



Dominik Schwarzingger

The Dark Triad of Personality in Personnel Selection

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Dominik Schwarzingger

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SALES & DISTRIBUTION

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Phone (800) 228 3749, Fax (419) 281 6883; E-mail customersupport@hogrefe.com

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EUROPE: Hogrefe Publishing, Merkelstr. 3, 37085 Göttingen, Germany
Phone +49 551 99950 0, Fax +49 551 99950 111; E-mail publishing@hogrefe.com

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Preface

In recent years, three classics of psychology have once again gained greater scientific and, above all, public recognition – narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy. Under the appealing title of the “Dark Triad of Personality” (Paulhus & Williams, 2002), they are increasingly being considered in many different areas, from couple psychology to management research. Just a few years have seen the compilation of an enormous breadth of knowledge about the Dark Triad. Currently, however, a growing number of critical voices are complaining that the depth and stringency of some research have been partly neglected; this hinders scientific progress, often creates misunderstandings, and may ultimately pose considerable risks, especially for applied purposes.

This book discusses the *Dark Triad of Personality in Personnel Selection*, an applied field that is not only highly regulated legally and professionally, but that, because of its significance for both individuals and organizations, also requires a special sense of proportion and quality, not at least for reasons of professional ethics. The following text addresses all relevant aspects for such an application, evaluates the current state of research, and provides practitioners with a solid basis for operative applications of the Dark Triad in the workplace.

There are many individuals and organizations without whom the present book would not have been possible; I can only honor the most important ones here. My greatest thank goes to Professor Heinz Schuler for many years of inspiration and collaboration; to the Hogrefe Publishing Group for the excellent cooperation on the present book project and the test TOP, especially Tanja Ulbricht and Sara Wellenzohn for the original German versions; to Lisa Bennett, Regina Pinks-Freybott, and Robert Dimbleby for the present English language adaptation; and, finally, to Anne Konz, on behalf of all readers, for her invaluable linguistic revisions and corrections to the manuscript.

Dominik Schwarzinger
Berlin, August 2022

1 Introduction

1.1 The Dark Triad of Personality – A Trending Topic in Organizational Psychology

The traits of narcissism, Machiavellianism, and subclinical psychopathy have become a big topic in psychological research since first considered together under the term Dark Triad of personality over the last two decades. We see this in the number and the breadth of content of scientific articles published on the Dark Triad. The initial work of Paulhus and Williams (2002), for example, has been cited several thousand times, and Muris et al. (2017) included almost 100 papers in their meta-analysis, each comprising all three Triad components. The vast majority of these papers have been published in recent years, thus witness to a nearly exponential increase in the number of articles (see Figure 1).

In 2019 – only 3 years after the editorial deadline of that meta-analysis and 17 years after the introduction of the Dark Triad – several hundred specific specialist publications had become available. The journal *Personality and Individual Differences* alone published more than 20 per year. A selection of the topics explored in these articles on the Triad illustrates the breadth of the burgeoning interest: number of children, intelligence, preferences for place of residence, academic misconduct, insomnia, violence in relationships, sporting activity, behavior in social media.

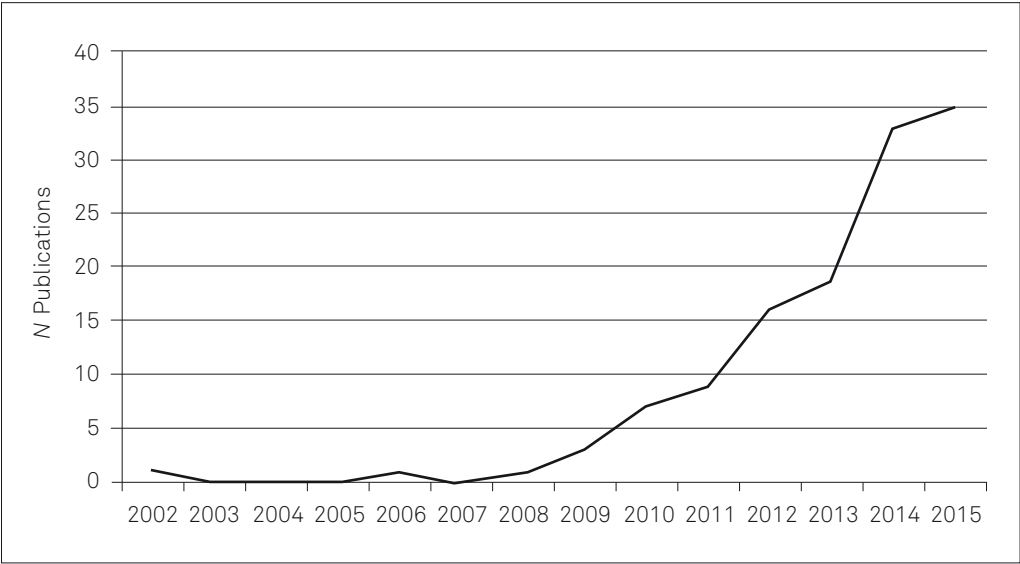


Figure 1. Publications on the Dark Triad since the creation of the term, based on a web-of-science search. Reprinted with permission from “The malevolent side of human nature: A meta-analysis and critical review of the literature on the Dark Triad (narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy),” by P. Muris, H. Merckelbach, H. Otgaar, & E. Meijer (2017), *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 12, 185. © 2017 Sage.

The trend extends so far that several publications now contain considerable criticism (e.g., Adam, 2019; Miller et al., 2019). This criticism is leveled not so much toward the concept of the Dark Triad itself as toward how studies are conducted, such as the theoretical foundations and the measurement methods used – but above all toward how the multitude of findings was not cumulatively studied and integrated. In other words, these questions concern some of the very principles of serious scientific research. We can understand this criticism as being directed at both those undertaking the research and at the system that has generated and permitted an excessive number of such uncritically verified publications, all of which contributed to the current, partially confused state of the research on the Dark Triad.

This situation is something that occurs from time to time in various scientific fields, which the scientific community concerned is in the process of trying to rectify, and as a result is perhaps not such a serious matter. A comparatively greater problem, however, is that, before the above-mentioned corrections and without recourse to the admonitions of the relevant experts, the Dark Triad has also attracted overwhelming interest in disciplines related to psychology, such as business management and human resources research but above all in the popular scientific and general press. This interest has arisen primarily because of the impact the Dark Triad has on the working world, a research focus that has recently become increasingly important (e.g., Cohen, 2016; O’Boyle et al., 2012; Spain et al., 2014; Wille et al., 2013). The results of this research are readily adopted outside academia, in particular in online media of all types and quality, but also in the career sections of major daily and weekly newspapers. Indeed, there has been real hype about the impact of these features in professional life.

For example, we read articles with titles such as “The Dark Triad – Why Radically Ruthless People Get Ahead” which discuss narcissists and psychopaths in top management positions. The popular debate thus emphasizes the enhanced values of the Dark Triad as partly conducive to professional success, especially in leadership positions, whereas, according to the definition of the characteristics and the traditional colloquial use of the terms, they are primarily and predominantly associated with *negative* consequences for third parties. A fact that has been well proven empirically in the last few years.

Based on the previous scientific findings (or the media coverage?), it cannot surprise that employers would like to “detect, remove, punish, [or] retrain employees with these characteristics” (Jonason et al., 2014, p. 122). For the characteristic of psychopathy, there have been several calls for the use of screening measures to keep dangerous persons away from certain positions (Skeem et al., 2011). Several relevant authors explicitly refer to possible aptitude-diagnostic use, namely, personnel selection based on the Dark Triad (e.g., O’Boyle et al., 2012; Schyns, 2015; Wu & LeBreton, 2011) – which has now turned it an object of recent personnel psychology research.

Further research into the effects of the Dark Triad in the workplace is urgently needed if it is to be used not only for the accumulation of scientific knowledge and for public discussion, but also in everyday human resources work. To justify the actual operative use of the Dark Triad traits as a basis for personnel decisions, one must first be able to reliably predict criteria relevant to this purpose – and here the findings are far less clear than public reception would suggest. Luckily, based on data stemming from companies and professionals, there is now enough high-quality empirical work available to allow statements about the extent to which the use of the Dark Triad may be beneficial in personnel work – and for which purposes.

However, the applied use of narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy in aptitude diagnostics generates several potential problems, ranging from ethical considerations and professional-legal guidelines, to still unclarified theoretical issues and the basic psychometric demands on the standard test procedures used for this purpose. In contrast to the criteria relationships that have so far been the subject of most research, these questions are still largely unresolved, primarily because Triad research was not oriented toward work and organization from the beginning, and because a broader occupation with this matter has taken place only in the last 10 years. Above all, however, we have little experience in the organizational context concerning how the Dark Triad can be applied successfully in practical personnel work, what reactions it provokes, and how valuable the results obtained really are. This book makes initial contributions to this and examines whether the hype about the Dark Triad of personality is justified from a personnel-psychological point of view.

1.2 Do We Need to Consider Dark Personality Traits in the Workplace?

The present focus on dark personality traits in work and organizational psychology arose mostly from the desire to identify features responsible for employees or executives “derailing” their careers – a risk some authors perceive for more than half of all managers (Dalal & Nolan, 2009). Based on expert estimates, Simonet et al. (2018) assume that the cost of a single “derailed” executive can run into the millions, making them costly and as we will see, also common.

In De Fruyt et al. (2013), 20% of the managers tested had a potential personality disorder. The authors make clear that every HR manager should deal with this issue, since 15% of the population (here: USA) display at least one personality disorder or its symptoms during their lifetime: Every HR manager thus inevitably encounters affected employees. This also demonstrates that the problem affects not only managers or employees from the higher hierarchical levels of an organization; on the contrary, the “dark side” of a person’s personality (especially if one includes not only clinical disorders but also their much more widespread subclinical forms) is one of the main factors influencing deviant behavior at all levels and in all sectors of the economy (see Sections 2.2 and 4.1).

Although the study of dark personality traits is certainly relevant and not new, only in recent years has it attracted widespread interest in industrial and organizational psychology and management sciences (Harms & Spain, 2015). This even led to two special journal issues on the subject of dark personalities in the workplace (Murphy, 2014; Stephan, 2015). These show that a wide variety of mental disorders and more harmless abnormalities – and even excessive manifestations of actually positive characteristics, such as perfectionism – are usually negatively associated with job performance (e.g., McCord et al., 2014). Other studies also discuss the positive effects of dark characteristics, although these are not unequivocally the case and do not apply in the same way to all characteristics and occupations (e.g., Gaddis & Foster, 2015).

In summary, the literature recognizes the potential added value of looking at the dark side of personality while pointing out the unclear and sometimes contradictory state of research – especially for the practical application in personnel work – and the considerable limitations and risks that are still largely unexplained and often not researched. Jackson (2014) states that job-related research is appropriate for maladaptive personality traits in general, but that the step toward applying it to actual staffing decisions presents challenges that are anything but trivial. Harms and Spain (2015) see dark traits eventually becoming mainstream in research, while for the application of these traits in organizational practice unresolved questions remain regarding their theoretical foundation, primarily those that address the practical detection of dark personality traits.

Spain et al. (2014), for example, point out in their review that the most widely used inventories for measuring the Dark Triad have been criticized for their psychometric quality while also raising practical and even potentially legal problems, especially regarding their use in applied professional contexts. O’Boyle et al. (2012) see extreme limitations to the commonly used measures, which they describe as inadequate specifically for personnel selection. That drives their clear recommendation – shared they say by many other authors – that future research on the Dark Triad be concerned with better job-related measurement.

The great interest in the Dark Triad and its presumed aptitude-diagnostic benefits thus is juxtaposed against a multitude of unresolved questions concerning its actual usefulness and applicability for practical personnel assessment – first and foremost concerning the measurement methods to be employed for this purpose. The present book addresses these problems and closes the gaps in our knowledge regarding the Dark Triad in personnel selection. However, because of the great damage that accompanies these dark characteristics as well as the great opportunities offered by observing the dark side, I call for more efforts to be made – both in research and practice – to fully exploit the potential of these characteristics while also preventing serious mistakes from being made with dealing with other people (applicants). It is paramount in this pursuit that we do not switch to the dark side by displaying noncompliant behavior ourselves.

1.3 The Structure of This Book

As mentioned in the previous section, there is a need for further research on the effects of the Dark Triad of personality at the workplace along with considerable skepticism about its practical applicability, viz. the use of existing measurement methodology for purposes of personnel selection. The present book, therefore, aims to clarify the extent to which – and how – the Dark Triad may be applicable in operational personnel work. To this end, I present findings from the current literature that can be used to evaluate the basic aptitude-diagnostic usefulness of narcissism, Machiavellianism, and subclinical psychopathy as well as discuss the general conditions and requirements for their practical use, especially for personnel selection. I then present a test procedure to meet the requirements regarding legal and professional guidelines and practical applicability in the target field of an organization. Thus, like the “grand migration” (Furnham, Richards et al., 2013, p. 200) from the clinical to the subclinical sphere, this text attempts to establish a “small migration” (Schwarzinger, 2020, p. 13) of the Dark Triad from the subclinical to the sphere of work.

The necessary steps of this migration movement can be divided into two large blocks: the basics and practical application. Chapters 1 to 3 comprise the basics, Chapters 4 to 6 the practical application. Chapter 7 presents a conclusion with recommendations.

Following this Introduction, I present the basics for the main topic in Chapter 2, which is therefore kept rather concise. Section 2.1 concerns the status of personality structure research and the systems developed in clinical psychology. Regarding the former, I discuss the widely recognized Big Five and HEXACO models, and regarding clinical psychology, I primarily touch on the DSM system of the American Psychiatric Association (APA). Section 2.2 regards central findings on personnel-psychological applications of general personality traits and common conceptualizations of professional success and failure. Building on this, in Section 2.3 I deal with the concept of so-called dark personality traits, describing in more detail the background to the ever-growing occupation-related interest, the genesis of the term, and the characteristics it covers. In addition, I differentiate it from the DSM system and describe the new, alternative DSM-5 model for personality disorders.

Chapters 3 and 4 are devoted to the Dark Triad of personality. Section 3.1 provides an introduction to the historical development and the current state of research on the (isolated) consideration of the three characteristics of narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy. Section 3.2 describes selected (non-occupation-related) findings on the characteristics of the issues that have received the most attention in research. These findings serve to provide a basis for understanding the typical motivation and behavior of Dark Triad characteristic bearers, which is also important for developing an occupational understanding of these characteristics. Section 3.3 compares different views on the structure of the Dark Triad, typical analytical methods used in its study, and the methodological criticism formulated in recent years, especially concerning these aspects. It also distinguishes the Dark Triad components from each other and describes their respective characteristics.

Chapter 4 presents a wide range of evidence for the basic aptitude-diagnostic usefulness of the Dark Triad. Section 4.1 turns, first, to their relationships with counterproductive behavior in the workplace, whereas Section 4.2 regards their relationships with criteria of job performance and success as well as (destructive) leadership behavior. Section 4.3 discusses further aptitude-diagnostic fields of application of the Dark Triad as well as occupationally relevant correlates of interest in practical personnel work and career guidance.

Chapter 5 deals with the professional, legal, and ethical demands placed on the operational use of the Dark Triad. Section 5.1 concerns the various measurement approaches proposed so far for the Dark Triad and then evaluates them regarding their quality and usability in personnel practice. Building on this, Section 5.2 discusses the necessity of job-related measurement procedures and the professional and legal requirements for the use of such procedures in the context of applied aptitude diagnostics. Finally, Section 5.3 focuses on the viewpoint of the applicants and associated ethical aspects.

Chapter 6 provides an overview of the test procedure Dark Triad of Personality at Work (TOP; Schwarzingers & Schuler, 2016, 2019) as an example of an explicitly work-related inventory of the Dark Triad. Section 6.1 first summarizes the objectives of test development and describes the construction of the TOP, from the formulation of items to item analysis to the factorial exploration of the item material. Section 6.2 reports the results of the reliability and validity studies regarding the relationships to external variables, their effects on third parties, and measures of individual and collective performance and professional

success. The final part of this chapter, Section 6.3, addresses questions about the practical use of the TOP, the legitimacy of its application against the background of professional formal and legal standards, and its acceptance by the test participants.

In a joint consideration of the theoretical work on the content and structure of the Triad, its measurement methodology and occupation-related findings, as well as the operative application requirements of legal and professional nature, Chapter 7 draws some conclusions and provides practical recommendations for the use of the Dark Triad of personality in both empirically researched (Section 7.1) and practically applied vocational-aptitude diagnostics (Section 7.2).

2 (Dark) Personality, Work Performance, and Professional Success

Before I explore the focal topic of the Dark Triad of personality in Chapter 3, I would like to devote this chapter to an overview of the different approaches to the question of what constitutes human personality in general, the dark side of personality, and the job-related application of “bright” and “dark” characteristics. Because of the breadth and depth of these lines of research, I do not claim completeness. Nevertheless, an overview of the commonly studied major personality traits and how they affect work performance as well as the concepts and classifications chosen in clinical psychology for the most common personality disorders is important as a basis for understanding the structure of the Dark Triad, its kinship relations, and previous profession-related findings.

In addition, I present various conceptualizations of job performance and job success, to define the criteria for assessing the aptitude-diagnostic suitability of personality traits and the Dark Triad.

2.1 From Physiognomy to the Five-Factor Model and the DSM-5

The study of the human personality looks back on a long and varied history that has failed to produce a singular and unambiguous system comparable to that of natural scientific theory, “not to mention [the absence of] a periodic table of the psychic elements” (Schuler, 2014a, p. 143). It is therefore not surprising that, through the ages, personality has been defined quite differently depending on the time and language background (Amelang & Bartussek, 1997). This ranges from early attempts to address differences in character traits from the “outside,” that is, from someone’s appearance or behavior, examples being Lersch’s phenomenological personality theory and – already linked to aptitude-diagnostic expectations – Lavater’s physiognomic interpretation of character (Schuler, 2014a); to investigations from the “inside,” using modern neuroscientific or molecular genetic methods (see Asendorpf, 2009).

2.1.1 “Normal” Personality and Personality Disorders

Today, a multitude of personality theories still exist side by side. The most widespread and accepted view resulted from empirical research on personality using a trait-based approach to differentiate and classify personality by (empirically) reducing it to a few statistically independent dimensions. There is currently widespread agreement that human personality

in the normal range can be described completely with varying degrees of expression on these broad dimensions – between three and seven depending on the author – which can be explained by fewer higher-order factors or can be divided into two central aspects and further subfacets (Guenole, 2014).

Research on hierarchical models also managed finding two higher-order factors, designated alpha and beta (Digman, 1997) or stability and plasticity (DeYoung et al., 2002), and a general factor of personality (e.g., Erdle & Rushton, 2010; Musek, 2007) as well as confirming the usefulness of finer-grained subfacets (e.g., DeYoung et al., 2007) – especially for application-related questions. Below, I will come back to this approach in my treatment of the Dark Triad of personality. Neuroimaging or molecular genetic methods increasingly confirm the assumptions of the trait-based approach and point out specific differences for personality factors in brain anatomy (e.g., DeYoung et al., 2010).

The findings described, however, refer to the so-called “normal” area of personality. Although there are some connections between this area and mental disorders – and the latter are sometimes simply seen as extreme manifestations of human character traits (see Moscoso & Salgado, 2004) – classification schemes have emerged in clinical psychology which are virtually independent of this area. These include the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, DSM for short (DSM-5; APA, 2013), and the *International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems*, ICD for short (ICD-11; WHO, 2019).

The ICD is much more broadly based on diseases in general, whereas the DSM focuses exclusively on mental diseases, which is why it can also map more disturbance patterns and more finely broken-down diagnostic criteria. The ICD-11, in the section on personality disorders check lists only general characteristics of the group (though, for example, neither narcissism nor psychopathy is further explained or their diagnostic criteria detailed). Section 3.1.1 of this volume provides some criteria for narcissistic personality disorder according to DSM-5 as an example of such a classification scheme. A diagnosis can be made, for example, using the *Structured Clinical Interview for DSM-5 Disorders* (SCID-5-CV; First et al., 2019). However, only persons with a corresponding license, such as psychotherapists, are authorized to officially diagnose and treat personality disorders.

In contrast to the dimensional view of distinctive traits outlined above, the DSM and the ICD agree in their focus on typical clinical profiles manifested by certain symptoms: a categorical model of mental disorders.

Yet, the domains of clinical and normal personality are not completely independent of each other, as evidenced in conceptual work, for example, on the Big Five and DSM disorders (Widiger et al., 2002) or on the meta-analytically confirmed correlation patterns for these domains (Samuel & Widiger, 2008a) as well as the shared latent dimensions of both sides and proposals for a common version under a hierarchical model (Markon et al., 2005). In the clinical field, the “phenomenological view” (or categorical view) is therefore increasingly being supplemented by a dimensional one (e.g., Eaton et al., 2011). This is why the DSM also includes an approach to a dimensional conceptualization of personality disorders in Part III of its latest version (DSM-5) – although the previous categories remain in the main part of the DSM-5.

In my reflections on dark personality traits in Section 2.3.1, I discuss the DSM-5 and the new dimensional approach contained therein in more detail. But first, I want to present a concise outline of the state of the art of research on normal personality traits and then (in Section 2.2) its possible applications in personnel psychology.

2.1.2 The Big Five and the Absence of Dark Factors

The so-called Five-Factor Model of Personality (FFM) by Costa and McCrae (1985) with its five broad bipolar dimensions (Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness to Experience, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness) is today generally accepted as a frame of reference. The synonym Big Five is also used for this model or its components (Goldberg, 1993). I discuss the development of this model in more detail in the following, as it is possibly one of the principal reasons for the long disregard of dark characteristics. The question is: Why are the dark traits not part of the classic, broad personality models such as the Big Five?

As early as 1933, Thurstone first reported on an FFM, and other well-known authors such as Cattell or the Guilfords found solutions like today's Big Five (Digman, 1996). A milestone in personality structure research was the lexical approach of Allport and Odbert (1936) to extract personality descriptions from a standard dictionary. On this basis, Cattell (1947) initially identified 35 trait clusters, which Fiske (1949) reduced to five factors (Wiggins & Trapnell, 1997). Tupes and Christal (1958, 1961) first found a clear and generalizable factor-solution in Cattell's variable clusters that consisted of five traits: enthusiasm/extraversion, tolerance, conscientiousness, emotional stability, and culture (Wiggins & Trapnell, 1997), which is why they are called the "true fathers" of the Big Five (Goldberg, 1993, p. 27). By the late 1980s and 1990s, there was a "near-consensus on the number and nature of the basic dimensions of personality differences" (Lee & Ashton, 2006, p. 182), and with the spread of the first inventory based on the five factors, the "hegemonic position" of the FFM was manifested (Schuler & Höft, 2006, p. 117).

But why are there no dark characteristics in such an elaborate model? Spain et al. (2014) attribute this to a lack of dark personality aspects in the lexical approach. According to Tellegen (1993), for example, evaluative descriptions such as "evil" were removed from the basic adjective list of Allport and Odbert (1936) that was later factor-analytically condensed into the Big Five (see also Saucier, 2019). That certain "negative" aspects are missing is shown by the fact that the inclusion of corresponding adjectives in new and independent lexical studies not only produced new extreme aspects of existing factors but also led to completely new ones that point in precisely this direction (see HEXACO, Ashton & Lee, 2008; Big-7, Waller & Zavala, 1993).

Of the other models under discussion, I would like to briefly discuss only that of Ashton and Lee (2008) in more detail (see box HEXACO model): Here, new lexical analyses (of seven European and Asian languages as well as in other language families of different origins) enabled to identify a factor that encompasses central aspects of dark personality traits (via their exact opposite).

HEXACO Model

In the HEXACO model of personality structure, the new factor Honesty-Humility is found as the sixth main dimension of personality, in addition to Emotionality, Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, and Openness to Experience.

Emotionality and Agreeableness are not direct equivalents of the FFM factors, merely their rotated variants; the factors Extraversion, Conscientiousness, and Openness to Experience of the HEXACO model, on the other hand, very closely resemble those of the

FFM (Lee & Ashton, 2006). Although the model thus does not simply represent a “Big Five +1” model, its central contribution lies in the new factor of Honesty-Humility or the “H-factor.” In simple terms, this sixth factor represents a kind of opposite of those traits often associated with or subsumed under the Dark Triad, which is why Paulhus (2014) sees low values on the “H-factor” as a common core of the Dark Triad (see Section 3.3).

Lee et al. (2005, p. 182) examined and described the content of this new factor and its added value to the Big Five in predicting workplace delinquency as follows: “[Honesty-Humility] represents individual differences in a reluctance versus a willingness to exploit others, a tendency that is not adequately captured by any of the Big Five factors.” As discussed below, precisely this tendency to exploit others for one’s own benefit is a key characteristic of the Dark Triad. Further findings on the overall connection of the “H-factor” and the personality models presented with the Dark Triad may be found in Chapter 3. The next section deals with the criteria of professional success and their connections with “bright” personality traits.

2.2 Predicting Job Performance with Personality Traits

I now present common operationalizations of job performance and success because the connections of the Dark Triad with these criteria serve as the main justification for using narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy for aptitude diagnostics. I subsequently discuss findings on the validity of general personality factors for the prediction of these criteria.

2.2.1 Job Performance and Success

Job performance is one of the most researched criteria in industrial and organizational psychology, as reflected in the number of published articles on the subject (see Cascio & Aguinis, 2008). Job performance can be understood as a multidimensional concept that includes the total contribution of an individual to organizational success (Motowidlo, 2003). This makes instantly clear there is no single job performance, but rather it presents a construct consisting of many interconnected subaspects in a longer-term perspective, all of which contribute to the overall performance – and all of which are based on an overarching factor (Lohaus & Schuler, 2014; Viswesvaran et al., 2005). Attempts to measure job performance can therefore capture only individual aspects of the overall performance in each case; single performance criteria are deficient, i.e., they fail to capture all relevant parts of the total performance and are contaminated, having been exposed to influences unrelated to the actual performance of the person (Lohaus & Schuler, 2014).

To distinguish from actual work performance is *professional success*, the hallmark of which is not the contribution to the success of the organization, but the individual result (also beyond the concrete workplace). Especially in the case of dark personality traits do the differential relationships to these two criteria – individual success and the company’s

success – seem very likely. To measure success, we often use objective measures such as salary, salary increases, or promotions as criteria (Henslin, 2005), though these are deficient because in many occupations, and for many people, success cannot be validly measured in monetary terms or according to classical hierarchies. In addition, success at work can also be measured based on the purpose of the activity, one's own satisfaction with it, the feeling of personal fit with the workplace and the organization, or the concrete activity for one's own interests (Schuler, 2014a). Although research usually focuses on the relationship between different predictors and job performance, one can also consider subjective measures of success such as job satisfaction or career satisfaction. Both areas are interdependent but should be understood or measured as independent constructs (Henslin, 2005).

In addition to job satisfaction, (organizational) commitment is a second, important variable that describes value attitudes toward work. One measures the subjective perception of one's own task or job, the other one's perception of the fit and binding to the organization (Sanecka, 2013). Both thus represent indicators of a successful professional placement or development. I discuss various forms of measuring objective and subjective success and job performance again at the end of this section, but let us start here by introducing the most important aspects of the latter criterion.

A widespread differentiation of job performance is the classical one forwarded by Borman and Motowidlo (1993) into task performance and contextual performance. Task-related performance comprises the clearly describable or required performance at a workplace; contextual performance comprises such contributions toward colleagues, teams, or the organization which are often not formally required, i.e., are voluntary and do not serve the actual fulfillment of the job. A closely related or very similar concept, often used synonymously, is organizational citizenship behavior (OCB; Smith et al., 1983), which distinguished early on between behavior related to individuals, such as helping a colleague, and pro-organizational behavior, such as speaking positively about the company (Sackett et al., 2006).

Task- and contextual performance have a high, meta-analytically generalizable correlation and can, as described, be understood as components of the construct of general job performance. However, they must also be considered independently, at least in the peripheral areas. For example, we find a curvilinear effect such that too much commitment to others (from about half a standard deviation above average) leads to a decline in one's own task-related performance (Rubin et al., 2013).

Counterproductive Behavior in the Workplace

Counterproductive work behavior (CWB) is a concept that cannot be strictly counted as job performance but, on the contrary, describes behavior that decisively reduces or even negatively impacts a person's overall value to the organization. CWB comprises all intentional actions that are principally capable of causing damage to the organization or one of its members (Marcus & Schuler, 2004; Nerdinger, 2008). Although situation-specific factors and overall conditions also play a role here, the personality of an employee is central to the probability of their showing counterproductive behavior – theoretically explainable with specific Big Five profiles, low integrity, or lack of self-control (Marcus, 2000).