

## When the Dark Lingers: The Role of Dark Triad Personality on Burnout Among Lecturers

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### Abstract

Burnout is commonly experienced by professionals in the "helping relationship" sector, including lecturers. One of the factors contributing to burnout is an individual's personality. This study aims to investigate how Dark Triad Personality traits (narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy) influence burnout among Indonesian lecturers. The methodology of this study was cross-sectional. Dark triad personality was measured using 5 scales: NPI, CNI, LPSP-I, LPSP-II, and Mach-IV. The total number of participants in this study was 260 (Male=141, female=119). They were all lecturers in Indonesia with at least two years of work experience. This study shows that Machiavellianism is the most significant predictor of negative burnout. Narcissism, both agentic narcissism and communal narcissism, significantly predicted burnout negatively. Secondary psychopathy significantly predicts burnout negatively, whereas primary psychopathy does not predict burnout. Furthermore, demographic factors such as gender, age, length of service, and job position do not predict burnout among lecturers.

**Keywords:** Narcissism, Machiavellianism, psychopathy, burnout, and gender.

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### Introduction

Burnout is a common symptom among helping relationship workers and social workers such as doctors, nurses, psychologists, and lecturers, and it became a serious concern (Susanto & Suminar, [2022](#)) because they are required to continually improve their competence to carry out their duties and responsibilities. Previous research discovered that employees at Quebec University experience high levels of burnout, with around 40% of 20% of 1,086 employees being affected (Biron et al., [2008](#)). Another study has revealed that burnout among lecturers at a university in Ukraine is at the second stage, namely resistance,

at 38.51%, the first stage is tension at 29.85%, and the third stage of burnout, namely exhaustion, at 31.51% (Kovalkova & Malkova, [2021](#)). The study also revealed that 10.16% of respondents experienced psycho-traumatic events; 7.25% were dissatisfied with themselves; 4.53% felt isolated; 7.94% experienced anxiety and depression; 8.59% exhibited inadequate emotional responses and 7.69% encountered emotional-ethical disorientation. 12.73% of participants experienced emotional burnout; 9.5% reported feelings of professional responsibility isolation; 5.19% suffered from emotional deficits; 6.43% experienced emotional detachment; 6.15% reported depersonalization; and 13.74% experienced psychosomatic and psycho-vegetative disorders (Kovalkova & Malkova, [2021](#)). Similar phenomena also occur in Indonesia. Work-related stress among Sorong Lecturer Academy academic staff reached 56.72%. Meanwhile, the burnout rate of lecturers in STAKN Kupang reached 44.66% (Tameon, [2019](#)). According to Wayanti's ([2016](#)) research, burnout among lecturers shows a 50% prevalence rate for physical exhaustion, and 56.3% experience emotional exhaustion (Wayanti, 2016).

Personality traits have been identified as a contributing factor to the onset of burnout. Fillhumam and Nurcholis ([2019](#)) found a negative correlation between burnout and the aspects of openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, and agreeableness in the Big Five personality traits (Fillhumaam et al., [2019](#)). However, they found a positive correlation with neuroticism. Similar findings were also presented by Storm & Rothmann ([2003](#)) indicating that high neuroticism, extraversion, agreeableness, low openness, and low conscientiousness can trigger the emergence of burnout (Storm & Rothmann, [2003](#)). Furthermore, it has been found that introvert personalities have a positive correlation with burnout (Atia & Soetjningsih, [2020](#)). Research conducted by (Alberto, [2022](#)) revealed that the introverted personality type has the greatest influence on burnout (Alberto, [2022](#)).

#### *The dark triad and burnout*

Burnout is not only influenced by positive personality traits. Previous research indicates that personality traits with negative connotations (such as dark triad traits: Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy) have an impact on burnout (Čopková, [2021](#); Prusik & Szulawski, [2019](#)). Several studies found that the dark triad has an impact on burnout (Busuioc & Butucescu, [2020](#); Čopková, [2021](#); Prusik & Szulawski, [2019](#)). Individuals with Machiavellianism and psychopathy exhibit low levels of burnout and are resilient to pressure due to their high need for power (Furtner et al., [2017](#)). Meanwhile, an individual with

n Narcissism also experiences a low level of burnout due to high life satisfaction and low-stress levels (Judge & LePine, [2007](#)).

A study conducted by Prusik and Szulawski ([2019](#)) investigated burnout and dark triad personality, and found that narcissism negatively correlates with burnout (Prusik & Szulawski, [2019](#)). There is a negative correlation between narcissism and burnout as individuals with high narcissism exhibit high work motivation and endurance towards fatigue (Prusik & Szulawski, [2019](#)). Another study revealed that narcissism is a moderator that reduces the relationship between emotion variables and burnout (Busuioc & Butucescu, [2020](#)). Unsurprisingly, narcissism negatively affects burnout, as it shares traits with extraversion; previous research has shown a positive correlation between narcissism and extraversion (Eşkisu et al., [2017](#); Mathieu, [2013](#); Permadi, [2023](#); Wang, [2017](#)). Furthermore, recent research indicates that individuals with high levels of the dark triad are more resilient to stress and more adaptive (Kajonius & Björkman, [2020](#); Zilong Cui, [2021](#)). Therefore, it is speculated that narcissism is negatively correlated with burnout.

Unlike narcissism, Machiavellianism and psychopathy positively correlate with burnout (Prusik & Szulawski, [2019](#)). More specifically, Machiavellianism is positively correlated with burnout and its components (emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation, and reduced personal accomplishment), and negatively correlated with general health, job satisfaction and life satisfaction (Mirkovic & Bianchi, [2019](#)). This phenomenon occurs because Machiavellianism is positively correlated with perfectionism (Sherry et al., [2006](#)), making individuals more prone to disappointment and failure (Mirkovic & Bianchi, [2019](#)). On the other hand, a positive correlation between psychopathy and burnout has been found, as individuals with high psychopathy have lower life satisfaction and well-being, thus impacting their psychological well-being (Aghababaei & Błachnio, [2015](#)).

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Among the three dark triad personality traits, narcissism appears to have the lowest impact on burnout, accounting for only 3.5% of the total burnout score (Schwarzkopf et al., [2016](#)). Individuals with high levels of narcissism believe that they are great and have fantasies about controlling others, achieving great success, and being overly admired and loved. They seek validation from others (Rizal & Handayani, [2021](#)). Based on the dimension of burnout, individuals with high narcissism will contribute 7.3% emotional exhaustion, 3.6% depersonalization, and no significant association with the dimension of reduced accomplishment (Schwarzkopf et al., [2016](#)). Previous research has shown a positive correlation between narcissism and burnout (Barnett & Flores, [2016](#); Schwarzkopf et al., [2016](#); Von Känel et al., [2017](#)). This is because the narcissistic individual has difficulty maintaining positive interpersonal relationships with co-workers, is disrespectful and distrustful of others, and creates a hostile work environment by behaving in a counterproductive manner. Individuals with high levels of narcissism contribute to emotional exhaustion of 7.3%, depersonalisation of 3.6%, and are not associated with decreased achievement. However, other studies (Grover & Furnham, [2021](#); Prusik & Szulawski, [2019](#)) have shown that narcissism has a negative correlation with burnout, as individuals with high levels of narcissism possess high levels of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Unfortunately, the study's limitation was the data collection was conducted in an individualistic country where the narcissism values differ from those in a collectivist country. Narcissism has an impact on burnout in individualistic countries, especially in collectivist societies that are less accepting of such traits. Therefore, it is suspected that individuals with high levels of narcissism in collectivist countries are more susceptible to burnout.

While research findings on the relationship between narcissism and burnout have been contradictory, all studies agree that Machiavellianism has a positive impact on burnout (Banka & Ortowski, [2012](#); Grover & Furnham, [2021](#); Mirkovic & Bianchi, [2019](#); Stradovnik & Stare, [2018](#)). Individuals with high levels of Machiavellianism exhibit characteristics of being deceitful, manipulative, dishonest, slanderous, and sabotaging (Dahling et al., [2012](#)). In addition, individuals with high levels of Machiavellianism also have a positive correlation with perfectionism (Sherry et al., [2006](#)), which exacerbates the condition of burnout. Machiavellianism is positively correlated with all dimensions of burnout, including emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation, and reduced achievement (Mirkovic & Bianchi, [2019](#)).

Consistent with Machiavellianism, psychopathy is also positively associated with burnout (Čopková, [2021](#); Johnson et al., [2015](#); Oyewunmi et al., [2018](#); Sutton et al., [2020](#)). Psychopathy refers to low levels of empathy, impulsivity, and a tendency to seek out excitement (Rizal & Handayani, [2021](#)). Psychopathy is even considered the largest predictor of burnout, at 58% (Čopková, [2021](#)). This occurs because individuals with high levels of psychopathy have poor communication skills (Oyewunmi et al., [2018](#)), which results in low satisfaction and happiness, leading to low psychological well-being (Aghababaei & Błachnio, [2015](#)).

In contrast, research on bright personality traits, especially agreeableness, shows a negative correlation with the dark triad (Mishra et al., [2022](#)). Therefore, the dark triad should also positively correlate with burnout. However, the majority of research results indicate that agreeableness has a negative correlation with burnout (Alarcon et al., [2009](#); Bai et al., [2020](#); Castillo-Gualda et al., [2019](#); Hardiyanti, [2018](#); Kim et al., [2019](#)). A positive correlation between the dark triad, particularly narcissism, and agreeableness has been found in several studies (Arseneault & Catano, [2019](#); Hyatt et al., [2018](#); Lee & Ashton, [2005](#); Zhou et al., [2015](#)). The findings are inconsistent with studies on the relationship between personality traits measured by the Big Five model and burnout. Therefore, further investigation is necessary to examine the relationship between dark triad personality traits and burnout.

#### *Cultural factors and burnout*

In addition to personality factors, cultural factors are also considered to impact the onset of burnout. People of African descent are more resistant to burnout than those of Caucasian descent, according to the Maslach Study conducted in 1993 (Lawrence & Reede, [2021](#)). This phenomenon occurs because individuals of African descent prioritize familial and friendship relationships. They are trained to become more accustomed to relationships involving emotions, such as conflicts and realistic expectations. This is supported by the fact that they are accustomed to dealing with unpleasant behaviors such as racism, discrimination, and poverty. Indonesia and Africa share a common cultural background, with Indonesian society being collectivist.

On the other hand, the dark triad is believed to be a hindrance to group harmony (Eşkisü et al., [2017](#); Hussain et al., [2021](#)). However, individuals with this personality can still thrive and even develop in

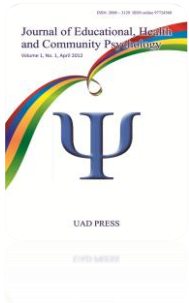
everyday society. Therefore, it is presumed that although the dark triad, in particular narcissism, predicts a decrease in burnout, the characteristics of narcissistic individuals who prioritize themselves and disrupt harmony are highly opposed in collective societies (Fatfouta et al., [2021](#)). Thus, the relationship between the dark triad and burnout in a collective society is likely to be different from the relationship between the dark triad and burnout in an individualistic society. Therefore, this hypothesis requires further investigation.

#### *Gender and burnout*

Demographic factors such as gender are considered to play a role in causing burnout. Compared to women, men may be more susceptible to emotional burnout. Males who experience burnout tend to undergo depersonalisation, whereas females who experience burnout tend to experience emotional exhaustion. Consistent with the aforementioned study, the meta-analysis conducted by Purvanova and Muros ([2010](#)) indicates that male burnout sufferers tend to experience higher levels of depersonalisation compared to females, while females experience higher levels of emotional exhaustion compared to males. Overall, however, women report higher burnout than men (Purvanova & Muros, [2010](#)).

Several previous studies have indicated that burnout is influenced by gender (Cañadas-De la Fuente et al., [2018](#); Lorello et al., [2021](#); Marchand et al., [2018](#); Maslach & Jackson, [1985](#); Redondo-Flórez et al., [2020](#); Verweij et al., [2017](#)). Men exhibit higher levels of burnout than women (Cañadas-De la Fuente et al., [2018](#)). However, on the other hand, Redondo-Flórez et al. ([2020](#)) demonstrate that women have higher levels of burnout than men (Redondo-Flórez et al., [2020](#)). Marchand et al. ([2018](#)) present that the level of burnout in women and men is based on their age. Young men are more prone to burnout, whereas women aged 20-35 and above 55 demonstrate vulnerability to burnout (Marchand et al., [2018](#)).

Research on the dark triad and burnout while controlling for demographic variables (gender) in collective Indonesian societies is still limited. Research in Indonesia predominantly focuses on burnout and personality related to the big five traits (Christianto, [2020](#); Fillhumaam et al., [2019](#); Hardiyanti, [2018](#); Purnama Sari Indah et al., [2022](#); Richardo Alexandra, [2022](#)). However, the roles and functions of men and women in Indonesia are very different from their counterparts in Europe and America, where research on burnout is more common. In addition, Indonesia's patriarchal culture puts undue pressure on men to



obtain higher education, achieve success, build confidence, develop competence (Adil et al., [2017](#)), and take responsibility as the head of the family, which is suspected to be a catalyst for male burnout. Therefore, based on the above arguments, the researcher is interested in further investigating the impact of the dark triad personality on the burnout experienced by lecturers, while controlling gender.

The extant literature on the dark triad (Machiavellianism, narcissism and psychopathy) and its relationship with burnout among lecturers is relatively sparse, leaving some important gaps in knowledge. While there is a growing interest in how the Dark Triad affects various occupations, the majority of research to date has focused on professions such as HR, recruitment, and the general workplace environment (Prusik & Szulawski, [2019](#)). Research specific to educators, particularly lecturers, is still in its infancy. Lecturers are exposed to distinctive stressors, including elevated student expectations, administrative responsibilities, and emotional demands associated with teaching. These stressors may interact with Dark Triad traits in a manner that differs from other occupational groups.

The extant literature suggests that while Machiavellianism and psychopathy are generally associated with higher levels of burnout due to their association with manipulation, lack of empathy and exploitation of others, the role of narcissism is more complex. The experience of burnout may differ for individuals with narcissistic traits, as their desire for external validation and admiration can serve as a protective factor, particularly in environments where they receive recognition (Prusik & Szulawski, [2019](#)). Further research is required to elucidate this paradox, particularly in the context of lecturers, who frequently operate within highly social and hierarchical environments. The majority of existing research has been conducted in a Western context. There is a knowledge gap concerning the interaction of these personality traits with burnout in non-Western educational settings, where cultural norms pertaining to authority, individualism and community may influence the prevalence of Dark Triad traits and their impact on burnout (Čopková, [2021](#)). Based on the presented material, it can be hypothesized that dark triads (narcissism, Machiavellianism, psychopathy) and demographic factors, specifically gender, have an impact on burnout among academics, both positively and negatively.

## **Method**

### *Research Design*

The research method used is a cross-sectional study. This study design observes a phenomenon at a specific point in time. The exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory nature of this research design enables an explanation of the relationship between variables, testing the hypothesis formulation validity, and determining the level of differences within the sample group at a specific time point (Allis Nurdini, [2006](#)).

### *Participants*

Minimum target sample size was 81, assuming an effect size of odds ratio (OR) = 2.17,  $\alpha = .05$ , and statistical power = .95 (Nuzulia & Why, [2020](#)). A total number of lecturers participated in this study is 260 (Males=141, females=119). The criteria for lecturing in this study require at least 2 years experience of lecturing. Convenience sampling was used for sample selection, whereby participants were chosen based on convenience and availability (Creswell, [2016](#)). The age range of the respondents was between 27 and 71 years old [Mean (SD) = 45.05(11.26)] with a working experience range of 2 to 43 years [Mean (SD) = 17.70 (11.489)]. Prior to the completion of the scales provided on the first page of the questionnaire, the participants were informed of the details of the study, confidentiality, provided with an opportunity to ask questions, and asked to give their informed consent. Eighty-five individuals hold structural positions while 175 others are ordinary lecturers.

### *Instruments*

Dark triad personality is measured using 5 scales. Machiavellianism is measured by the Mach-IV scale consisting of 20 items, which test interpersonal tactics, a cynical view of human nature and a disregard for conventional morality. There are five response options for this scale: strongly disagree, somewhat disagree, neutral, somewhat agree, and strongly agree. The higher the score, the higher the level of Machiavellianism of the individual being assessed. The internal consistency of this scale, measured by Cronbach's Alpha, is .697. The example item of this scale are: (1) People suffering from incurable diseases should have the choice of being put painlessly to death; (2) It is wise to flatter important people; and (3) The best way to handle people is to tell them what they want to hear.



Narcissism was measured in this study using two scales, the Narcissistic Personality Inventory-Short Version (NPI; Ames et al., [2016](#)) and the Communal Narcissism Inventory (CNI; Gebauer et al., [2012](#)). Inventory-Short Version (NPI) comprises 16 items and has a reliability of .723 to measure agentic narcissism. NPI was chosen due to its high internal consistency and significant association with the long version of the narcissism scale, specifically NPI-40. The higher the score obtained, the higher the level of agentic narcissism in the individual. The Communal Narcissism Inventory (CNI) comprises 16 items with a reliability of .949 and is used to assess how an individual views themselves within a group. Scoring the Narcissistic Personality Inventory-Short Version (NPI) entails assigning a score of 1 to statements that depict narcissism and 0 to those that do not. Scoring for the Communal Narcissism Inventory (CNI) is accomplished by providing 7 answer options. The higher the score obtained, the higher the level of communal narcissism displayed by the individual. The example item of this scale are: (1) I really like to be the center of attention; (2) I think I am a special person, and (3) Everybody likes to hear my stories.

Psychopathy is also measured using two scales, The Levenson Primary and Secondary Psychopathy Scale (LPSP-I & LPSP-II; Levenson et al., [1995](#)). The LPSP-I comprises 16 items, with a reliability of .784, measuring selfish, caring, and manipulative postures towards others. Meanwhile, LPSP-II comprises 10 items with a reliability of .684 for assessing impulsivity and self-defeating lifestyle. The second scoring scale is achieved by providing four answer options, namely disagree, somewhat disagree, somewhat agree, and strongly agree. The higher the score, the more psychopathic the person. The example item of this scale are: (1) I find myself in the same kinds of trouble, time after time; (2) I don't plan anything very far in advance; and (3) I quickly lose interest in tasks I start.

Burnout is measured using an instrument developed by Maslach, known as the Maslach-Burnout Inventory. This scale comprises 22 items, with a Cronbach's Alpha score of .921. The higher the score obtained, the greater the level of burnout experienced by the participant. The example item of this scale are: (1) I feel emotionally drained by my work; (2) I feel I work too hard at my job; and (3) I feel like I am at the end of my rope.

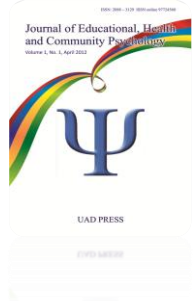
### *Data Analysis*



The data analysis used in this study is multiple linear regression analysis using software IBM SPSS 21.

## **Result**

Table I shows the mean and standard deviation (SD) of each variable along with the intercorrelation between each variable. The results show that burnout correlates negatively with agentic narcissism, communal narcissism, Machiavellianism, gender, age, job tenure, and job position. Meanwhile, burnout has a positive correlation with primary and secondary psychopathy.



**Tabel 1**

Mean (SD), and Intercorrelation between Research Variables (N = 260)

Variabel	Mean (SD)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1 Agentic Narcissism	81.2308 (16.57860)										
2 Communal Narcissism	3.5192 (2.71198)	.403**									
3 Primary Psy	12.7962 (6.44615)	.245**	.154*								
4 Secondary Psy	9.9846 (4.33177)	-.071	-.116	.407**							
5 Machiavellianism	72.7538 (8.26684)	-.147*	-.014	-.567**	-.506**						
6 Gender	1.5423 (.49917)	.082	.046	.040	.032	-.020					
7 Age	45.0500 (11.25938)	-.032	-.095	-.098	-.184**	.222**	.115				
8 Employment Tenure	17.7019 (11.48797)	-.023	-.066	-.105	-.181**	.199**	.096	.952**			
9 Job Position	1.3269 (.46999)	.060	.100	.081	.008	-.036	.031	-.008	.007		
10 Burnout	56.6077 (20.13602)	-.180**	-.211**	.319**	.588**	-.550**	-.066	-.311**	-.290**	-.041	

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).



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The regression analysis was conducted in two stages. The first stage involved analysis without including control variables (i.e., gender, age, job tenure, and job position), while in the second stage, control variables were included. The hypothesis test results can be seen in [Table 2](#).

**Table 2**

Result Multiple Analysis Regression Step 1 and Step 2 (N=260)

Variabel	Step 1					Step 2				
	B	SE	Sig.	CI 95%		B	SE	Sig.	CI 95%	
				LB	UB				LB	UB
R <sup>2</sup>	.483					.519				
Agentic Narcissism	-1.261	.379	.001	-2.008	-.515	-1.205	.369	.001	-1.932	-.477
Communal Narcissism	-.130	.061	.033	-.250	-.011	-.157	.060	.009	-.275	-.039
Primary Psychopathy	.032	.180	.857	-.322	.387	.100	.177	.572	-.248	.448
Secondary Psychopathy	1.690	.254	.001	1.189	2.190	1.593	.249	.001	1.103	2.083
Machiavellianism	-.941	.144	.001	-1.225	-.657	-.840	.143	.001	-1.121	-.559
Gender						-1.742	1.796	.333	-5.278	1.795
Age						-.475	.263	.072	-.993	.043
Employment Tenure						.156	.255	.541	-.346	.658
Job Position						-1.628	1.896	.391	-5.363	2.106

According to [table 2](#), it was discovered that the variables of agentic narcissism, communal narcissism, secondary psychopathy, and Machiavellianism are able to predict burnout. Meanwhile, primary psychopathy cannot predict burnout. The results from [table 2](#) indicate that agentic narcissism, communal narcissism, and Machiavellianism negatively predict burnout. The higher a person's levels of Agentic Narcissism, Communal Narcissism and Machiavellianism, the less likely they are to experience burnout, and vice versa. Meanwhile, primary psychopathy and secondary psychopathy positively predict burnout; as primary and secondary psychopathy increase, so does burnout. Control variables such as gender, age, employment tenure, and job position do not predict the occurrence of burnout. Thus, with or without control variables, the dark triad personality holds the same level of significance.



## **Discussion**

The study found that all predictor variables (narcissism, Machiavellianism, and secondary psychopathy), with or without controlling for demographic variables (gender, age, length of employment, and job position), significantly predicted burnout, except for primary psychopathy. Agentic and communal narcissism have a negative correlation with burnout, while secondary psychopathy has a positive correlation, and Machiavellianism has a negative correlation.

The strongest predictor of burnout is Machiavellianism. The higher the level of Machiavellianism, the lower the level of burnout. This result differs from previous research, which stated that Machiavellianism has a positive effect on burnout (Manteghian et al., [2019](#); Mirkovic & Bianchi, [2019](#); Prusik & Szulawski, [2019](#)). The negative role of Machiavellianism on burnout because high levels of Machiavellianism make individuals resistant to social pressure. An individual with high Machiavellianism faces social pressure calmly, seeing it as an easily manageable obstacle due to their manipulative nature. Furthermore, Machiavellianism negatively predicts the occurrence of burnout presumably because people with high Machiavellianism show a positive relationship to positive reappraisal. In stressful situations, individuals high in Machiavellianism strive to control emotional reactions (Birkás et al., [2016](#)), so Machiavellianism is negatively correlated with 'avoidance motivation' (Kajonius & Björkman, [2020](#)). Machiavellian individuals flourish in environments lacking clear rules or guidelines, seeking out loopholes to gain advantage through positive reappraisal and unscrupulous actions to reach their objectives without

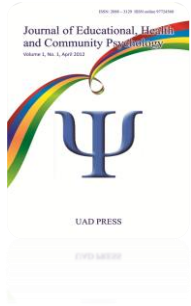
Moreover, it is suggested that Machiavellianism is negatively associated with burnout due to its manipulative nature. These manipulative qualities are believed to be employed to establish fake relationships, enhance the trust of others, and exploit them for favors, particularly in Indonesia collective cultures that prioritize relational orientation (O'Boyle et al., [2013](#)). Collectivist societies are a breeding ground for Machiavellianism, because in such societies, an individual can become a "social chameleon" who easily blends in, adapts, and gains many friends - acquired through manipulative tactics - thereby gaining easy access to seeking help in achieving their goals. With their manipulation skills, people with high Machiavellianism are expected to find career success more easily.



The career success of Machiavellianism is evidenced by the results of previous studies which show that Machiavellianism is positively correlated with positive work outcomes. Previous studies reveal that China, a collective society, experiences higher positive work outcomes compared to the United States (Ma et al., [2021](#)).

Both agentic and communal narcissism are negatively predictive of burnout. These findings align with previous research indicating a negative correlation between narcissism and burnout; higher levels of narcissism correspond with lower levels of burnout (Grover & Furnham, [2021](#); Prusik & Szulawski, [2019](#)). This may arise from the need for flattery and praise from others, and the intrinsic and extrinsic motivations (Grover & Furnham, [2021](#); Prusik & Szulawski, [2019](#)) to constantly seek approval from others. Individuals with high levels of narcissism are assumed to experience low levels of burnout due to their desire for flattery and praise. They are seemingly less affected by stress and obstacles when pursuing their goals and persist until they reach the pinnacle of admiration. This is because the self-esteem of a narcissistic person is reinforced by praise.

Another dimension of the dark triad personality with significantly high value towards burnout is secondary psychopathy. This finding supports previous research indicating a positive correlation between psychopathy and burnout (Čopková, [2021](#); Johnson et al., [2015](#); Oyewunmi et al., [2018](#); Sutton et al., [2020](#)). It is believed that individuals with high levels of psychopathy may struggle to develop interpersonal relationships due to their poor communication skills (Oyewunmi et al., [2018](#)). The inability of individuals with high levels of psychopathy to establish social relations is criticized in a country with a collectivist culture that highly values social relationships and togetherness. Furthermore, the characteristics of psychopathy that have a positive correlation with antisocial behaviour (Pasion et al., [2018](#)) make it increasingly difficult for them to access support and assistance from the community in a collectivist country. Furthermore, negative traits such as insecurity (Kyranides & Neofytou, [2021](#)) are speculated to act as catalysts for burnout to emerge, as insecurity exhibits a positive correlation with burnout (Anand et al, [2023](#)). The only aspect of the dark triad personality that does not significantly relate to burnout is primary psychopathy. Although primary psychopathy cannot predict burnout, it does have a positive correlation with burnout.



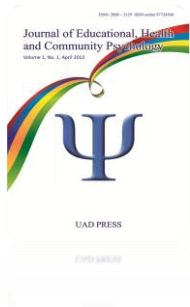
Demographic factors such as gender, age, length of service, and position do not predict the emergence of burnout. Gender is not a predictor of burnout, which is inconsistent with previous research indicating that certain genders have positive or negative correlations with burnout (Cañadas-De la Fuente et al., [2018](#); Lorello et al., [2021](#); Marchand et al., [2018](#); Maslach & Jackson, [1985](#); Redondo-Flórez et al., [2020](#); Verweij et al., [2017](#)). Gender is not a predictor of burnout, which is inconsistent with previous research indicating that certain genders have positive or negative correlations with burnout (Cañadas-De la Fuente et al., [2018](#); Lorello et al., [2021](#); Marchand et al., [2018](#); Maslach & Jackson, [1985](#); Redondo-Flórez et al., [2020](#); Verweij et al., [2017](#)). The age of an individual is unable to predict the onset of burnout. These findings do not align with the study by Marchand et al. ([2018](#)) (Marchand et al., [2018](#)). Length of employment does not predict the emergence of burnout, contradicting previous research that suggests employees with a tenure of 0-5 years are more susceptible to burnout than those with a tenure of 6-10 years (Putri et al., [2019](#)). Moreover, job position cannot predict burnout. These findings do not align with previous research suggesting that position positively affects job fatigue, as job fatigue is directly proportional to workload (Pratiwi et al., [2019](#)). The variables are not capable of predicting the occurrence of burnout, presumably due to the nature of academic work in Indonesia that implements flexible work hours. Outside teaching hours, both senior and junior lecturers can engage in activities that align with their passions, such as conducting research and community service to avoid monotony in their work.

Although the study adopts a cross-sectional design, it provides evidence that dark personality traits (Machiavellianism, agentic narcissism, communal narcissism, and psychopathy) predict burnout. This study may serve as a point of reference for human resources practitioners in the recruitment and selection of employees. For jobs that demand resilience to high levels of stress, the dark triad variables are worth considering, albeit with all the ensuing consequences.

## **Conclusion**

The limitation of this study is used a cross-sectional design. Nonetheless, this study provides evidence that dark personality traits (Machiavellianism, agentic narcissism, communal narcissism, and psychopathy) predict burnout. This study shows that Machiavellianism is the most significant predictor





of negative burnout. Narcissism, both agentic narcissism and communal narcissism, significantly predicted burnout negatively. Secondary psychopathy significantly predicts burnout negatively, whereas primary psychopathy does not predict burnout. Furthermore, demographic factors such as gender, age, length of service, and job position do not predict burnout among lecturers. This study may serve as a point of reference for human resources practitioners in the recruitment and selection of employees. For jobs that demand resilience to high levels of stress, the dark triad variables are worth considering, albeit with all the ensuing consequences.

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#### **Conflict of Interest**

The researchers declare that this paper has no conflicts of interest.

#### **Author Contribution**

All authors have contributed equally to the study's conceptualization, interpreting data, reviewing, and editing the manuscript.

#### **Data Availability**

Data can be provided upon request to the author.

#### **Declarations Ethical Statement**

The study followed the guidelines of the Declaration of Helsinki.

#### **Informed Consent Statement**

Informed consent was obtained from all persons involved in the study.

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