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Psychology of Personality: Real and Virtual Context

DARK TRIAD AND VALUES IN ATHLETES AND NON-ATHLETES

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Abstract

The study was aimed at identifying the relationship between value orientations and indicators of The Dark Triad in athletes and non-athletes. The sample consisted of 69 professional athletes, and 69 Non-Athletes youths, who are not related to professional sports (N=138). Negative personality traits were assessed by a short Dark Triad Questionnaire (SD3), values were assessed by Schwartz Portrait Values Questionnaire. The value of the Achievement is the first place in athletes. Non-Athletes have Self-Direction values. Significant differences between athletes and non-athletes in the values of Tradition, Self-Direction, Stimulation, Hedonism and Benevolence were found: non-athletes received higher rates in these parameters. The relationship of value orientations and indicators of the Dark Triad is most pronounced in the group of athletes. In the sports group, Machiavellianism is positively correlated with the values of Security, Tradition, Self-Direction, Hedonism, Power, Benevolence and Universalism, and negatively correlated with Conformity. Narcissism is positively correlated with the values of Security, Self-Direction, Hedonism, Achievement and Power, and negatively associated with Conformity and Tradition. Psychopathy correlates positively with Hedonism, and negatively with Conformity, Tradition, Achievement, and Benevolence.

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1. Introduction

People who are professionally engaged in a particular sport differ from those who are not involved in professional sports, not only the level of mastering special skills and abilities, but also a number of personal qualities, values, etc. Study of the value preferences of athletes can be an important aspect in the study of the success of sports activities.

2. Problem Statement

Values represent certain established beliefs, ways of assessing a particular event in various field of human life (Rokeach, 1973; Schwartz, 1992). In studies of the relationships of personality traits and values, as a rule, the main focus is on the relationships of values with the characteristics of the components of the Big Five, while the relationship of values with negative personality traits is rarely the object of scientific interest (Parks-Leduc et al., 2014).

The Dark Triad represents three distinct but interrelated traits - Narcissism, Machiavellianism, and non-clinical Psychopathy (Paulhus & Williams, 2002). These personality traits are considered to be maladaptive, but in some cases, they can give their carrier certain advantages over the rest (Furnham et al., 2013). It should be noted that, in spite of the increased popularity of the study of the Dark Triad, these indicators of personality are less studied among athletes. Empirical studies have shown a connection between the Dark Triad and the athlete's attitude to doping. For example, athletes who score higher in the Dark Triad are more susceptible to doping (Nicholls et al., 2017).

A study of the Dark Triad, performed on respondents with sports experience and respondents who do not engage in professional sports, showed significant differences between athletes and non-athletes (Vaughan et al., 2019). Thus, the athletes received higher scores for all three indicators Dark Triad compared to non-athletes. In turn, athletes engaged in individual sports have higher rates of narcissism, Machiavellianism and psychopathy compared to athletes engaged in collective sports (Vaughan et al., 2019).

3. Research Questions

It is assumed that athletes differ significantly from non-athletes in terms of their value preferences and Dark Triad indexes, as well as in the interrelationships of those variables.

4. Purpose of the Study

The study aims to identify the relationship between value orientations and the Dark Triad in athletes and non-athletes.

5. Research Methods

Sample

1. 69 professional athletes, students at the Institute of physical culture, sports and health. The average age of the respondents was 20.55 years, SD– 2 years. 42% of the respondents were female.

2. 69 not athletes who are not related to professional sports. Mean age = 21.25 years old, SD =2.8; 49% female.

Methods

A short questionnaire of the Dark Triad (SD3) (Egorova et al., 2015) was used to assess negative personality traits. This questionnaire contains 27 questions and provides an assessment on three scales: Machiavellianism, Narcissism and Psychopathy.

In the study of the value sphere, Schwartz's "Portrait value questionnaire" was used in the adaptation of Magun and Rudnev (2008).

6. Findings

6.1. Values in athletes and non-athletes

Ranking of value preferences of athletes allowed to identify the following picture. Male and female who are professionally engaged in sports, chose the Achievement value in the first place, Universalism in the second, and Independent direction in the third. The least important values for athletes are Stimulation, Conformity and Tradition.

The hierarchy of values of male and female who do not engage in sports differs from the hierarchy of values of athletes. The most preferred values of this group of respondents are Self-Direction, Benevolence and Hedonism, and the least preferred Power, Tradition and Conformity (Table 01).

Table 01. Hierarchy of values of athletes and non-athletes

Athletes			Non-Athletes		
Value	M	SD	Value	M	SD
1.Achievement	4,39	1,23	Value	M	SD
2.Universalism	4,20	1,02	1.Achievement	4,74	0,81
3.Self-Direction	4,17	1,62	2.Universalism	4,64	0,98
4. Benevolence	4,09	1,24	3.Self-Direction	4,61	1,12
5. Hedonism	3,96	1,61	4. Benevolence	4,41	0,88
6. Power	3,82	1,52	5. Hedonism	4,37	1,30
7. Security	3,77	1,15	6. Power	4,31	1,31
8. Stimulation	3,70	1,36	7. Security	4,03	1,26
9. Conformity	3,21	1,41	8. Stimulation	3,77	1,15
10. Tradition	2,93	0,91	9. Conformity	3,30	1,15

The next stage of data analysis was the comparison of the average values of the main indicators of the value sphere in the groups of athletes and non-athletes. For this goal we used student's T-test (Table 02). Significant differences between students of conventional universities and students studying at a sports Institute have been found for values such as Tradition, Self-Direction, Stimulation, Hedonism and Benevolence. Non-athletes received on average higher marks on these indicators in comparison with athletes.

Table 02. Comparison of athletes and non-athletes on values

Value	M (Athletes)	M (Non-Athletes)	t	p
Security	3,77	4,03	-1,27	0,21
Conformity	3,21	3,01	0,91	0,37
Tradition	2,93	3,30	-2,09	0,04
Self-Direction	4,17	4,74	-2,63	0,01
Stimulation	3,70	4,31	-2,71	0,01
Hedonism	3,96	4,61	-2,74	0,01
Achievement	4,39	4,37	0,10	0,92
Power	3,82	3,77	0,22	0,83
Benevolence	4,09	4,64	-2,94	0,00
Universalism	4,20	4,41	-1,31	0,19

Comparison of male and female obtained statistically significant sex differences in the value of Achievement in the group of athletes. In general, female received higher rates for this parameter ($t = 2,17$, $p = 0,03$). There were no significant gender differences in value indicators in the not involved in sport group of male and female. Studies conducted earlier on sample of similar age, but not engaged in professional sports, showed a different picture of sex differences. Female chose the values of Security compared to the male, also there was no significant sex differences in other attitudes (Rzhanova & Alekseeva, 2017).

Analysis of the relationship between value orientations and sports experience in a group of students involved in sports, showed a positive correlations with the duration of sports career values such as Conformity ($r = 0,34$, $p = 0,01$) and Tradition ($r = 0,27$, $p = 0,03$). Then the longer the study participant's sports experience, then more he / she prefers values related to the preservation of cultural and religious customs, as well as compliance with social and cultural requirements.

6.2. Dark Triad in athletes and non-athletes

Comparison of the mean values of the Dark Triad obtained significant differences between athletes and non-athletes in psychopathy. Athletes in general received higher marks for this parameter (Table 3.). There were no significant differences between the analyzed groups of respondents in terms of Machiavellianism and Narcissism.

Table 03. Comparison of athletes and non-athletes in the Dark triad

Dark Triad	M (Athletes)	M (Non-Athletes)	t	p
Machiavellianism	31,64	30,74	0,88	0,38
Narcissism	28,86	27,19	1,93	0,06
Psychopathy	24,91	20,88	2,95	0,00

In the sample of athletes significant sex differences in characteristics that constitute the Dark Triad were identified. Thus, young men received higher scores in terms of Narcissism and Psychopathy (Table 0 4). This picture is somewhat different from the data obtained earlier in the Russian-language sample (Egorova et al., 2015), however, coincides with the results of other studies, most of which showed that male

and female differ in Narcissism and Psychopathy and much less in Machiavellianism (see, for example Jonason et al., 2010; Jonason et al., 2012)

Table 04. Comparison of male and female athletes in the Dark triad

Dark Triad	M (male athletes)	M (female athletes)	t	p
Machiavellianism	32,8	30,0	1,90	0,06
Narcissism	30,0	27,3	2,97	0,00
Psychopathy	29,6	18,4	6,49	0,00

Sports experience negatively correlates with all three indicators of The dark triad Correlation with Machiavellianism $r = -0,26$, $p = 0,03$; correlation with Narcissism $r = -0,55$, $p = 0,00$; correlation with Psychopathy $r = -0,69$, $p = 0,00$.

The more sports experience, the less pronounced are the characteristics that make up the Dark Triad. This picture may be related to the fact that at the beginning of a professional career, the qualities associated with competition and rivalries are more necessary.

6.3. Values and the Dark Triad

By means of correlation analysis revealed multiple relationships between the characteristics of the Dark Triad and indicators of the value sphere in the group of athletes and non-athletes (Table. 5).

Table 05. Correlations of 10 values and the Dark triad in a group of athletes and non-athletes

	Athletes			Non-Athletes		
	Machiavellianism	Narcissism	Psychopathy	Machiavellianism	Narcissism	Psychopathy
Achievement	,543**	,315**	-,064	,178	,049	-,013
Universalism	-,476**	-,567**	-,484**	-,047	-,094	-,249*
Self-Direction	,248*	-,357**	-,403**	-,102	-,257*	-,003
Benevolence	,552**	,352**	-,135	,073	,333**	,343**
Hedonism	,473**	,342**	,076	-,027	,388**	,202
Power	,426**	,288*	,336**	,261*	,380**	,353**
Security	,130	,391**	-,284*	,331**	,624**	,224
Stimulation	,516**	,368**	,098	,455**	,512**	,400**
Conformity	,510**	,046	-,261*	-,040	,102	-,113
Tradition	,429**	,252*	-,112	-,162	-,078	-,101

Notes: ¹ * $p < 0,05$; ** $p < 0,01$

So, in the group of athletes Machiavellianism is positively associated with the values of Security, Tradition, Independence, Self-Direction, Hedonism, Power, Benevolence and Universalism, and is negatively associated with Conformity. Narcissism is positively associated with the values of Security, Self-Direction, Stimulation, Hedonism, Achievement and Power, and negatively associated with Conformity and Tradition. Psychopathy correlates positively with Hedonism, and negatively with Conformity, Tradition, Achievement, and Benevolence.

The group of non-athletes is characterized by a smaller number of significant correlations between the basic values and indicators of the Dark Triad in comparison with athletes. Machiavellianism positively correlates with Hedonism, Achievement and Power. Narcissism is positively associated with Self-

Direction, Stimulation, Hedonism, Achievement, Power and negatively with Tradition. Psychopathy positively correlates with Self-Direction, Hedonism, Power and negatively correlates with Conformity.

7. Conclusion

As it could be expected, when ranking values, athletes set the value of Achievement in the first place. For ordinary respondents, this value is not so important, in the hierarchy they prefer the value of Self-Direction. The comparison of averages does not identify significant differences in achievement value. Other values such as Tradition, Self-Direction, Stimulation, Hedonism, and Benevolence are rated higher by regular respondents rather than athletes. Our results do not agree with the data obtained in other works, in particular, with the Latvian study, where on the contrary it was athletes who had higher scores on Hedonism, Stimulation, Self-Direction and Achievement (Sigitas et al., 2017). Differences in the results are most likely due to the heterogeneity of the sample, which included representatives of different sports.

Comparison of value assessments of male and female athletes found significant differences only in the value of Achievement. This result can most likely be explained by the fact that in society there is a stereotype of male dominance in sports competitions and masculine behaviour (Schissel, 2000). And, therefore, women have to put more effort to their achievements in sports to be evaluated as significantly as men.

The relationship of value orientations and indicators of the Dark Triad is most distinct in the group of athletes. In a sample of non-athletes, the identified relationships are quite expected: Machiavellianism, Narcissism and Psychopathy are mainly positively associated with the values that make up the factors of the highest order of Self-Enhancement and Openness to Change - that is, with those values that are associated with obtaining benefits for themselves, and negatively with the values of Conservation. In the group of athletes, the links between values and Narcissism and Psychopathy are quite predictable and differ less from the picture obtained from non-athletes. Differences are observed in the analysis of links with Machiavellianism: this indicator positively correlates with higher-order values of Self-Transcendence, which are the opposite of Schwartz's values of Self-Enhancement, and reflect the desire to sacrifice personal preferences for the benefit of others (Schwartz et al., 2012), Machiavellianism in athletes is also positively associated with Conservation, Security and Tradition.

We suppose that such results can be explained by the specificity of the social situation in which athletes are included. On the one hand, sports competition and the desire to win competitions can excite negative social actions, such as an attack on other players or cheating (Kavussanu et al., 2006), on the other hand, athletes are often required to be role models, since sport in modern society is used not only for physical improvement, but also in particular for moral and aesthetic education (Yagodin, 2016). Therefore, it is likely that athletes with high Machiavellianism are more likely to give socially desirable answers when evaluate their value preferences, appreciating the values of Universalism, Benevolence and Tradition.

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