

Personality and Individual Differences

The Dark Side of Personality

Task One: Case Studies

1. A political figure (D. Stump) has risen to power by exploiting public fears, manipulating narratives shown by media outlets, and scapegoating marginalised groups. They have consistently demonstrated that they prioritise their own interests over the well-being of the population, dismiss opposing opinions, and strengthen their control through authoritarian measures (controlling and obedience).

Analysis:

The political figure exhibits traits of all three dark triad traits - Machiavellianism (strategic manipulation for power), narcissism (grandiosity and lack of empathy), and psychopathy (callous disregard for others' rights and well-being).

2. A high-ranking executive in a large, well-known organisation has been shown to consistently undermine and manipulate colleagues to advance their own career. They exploit personal information about other members of staff that has been shared with them in confidence, spread rumours, and sabotage projects of people they perceive as a threat. Despite their unethical tactics, they consistently achieve promotions and recognition within the company.

Analysis:

This individual exhibits traits of Machiavellianism through their strategic manipulation and exploitation of others for personal gain.

3. Mark has a coloured history of impulsive and aggressive behaviour. He frequently lies to and manipulates others for personal gain. He has been arrested in the past for fraud and assault on another person and does not show any remorse for his actions. Despite repeated interventions and consequences, he continues to engage in harmful behaviours.

Analysis:

Mark demonstrates traits of psychopathy, characterised by his impulsivity, deceitfulness, and lack of empathy or remorse.

4. Sarah's partner constantly belittles her accomplishments and demands constant attention and admiration. He shows little empathy towards her when she voices her feelings or needs. Despite his behaviour, Sarah feels as though she is deeply attached to him, and fears leaving the relationship as he has previously threatened to engage in self-harming behaviour if she does.

Analysis:

Sarah's partner displays traits of narcissism, as evidenced by their grandiosity (belittling), lack of empathy, and need for admiration.

5. Throughout his first year at university, Jude has consistently plagiarised work and cheated during exams in order to achieve high marks. He has charmed lecturers and his peers and constantly deflects suspicion when questioned about his academic integrity. Despite receiving multiple warnings and penalties, he continues to engage the same behaviour.

Analysis:

The student's behaviour aligns with Machiavellianism, as they manipulate others and engage in dishonest tactics to achieve their academic goals.