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# The Dark Tetrad and Rape Myth Acceptance

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The Dark Tetrad and Rape Myth Acceptance

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### Abstract

With the influx of research into the "dark" personality traits, as well as the prevalence of sexual assault and rape, specifically on college campuses, it has become important to explore the possible relationships between the Dark Tetrad of personality (i.e., sub-clinical levels of narcissism, psychopathy, Machiavellianism, and sadism) and rape myth acceptance. This study was an extension of a prior study by Jonason, Girgis, and Milne-Home (2017) looking at these traits, without sadism, and with rape myth acceptance. Positive relationships between each of the Dark Tetrad traits and each rape myth were found, with the strongest correlation being between sadism and the "It Wasn't Really Rape" rape myth. The Dark Tetrad as a whole was found to be a significant predictor for all subscales, except for the "He Didn't Do It" rape myth. This research adds to the wealth of research into dark personality traits and rape myths and provides a more compelling link between the two.

### The Dark Tetrad and Rape Myth Acceptance

The increase of rapes and sexual assaults on campus has called for research into the possible predictors of these behaviors. Prior research has found relationships between subclinical levels of psychopathy, narcissism, and Machiavellianism and the acceptance of rape myths. These "dark" traits have a number of maladaptive life outcomes, including higher levels of aggression (Jones & Neria, 2015), violence (Robertson & Knight, 2014), and short-term mating (Jonason, Li, Webster, & Schmitt, 2009). The finding that these traits may be linked to the acceptance of certain rape myths, as well as correlated behaviors such as sexual coercion, victim blaming, and violence, may lead to the development of targeted and research-based sexual assault prevention programs. This study adds to the prior literature by including sadism as a "dark" trait and looking at specific rape myths.

### Literature Review

#### Dark Triad

The study of "dark" personality traits has generated a wealth of research, focusing especially on the three subclinical traits of Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy. These have become known as the "Dark Triad" of personality. Research has revealed that the Dark Triad are positively related but nonetheless distinct constructs (Furnham, Richards, & Paulhus, 2013; Paulhus & Williams, 2002). Machiavellianism is characterized by manipulation of others for one's own gain, cynicism, and a lack of morals (Furnham et al., 2013). It has been found to be significantly negatively correlated with the Big Five personality traits of Agreeableness and Conscientiousness (Paulhus & Williams, 2002). Narcissism, which is composed of grandiosity, entitlement, dominance, and superior beliefs and behaviors (Furnham et al., 2013), is positively correlated with Big Five Extraversion, Openness, and the specific

tendency of self-enhancement. The third trait, psychopathy, is characterized by increased impulsivity and thrill-seeking combined with decreased levels of empathy (Furnham, et al., 2013). It has been found to be significantly and positively correlated with Big Five Extraversion and Openness, and significantly and negatively correlated with Big Five Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, and Neuroticism (Paulhus & Williams, 2002). Different studies have found different common elements among the three Dark Triad traits, some being low Honesty-Humility (Book et al., 2016; Mededovic´ & Petrovic´, 2015), high social exploitativeness (Jonason et al., 2009), and high callousness (Mededovic´ & Petrovic´, 2015). Despite this common core, research has supported the distinctiveness of the Dark Triad traits (Furnham et al., 2013; Paulhus & Williams, 2002).

**Dark Tetrad.** More recently, there has been support for the addition of subclinical sadism to the Dark Triad. Research has found that sadism, characterized by cruelty, humiliation, aggression, and intimidation constructs, warrants a place with the other three "dark" traits, leading to the proposal of the Dark Tetrad (Buckels, Jones, & Paulhus, 2013). Sadism has been shown to share a number of characteristics (e.g., callousness) with the other traits in the Dark Triad, especially psychopathy. However, research has found it to be a unique predictor of maladaptive behaviors when combined with the Dark Triad, thus supporting its conceptualization as a distinct "dark" trait (Buckels et al., 2013). Furthermore, factor analysis of the Short Dark Triad (SD3; Jones & Paulhus, 2014) and the Assessment of Sadistic Personality (ASP; Plouffe, Saklofske, & Smith, 2016), valid and reliable measures of the Dark Triad and sadism, respectively, has found that the Dark Triad traits and sadism load as four distinct, but related, constructs (Plouffe, Saklofske, & Smith, 2016).

**Life Outcomes.** Over the past two decades, these "dark" personality traits, specifically those of the Dark Triad, have been associated with a number of negative life outcomes, such as an exploitative short-term mating strategy, (Jonason et al., 2009), aggression (Jones & Neria, 2015), and romantic revenge (Brewer, Hunt, & Abell., 2015). More relevant to this study are the sexually aggressive and violent behaviors that have been linked specifically to the Dark Triad. Sexual coercion, through the use of force or threats, as well as sexual coaxing, or the persistent and insistent advocacy for sexual contact, have been linked to the Dark Triad traits (Forbes, Adams-Curtis, Pakalka, & White, 2006). Psychopathy in particular has been found to be a unique predictor of the use of coercion in sexual situations (Forbes, Adams-Curtis, Pakalka, & White 2006). Even when looking across a number of different sexual situations, from being with a stranger, to being on a date with a significant other, psychopathy alone was significantly related with coerciveness. Research further supports the callous component of all three "dark" traits being a significant predictor of coaxing behavior (Jones & Olderbak, 2014). In a similar vein, Forbes, Adams-Curtis, Pakalka, and White (2006) found that different forms of aggression positively correlated with sexual coercion with dating partners. While not looking specifically at the Dark Triad or Dark Tetrad, this finding could potentially be explained by the aggression component of psychopathy and sadism.

Few studies have looked at the impact of the Dark Tetrad in relation to sexual assault and rape. However, conceptually speaking, subclinical levels of non-sexual sadism may account for incremental variance in sexual assault. Sadism specifically has been found to be a positive predictor of both non-sexual and sexual violence (Robertson & Knight, 2014). This may be due to the aggressive, callous, and cruel components of sadism. Furthermore, while those with

heightened levels of sadism may not be aroused by the sexual acts themselves, they may instead be utilizing these acts as means of degradation and control (Robertson & Knight, 2014).

In sum, the extant empirical research indicates a relationship between the Dark Tetrad personality traits and different indicators of interpersonal violence. These findings suggest that those higher in Dark Tetrad traits are more likely to endorse attitudes and engage in behaviors that result in sexual aggression towards women. One possible extension of this link is that there may be a positive relationship between the level of Dark Tetrad traits and the acceptance of rape myths.

**Rape Myth Acceptance.** An area of study that has, especially in recent times, received increased research attention is that of rape myth acceptance. This has led to an increased focus on the occurrence of rape and sexual assault, specifically in college campus settings, and an attempt to understand the impact of rape myth beliefs on sexual behavior, as well as the underlying causes of these fallacious attitudes. Rape myths are generally defined as "attitudes and generally false beliefs about rape that are widely and persistently held, and that serve to deny and justify male sexual aggression against women" (Losway & Fitzgerald, 1994, p. 133). There have been a number of studies reporting significant differences by gender, with men reporting greater acceptance of rape myths than women (Hayes, Abbott, & Cook, 2016; Hayes, Lorenz, & Bell, 2013). Engaging in heavy drinking (Hayes et al., 2016), as well as the status of the perpetrator and beliefs about equality (Chapleau & Oswald, 2013), have also all been correlated with rape myth acceptance, leading to the belief that these attitudes may be malleable or strategically motivated (Chapleau & Oswald, 2013). Rape myth acceptance can be extremely detrimental to victims of sexual assault, as there have been relationships found between greater acceptance of these myths and more victim blaming as well as decreased reporting of sexual

assaults by victims (Hayes et al., 2016; Hayes, Lorenz, & Bell, 2013). Lanier (2001) found that adolescent boys who reported engaging in forced sexual activity were more likely to endorse rape myths than those who did not. Research also has shown positive links between acceptance of rape myths, sexual coercion, and physical and psychological aggression in a college population (Forbes et al., 2006).

Most relevant to the current study, a relationship has been found between the Dark Triad traits and rape myth acceptance. Jonason, Girgis, & Milne-Home (2017) found significant positive correlations between all three Dark Triad variables and overall rape myth acceptance; however, when the shared variance among the Dark Triad was statistically controlled, only psychopathy emerged as a unique predictor. Jonason et al.'s (2017) findings supported a structural model in which a latent Dark Triad variable positively predicted a latent rape-enabling attitudes variable that included rape myth acceptance as one of the observed indicator variables. Collectively, Jonason et al.'s (2017) preliminary findings suggest a significant positive association between the Dark Triad and rape myth acceptance.

### **Current Project**

The current study is an extension of Jonason et al.'s (2017) research into the Dark Triad and rape myth acceptance. Given that sadism overlaps with but is distinct from the Dark Triad (Buckels et al., 2013), using the Dark Tetrad, with the added trait of sadism, may account for more variance in rape myth acceptance. Conceptually, sadism is characterized by aggression, which has been linked to rape myth acceptance in prior research (Robertson & Knight, 2014). The cruelty, humiliation, and intimidation components of sadism further support the notion that higher levels of sadism should be connected with greater rape myth acceptance. The strong positive association between psychopathy (a unique positive predictor of rape myth acceptance;

Jonason et al., 2017) and sadism (Mededovic´ & Petrovic´, 2015) further supports the possibility that those with increased levels of sadism may be more likely to affirm rape myths, as these beliefs may reflect the callous, degrading, and controlling aspects of the sadistic and psychopathic personality.

Due to the limitations in Jonason et al. (2017), I sought to extend their preliminary findings by addressing them. First, Jonason et al. (2017) researched the Dark Triad in relation to rape myth acceptance, rape survivor empathy, and rape perpetrator empathy. This study focused on the Dark Tetrad (i.e., the Dark Triad plus sadism) in an attempt to further the understanding of relationships between these aversive personality traits and rape myth acceptance. Second, while Jonason et al. (2017) utilized the Updated Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance scale (McMahon & Farmer, 2011), they only used five of the 22 items, citing the potential for participant fatigue as well as the emotional stress that the items may inflict as reasons for their decision (Jonason et al, 2017). This study looked at the relationship between the Dark Tetrad and the Updated Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance scale (McMahon & Farmer, 2011) in its entirety. This updated version is superior to the prior scale for two reasons. First, the language has been carefully updated, utilizing focus groups and experts, to reflect the most modern language in relation to sexual assault. Second, the measure is broken down into subscales, which allows for the scoring of four distinct rape myths as well as a total score (McMahon & Farmer, 2011). As the scale has shown strong validity and reliability (McMahon & Farmer, 2011), scoring the scale as intended will allow for a more fine-grained analysis of the relation between the Dark Tetrad and endorsement of each of the specific rape myths as well as overall rape myth acceptance.

There has been little prior research into the potential relationship between the Dark Tetrad and each of the specific rape myths. Conceptually speaking, each of the "dark" traits may

be reflected in different rape myths. For example, narcissism may be more strongly related with the "It Wasn't Really Rape" and the "He Didn't Mean To" myths, which remove culpability from the perpetrator. Psychopathy and sadism may relate more strongly with the "She Asked for It" and "She Lied" rape myths, in which the victim is blamed for the rape.

### **Hypotheses**

It was first hypothesized that each of the Dark Tetrad would be positively correlated with each of the specific rape myths (e.g., "It Wasn't Really Rape") due to the aggressiveness components of each trait and prior research that has related aggression with rape myth acceptance (Forbes et al., 2006). Looking specifically at each trait, my second hypothesis is that psychopathy and sadism should have the strongest correlations with the "She Asked for It" and "She Lied" rape myths. The lack of empathy, cruelty, and callous aspects of these two traits conceptually support this assertion. The third hypothesis is that narcissism should be correlated most strongly with the "It Wasn't Really Rape" and "He Didn't Mean To" rape myths due to the grandiosity and egotism characteristics of this trait. Fourth, Machiavellianism should be correlated most strongly with the "It Wasn't Really Rape" rape myth because the controlled and careful manipulation component of this trait will allow more Machiavellian respondents to endorse behaviors that are not overtly assaultive, while still maintaining control and getting what they want.

The final and main hypothesis was that sadism would account for statistically significant unique variance in rape myth acceptance scores. This hypothesis was based on previous research, which has revealed that (a) psychopathy was a unique predictor of rape myth acceptance (Jonason et al., 2017), and (b) psychopathy and sadism were strongly positively correlated (Mededovic' & Petrovic', 2015).

## Method

### Participants and Procedure

Participants were college students from an American Midwestern university ( $N = 932$ ; 316 males; 612 females; 4 transgender/other), whose ages ranged from 18-66 ( $M = 21.85$ ,  $SD = 7.14$ ). All participants completed an online, anonymous survey through Qualtrics via the Sona system in the Department of Psychology at the aforementioned Midwestern university. The racial breakdown of the sample was as follows: 77.6% White/European American, 12% Black/African American, 4.6% Asian/Asian American, 3.9% Multiethnic, 1.6% Latino/a, .1% American Indian/Alaskan Native, and .1% Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander. 76 participants were removed due to having excessive (i.e., > 20%) missing data. Missing data among the remaining 856 cases were handled using Available Item Analysis (AIA; Parent, 2013). Results of Little's (1988) test indicated that the data were missing completely at random (MCAR) for narcissism,  $\chi^2(4) = 6.61$ ,  $p = .158$ , psychopathy,  $\chi^2(11) = 6.74$ ,  $p = .820$ , sadism,  $\chi^2(8) = 6.59$ ,  $p = .581$ , and rape myths item scores,  $\chi^2(60) = 51.25$ ,  $p = .786$ . These results indicate that the pattern of missingness in the data was not problematic. (Note that there were no missing Machiavellianism data; therefore, Little's test was not performed on these data.)

### Procedure and Measures

**Dark Triad.** The Dark Triad was assessed using the Short Dark Triad (SD3; Jones & Paulhus, 2014), which measures Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy. It is comprised of three, 9-item scales, each quantifying one "dark" trait, and has been shown to have strong validity and reliability (Jones & Paulhus, 2014). Participants used a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *disagree strongly*; 5 = *agree strongly*) to indicate their agreement with each item. Sample items include "It's not wise to tell your secrets" (Machiavellianism), "People see me as a natural

leader” (Narcissism), and “I like to get revenge on authorities” (Psychopathy). Item ratings for each subscale were averaged, with higher scores indicating higher levels of each Dark Triad trait (Jones & Paulhus, 2014). Multiple studies have found that the SD3 is superior to other measures of the Dark Triad, specifically the Dirty Dozen (Jonason & Webster, 2010), as the SD3 has demonstrated stronger convergent validity, accounts for more variance in conceptually related criteria, and appears to better capture the constructs of the Dark Triad (Jones & Paulhus, 2014; Maples, Lamkin, & Miller, 2013). Within this sample, each subscale showed moderate to strong reliability (Psychopathy  $\alpha = .75$ ; Narcissism  $\alpha = .67$ ; Machiavellianism  $\alpha = .77$ )

**Sadism.** Sadism was measured using Plouffe et al.’s (2016) measure of sadistic personality tendencies, the Assessment of Sadistic Personality (ASP). This 9-item questionnaire uses a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree*; 5 = *strongly agree*) for participants to denote their agreement with each item. Three aspects of sadism are measured: subjugation, pleasure-seeking, and unempathic. Sample items are “I have made fun of people so that they know I am in control” (Subjugation), “When I mock someone, it is funny to see them get upset” (Pleasure-seeking), and “I think about hurting people who irritate me” (Unempathic). It has shown acceptable internal reliability and strong convergent validity with other established measures of sadism (Plouffe et al., 2016). Within this sample, it demonstrated strong reliability ( $\alpha = .86$ ). The ASP is scored using the total score, with one item reverse scored. Higher scores indicate higher levels of sadism.

**Rape Myth Acceptance.** The final scale that participants completed was the Updated Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance scale (UIRMA; McMahon & Farmer, 2011). As noted earlier, this scale has been updated to reflect current trends in language as well as the more subtle and subversive rape myths that have been ingrained in the current culture. There are four subscales,

each with five or six questions that comprise this 22-item questionnaire. Each of the subscales represents a specific rape myth, such as "She Asked for It", "He Didn't Mean To", "It Wasn't Really Rape", and "She Lied". Participants respond using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree*; 5 = *strongly agree*). Sample items include "If a girl acts like a slut, eventually she is going to get into trouble" (She Asked For It), "Rape happens when a guy's sex drive gets out of control" (He Didn't Mean To), "A rape probably didn't happen if the girl has no bruises or marks" (It Wasn't Really Rape), and "Rape accusations are often used as a way of getting back at guys" (She Lied). The UIRMA is scored by totaling item responses into a total raw score, as well as for each of the subscales. Lower scores indicate a greater rejection of rape myths. The measure has demonstrated adequate internal consistency, and when factor analysed, showed a five-factor structure that corresponded closely with the scoring scheme. All items loaded substantively onto factors corresponding to the subscales for which the items were intended (McMahon & Farmer, 2011). Within this sample, the UIRMA demonstrated strong reliability within each subscale and overall (see Table 1).

## Results

Following data collection and cleaning, the data were analyzed using SPSS Version 22. First, I conducted a preliminary correlation analyses to look at the associations between each of the Dark Tetrad and each of the specific rape myths variables, as well as total rape myth endorsement (see Table 1). As hypothesized, all of the Dark Tetrad variables were significantly and positively correlated with endorsement of each of the four specific rape myths as well as total rape myth acceptance. In partial support of the second hypothesis, both psychopathy ( $r=.20$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and sadism ( $r=.21$ ,  $p < .01$ ) had stronger significant correlations with the "She Asked For It" rape myth than did the other two Dark Tetrad variables (i.e., Machiavellianism and

narcissism). Contrary to my second hypothesis, however, psychopathy ( $r = .25, p < .01$ ) and sadism ( $r = .29, p < .01$ ) had their strongest significant correlations with the “It Wasn’t Really Rape” myth, not the “She Asked For It” and “She Lied” rape myths. The third hypothesis—that Narcissism should correlate most strongly with “It Wasn’t Really Rape” and “He Didn’t Mean To”—was not supported. Instead, Narcissism correlated quite modestly and about equally ( $r$ s ranging from .11 to .15) with all four specific rape myths. The fourth hypothesis, that Machiavellianism would be most strongly correlated to the “It Wasn’t Really Rape” myth ( $r = .12, p < .01$ ), was not supported, as Machiavellianism showed a slightly stronger correlation with the “She Lied” myth ( $r = .17, p < .01$ ). All of the correlations between the Dark Tetrad and rape myth acceptance were relatively low, with the strongest correlation between sadism and the “It Wasn’t Really Rape” rape myth ( $r = .29, p < .01$ ).

Next, hierarchical regressions were run to test the final hypothesis. Using each of the specific rape myth variables as well as total rape myth acceptance as successive criterion variables, three sets of predictor variables were added in three steps. In step 1, age and gender were added. Then, the Dark Triad variables were added in step 2, and sadism was added in step 3. Adding sadism to the model accounted for significantly more variance in “It Wasn’t Really Rape” ( $\Delta R^2 = .02, F(2, 904) = 20.35, p < .001$ ), “She Asked For It” ( $\Delta R^2 = .00, F(2, 904) = 4.11, p < .05$ ) as well as the total rape myth endorsement ( $\Delta R^2 = .01, F(2, 904) = 7.12, p < .001$ ). Therefore, the first hypothesis was partially supported, as sadism only accounted for statistically significant incremental variance (i.e., above and beyond the demographics and Dark Triad) in one of the four specific rape myths as well as in total rape myth acceptance. With all of the variables in the final models, age, narcissism, and sadism contributed unique variance in the “She Asked For It” myth; gender, age, and narcissism contributed unique variance to the “He Didn’t

Mean To" rape myth; age, psychopathy, and sadism offered unique variance in the "It Wasn't Really Rape" myth; psychopathy and sadism offered unique variance to the "She Lied" myth; and gender, age, narcissism, and sadism accounted for unique variance in the total rape myth acceptance (see Table 2).

### **Discussion**

This study provided an extension of Jonason et al.'s (2017) study into the relationship between the Dark Triad and rape myth acceptance. Adding sadism, and looking at each of the specific rape myths assessed by the Updated Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance subscales, provided a better understanding of the relationship between "dark" traits and rape myth acceptance. Overall, the data supported two out of the five hypotheses.

First, the data offered complete support for the first hypothesis, that each of the Dark Tetrad traits would be positively correlated with each of the rape myths (see Table 1). The callousness, cruelty, and lack of empathy components of each of these traits (Buckels, Jones, & Paulhus, 2013) lends to theoretical support for this finding, as conceptually these components should facilitate the acceptance of rape myths. These findings are also consistent with the findings of Jonason et al. (2017), who found positive, significant correlations between overall rape myth acceptance and each of the Dark Triad. With the addition of sadism in the current study, as well as exploring the relationships between each of the dark traits and each individual rape myth, the current findings extend the literature on the socially aversive Dark Tetrad traits.

Hypotheses two through four were not supported by the data. The second hypothesis, that psychopathy and sadism should have the strongest correlations with the "She Asked for It" and "She Lied" rape myths, was not supported, as these two traits were most strongly related to the "It Wasn't Really Rape" myth. Looking at these findings in relation to the literature, sadism may

have been correlated most strongly with the "It Wasn't Really Rape" myth due to the unempathic component of sadism (Plouffe et al., 2016). Those who are higher in sadistic traits, specifically low empathy, may be more likely to endorse items on the "It Wasn't Really Rape" subscale, such as "If a girl doesn't say 'no' she can't claim rape" and "If a girl doesn't physically resist sex -- even if protesting verbally -- it can't be considered rape" (McMahon & Farmer, 2011). Similar to this, psychopathy is also characterized by low levels of empathy (Furnham et al., 2013), as well as callousness (Mededovic' & Petrovic', 2015). The strong correlation between psychopathy and sadism (Mededovic' & Petrovic', 2015) can also explain why both of these traits were correlated with the "It Wasn't Really Rape" myth. Finally, it should be noted that associations of psychopathy and sadism with three of the four rape myths (the exception being "He Didn't Mean To") were of a similar magnitude, with correlations ranging from .20 to .25 (psychopathy) and from .21 to .29 (sadism).

The third hypothesis, that narcissism should be correlated most strongly with the "It Wasn't Really Rape" and "He Didn't Mean To" rape myths, was also not supported, as narcissism correlated most strongly with the "She Asked For It" and "She Lied" myths. Returning to the literature, this finding is supported by the entitlement, dominance, and superior aspects of this trait (Furnham et al., 2013). Items such as "If a girl goes to a room alone with a guy at a party, it is her own fault if she is raped" (She Asked For It) and "A lot of times, girls who say they were raped often led the guy on and then had regrets" (She Lied) conceptually would seem to be more likely to receive affirmation from those who have increased levels of entitlement and superiority. (Note, once again, that correlations between narcissism and specific rape myths were consistently modest, ranging from .11 to .15.) Finally, the fourth hypothesis, which posited that Machiavellianism should be correlated most strongly with the "It Wasn't Really Rape" rape

myth, was not supported. Given that Machiavellianism is associated with low conscientiousness (Paulhus & Williams, 2002), as well as the tendency to manipulate others and a lack of morals, the finding that Machiavellianism was most strongly (though modestly) positively correlated with the "She Lied" rape myth is supported by the literature. Manipulating the situation for their own gain and a lack of socially acceptable morals (Furnham et al., 2013) helps to explain why those high in Machiavellianism would be more likely to endorse items such as "Rape accusations are often used as a way of getting back at guys" and "A lot of times, girls who say they were raped often led the guy on and then had regrets" (She Lied).

None of the dark traits were correlated most strongly with the "He Didn't Mean To" myth, possibly because of the high social exploitativeness (Jonason et al., 2009) and high callousness (Mededovic´ & Petrovic´, 2015) associated with each of them. Conceptually speaking, the exploitativeness and callousness would make those with increased levels of the dark traits more likely to blame the female victim, and thereby endorse the other rape myths such as "She Asked For It" and "She Lied" rather than assume any degree of responsibility for the action.

Finally, the last hypothesis was partially supported. The addition of sadism did account for a small amount of unique variance in the "It Wasn't Really Rape" and "She Asked For It" rape myths as well as overall rape acceptance (see Table 2). This finding is supported by the literature, as psychopathy and sadism tend to be correlated (see Table 1) and conceptually similar (Buckels, Jones, & Paulhus, 2013), and psychopathy has been found to be a unique predictor of rape myth acceptance (Jonason et al., 2017).

Two out of the five hypotheses were somewhat supported by the data, with the final hypothesis receiving partial support. Nevertheless, associations of the Dark Tetrad with rape

myth acceptance were quite modest, with correlations ranging from .09 to .29 (*mdn* = .16) and 1-4% incremental variance explained by the Dark Tetrad in steps 2 and 3 of the hierarchical regressions. One potential reason is that each of these traits (in addition to attitudes supportive of rape myths) is quite socially undesirable. Therefore, participants may have been less likely to indicate both their true standing on the dark traits as well as their actual acceptance of the rape myths. The low correlations may have been due to little variability in the data due to impression management or some other form of socially desirable responding by the participants (see Table 1).

While the study does have a number of strengths, there were a few limitations. Using a convenience sample will always affect the generalizability of the findings. However, it was not feasible to conduct this study using another collection method. Another limitation could be the use of a college population. However, due to the recent influx of discussion about rape and sexual assault on college campuses, it is important to explore this specific population to ascertain any relationships and assist in the development of prevention programs specifically for college campuses. A third limitation may be the small magnitudes found. While some of the incremental variances were significant, the corresponding amounts of variance were minimal. The significant findings in these cases may have been due to the large sample size.

Overall, this research helped to contribute not only to the wealth of research on the Dark Tetrad, but also to the link between dark traits and rape myth acceptance. With the influx of sexual assaults on campus, as well as the attention that these incidents have received by legislators, the media, and campuses, it is important to understand the underlying traits surrounding the attitudes toward rape. This study also extended and supported a previous study, Jonason et al. (2017). Practically, this research has implications for the development of research

based interventions for the prevention of sexual assault. Understanding that predictors, such as the Dark Tetrad, account for unique variance within the acceptance of certain rape myths will allow those involved in the development of sexual assault awareness and interventions to be more targeted in their approaches.

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Table 1

*Descriptive Statistics and Correlations*

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>α</i>
1. Psychopathy	-	.55*	.30*	.69*	.20*	.09*	.25*	.24*	.22*	2.13	.61	.75
2. Machiavellianism	-	-	.31*	.47*	.14*	.10*	.12*	.17*	.16*	2.93	.63	.77
3. Narcissism	-	-	-	.21*	.15*	.13*	.11*	.15*	.16*	2.92	.56	.67
4. Sadism	-	-	-	-	.21*	.12*	.29*	.23*	.24*	15.73	6.01	.86
5. "She Asked For It"	-	-	-	-	-	.59*	.62*	.70*	.88*	11.49	4.79	.85
6. "He Didn't Mean To"	-	-	-	-	-	-	.48*	.59*	.82*	13.59	4.86	.79
7. "It Wasn't Really Rape"	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	.57*	.76*	7.30	3.13	.86
8. "She Lied"	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	.89*	10.93	4.79	.92
9. UIRMAS Total Score	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	43.31	14.71	.93

\* $p < .01$ .

Table 2

*Hierarchical Regressions*

	Variables	Final $\beta$	$R$	$R^2$	$\Delta R^2$	$F$ value for $\Delta R^2$
Criterion: "She Asked For It" (Overall $F [6, 900] = 16.92^{***}$ )						
Step 1:	Gender	-.04	.27	.07	.07	38.85***
	Age	-.21***				
Step 2:	Narcissism	.08*	.31	.10	.02	7.90***
	Machiavellianism	.03				
	Psychopathy	.04				
Step 3:	Sadism	.04*	.32	.10	.00	4.11*
Criterion: "He Didn't Mean To" (Overall $F [6, 900] = 11.79^{***}$ )						
Step 1:	Gender	-.19***	.25	.06	.06	30.98***
	Age	-.13***				
Step 2:	Narcissism	.07*	.27	.07	.01	2.29
	Machiavellianism	.02				
	Psychopathy	-.02				
Step 3:	Sadism	.06	.27	.07	.00	1.62
Criterion: "It Wasn't Really Rape" (Overall $F [6, 900] = 16.48^{***}$ )						
Step 1:	Gender	-.06	.19	.04	.04	17.03***
	Age	-.09**				
Step 2:	Narcissism	.04	.28	.08	.04	13.79***
	Machiavellianism	-.06				
	Psychopathy	.10*				
Step 3:	Sadism	.20***	.32	.10	.02	20.35***

	Variables	Final $\beta$	$R$	$R^2$	$\Delta R^2$	
Criterion: "She Lied" (Overall $F [6, 900] = 20.62^{***}$ )						
Step 1:	Gender		.29	.09	.09	42.50***
	Age					
Step 2:	Narcissism	.04	.34	.12	.03	10.74***
	Machiavellianism	-.06				
	Psychopathy	.10*				
Step 3:	Sadism	.20***	.35	.12	.00	3.44
Criterion: UIRMAS Total Score (Overall $F [6, 900] = 20.78^{***}$ )						
Step 1:	Gender	-.10**	.29	.09	.09	42.32***
	Age	-.20***				
Step 2:	Narcissism	.08*	.34	.11	.03	9.87***
	Machiavellianism	.01				
	Psychopathy	.05				
Step 3:	Sadism	.12**	.35	.12	.01	7.12**

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