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**The Dark Triad of Personality**  
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# Personality and Individual Differences

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## Dirty Dozen vs. the H factor: Comparison of the Dark Triad and Honesty–Humility in prosociality, religiosity, and happiness

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### ABSTRACT

Past research has shown that prosocial behavior is related to higher religiosity and Honesty–Humility and lower levels of the Dark Triad (i.e. narcissism, psychopathy, and Machiavellianism). Honesty–Humility and the Dark Triad are theoretically linked traits (related to an exploitive behavioral style) that tend to be studied in isolation. This study showed that religion–prosociality link is not an artifact of gender, happiness, and personality. We examined Honesty–Humility and the Dark Triad in the same sample to better understand how these traits converge and diverge in their associations with self-reported prosociality, religiosity, and happiness. Results suggested that Honesty–Humility and the Dark Triad traits uniquely relate to prosociality, religious orientation and happiness with Honesty–Humility evidencing stronger relations than the Dark Triad as measured by the Dirty Dozen. Data also supported this conclusion that Dirty Dozen Machiavellianism is the “darker” side of the Dark Triad.

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### 1. Introduction

The word prosocial was created by social scientists as an antonym for antisocial. Prosocial behavior covers the broad range of actions, such as helping, volunteering, sharing, and cooperation, intended to benefit others than oneself (Batson & Powell, 2003). Prosocial behavior depends on situational as well as dispositional variables. For example, there is evidence that happiness leads to prosocial behavior and prosociality makes people happier (Aknin et al., 2013; Hideg, 2012). Our focus in the present study is on religiosity and personality predictors of prosociality.

Despite some arguments that deny the existence of a religious prosociality (see Galen, 2012), research frequently has shown association between religiousness and prosociality, and that this link is not an artifact of gender, social desirability, attachment, empathy and intergroup favoritism, and it is not limited to self-reports and it is not found just at the explicit level (Pichon, Boccato, & Saroglou, 2007; Pichon & Saroglou, 2009; Preston & Ritter, 2013; Saroglou, 2012; Saroglou, Pichon, Trompette, Verschuere, & Dernelle, 2005). Such a link rather may be because of the “teaching of equality and brotherhood, of compassion and humanheartedness, that mark all the great world religions” (Allport & Ross, 1967, p. 433).

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Research on the Five Factor and the HEXACO models revealed that higher scorers on Agreeableness and Honesty–Humility are more helpful (e.g. Carlo, Okun, Knight, & de Guzman, 2005; LaBouff, Rowatt, Johnson, Tsang, & McCullough Willerton, 2011). While Big Five Agreeableness considered as the core trait contributing to prosocial behavior (Carlo et al., 2005), Honesty–Humility well represents the two norms for prosocial behavior, reciprocity and fairness (Ashton & Lee, 2007; McCullough & Tabak, 2010). Honesty–Humility also has positive relationships with religion, and null or weak relations with self-esteem and happiness (Aghababaei, 2012, 2014; Aghababaei, Wasserman, & Nannini, 2014; Lee, Ogunfowora, & Ashton, 2005; MacInnis, Busseri, Choma, & Hodson, 2013; Saroglou et al., 2005; Sibley, 2011; Visser & Pozzebon, 2013). On the other hand, people higher on the “dark” personalities are less likely to help other people. Higher scorers on the Dark Triad traits (i.e. narcissism, psychopathy, and Machiavellianism) are characterized by disagreeableness, dishonesty, duplicity, and aggressiveness; they report lower levels of religiosity, and typically benefit more from exploiting others, not by helping them (Furnham, Richards, & Paulhus, 2013; Jonason, Li, & Teicher, 2010; Lannin, Gyll, Krizan, Madon, & Cornish, 2014; Paulhus & White, 2002; Veselka, Schermer, & Vernon, 2012; White, 2014). All of the Dark Triad traits include a tendency to deceive, manipulate and exploit others. These tendencies, within the HEXACO model of personality define the negative pole of the H factor, Honesty–Humility (Lee et al., 2013).

In this study, we aim to extend previous findings on prosociality and personality by investigating whether the prosociality–religion link remains even when we control for other predictors including gender, Honesty–Humility, the Dark Triad and happiness. We also are interested in the comparison of Honesty–Humility with the Dark Triad. Because Honesty–Humility explicitly contrasts antisocial and prosocial behavior, this factor is more relevant to the Dark Triad than any of the other HEXACO dimensions (Furnham et al., 2013). Moreover, much of the common variance in the Dark Triad is captured by the Honesty–Humility factor, and Honesty–Humility has advantage over the Dirty Dozen measure of the Dark Triad in predicting variables related to sex, power, and particularly money (Lee et al., 2013). We want to extend this line of research to prosociality, religiosity and happiness.

Since the Dark Triad traits and the negative pole of the H factor seem to share a core of dishonesty and disagreeableness, it is important to determine the independent contribution of these traits. To distinguish these traits, one cannot rely on raw correlations as the sole method of analysis; “at minimum, multiple regression or partial correlations should be reported” (Furnham et al., 2013, p. 209) to see their unique and divergent correlations with personal and interpersonal outcomes such as happiness, religiosity, and prosociality. We expect to find positive links among Honesty–Humility, prosociality and religiosity. Dark Triad traits, on the other hand, are expected to negatively correlate with prosociality, religion and Honesty–Humility, but we made no hypothesis related to the independent contribution of each of these traits.

## 2. Methods

### 2.1. Participants

223 employees were recruited from two private companies in urban area of Tehran. These 133 female and 90 male had ages ranging from 18 to 57, with a mean of 31.24 ( $SD = 8.94$ ), most of them (62.3%) were married, and all of them reported to be Muslim. Participation in the study was voluntary and anonymous. Participants at their convenience completed a paper-and-pencil survey package containing the Persian versions of these measures. A five point Likert-type scale was applied for all items described in this section, unless indicated otherwise.

### 2.2. Measures

#### 2.2.1. The Dark Triad Dirty Dozen

The 12-item Dirty Dozen measure of the Dark Triad (DTDD; Jonason & Webster, 2010) was used to measure narcissism, psychopathy, and Machiavellianism. The DTDD has been shown to have internal consistency and test–retest reliability, and construct and convergent validity (Jonason, Kaufman, Webster, & Geher, 2013; Jonason & Luévano, 2013; Jonason & McCain, 2012; Jonason & Webster, 2010). We replicated the factor structure of the DTDD in the current study. Like the original measure, its Persian translation has a three-factor structure, consisting of Machiavellianism ( $\alpha = .84$ ;  $M = 1.66$ ;  $SD = .88$ ), psychopathy ( $\alpha = .63$ ;  $M = 1.98$ ;  $SD = .77$ ), and narcissism ( $\alpha = .84$ ;  $M = 2.93$ ;  $SD = 1.1$ ). Cronbach's alpha for the DTDD was at .82 ( $M = 2.19$ ;  $SD = .68$ ).

#### 2.2.2. The HEXACO Personality Inventory

The HEXACO factors (Honesty–Humility, Emotionality, eXtraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Openness) were measured using the 60-item HEXACO Personality Inventory-Revised (HEXACO-60; Ashton & Lee, 2009). The HEXACO-60 has been

shown to have internal consistency reliability and convergent validity. Coefficient alpha of the six factors ranged from .60 to .75.

#### 2.2.3. The Prosocial Personality Battery

The 30-item Prosocial Personality Battery (PSB; Penner, Fritzsche, Craiger, & Freifeld, 1995) was used to assess prosocial tendencies. Penner et al. (1995) included measures of empathy, from Interpersonal Reactivity Index (Davis, 1980), to account for this meditational variable that is often identified as an antecedent of prosocial behavior. Therefore this scale is composed of items that assess both empathy and prosocial behavior. The PSB consisted of these scales: social responsibility, empathy (including empathic concern, perspective taking, and personal distress), mutual moral reasoning, other oriented reasoning and self-reported altruism. Cronbach's alpha coefficient in the current study for this scale was at .81.

#### 2.2.4. The Religious Orientation Scale

The 14-item Religious Orientation Scale-Revised (Hill, 1999), which is an adaptation of Allport and Ross's (1967) scale, was used to measure intrinsic (“My whole approach to life is based on my religion”), extrinsic-personal (“What religion offers me most is comfort in times of trouble and sorrow”), and extrinsic-social (“I go to the mosque or religious community mainly because I enjoy seeing people I know there”) religious orientation. This scale has been shown to have internal consistency reliability and criterion and construct validity (e.g. Ghorbani, Watson, Rezazadeh, & Cunningham, 2011). Cronbach's alphas for these three scales, in the current study, were .79, .83, and .80, respectively.

#### 2.2.5. The Subjective Happiness Scale

The Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS) which is a widely used, 4-item global assessment of happiness (Lyubomirsky & Lepper, 1999) was used to measure happiness. Each item was assessed on a 7 point Likert scale. Sample item is “In general I consider myself: 1 = not a very happy person to 7 = a very happy person”. The SHS has shown to have test–retest reliability, discriminant and convergent validity, and internal consistency (Lyubomirsky & Lepper, 1999). Cronbach's alpha for the SHS in the current study was .71.

## 3. Results

Table 1 shows bivariate correlations among the study variables. As expected, prosociality was positively correlated to higher Honesty–Humility, Agreeableness, happiness and religiosity, and lower scores on the Dark Triad. As with previous studies, men reported higher on the Dark Triad and lower on Emotionality and religiosity. Table 1 also shows correlations of Honesty–Humility facets to other variables.

A series of hierarchical regressions was used to see the unique contribution of religiosity by controlling for gender, happiness and personality factors. In doing so, religiosity was entered (in step 2), after entering gender, happiness, HEXACO and the Dark Triad (in step 1). After controlling for these variables, intrinsic religiosity managed to explain additional unique variance in self-reported prosociality (see Table 2). Using the same method for the two other religiosity measures, the extrinsic personal religiosity accounted for a significant portion of variance, after those variables have been controlled ( $R^2 = .05$ ,  $\beta = .25$ ;  $p < .01$ ). However, controlling for gender, happiness and personality, extrinsic social religiosity failed to account for an additional variance in prosociality ( $R^2 = .00$ ,  $\beta = .05$ ;  $p = .28$ ).

We investigated the effects of Honesty–Humility and the composite Dark Triad on the other's relation to variables under study,

**Table 1**  
Intercorrelations between study variables.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
1. Age	1															
2. Gender	-.05	1														
3. Prosociality	.30**	-.16*	1													
4. Happiness	.06	.01	.20**	1												
<i>Religious orientation</i>																
5. Intrinsic	.15*	-.27**	.46**	.02	1											
6. Extrinsic personal	.08	-.26**	.41**	.08	.75**	1										
7. Extrinsic social	-.05	.01	-.05	-.04	.15*	.30**	1									
<i>Dark Triad scales</i>																
8. Machiavellianism	-.29**	.20**	-.45**	-.01	-.27**	-.17**	.15*	1								
9. Psychopathy	-.13*	.20**	-.28**	-.06	-.18**	-.13*	.05	.40**	1							
10. Narcissism	-.25**	.09	-.21**	.07	-.13*	-.09	-.09	.27**	.29**	1						
11. Dirty Dozen (total)	-.31**	.20**	-.42**	.01	-.26**	-.17**	.04	.73**	.71**	.76**	1					
<i>HEXACO scales</i>																
12. Openness	-.03	-.21**	.24**	.06	.06	.06	-.01	-.15*	-.18**	-.05	-.16*	1				
13. Extraversion	.04	.04	.19**	.45**	.06	.06	-.09	-.08	-.14*	.11	-.03	.25**	1			
14. Agreeableness	.17**	-.21**	.43**	.21**	.34**	.26**	.01	-.33**	-.37**	-.08	-.32**	.11	.18**	1		
15. Conscientiousness	.08	-.21**	.38**	.13	.26**	.23**	-.12	-.26**	-.34**	.04	-.22**	.40**	.44**	.32**	1	
16. Emotionality	-.02	-.22**	.22**	-.13*	.18**	.14*	-.04	-.11	-.10	.07	-.04	.01	-.15*	.06	.03	1
17. Honesty–Humility	.33**	-.19**	.51**	-.10	.35**	.19**	-.17**	-.58**	-.36**	-.36**	-.59**	.01	.07	.40**	.26**	.06
<i>Honesty–Humility facets</i>																
Sincerity	.23**	-.15*	.43**	-.01	.23**	.11	-.20**	-.53**	-.40**	.18**	-.47**	.14*	.22**	.33**	.35**	.08
Fairness	.15*	-.15*	.45**	.06	.43**	.35**	-.11	-.51**	-.24**	-.02	-.32**	.02	.14*	.40**	.34**	.08
Greed avoidance	.19**	-.05	.19**	-.10	.09	-.01	.02	-.08	-.07	-.33**	-.24**	-.11	-.11	.10	-.08	-.01
Modesty	.27**	-.16*	.18**	-.24**	.07	-.04	-.14*	-.27**	-.17**	-.53**	-.47**	-.06	-.14*	.15*	-.07	-.03

Note: Gender coded 1 = female and 2 = male.

\*  $p < 0.05$ .

\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

**Table 2**  
Results of the hierarchical regression analysis in predicting prosociality.

	B (SE)	$\beta$	R2	$\Delta R2$
Step 1:			.48**	
Gender	.07 (.05)	.07		
Happiness	.09 (.02)	.20**		
Dark Triad composite	-.06 (.04)	-.09		
Openness	.16 (.05)	.18**		
Extraversion	-.04 (.05)	-.05		
Agreeableness	.12 (.04)	.16**		
Conscientiousness	.12 (.05)	.15*		
Emotionality	.18 (.04)	.20**		
Honesty–Humility	.27 (.04)	.37**		
Step 2:			.53**	.05**
Intrinsic religiosity	.15 (.03)	.26**		

\*  $p < 0.05$ .

\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

by conducting partial correlation analyses (see Table 3). Results suggest that Honesty–Humility and the Dark Triad composite both influenced the other's correlations. However, this effect was most notable for the Dark Triad composite.

Finally, a series of multiple regressions was applied to determine the independent contribution of the three facets of the Dark Triad. When shared variance between the Dark Triad traits was controlled, Machiavellianism was the strongest predictor of prosociality and religiosity measures (see Table 4).

#### 4. Discussion

Religious people had higher self-report levels of prosociality and lower self-report levels of the Dark Triad. The influence of gender, happiness and personality did not negate the interpretive value of the relationships between self-reports on religion and prosociality. People who live their religions internalize religion's "values of humanity, compassion, and love of neighbor" (Allport & Ross, 1967, p. 441). Additionally, while social extrinsic religiosity

deals with attainment of social benefits, personal extrinsic religiosity deals with overcoming and controlling psychological troubles and distress. In the current study, extrinsic personal orientation follows a path similar to the intrinsic rather than the extrinsic social orientation, which is in line with more recent findings with non-Protestant samples (e.g. Aghababaei, 2012; Flere & Lavric, 2008). Our findings suggest that religion as a whole may not be good for prosociality, however, mature and adjusted forms of religion (such as intrinsic religiosity) are. The findings advise researchers employing the variable religion, to distinguish between religious attitudes that are intrinsic, extrinsic personal, and extrinsic social. Attempts to define religion as a single linear dimension are likely too simple and can be misleading. To know a person is religious is not as important as to know the role religion plays in her life (Aghababaei, 2012; Allport & Ross, 1967; Cooper & Pullig, 2013).

The present study, to our knowledge, has provided the first comparison of the H factor and the Dark Triad traits in relation to prosociality, religion, and happiness. A limitation of research on the Dark Triad is that many of them are atheoretical and descriptive, and their samples tend to be drawn from college students from Western countries, which may make some findings difficult to generalize. Beyond replicating past associations (including lower levels of the Dark Triad in women), this study gained more knowledge about the Dark Triad within a non-Western, workplace context. Our results showed that narcissism is the "lighter" side and Machiavellianism may be the "darker" side of the Dark Triad which was consistent with some previous findings. For instance, Lee et al. (2013) found that Machiavellianism was the strongest correlate of Honesty–Humility. Additionally, in our data the Dirty Dozen Machiavellianism was the strongest correlate of the Honesty sub-factor, whereas narcissism was the strongest correlate of the Humility sub-factor which is consistent both with previous findings by Jonason and McCain (2012), and conceptualization of narcissism as a construct related to entitlement and grandiosity.

**Table 3**

Zero-order and partial correlations between Honesty–Humility, composite Dark Triad, and other variables.

	H factor	H factor (control for Dirty Dozen)	Dirty Dozen	Dirty Dozen (control for the H factor)
Happiness	-.10	-.14	.01	-.09
<i>Prosociality variables</i>				
Social Responsibility	.43**	.35**	-.30**	-.09
Empathic Concern	.41**	.30**	-.30**	-.08
Perspective Taking	.19**	.20**	-.11	.05
Personal Distress	.11	.06	-.10	-.09
Mutual Moral Reasoning	.39**	.22**	-.40**	-.20**
Other Oriented Reasoning	.41**	.21**	-.44**	-.25**
Self-reported altruism	.21**	.16*	-.19**	-.03
Prosociality (Total)	.51**	.39**	-.42**	-.16*
<i>Religious Orientation</i>				
Intrinsic	.35**	.23**	-.26**	-.04
Extrinsic personal	.19**	.11	-.17**	-.04
Extrinsic social	-.17**	-.19**	.04	-.06

\*  $p < 0.05$ .

\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

**Table 4**

Regressions predicting happiness, prosociality and religiosity from the Dark Triad.

Dark Triad	Happiness	Prosociality								Religious orientation		
		SR	EC	PT	PD	OOR	MMR	SRA	Total	In	Ep	Es
Machiavellianism	.01	-.36**	-.32**	-.02	-.13	-.30**	-.34**	-.14	-.38**	-.22**	-.13	.17*
Psychopathy	-.08	-.03	-.07	-.14	.01	-.19**	-.13	.04	-.09	-.06	-.07	.02
Narcissism	0.7	-.02	-.01	.01	-.01	-.05	-.11	-.14*	-.08	-.07	-.03	-.15*
R <sup>2</sup>	.01	.14**	.13**	.02	.01	.19**	.22**	.04*	.22**	.08**	.03*	.03*

Note: SR, Social Responsibility; EC, Empathic Concern; PT, Perspective Taking; PD, Personal Distress; OOR, Other Oriented Reasoning; MMR, Mutual Moral Reasoning; SRA, Self-reported altruism; In, intrinsic; Ep, extrinsic personal; Es, extrinsic social.

\*  $p < 0.05$ .

\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

“Darkness” of a trait may also be viewed by its benefits (or lack thereof) for others (Rauthmann & Kolar, 2012). In this sense, the current study suggested that Machiavellians are less likely to engage in altruistic prosocial behavior. However, they might engage in prosocial actions for non-altruistic reasons such as societal pressure, or as a tactic of influence to get what they want (see Jonason, Slomski, & Partyka, 2012). Additionally, among the Dark Triad, only Machiavellianism was related to higher scores on extrinsic social religiosity, showing that Machiavellians may “use” their religions to gain their social ends, which is consistent with the conceptualization of Machiavellianism as a tendency to manipulate and deceive others in social situations for personal gain. It has been suggested, however, that Machiavellianism items of the Dirty Dozen referring to exploitation and manipulation, could also be psychopathy items; thus the Dirty Dozen Machiavellianism scale also or even exclusively measures psychopathy and the psychopathy scale actually assesses Machiavellianism (Rauthmann & Kolar, 2013). In any case, since the Dirty Dozen may be more apt for studying the Dark Triad composite rather than the Dark Triad components (Lee et al., 2013) further research using alternative, more comprehensive measures of the Dark Triad is warranted to highlight the divergent personal and interpersonal outcomes of these traits.

The fact that both high scores on Honesty–Humility, and on the Dark Triad is not associated with happiness, suggest that being or not being manipulative and exploitive of others although each may have some adaptive advantages, has nothing to do with one’s own subjective well-being. Further research using multiple methods of measurement, studying other cultures is necessary to confirm, and test the generalizability of our findings, however.

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