia and law. The study lays the foundation for developing multimodal interventions that consider the relationship between personality traits and RMA/RSA when addressing sexual aggression. The implications, limitations, and suggestions for future research are discussed.*

**Keywords:** *Dark Triad, Personality, Rape Myth Acceptance, Rape Supportive Attitudes, Regression*

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## INTRODUCTION

The Dark Triad is a socially malevolent personality constellation comprising three distinct but interrelated personality traits: Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy (Lyons, 2019). Machiavellianism is centred on manipulateness, callousness, and indifference to morality. Individuals with this trait are cynical, exploitative, deceptive, and insensitive towards others (Christie & Geis, 2013). Freud introduced narcissism (1914) to refer to entitlement and excessive self-admiration. The main components of narcissism are grandiosity, entitlement, dominance, and superiority (Miller et al., 2017). Psychopathy is the most malicious aspect of the Dark Triad, commonly seen in criminals, constituting antisocial behaviour, manipulateness, impulsivity, thrill-seeking behaviour, and apathy (Hare & Neumann, 2008). The Dark Triad traits mutually pertain to low agreeableness, high callousness, and a tendency to manipulate others (Lyons, 2019) as well as low affective empathy, cynical responses to inspirational narratives, and inappropriate emotional affect (Lyons et al., 2017). Past scientific literature has established the role of socially aversive personality traits in rape cognitions (Longpré et al., 2022). The Dark Triad is associated with cognition and attitudes that promote sexual violence, including sexual harassment proclivity (Zeigler-Hill et al., 2016) and sexism (Gluck et al., 2020) in both sexes. Sexual violence and attitudes may correspond to emotional deficits, which question the role of the Dark Triad in sexual violence perpetration. The Dark Triad traits were found to perceive sexist tweets as acceptable and funny (Lyons et al., 2022), which can potentially magnify rape cognitions and normalise sexual harassment among those who harbour hostile sexist attitudes (Mallett et al., 2016). Thus, it can be surmised that the Dark Triad is potentially involved in maintaining rape cognitions that promote sexual violence.

The International Criminal Court (ICC, 2000) characterises sexual violence as including (1) rape, (2) sexual slavery, (3) forced prostitution, (4) forced pregnancy, and (5) forced sterilisation/abortion. The present study delves into two crucial rape cognitions that promote sexual violence, namely rape myths and rape-supportive attitudes. Most rape myths and rape-supportive attitudes fall into the following criteria: victim blaming, excusing the perpetrator of responsibility for the assault, and justification for the assault (Svensson et al., 2019).

Sociologists and feminists initially coined the notion of rape myths to

explain a complex set of socio-cultural beliefs that sustain and promote sexual violence against women (Schwendinger & Schwendinger, 1974; Brownmiller, 1974). Lonsway and Fitzgerald (1994) redefined and reconceptualised rape myths as constituting false or apocryphal, persistent beliefs that deny and justify male sexual aggression against women. Rape myths are comparable to stereotypes in their overgeneralised and shared nature besides psychological and societal functions (Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1995). Rape myths are also associated with rape scripts, which are beliefs about rape, including the nature of rape, gender roles, boundaries of vulnerability, and disposition of victims (Ryan, 2019). Such rape scripts are not based on evidence and construct a cultural understanding of rape (Carroll et al., 2019). Individuals higher in rape myth acceptance report a higher proclivity to rape, mediated by anticipated enjoyment of sexual dominance (Süssenbach & Euteneuer, 2022). Rape myth acceptance (RMA) is related to increased acceptance of sexual aggression by college men (Hedrick, 2021), intimate partner violence (Rich et al., 2021), and self-blame among victims (Bernstein et al., 2022). Rape myths are also prevalent at the institutional level, wrongfully assuming that rape must involve overt force, although most rape and sexual assault crimes employ instrumental violence (Ryan, 2019). Besides, marital rape is not criminalised in India, emphasising institutional apathy towards this issue (Agarwal et al., 2022). Overall, rape myths prevail to justify male sexual aggression and blame victims, which impacts how victims are treated at the social and institutional levels.

Rape-supportive attitudes (RSA) function to deny and justify male sexual aggression against women (Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994). RSAs are activated during events congruent with the perpetrator's pre-existing attitudes that can bias their perceptions of the victim's behaviour. Various studies have demonstrated the importance of rape-supportive attitudes in perpetuating sexual violence (Obierefu & Ojedokun, 2019). The higher endorsement of RSA, higher among males and juveniles (Svensson et al., 2019) predicts sexual aggression and sexual double standards (Glance & Kaufman, 2020). In fact, sexual aggressors were found to have fewer egalitarian gender beliefs and more rape-supportive attitudes (Moyano et al., 2017). Besides, males who perpetrate sexual violence are more likely to accept justifications for rape (Obierefu & Ojedokun, 2019). The affirmation of traditional gender roles is also linked to the justification of forceful actions (Angelone et al., 2021). Therefore, theories about the prevalence of RSA emphasise the cultural beliefs that legitimise and condone sexual violence against women (Steinmetz et al., 2019), which

promote men's coercive sexuality and tolerance of rape (Angelone et al., 2021). As the majority of the studies in this area have been conducted in the Western context (Moyano et al., 2017), there is a need for a multicultural perspective on this issue. Rape scripts guide the interactions of men and women in interpersonal contexts to facilitate rape-supportive attitudes, especially when the behavioural norms of females are exaggerated (Palermo et al., 2019). The role of gender socialisation is highlighted in the maintenance of RSA, but this relationship can potentially be further explained by the socially aversive Dark Triad traits.

Therefore, it is conceivable that the Dark Triad traits, which correlate with apathy (Shen, 2022), sexual aggression (Lyons et al., 2022), rape cognitions (Pavlović et al., 2019) and ambivalent sexism (Navas et al., 2020) predict RMA and RSA.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Numerous studies exist on the influence of the Dark Triad traits on rape cognitions that promote sexual violence perpetration (Mouilso & Calhoun, 2016). Individuals possessing the Dark Triad traits have been found to readily accept rape myths (Jonason et al., 2017), blame rape victims (Brewer et al., 2021), and promote sexual harassment (Zeigler-Hill et al., 2016).

These socially malevolent traits demonstrate behaviours and cognitions characteristic of perpetrators of sexual coercion, including impulsivity, aggression, poor self-control, apathy and promiscuous mating (Andrighetto et al., 2019). The Dark Triad is, in fact, considered a predictor of coercive cognitions and behaviours. Although only narcissism was highlighted in women, all three Dark Triad traits were correlated with sexual coercion in men (Lyons et al., 2022). Moreover, psychopathy (Lyons et al., 2022) and narcissism (Mouilso & Calhoun, 2016) have predominantly been linked to sexual coercion of different degrees following the rejection of sexual advances. The Dark Triad constellation is considered a manifestation of a fast history strategy wherein individuals seek short-term mating opportunities over long-term and stable relationships, which is also a sexual coercion tactic (Kiire, 2019). It is hence feasible that the Dark Triad facilitates the fast life history strategy for sexual exploitation.

Of the three traits, psychopathy is the strongest predictor of rape cognitions. Psychopathy, specifically, is related to rape myth acceptance and low victim empathy in both sexes (Jonason et al., 2017) and victim blame among women (Brewer et al., 2021). Such emotional coldness is

shared by both psychopaths and perpetrators of sexual violence (Bradford et al., 2020), suggesting that higher psychopathy may allude to higher levels of rape cognitions regardless of situational factors (Watts et al., 2017). However, most research on psychopathy has been conducted on criminals (Ruihan, 2022), so there is a need to assess the importance of this trait in perpetuating rape cognitions in the general population.

The narcissistic reactance theory of rape (Baumeister et al., 2002) proposes that narcissistic suitors are more likely to coerce sex than accept refusal because of their sense of entitlement, need for admiration, and low empathy. Available studies have deduced positive correlations between narcissism and rape myth acceptance, victim empathy, and sexual violence perpetration (Mouilso & Calhoun, 2016), but with smaller samples in student populations. Narcissism has been identified for its undesirable effect on empathy priming in sexual assault prevention and intervention programmes (Long & Herr, 2022). This paves the way for identifying high-risk individuals who possess narcissistic and other socially malevolent traits, such as those of the Dark Triad, in the cultivation of rape cognitions and the perpetration of sexual violence.

Although the exploitative nature of Machiavellianism is linked to sexual aggression (Brewer et al., 2021), it has been negatively associated with short-term sexual behaviours and harassment (Koscielska et al., 2020) due to the moral flexibility of this trait. When conducted on a sample of women, no relationship was determined between Machiavellianism and sexual harassment (Brewer et al., 2021). It is implied that Machiavellianism might correspond only to the ‘She lied’ subfactor and not overall rape myth acceptance (Boland, 2018). Thus, Machiavellianism has mixed relations to rape cognitions and sexual violence (Longpré et al., 2022), which must be clarified.

Nevertheless, the influence of the Dark Triad on RMA and RSA has not been explored, especially together, outside the Western context. Available literature has been conducted on small samples of criminal and student populations, which are not representative of the general public. Despite evidence of immediate adjustment, long-term changes in RMA and RSA have not been documented following sexual assault prevention programmes (Edwards et al., 2019), and the biased literature may not publish null findings (Steinmetz et al., 2019). Certain researchers have pinpointed that focusing merely on RMA and RSA adjustment is insufficient (Wright et al., 2020), so the current study aims to deduce the interplay of personality in maintaining such attitudes. Most studies on RMA and RSA have been conducted in individualistic cultures. However,

it has been acknowledged that ethnicity influences the tolerance of sexual crimes due to the difference in sexual values. Diverse cultural, political and religious influences on gender role norm endorsement (Safdar & Kosakowska-Berezecka, 2015) and consequently on sexuality (Ahrold & Meston, 2010) highlight the need for multicultural research on the impact of ethnicity in the development of RMA and RSA. This can aid in the formation of prevention programmes with aggressors and psychosocial interventions that address the role of the Dark Triad of personality in the maintenance of RMA and RSA.

## AIM

The present study aims to investigate the influence of the Dark Triad traits on rape myth acceptance and rape-supportive attitudes.

## HYPOTHESES

- Machiavellianism will predict rape myth acceptance.
- Narcissism will predict rape myth acceptance.
- Psychopathy will predict rape myth acceptance.
- Machiavellianism will predict rape-supportive attitudes.
- Narcissism will predict rape-supportive attitudes.
- Psychopathy will predict rape-supportive attitudes.

## METHODOLOGY

### Design

The present quantitative study incorporated a non-experimental and within-group design. The predictor variables are Machiavellianism, Narcissism and Psychopathy of the Dark Triad of personality, and the outcome variables are RMA and RSA. The within-group design is relevant for this research because all participants will be exposed to the same treatment, and the effects of the predictor variables on the outcome variable can be discerned (Field & Hole, 2002).

### Participants

215 individuals globally of 6 races were selected for this study using convenience and snowball sampling from social media platforms such

as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, and SurveyCircle. The final number of participants was 101 after screening the data for anomalies and missing input. Individuals had to be aged 18 and above to participate. The mean age of the participants was 25.71. They were predominantly female at 71, with 28 males and 2 individuals identifying as non-binary. Out of a total of 101, the majority comprised 87 Indians (Fig. 1--6).

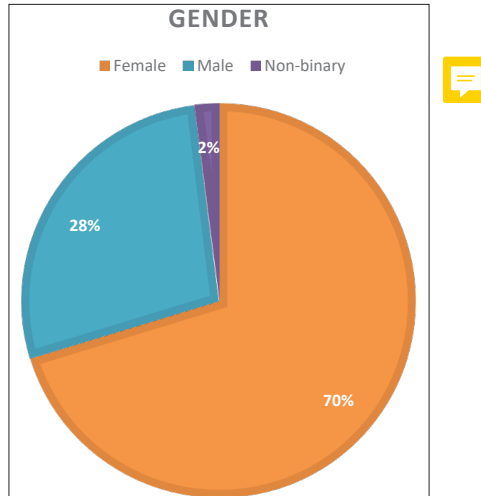


Fig. 1: Gender of Participants

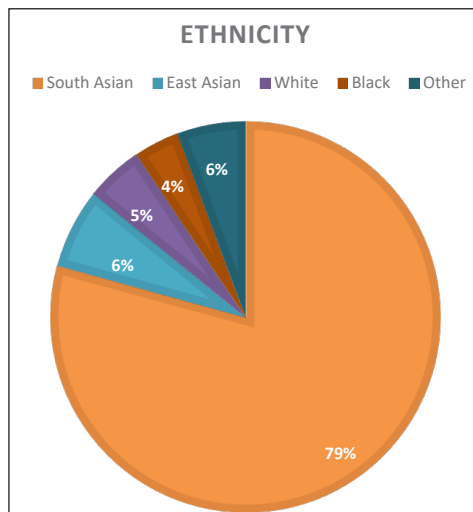


Fig. 2: Ethnicity of Participants

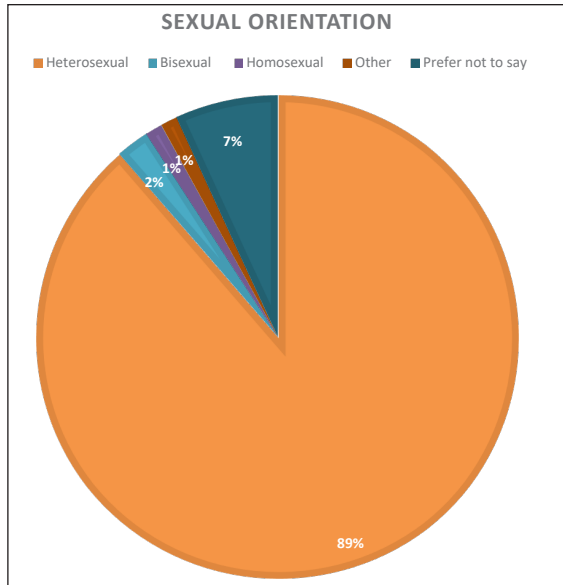


Fig. 3: Sexual Orientation of Participants

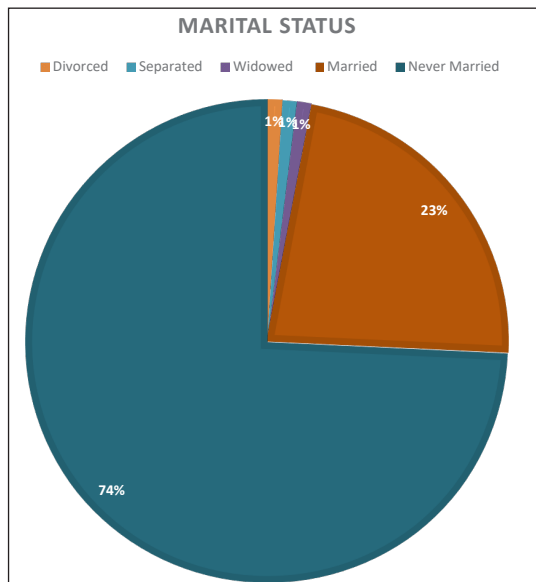


Fig. 4: Marital Status of Participants

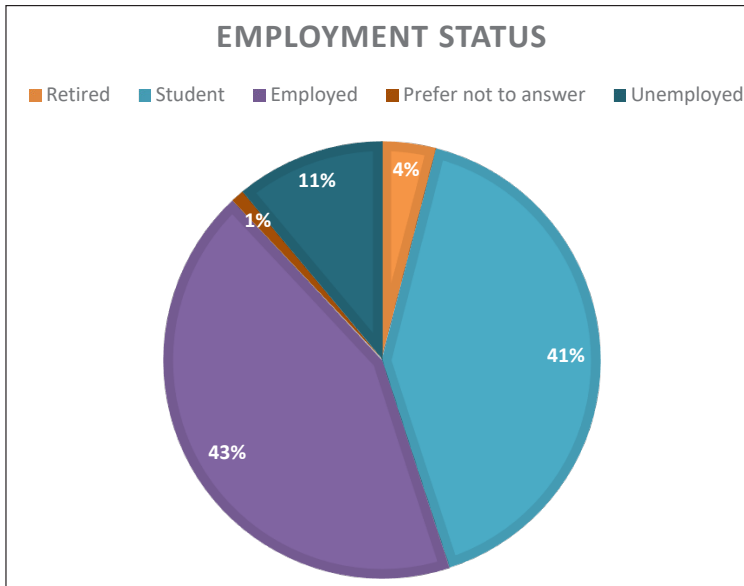


Fig. 5: Employment Status

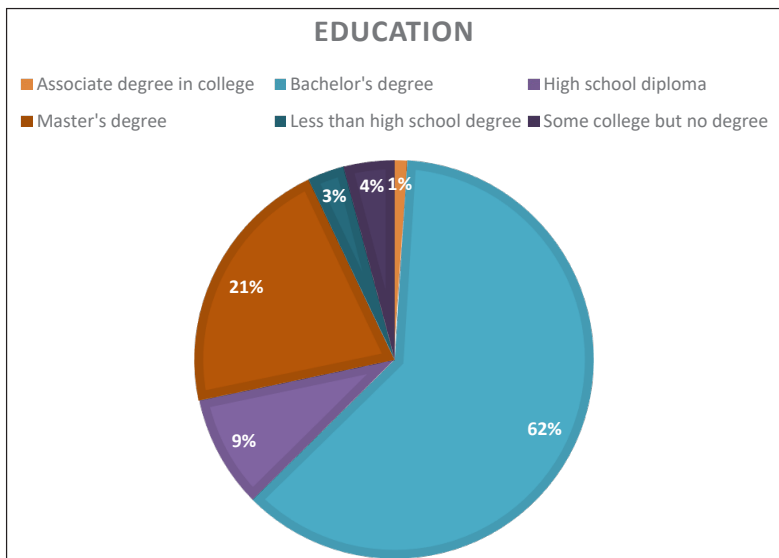


Fig. 6: Educational Qualification

## Measures

### *Jones and Paulhus' (2014) Short Dark Triad Questionnaire (SD3)*

Jones and Paulhus' (2014) Short Dark Triad Questionnaire (SD3) was applied to measure the Dark Triad personality traits. SD3 comprises 27 items on a 5-point Likert Scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The three subscales are Machiavellianism (Items 1-9), Narcissism (Items 10-18) and Psychopathy (Items 19-27). The reversed items are 11, 15, 17, 20, and 25. Each subscale score is retrieved by averaging the corresponding items. An example of an item from the SD3 is, "I like to use clever manipulation to get my way." The psychometric properties of the original SD3 revealed acceptable internal consistency for every dimension and convergent validity with the external variables, consistent with Cronbach's alpha of the scale in a range between 0.74 to 0.78 (Jones & Paulhus, 2014). Cronbach's alpha coefficient in the current study was found to be 0.808, promoting excellent reliability.

### *McMahon and Farmer's (2011) Updated Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (uIRMA)*

McMahon and Farmer's (2011) Updated Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (uIRMA) was used to measure RMA. There exist 22 items on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5, with higher ratings indicating stronger agreement. There are four sub-scales used to quantify attitudes and beliefs around sexual assault: She asked for it (SA; Items 1-6), He didn't mean to (MT; Items 7-12), It wasn't really rape (NR; Items 13-17), and she lied (LI; 18 and 22). None of the items are reversed. Higher total scores depict higher rape-supportive attitudes. An example of an item would be, "If a girl is raped while she is drunk, she is at least somewhat responsible for letting things get out of hand." uIRMA has an overall Cronbach's alpha of 0.87 and internal consistency of 0.64-0.80 across subscales and is deemed a valid and reliable measure of rape myth acceptance (Cyders et al., 2014). Cronbach's alpha coefficient in the current study was calculated to be 0.932, suggesting good reliability.

### *Lottes' (1991) Rape Supportive Attitude Scale (RSAS)*

Lottes' (1991) Rape Supportive Attitude Scale (RSAS) was implemented to quantify attitudes among adults hostile to rape victims and false beliefs about rape and rapists. The RSAS has 20 items that measure seven beliefs about rape: Women enjoy sexual violence, Women are responsible for rape prevention, sex rather than power is the primary motivation for rape, rape happens only to certain kinds of women, A woman is less desirable after she has been raped, Women falsely report many rape

claims, and rape is justified in some situations. All items are scored in the same direction and rated on a 5-point Likert Scale from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The total rape-supportive attitude score ranges from 20 to 100. Higher total scores represent higher levels of rape-supportive attitudes. An example of an item from the RSAS is, “A raped woman is a less desirable woman.” Cronbach’s alpha coefficient was 0.91 for both samples of college students in the initial study (Lottes, 1991). For both samples ( $n = 246$  and  $n = 390$ ), RSAS scores were significantly correlated as predicted with non-egalitarian gender role beliefs ( $r = 0.50$ ,  $r = 0.42$ ), traditional attitudes towards female sexuality ( $r = 0.50$ ,  $r = 0.42$ ), adversarial sexual beliefs ( $r = 0.65$ ,  $r = 0.70$ ), arousal to sexual violence ( $r = 0.32$ ,  $r = 0.37$ ), and non-acceptance of homosexuality ( $r = .25$ ,  $r = .34$ ). Cronbach’s alpha coefficient in the present research was 0.944, deeming good reliability.

## **Procedure**

Participants who read the information sheet and provided consent were recruited from online social media platforms. They answered the 10-minute-long questionnaire created in Qualtrics. Demographics such as age, gender, residence, and educational qualifications were sought. Participants were asked to complete the SD3, uIRMA, and RSAS to measure their Dark Triad traits, RMA and RSA, respectively. After completing the survey, they received the debriefing sheet.

## **Statistical Analysis**

Multiple regression analyses were performed on IBM SPSS Statistics 25 to determine whether the predictor variables, Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy, predicted the outcome variables, RMA and RSA. This regression framework included six models. The first model (Model 1) introduced Machiavellianism as the predictor variable for RMA, whereas the second model (Model 2) selected narcissism as the predictor variable for RMA. The third model (Model 3) used psychopathy as the predictor variable for RMA. The fourth model (Model 4) consulted Machiavellianism as the predictor variable for RSA. The fifth model (Model 5) applied narcissism as the predictor variable for RSA. The sixth model (Model 6) referred to psychopathy as the predictor variable for RSA. Accordingly, these predictors’ significance and influence on the outcome variables can be demonstrated.

## RESULTS

101 individuals participated in the present study. Strong Cronbach's alpha values were determined for all three measures upon employing reliability statistics. Descriptive statistics (Table 1) demonstrate the means and standard deviations for the Dark Triad, RMA, RSA, and age.

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of the Dark Triad, Rape Myth Acceptance, Rape Supportive Attitudes, and Age**

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>
Machiavellianism	3.03	0.63
Narcissism	2.90	0.52
Psychopathy	2.31	0.59
Rape Myth Acceptance	46.47	15.21
Rape Supportive Attitudes	40.73	14.57
Age	25.71	5.82

$N = 101$ .

### Machiavellianism and Rape Myth Acceptance

*Hypothesis 1: Machiavellianism will positively predict rape myth acceptance.*

**Table 2: Regression Analysis of Machiavellianism on Rape Myth Acceptance**

<i>Block</i>	<i>Predictor</i>	<i>Rape Myth Acceptance</i>		
		<i>Model Fit</i>	$\beta$	<i>t</i>
1	Machiavellianism	Adjusted $R^2 = 0.104$ $F(1,99) = 12.589$	0.336	3.3548

$\beta$  = Standardised regression coefficient.

Simple regression was applied to examine the influence of Machiavellianism on RMA. Table 2 shows that the above model (Model 1) is statistically significant ( $F(1, 99) = 12.589, p < 0.001$ ) and explained 10.4% of the variance in RMA (Adjusted  $R^2 = 0.104$ ). Therefore, Model 1 supports the hypothesis, implying that Machiavellianism is a significant positive predictor of RMA.

## Narcissism and Rape Myth Acceptance

*Hypothesis 2: Narcissism will positively predict rape myth acceptance.*

**Table 3: Regression Analysis of Narcissism on Rape Myth Acceptance**

<i>Block</i>	<i>Predictor</i>	<i>Rape Myth Acceptance</i>		
		<i>Model Fit</i>	$\beta$	<i>t</i>
1	Narcissism	Adjusted $R^2 = 0.099$ $F(1,99) = 12.038$	0.329	3.470

$\beta$  = Standardised regression coefficient.

Simple regression was applied to examine the influence of narcissism on RMA. Table 3 shows that the above model (Model 2) is statistically significant ( $F(1, 99) = 12.038$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and explained 9.9% of the variance in RMA (Adjusted  $R^2 = 0.099$ ). Therefore, Model 2 supports the hypothesis, implying that narcissism is a significant positive predictor of RMA.

## Psychopathy and rape Myth Acceptance

*Hypothesis 3: Psychopathy will positively predict rape myth acceptance.*

**Table 4: Regression Analysis of Psychopathy on Rape Myth Acceptance**

<i>Block</i>	<i>Predictor</i>	<i>Rape Myth Acceptance</i>		
		<i>Model Fit</i>	$\beta$	<i>t</i>
1	Psychopathy	Adjusted $R^2 = 0.297$ $F(1,99) = 41.785$	0.545	6.464

$\beta$  = Standardised regression coefficient.

Simple regression was applied to examine the influence of psychopathy on RMA. Table 4 shows that the above model (Model 3) is statistically significant ( $F(1, 99) = 41.785$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and explained 29.7% of the variance in RMA (Adjusted  $R^2 = 0.297$ ). Therefore, Model 3 supports the hypothesis, implying that psychopathy is a significant positive predictor of RMA.

## Machiavellianism and Rape-Supportive Attitudes

*Hypothesis 4: Machiavellianism will positively predict rape-supportive attitudes.*

**Table 5: Regression Analysis of Machiavellianism on Rape-Supportive Attitudes**

<i>Block</i>	<i>Predictor</i>	<i>Rape Supportive Attitudes</i>		
		<i>Model Fit</i>	$\beta$	<i>t</i>
1	Machiavellianism	Adjusted $R^2 = 0.122$ $F(1,99) = 14.878$	0.361	3.857

$\beta$  = Standardised regression coefficient.

Simple regression was applied to examine the influence of Machiavellianism on RSA. Table 5 shows that the above model (Model 4) is statistically significant ( $F(1, 99) = 14.878$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and explained 12.2% of the variance in RSA (Adjusted  $R^2 = 0.122$ ). Therefore, Model 4 supports the hypothesis, implying that Machiavellianism is a significant positive predictor of RSA.

## Narcissism and Rape-Supportive Attitudes

*Hypothesis 5: Narcissism will positively predict rape-supportive attitudes.*

**Table 6: Regression Analysis of Narcissism on Rape-Supportive Attitudes**

<i>Block</i>	<i>Predictor</i>	<i>Rape Supportive Attitudes</i>		
		<i>Model Fit</i>	$\beta$	<i>t</i>
1	Narcissism	Adjusted $R^2 = 0.91$ $F(1,99) = 10.975$	0.316	3.313

$\beta$  = Standardised regression coefficient.

Simple regression was applied to examine the influence of narcissism on RSA. Table 6 shows that the above model (Model 5) is statistically significant ( $F(1, 99) = 10.975$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and explained 91.0% of the variance in RSA (Adjusted  $R^2 = 0.91$ ). Therefore, Model 5 supports the hypothesis, implying that narcissism is a significant positive predictor of RSA.

## Psychopathy and Rape-Supportive Attitudes

*Hypothesis 6: Psychopathy will positively predict rape-supportive attitudes.*

**Table 7: Regression Analysis of Psychopathy on Rape-Supportive Attitudes**

<i>Block</i>	<i>Predictor</i>	<i>Rape Supportive Attitudes</i>		
		<i>Model Fit</i>	$\beta$	<i>t</i>
1	Psychopathy	Adjusted $R^2 = 0.312$ $F(1,99) = 46.346$	0.565	6.808

$\beta$  = Standardised regression coefficient.

Simple regression was applied to examine the influence of psychopathy on RSA. Table 7 shows that the above model (Model 6) is statistically significant ( $F(1, 99) = 46.346$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and explained 31.2% of the variance in RSA (Adjusted  $R^2 = 0.312$ ). Therefore, Model 6 supports the hypothesis, implying that psychopathy is a significant positive predictor of RSA.

## DISCUSSION

The current study aimed to determine the influence of the Dark Triad of personality on RMA and RSA in a worldwide sample of 101 individuals. As hypothesised, Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy were positive predictors of both RMA and RSA, with high variance at statistical significance.

The reported findings are primarily congruent with the existing literature on the Dark Triad of personality, RMA and RSA. Limited studies have explored the influence of aggressive personalities in the shaping of rape cognitions like RMA and RSA. Anger, hostility and aggression, characteristic of the Dark Triad, are prevalent in individuals with RMA and RSA (Andrighetto et al., 2019). Hostile sexism and masculine honour beliefs were found to mediate the association between the Dark Triad traits and RMA in a Lebanese sample (Sanchez-Ruiz et al., 2021), which is supported by the theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). The foundation of RMA includes impulsivity, apathy (Jones & Paulhus, 2014) and an exploitative mating strategy (Jonason et al., 2017), which are factors linked to the Dark Triad. These socially aversive traits have been strongly correlated to rape cognitions, especially RSA, including a study

where those strong in the Dark Triad rated sexist tweets as humorous and acceptable, with psychopathy being the most robust predictor (Lyons et al., 2022). The Dark Triad is said to endorse RSA in the manifestation of sexual coercion (de Mello & Junior, 2023).

Machiavellianism accounted for 10.4% of the variance in RMA and 12.2% of the variance in RSA in the present study. Such limited variance can be explained by previous research studies, which have not found a strong relationship between Machiavellianism and sexual violence due to low impulsivity and flexible morality (Sánchez-Medina et al., 2020). Besides, manipulative strategies characteristic of this trait are less likely to result in sexual violence (Longpré et al., 2022).

Psychopathy predicted 29.7% of the variance in RMA and 31.2% in RSA, which can be elaborated by its association with sexual coercion (Lyons et al., 2022). Previous research has linked psychopathy to sexual cyberbullying behaviours, which are maintained by rape cognitions (Sánchez-Medina, 2020). Psychopathy has been found to be the only significant individual predictor out of the Dark Triad to endorse rape cognitions in women (Brewer et al., 2019). This trait is seen as the most malicious of the three, with a solid relationship to sexual crimes (Johnson, 2019).

Surprisingly, narcissism contributed to 9.9% of the overall variance in RMA but largely influenced RSA at 91% of the overall variance. Such mixed findings about the two forms of rape cognitions must be further probed. Narcissism is associated with sexual coercion in women, endorsing rape cognitions, particularly RSA (Lyons et al., 2022). Empathy does not affect narcissism when endorsing high RMA (Long & Herr, 2022). However, previous literature lacks the distinction between perpetrators and non-perpetrators based on the two subtypes of narcissism, grandiose and vulnerable. It is vulnerable narcissism that predicts verbal coercion under the influence of alcohol and the use of force when interacting with low levels of RMA (Welker, 2019). Hence, the mixed influence of narcissism on RMA must be clarified.

As aforementioned, the findings of this research have several practical implications. Because the participants hailed from 6 races in this global study, the results regarding the influence of the Dark Triad on RMA and RSA may have multicultural advantages. The findings may be more generalisable to adults worldwide and aid in the formation of societal reforms at an international level, ideally reducing the prevalence of sexual crimes. The present study's findings pinpoint the necessity for educational

institutions and humanitarian organisations to implement campaigns addressing awareness and management of rape cases to reduce aggressive sexual behaviours. Individuals in the general population, including suggestible children and adolescents, can be provided with relevant interventions to modify their perceptions of rape to prevent and control sexual crimes. Sexual aggressors scoring higher on these personality traits can be introduced to psychosocial interventions that change their rape-supportive attitudes and weaken rape myths so that sexual crimes are minimised. This provides an alternative to imprisonment for such sexual offenders under appropriate circumstances. The study's findings can also be integrated into national and international legal and political strategies to prevent sexual crimes. Prevention programmes with aggressors and psychosocial interventions should address the role of the Dark Triad of personality in the maintenance of rape-supportive attitudes and rape myth acceptance. Most interventions have focused on gender inequality as the sole cause of gender violence. Thus, the current study paves the way for the development of multimodal interventions that consider the relationship of personality with rape myth acceptance and rape-supportive attitudes when combating sexual aggression.

The aforementioned practical implications can be translated into concrete policy recommendations. Firstly, multicultural educational campaigns should be developed and implemented to address awareness and management of rape cases, tailoring interventions to various cultural contexts. These campaigns aim to reduce the prevalence of sexual crimes by challenging rape myths and supportive attitudes on a global scale. Additionally, interventions targeting individuals in the general population, including children and adolescents, should be introduced to modify perceptions of rape and combat rape-supportive attitudes. Furthermore, psychosocial interventions should be designed specifically for offenders exhibiting high Dark Triad personality traits, offering an alternative to imprisonment and focusing on weakening rape myths and attitudes supportive of sexual aggression. Integration of these findings into legal and political strategies is crucial, ensuring that legislative frameworks address the role of personality traits in maintaining rape-supportive attitudes. Moreover, the development of multimodal interventions, considering both gender inequality and personality traits, should be prioritised to comprehensively address factors contributing to sexual aggression. Further research, particularly qualitative studies, is also essential to deepen the societal understanding of the influence of personality traits on rape myth

acceptance and supportive attitudes, informing future interventions and policy development.

A limitation of the present study may be that the results represent only adults and may not be generalised to younger individuals. Conducting the study online on social media platforms may also have confounded the findings. Varied results may have been generated had the research been performed in a laboratory setting. Gender differences were not considered, which may have provided a variation in the obtained findings, considering the number of studies that support the role of gender in maintaining rape cognitions.

Further research is required to clarify the diverse influence of narcissism on RMA, especially by considering the vulnerable and grandiose subtypes outside this study's scope. Gender influences may be found, as previously it has been demonstrated that gender moderates the maintenance of rape cognitions like RSA and RMA (Navas et al., 2020). Qualitative studies can provide an in-depth understanding of the rape cognitions harboured by high scores on the Dark Triad and open new research domains in academia and law.

In essence, the present study contributes to the vast array of findings on Dark Triad personality traits and their contributions towards the maintenance of rape cognitions like RMA and RSA. Interventions for identifying and targeting the Dark Triad are required to weaken rape cognitions, thus promoting a mature perspective towards rape crimes in society.

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