

## Picture Of The Dark Triad Personality Of Students In Medan City

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### Article History:

Accepted: 10 December 2024

Revised: 6 July 2025

Published: 31 August 2025

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### Abstract

*This study aims to determine the Dark Triad Personality Description of College Students in Medan City. Based on the results of descriptive analysis of Dark Triad Personality in 350 student respondents in Medan City, several conclusions can be drawn as follows: Overall, the total score of Dark Triad Personality in the study sample was at an average of 56.1 (SD = 8.4), with the majority of respondents included in the medium category. When viewed per dimension, Machiavellianism showed the largest proportion of high categories (77 people; 22.0%), while Narcissism and Psychopathy each had 62 people (17.7%) in the high category. For the three dimensions, the majority of respondents were also in the medium category (Machiavellianism 60.9%; Narcissism 72.6%; Psychopathy 65.4%). The majority picture at the moderate level strengthens the view that the Dark Triad in the non-clinical population is subclinical, that is, present in the form of tendencies that are not always pathological. However, the presence of a high proportion of respondents (especially on Machiavellianism) suggests the existence of a small group that deserves further attention in further studies. The limitations of the study (descriptive design, purposive sampling, and self-report data) should be considered so that the results are best understood as an initial snapshot/sample population, rather than a full generalization to all students in Medan City.*

**Keywords:** Dark Triad Personality, Mahasiswa

## INTRODUCTION

A student is a term for someone who is pursuing higher education at a university, institute, polytechnic, academy, or college. Usually, students are between 18 and 30 years old and come from various backgrounds, such as ethnicity, culture, and religion to pursue education according to their respective passions and fields. This definition is in accordance with the Big Indonesian Dictionary (kbbi.web.id) which states that a student is a person who studies at a college. According to Hartaji (Apriyanti & Hartono, 2022), a student is someone who is in the process of gaining knowledge or studying and is registered to be studying at one of the forms of higher education consisting of academies, polytechnics, colleges, institutes and universities. According to Sarwono (Asih & Lutfiyah, 2023) a student is anyone who is officially registered to take courses at a college with an age limit of around 18-30 years.

The duties and roles of students encompass a wide range of important aspects of campus and community life. Students are expected to focus on learning, mastering knowledge, and developing themselves both academically and non-academically to gain maximum benefit from their college experience. Furthermore, they are expected to possess critical and

analytical thinking skills to contribute to the development of science and technology (Avitasari, 2021). Students also play a role in maintaining ethics and integrity in their studies, such as avoiding plagiarism, which is an important aspect in building trust and credibility in educational institutions (Azizah, 2015). Furthermore, students are also active agents of social change in addressing societal issues, whether social, political, or cultural, so that their role is not limited to the academic world, but also in shaping a better society (Azwar, 2020). By applying the knowledge they have learned, students can solve problems around them and contribute to community development. Furthermore, it is important for students to maintain a balance between academic, social, and personal activities to ensure holistic development (Azizah, 2015). Thus, students' roles are broad, contributing not only to their own development but also to their environment and society at large (Salsabila, 2022). Despite this potential and positive role, not all student behavior reflects the ideal values expected. We can see that many student brawls still occur among students. The phenomenon of student brawls in Indonesia remains a serious and ongoing social problem. These student brawls often occur between groups from different universities and can involve many individuals over a prolonged period, leading to physical violence and material damage. Despite efforts to prevent them, brawls remain rampant in various regions. For example, several reports (Avitasari, 2021) state that a brawl between faculties on a campus in Jakarta resulted in serious injuries, prompting security forces to deploy dozens of police officers to secure the situation. However, similar incidents have erupted again on the same campus. This indicates that this phenomenon remains a problem that has not been fully resolved. According to data from the Jakarta Metropolitan Police, there were at least 111 brawls in the last three months of 2024 (Asih & Lutfiyah, 2023). This demonstrates that despite awareness and countermeasures from the campus, the fact that brawls continue to increase indicates the need for more intensive monitoring and guidance. This phenomenon of brawls causes significant harm, both physical and psychological, to the students involved, and damages the campus's reputation. Given the importance of changing attitudes and providing guidance in handling student conflict, it is crucial for the campus and community to work together to create a safer and more peaceful environment (Kusumawati, Pratisti, & Prasetyaningrum, 2022).

This phenomenon is inseparable from one of Indonesia's provinces, namely North Sumatra. This province boasts abundant natural resources and a distinctive cultural diversity. Medan, as the capital of North Sumatra province, is one of the largest cities in Indonesia and a center of commerce, education, and culture in the Sumatra region (Medan City Government, n.d.). As a metropolitan city, Medan is home to numerous universities, both private and public. Medan boasts approximately 118 universities: 3 state universities and 115 private universities (Central Statistics Agency of North Sumatra Province, 2023). The large number of universities in Medan demonstrates Medan's commitment to human resource development in North Sumatra (Audina, 2022). Some of these universities have even achieved national rankings as among the best universities in Indonesia. This demonstrates progress in the field of education in Medan. Medan students are also known for their diverse student body, coming from various regions, both within and outside North Sumatra, and from various cultural backgrounds, reflecting the plurality of Indonesian society. However, as revealed in a Kompas report (2024), student brawls continue to occur despite various efforts by campus authorities and security forces to address them. These brawls often occur near campus or in other public places, which in turn tarnishes the image of education in the area.

On March 26, 2024, a clash between students from the Faculty of Engineering and the Faculty of Sport Science at Medan State University lasted for about ten minutes before lecturers intervened to break it up, although there were no reports of serious injuries (Utomo & Wadrianto, 2024). Furthermore, on September 26, 2024, a clash between Mechanical Engineering and Civil Engineering students at the Medan State Polytechnic campus during a graduation ceremony caused damage to the cafeteria and windows, and caused several students to faint from stone throwing (Utara, 2023)

On December 5, 2024, police named 13 students of the Catholic University of Santo Thomas Medan as suspects after a clash between the faculties of Engineering and Agriculture that triggered the burning of motorbikes and damage to a cafe on Jalan Melati Raya (Bretag et al., 2014).

However, the phenomenon of violence in campus life is not limited to brawls. Complex student dynamics are also evident in the increasing practice of bullying, organizational conflicts, mutual taunting on social media, and even violent demonstrations. For example, research by Apriyanti and Hartono (Bushman & Baumeister, 1998) shows that students often experience bullying during orientation or orientation activities, which is motivated by a culture of seniority and psychological dominance of upper-level students. Furthermore, conflicts within campus organizations often reveal the dark side of student dynamics. For example, on January 17, 2023, the IAIN Palopo Student Executive Board (BEM) presidential election ended in clashes, with supporters of the two candidates attacking each other with stones and sticks when they refused to allow the Student Election Commission (KPU) to admit witnesses. This led to police intervention to secure the situation (Kompas, 2023). Incidents such as these demonstrate that not only conflicts of interest or values, but also the drive to maintain power, manipulate groups, and disregard the safety of others can arise on campus.

Considering the various forms of conflict that occur on campus, including physical fights, verbal bullying, and social manipulation within organizations, several factors can influence how students respond to these situations. One of these is personality, which can influence how someone responds to conflict or challenges.

Personality is one of the factors that influences a person's behavior. In general, personality can be described as a pattern of certain traits and characteristics, which are relatively permanent and provide both consistency and individuality to a person's behavior. Traits are a factor

The causes of interindividual differences in behavior, behavioral consistency over time, and behavioral stability across situations (Bustomi, 2024). With this definition, personality cannot be categorized as right or wrong, but rather as certain tendencies that are seen in behavior or behavioral patterns that consistently emerge. One personality type that is still rarely studied, especially among students, is the dark triad personality.

Humans have a dark side within themselves, known as the dark triad personality. This concept refers to three more negative personality dimensions that can potentially lead to aggressive or violent behavior: narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy (Garcia, Rosenberg, González Moraga, & Rapp-Ricciardi, 2018)

Narcissism is a tendency to have an inflated view of oneself, a need for admiration, and a lack of empathy for others (Caparrós, Brugués, & Pérez-Testor, 2021). Individuals with narcissistic traits often feel the need to prove their superiority, which can lead them to demonstrate power or dominance through extreme actions, such as brawling (Giammarco & Vernon, 2015). When their self-esteem is threatened, they may respond aggressively or resort to physical confrontation to prove their superiority over their opponent.

Machiavellianism, on the other hand, refers to manipulative traits and a tendency to pursue personal goals through cunning means and without regard for morality. Students who exhibit Machiavellian traits may engage in social conflict, either directly, such as brawls, or covertly, such as manipulation within organizations, as a means to gain personal gain or strengthen their position within a group.

In addition, psychopathy, which is one dimension of the dark triad, is often characterized by a lack of empathy, high manipulative abilities, and a tendency to engage in risky behavior without considering the consequences or impulsiveness. Individuals with psychopathic traits tend to be more likely to engage in aggressive behavior, both in the form of physical violence and a disregard for social empathy, because they do not feel remorse or concern for the impact of their actions. They are more likely to act on impulse or momentary emotions without considering the long-term consequences, which can lead them to engage in physical violence or intergroup clashes.

Research shows that dark triad personality traits are associated with aggressive and violent behavior. Jonason, Li, Webster, & Schmitt (Glenn & Sellbom, 2015) in *Personality and Individual Differences* revealed that dark triad traits are positively associated with a tendency towards aggressive and antisocial behavior, including violence. Those with high levels of narcissism are more likely to engage in aggressive behavior as a way to maintain their fragile self-esteem. This is in line with the findings of Bushman and Baumeister (Gunawan & Sulistiawan, 2017) who found that when self-esteem is threatened through negative feedback, individuals with high levels of narcissism show a significant increase in aggression compared to individuals with lower levels of narcissism. Furthermore, there is also research in Indonesia, namely research published in the *Udayana Psychology journal* in 2023, which indicates that the higher the Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy of students, the higher the tendency for bullying behavior, and vice versa.

Although the term dark triad refers to personality traits that tend to be negative, clinically, these three dimensions—narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy—are not classified as personality disorders requiring a psychiatric diagnosis according to the DSM-5 (Hafid, 2015). This means that these characteristics can appear subclinically and vary in intensity in the general population without indicating pathology.

This also underlies the descriptive approach used to map dark triad personality tendencies in college students. Thus, dark triad personality provides an important perspective in understanding various forms of aggressive and manipulative behavior among college students, both in physical contexts such as brawls and in non-physical social dynamics such as bullying and unfair competition.

## **METHOD**

A research method is a series of systematic procedures used to collect, analyze, and interpret data to answer the problem formulation and achieve the research objectives. This research uses a descriptive quantitative approach, namely an approach that focuses on collecting numerical data to describe phenomena or conditions that occur objectively and factually. Descriptive research is a type of research that aims to describe the conditions, characteristics, and relationships between variables as they exist in the field without any researcher intervention (Horan, Guinn, & Banghart, 2015). Next, this research will explain the identification of research variables, operational definitions, research subjects, population and samples, data collection techniques, research implementation, data analysis techniques.

According to Sugiyono (2019), research variables are measurable or observable characteristics or attributes of individuals in organizations, with specific variations determined by researchers to be studied and then conclusions drawn. This study uses only one variable because the purpose of this study is to describe the variable without drawing conclusions. The variable in this study is the dark triad personality.

Dark Triad personality is a personality type that emphasizes a person's negative side, where the dark traits can be recognized from pathological behavioral patterns that can directly influence interpersonal behavior.

To measure the dark triad personality, it will be measured based on aspects according to Jones & Paulhus (2014), including: Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy. The dark triad personality measurement tool is used to determine the dark triad personality profile of students at universities in Medan.

This study used subjects with the criteria of being active students in Medan aged 18-25 years. Malhotra (Makassar, 2023) stated that a population is a combination of all elements that share a set of similar characteristics that encompass the universe for the purposes of marketing research problems. In this study, the population was active students in Medan aged 18-25 years. According to 2023 BPS data, the number of students in Medan was 268,044. In research, a sample is a portion of a population selected through a sampling method, and the sample must reflect the characteristics of the population representatively (Sugiyono, 2018). Based on the Isaac Michael scale table, the number of samples used in this study with a 5% error rate, the sample taken was 348 respondents. This number was divided across several campuses to ensure representativeness.

The sampling method in this study used a non-probability sampling approach with a purposive sampling technique. According to Sugiyono (2018), non-probability sampling is a sampling technique that does not provide an equal opportunity for every member of the population to be selected as a sample. Meanwhile, according to Sugiyono (Machiavelli, 2015) purposive sampling is the process of selecting samples based on considering certain criteria relevant to the research objectives to determine the number of samples to be studied. The data collection technique in this study was the scale method. Azwar (Malhotra, 2010) stated that the scale method can describe aspects of an individual's personality, reflecting aspects of themselves that are usually not consciously perceived by the respondent. Respondents are not aware of the direction of the answer or the conclusions expressed by the statement or question. Therefore, respondents are asked to mark an X on the answer that they believe matches their characteristics.

The scale used in this study to measure respondents' agreement or disagreement with each statement made by the researcher was a Likert scale. This scale technique includes two types of statements: favorable and unfavorable. Favorable statements are positive statements that support the attitude object being expressed, while unfavorable statements are negative statements that do not support the attitude object being expressed (McCabe, Trevino, & Butterfield, 2001).

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Research Subject Overview**

This study sampled 350 active students at state and private universities (PTN/PTS) aged 18-25 in Medan. The researchers categorized each student respondent based on their university of origin, faculty, semester, age, ethnicity, and gender.

Based on table 4.1, it can be seen that the largest sample in this study were students from HKBP Nommensen University, as many as 117 people (33.4%), University of North Sumatra as many as 69 people (19.7%), State University of Medan as many as 54 people (15.4%), State Islamic University of North Sumatra as many as 22 people (6.3%), Muhammadiyah University of North Sumatra as many as 13 people (3.7%), Methodist University of Indonesia as many as 12 people (3.4%), Islamic University of North Sumatra as many as 9 people (%), Medan State Polytechnic as many as 8 people (2.2%), Medan Area University as many as 7 people (2.0%), Prima Indonesia University as many as 7 people (2.0%), Santo Thomas Catholic University as many as 6 people (1.7%), Indonesian Institute of Technology & Business as many as 4 people (1.1%), Dharma Agung University as many as 4 people (1.1%), Dharmawangsa University as many as 3 people (0.9%), Indonesian Community Development University as many as 3 people (0.9%), Amik Medicom as many as 2 people (0.6%), Pembangunan University Panca Budi as many as 2 people (0.6%), Helvetia Health Institute as many as 1 person (0.3%), ITSI Medan as many as (0.3%), Medan Tourism Polytechnic as many as 1 person (0.3%), Medan Senior Health College as many as 1 person (0.3%), Batutta University as many as 1 person (0.3%), Gunadarma University as many as 1 person (0.3%), Al Washliyah Muslim Nusantara University as many as 1 person (0.3%), and Sari Mutiara University as many as 1 person (0.3%) (Muris, Merckelbach, Otgaar, & Meijer, 2017).

## Research result

### Description of Research Results

Based on the data obtained, the author analyzed the research data. The description of the research data consisted of hypothetical and empirical data. The results of the hypothetical and empirical scores can be seen in the following table:

**Table 1. Comparison of Hypothetical Data and Empirical Data**

Variables	Hypothetical Data					Empirical Data				
	Min	Max	Mean	Elem entar y Scho ol	Range	Min	Max	Mean	Elem entar y Scho ol	Range
<i>Dark Triad Personality</i>	22	88	55	11	66	31	82	56.1	8.4	51

Based on the table above, it can be seen that the hypothetical mean for the Dark Triad Personality variable is smaller than the empirical mean ( $55 < 56.1$ ). This shows that active students in the city of Medan have a high level of Dark Triad Personality.

## Discussion

The descriptive analysis results show that the total Dark Triad Personality score of Medan City students averaged 56.1 (SD = 8.4), with the majority of respondents in the moderate

category. The complete distribution per aspect shows that the majority of respondents were in the moderate category for all dimensions: Machiavellianism 60.9%, Narcissism 72.6%, and Psychopathy 65.4%. However, in more detail, when viewed per aspect, Machiavellianism showed the largest proportion of high categories, namely 77 people (22.0%), while Narcissism and Psychopathy had 62 people (17.7%) in the high category each. The fact that Machiavellianism had a slightly larger percentage of high categories (22.0%) deserves attention. Theoretically, Machiavellianism is related to calculative interpersonal strategies and goal orientation (Jones & Paulhus, 2014), a pattern that can emerge or be strengthened in competitive contexts, such as academic pressure or student organization competition. Therefore, it's not surprising that strategic/manipulative aspects were more prominent among some respondents. Consistent with research by Irfani Rizal and Benni Handayani (Sukmawati, 2022) that described the Dark Triad among social media users, this study's findings also indicate a relatively prominent Machiavellian tendency compared to other dimensions (Panjaitan, 2021).

From a demographic perspective, gender differences appear to influence score distribution. Men were nearly twice as likely to fall within the high category as women (16.5% vs. 8.6%). This is consistent with meta-analyses showing that men tend to be higher in Machiavellianism and Psychopathy (Alfatah Adi Nugroho, Andina Arsy Hanifah, & Ayudya Valentina Tunggadewi, 2023). Contextually, the majority of respondents were in their final semesters, experiencing the pressure of final assignments, competition for jobs, and organizational pressures—conditions that can strengthen strategic tendencies (Machiavellianism) and the need for recognition (Narcissism). This interpretation is consistent with frameworks that suggest trait expression is influenced by the interaction between individual dispositions and environmental pressures (Mastarismi, 2020).

Moderate Dark Triad scores reflect subclinical expression, although high-score groups remain at risk. Thus, while Medan is characterized by social phenomena such as brawls and demonstrations, extreme behavior is likely driven by a small number of high-scoring individuals rather than the majority of students.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the results of descriptive analysis of Dark Triad Personality in 350 student respondents in Medan City, several conclusions can be drawn as follows:

1. Overall, the total Dark Triad Personality score in the research sample was at an average of 56.1 (SD = 8.4), with the majority of respondents falling into the moderate category.
2. When viewed by dimension, Machiavellianism showed the largest proportion of high respondents (77 people; 22.0%), while Narcissism and Psychopathy each had 62 people (17.7%) in the high category. For all three dimensions, the majority of respondents were also in the medium category (Machiavellianism 60.9%; Narcissism 72.6%; Psychopathy 65.4%)
1. 65.4%)
2. The majority's moderate scores reinforce the view that the Dark Triad in non-clinical populations is subclinical, present in the form of tendencies that are not necessarily pathological. However, the presence of a proportion of respondents with high scores (especially on Machiavellianism) suggests the existence of a small group that deserves attention in further studies.

3. It is necessary to consider the limitations of the research (descriptive design, purposive sampling, and self-report data) so that the results are more accurately understood as an initial description/sample population of the research, not a full generalization to all students in Medan City.

### **Suggestion**

Based on the findings and limitations of the research, the following are practical suggestions and recommendations for further research:

1. The results of the Dark Triad aspect mapping should be used as a basis for more focused character development planning.
2. Given that Machiavellianism is relatively more prominent and Narcissism and Psychopathy are also present to some extent, faculties and student units are encouraged to develop empathy-strengthening and impulse-control programs that target groups with higher Psychopathy scores.
3. The ethics and academic integrity module needs to be enriched and directed towards contexts related to Machiavellianism tendencies.
4. Support services for final-semester students, such as counseling, stress management training, and career readiness programs, should be strengthened to help reduce the stress of academic/professional transitions that can potentially reinforce instrumental strategies and the need for recognition.
5. Any intervention should be piloted and evaluated for effectiveness before widespread implementation, and adapted to local characteristics to avoid stigmatization.
6. Conduct further research with correlational or longitudinal designs to test relationships between variables and monitor trait dynamics over time.
7. Use probability sampling techniques (stratified random sampling) so that the results are more representative and generalization to the student population is safer.

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