



Research article

Linking dark triad traits, psychological entitlement, and knowledge hiding behavior



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ABSTRACT

This research attempts to empirically examine the role of dark personalities (i.e., narcissism, psychopathy, and Machiavellianism) on academics' knowledge hiding behavior (KHB) with the mediating effect of psychological entitlement. The data were conveniently collected using Google Form from the faculty members serving in 5 public universities of Bangladesh. This study employed PLS-SEM estimation to test the hypotheses on a sample of 219. The results of this study revealed a significant direct influence of narcissism, psychopathy, and Machiavellianism on KHB. Moreover, psychological entitlement mediated the relationship between the dark triad traits and KHB. This research contributes to the literature by revealing how dark triad traits influence academics' KHB via psychological entitlement. The practical implications for the concerned authorities, limitations, and avenues for future research are also highlighted.

1. Introduction

Since higher education institutions (HEIs) are inherently knowledge organizations for creating and disseminating knowledge, it is logically expected that their academics will proactively engage in knowledge sharing activities with each other (Karim, 2020). Knowledge sharing among the academics is crucial for promoting strategic plans, curriculums, collaborative research, administrative services, and academic excellence in HEIs (Howell and Annansingh, 2013). However, knowledge hiding and hoarding are much common among the academics of these institutions (Bari et al., 2019; Chalak et al., 2014; Goh and Sandhu, 2013; Hernaes et al., 2015, 2019; Karim, 2019, 2020; Karim and Majid, 2019; Muqadas et al., 2017; Ramjeawon and Rowley, 2017; Samdani et al., 2019; Yang and Ribiere, 2020). Apart from knowledge hoarding (i.e., unintentional knowledge withholding), academics intentionally hide knowledge from each other (Karim, 2020). For instance, according to Chalak et al. (2014), around 75% of faculty members take a passive approach to knowledge sharing with peers. Knowledge hiding behavior (KHB) is usually defined as "an intentional attempt by an individual to withhold or conceal knowledge that has been requested by another person" (Connelly et al., 2012, p. 65). Generally, those who conceal their knowledge exhibit three distinct behaviors: (i) rationalized hiding (i.e., providing an explanation of being unable to deliver the requested knowledge), (ii) playing dumb (i.e., showing unawareness of the

requested knowledge), and (iii) evasive hiding (i.e., giving a promise or providing irrelevant information) (Pan et al., 2018). Indeed, KHB appears to be a common organizational phenomenon (Lin et al., 2020) and is likely to undermine individual and organizational outcomes (Burmeister et al., 2019; Ćerne et al., 2017; Singh, 2019; Zhang and Min, 2019).

In preparation for reducing barriers in the way of effective knowledge sharing within an organization, it is essential to discover the determinants of knowledge hiding which is commonly known as a counterproductive knowledge behavior (Xiao and Cooke, 2019). Yang and Ribiere (2020) concluded that academics have a common tendency to hide knowledge from their peers mostly due to personality traits and poor interpersonal relationship. From the personality perspective, the field of research linking personality traits to knowledge hiding is still in its early stage (Pan et al., 2018). Personality traits represent an individual's stable characteristics and are the key determinants of individual behavior (Maran et al., 2022). Since knowledge hiding is a kind of undesired workplace behaviors, they are more likely to originate from undesired personality traits, such as dark triad (DT) personalities (Karim, 2020; Pan et al., 2016, 2018). DT personality traits comprise of three socially undesirable personality traits, such as narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy (Baughman et al., 2012), which are increasingly being recognized as the key source of undesirable employee attitudes and behaviors (Abukhait et al., 2022; Baughman et al., 2012; O'Boyle et al., 2012; Lata and Chaudhary, 2020; Serenko and Choo, 2020). Since

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manipulation, aggressiveness, emotional coldness and exploitation are the key characteristics of DT personalities (Kraus et al., 2018; Wai and Tiliopoulos, 2012), academics with these personalities are more likely to hide knowledge from co-workers at HEIs (Karim, 2020). Prior empirical studies indicate that there exists a mediating mechanism in the dark personality traits-counterproductive behavior relation (Mahmood et al., 2021; Pan et al., 2018; Ying and Cohen, 2018). However, empirical evidence addressing the mediating mechanism linking the dark personalities-KHB is absent in the current literature, with an exception of Pan et al.'s (2018) study. Prior research in management and psychology showed that psychological variables are good at predicting behavior on an individual level (Palmer et al., 2019). Keeping the things in mind and drawing on the theory of planned behavior, the present study aims at exploring psychological entitlement as a linking mechanism between dark personalities and KHB.

Psychological entitlement represents an individual's stable sense of deserving more and being entitled to more than others (Campbell et al., 2004). Due to the self-serving attributes, individuals with dark personality traits are more likely to experience a sense of entitlement/deservingness (Deol and Schermer, 2021) including an excessive sense of knowledge ownership and its control, which may cause them to hide their knowledge from the co-workers (Alnaimi and Rjoub, 2021). Based on the social exchange theory, Khalid et al. (2020) argued that when unrealistic expectations of psychologically entitled employees remain unfulfilled, they tend to experience a stronger sense of unfairness and a lack of reciprocity, which may induce them to hide knowledge from co-workers. Thus, this first-of-its-kind study aims to explore a potential mediating role of psychological entitlement in the link between dark personalities and KHB of academics in the context of knowledge-intensive organizations like HEIs.

2. Literature review

2.1. Dark personality traits and knowledge hiding behavior

Dark personalities are an assemblage of three malevolent traits, namely narcissism, psychopathy, and Machiavellianism (Paulhus and Williams, 2002). Narcissism, an eponym derived from the Greek mythic character of *Narcissus* who was infatuated with own reflection, is a personality type characterized by a strong sense of superiority, dominance, arrogance, ambition, self-centered behavior, and a need for attention and admiration (Kraus et al., 2018; Gluck et al., 2020; Limone et al., 2020; Rogoza et al., 2021). Psychopathy refers to a personality trait characterized by impulsivity, enduring antisocial behaviors, and absence of empathy and remorse (Karim, 2020). Another dark personality type called Machiavellianism which is named after the Italian political philosopher *Niccolo Machiavelli* who suggested a style of ruling based on the philosophy "ends justify the means" (Rogoza et al., 2021). This type of personality commonly represents opportunism, pragmatism, immorality, interpersonal manipulation, and cynicism (Gluck et al., 2020; Kraus et al., 2018). Machiavellians (also called Machs) are more likely to deliberately engage in exploitative and amoral behaviors, distrust others, exercise manipulative control on others, and pursue a high socioeconomic status (Bianchi and Mirkovic, 2020).

The dark personalities are distinct but related personality traits which have some common features such as manipulation, low agreeableness, selfishness, coldness, and lack of honesty and empathy (Lyons, 2019; Lyons and Rice, 2014). The manipulative and selfish natures of dark personalities are likely to push them to engage in deviant and counterproductive behavior (Ellen III et al., 2021; Lata and Chaudhary, 2020). In particular, an excessive sense of entitlement of narcissism, interpersonal manipulation of Machiavellianism, and the antisocial inclinations of psychopathy all patronize counterproductive behavior (Cohen, 2016). Consequently, dark personalities might be more likely to engage in another counterproductive behavior, such as KHB. Moreover, dark personalities' greater involvement in self-maximizing and non-cooperative

behavior (Deutchman and Sullivan, 2018) may also predict their behavior of knowledge hiding, since the later involves elements of non-cooperation (Chen, 2020), self-centeredness (Malik et al., 2019), and deception (Burmeister et al., 2019). From the viewpoint of social exchange theory, dark personalities tend to disregard social norms, ignore social exchange and thus may ignore knowledge request from co-workers (Pan et al., 2018). From the perspective of Life history theory (LHT), Karim (2020) argued that dark personalities tend to adopt a fast life strategy which requires them to engage in opportunistic, selfish and non-cooperative behavior including knowledge hiding from others. Supporting these arguments, few studies showed that dark personality traits can successfully predict KHB (Karim, 2020; Pan et al., 2016, 2018). In particular, Pan et al. (2016) discovered that Machiavellianism was a significant predictor of KHB. In the context of HEIs, Karim (2020) found that Machiavellianism and psychopathy had significant positive association with KHB. Pan et al. (2018) explored that all the three types of dark personalities significantly predicted KHB via transactional psychological contract. Thus, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1. Machiavellianism is positively associated with knowledge hiding behavior.

H2. Narcissism is positively associated with knowledge hiding behavior.

H3. Psychopathy is positively associated with knowledge hiding behavior.

2.2. Mediating role of psychological entitlement

Psychological entitlement is generally described as an attitude that reflects enduring feelings of deservingness, inflated expectations, specialness, and excessive self-regard (Eissa and Lester, 2021; Grubbs and Exline, 2016; Turnipseed and Cohen, 2015). Psychological entitlement is defined as "the phenomenon in which individuals consistently believe that they deserve preferential rewards and treatment" (Harvey and Martinko, 2009, 459) without considering actual deservingness.

Few prior studies revealed that undesired behaviors may be best predicted by undesired personality traits through the intervening role of undesired attitudes (Nicholls et al., 2020; Jones et al., 2017; Ying and Cohen, 2018). Following this line of thought, psychological entitlement may play an important mediating role between DT traits and KHB, which can be explained by the theory of planned behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991). The TPB is a psychological theory which has widely been used in predicting behaviors (Ajzen, 2020). According to this theory, personality traits and attitudes play a key role in explaining and forecasting human behavior (Ajzen, 1991). The theory indicates that three core constructs (i.e., attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control) are the immediate determinants of behavioral intention towards a particular behavior, whereas personality traits are the 'distal predictors', which have a more subtle but persistent influence (Wang et al., 2021). In the TPB, personality traits are considered *background factors* which are assumed to influence intentions and behavior through the mediating effect of the core constructs, such as attitudes (Ajzen, 2020). Building upon TPB, Maasberg et al. (2015) argued that DT traits which are commonly known as the malicious personality traits should be associated with an undesired behavior through a connecting construct (e.g., a negative attitude or a malicious intent). Accordingly, dark traits are more likely to engage in knowledge hiding through a negative attitude (i.e., psychological entitlement).

Moreover, it is evident that psychological entitlement has a positive association with DT traits (Deol and Schermer, 2021). Generally, individuals with the dark personality traits entail a strong sense of superiority, dominance and entitlement (Jonason et al., 2013). Such individuals tend to experience entitled beliefs, expectations, and attitudes in the workplace (Deol and Schermer, 2021). Previous research highlighted that individual with dark personalities usually have a strong

desire for status/prestige, a constant need for power and social dominance, and have a persistent need to be the center of attention (Naseer et al., 2020; Vedel and Thomsen, 2017). Moreover, their manipulative capacity to get ahead without putting a fair share of their effort may trigger their sense of entitlement (Naseer et al., 2020). In addition, previous studies also reported that DT traits can predict the sense of entitlement (Foley, 2020; Lee, 2019; Turnipseed and Cohen, 2015; Żemojtel-Piotrowska et al., 2017). For example, Lee (2019) demonstrated that sadism is a significant predictor of the feelings of entitlement.

On the other hand, individuals with greater psychological entitlement usually experience an excessive feeling of self-importance and a self-serving bias (Khalid et al., 2020). Due to self-serving attributes, entitled individuals tend to be more selfish and insensitive toward others' needs, resulting in their inclination to knowledge hiding from co-workers (Alnaimi and Rjoub, 2021). Following the sense of self-importance, entitled individuals may prefer to hide their knowledge in order to uphold a sense of importance, status, and superiority. Moreover, their undue expectations may promote the perception of being under-rewarded as well as a sense of unfairness at the workplace, inducing them to exhibit resentful attitudes and behaviors including concealment of knowledge from others (Khalid et al., 2020). It also appears that psychological entitlement fits as a mediator between DT traits and undesired employee behavior (Matherne III et al., 2019; Yuping et al., 2021). Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H4. Psychological entitlement mediates the relationship between narcissism and knowledge hiding behavior.

H5. Psychological entitlement mediates the relationship between psychopathy and knowledge hiding behavior.

H6. Psychological entitlement mediates the relationship between Machiavellianism and knowledge hiding behavior.

3. Methodology

3.1. Participants

In order to test the hypotheses, this study administered a quantitative online survey with a structured questionnaire. The population of the study exclusively consisted of full-time faculty members (i.e., professors, associate professors, assistant professors, and lecturers) serving in 5 public universities in Bangladesh. Using Google Form and convenience sampling method, the questionnaire was sent to the official email addresses of potential respondents. The questionnaire began with an introduction which explained the purpose of the study and ensured anonymity and confidentiality of the collected data. Moreover, potential respondents were requested for their consent and voluntary participation in the survey. The participants expressed their consent by returning the completed questionnaire. The study didn't require any ethical approval under the present institutional and national practices as well as legislations.

The survey yielded a total of 219 useable responses with a response rate of 36.5%. Of the respondents, 63.5% were male and 80.8% were married. Concerning age, 35.2% were aged below 30 years, 54.3% were between 31 and 40 years, 8.2% were between 41 and 50 years, and 2.3%

were older than 50 years. Related to educational background, most respondents (74.4%) had master's degree, 18.7% had doctoral degree, and 5.5% had MPhil degree, whereas only 1.4% had honor's degree. Regarding job position, 3.7% were professors, 16.4% were associate professors, 33.3% were assistant professors, and 46.6% were lecturer. Regarding teaching experience, 46.1% served up to 5 years, 37.4% for 6–10 years, 11% for 11–15 years, whereas only 5.5% for more than 15 years.

3.2. Measures

The study measured dark personalities (Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy) using 12 items adopted from the study of Jonason and Webster (2010). Out of them, a 4-item scale measured Machiavellianism with a sample item "I tend to exploit others towards my own end". The measurement scale of narcissism comprises of 4 items with a sample item "I tend to seek prestige or status". Psychopathy was assessed with a 4-item measure. A sample item is "I tend to be cynical". Composite reliability coefficients for the three scales were reported above 0.80 ranging from 0.84 to 0.94.

The study employed a 9-item scale for measuring psychological entitlement constructed by Campbell et al. (2004), which includes items such as "great things should come to me".

The study measured knowledge hiding with 3 items adapted from Serenko and Bontis (2016). A sample item was "I often leave out pertinent information or facts when communicating with my fellow colleagues". Reliability coefficients for this scale were reported 0.85 and 0.895 for Cronbach alpha (α) and composite reliability (CR) respectively.

4. Data analysis

Table 1 summarizes the descriptive statistics for each of the variables of the study. As exhibited in Table 1, all three DT traits were positively correlated with both psychological entitlement and KHB. Moreover, psychological entitlement was positively correlated with KHB. Since the study used self-report data, Harman's single-factor test was conducted to examine the possibility of Common Method Variance (CMV). The factor analysis explored a single factor explaining only 34.819% of variance and thus proved that CMV is not a concerning issue. Moreover, collinearity issue is examined using the variance inflation factor (VIF). All VIF values for the predictors (MAC, NAR, PSY and PE) were lower than the conservative threshold of 3.3 as recommended by Kock (2015). Moreover, the study applied an ex-ante measure to prevent the presence of CMV by guaranteeing anonymity and confidentiality of the respondents to provide candid responses (Fu et al., 2022).

4.1. Assessment of measurement model

The study analyzed the hypothesized model with PLS-SEM by assessing measurement (inner) and structural (outer) models. A measurement model (reflective) evaluates reliability, convergent validity and discriminant validity of the measures of a model's constructs (Ali et al., 2018). Table 2 presents the assessment of measurement model indicating the fulfillment of reliability and validity of the measures. Specifically, all

Table 1. Means, standard deviations, and correlations.

SL	Latent Variables	Mean	S.D.	1	2	3	4	5
1.	Machiavellianism (MAC)	3.0890	.64	1				
2.	Narcissism (NAR)	3.1370	.70	.247**	1			
3.	Psychopathy (PSY)	2.9258	.64	.187**	.331**	1		
4.	Psychological Entitlement (PE)	3.3724	.60	.276**	.388**	.423**	1	
5.	Knowledge Hiding Behavior (KHB)	3.0335	.64	.344**	.378**	.564**	.495**	1

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 2. The measurement model outcomes.

Constructs	Items	SL	α	rho_A	CR	AVE
Knowledge Hiding Behavior	KHB1	0.836	0.788	0.798	0.876	0.702
	KHB2	0.874				
	KHB3	0.803				
Machiavellianism	MAC1	0.758	0.778	0.788	0.856	0.597
	MAC2	0.811				
	MAC3	0.758				
	MAC4	0.763				
Narcissism	NAR1	0.825	0.826	0.832	0.885	0.659
	NAR2	0.734				
	NAR3	0.828				
	NAR4	0.855				
Psychopathy	PSY1	0.839	0.837	0.846	0.891	0.671
	PSY2	0.836				
	PSY3	0.799				
	PSY4	0.801				
Psychological Entitlement	PE1	0.774	0.925	0.927	0.938	0.627
	PE2	0.794				
	PE3	0.725				
	PE4	0.751				
	PE5	0.688				
	PE6	0.874				
	PE7	0.840				
	PE8	0.852				
	PE9	0.806				

the item loadings are above the threshold of 0.70, except for one item (PE5 = .688). The study has retained the item (PE5) for further analysis, since its loading is greater than 0.40 and the minimum threshold values of AVE and CR were already achieved (Hair et al., 2017). All the construct reliabilities (Cronbach's alpha, rho_A, composite reliability) are higher than the critical value of 0.70, as suggested by Ali et al. (2018). Thus, reliability of the constructs and their corresponding items are established. All average variance extracted (AVE) values are well above the cut-off value of 0.50, confirming the convergent validity. The discriminant validity that measures uniqueness of the constructs is assessed using Henseler et al.'s (2015) heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) criterion. As shown in Table 3, all the HTMT values are much lower than the threshold of 0.85 (Ringle et al., 2020), thus fulfilling the discriminant validity criterion.

4.2. Assessment of structural model

Table 4 and Figure 1 present the outcomes of the structural model and the hypotheses. Following one-tailed test (see Cepeda-Carrion et al., 2019) and bootstrapping procedure with 10,000 samples (Ringle et al., 2020), structural modeling was performed to determine the hypothesized relationships among the variables. As presented in Table 4 and Figure 1, the direct paths from all three DT traits, namely Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy to KHB demonstrate significant positive associations between them, with values of ($\beta = 0.189$, t-value = 3.501, $p < 0.001$) ($\beta = 0.113$, t-value = 2.096, $p < 0.05$) and ($\beta = 0.403$,

Table 3. Heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT).

	KHB	MAC	NAR	PE	PSY
KHB	-				
MAC	0.439	-			
NAR	0.465	0.310	-		
PE	0.576	0.327	0.443	-	
PSY	0.692	0.230	0.396	0.479	-

t-value = 6.645, $p < 0.001$), respectively. Table 4 also reported the effect size (f^2) for each relationship, which is interpreted as follows: 0.35 (large), 0.15 (medium), and 0.02 (small) (Cohen, 1988). This study also examines the mediating effect of psychological entitlement on the relation between the three dark personalities and KHB. The results of the structural model demonstrated that psychological entitlement significantly mediated the relationships between Machiavellianism and KHB ($\beta = 0.037$, t-value = 1.910, $p < 0.05$), narcissism and KHB ($\beta = 0.056$, t-value = 2.678, $p < 0.01$), and psychopathy and KHB ($\beta = 0.071$, t-value = 3.260, $p < 0.001$). Moreover, non-existence of zero in the confidence intervals supports all the mediations, as shown in Table 4 (Carrión et al., 2017).

Besides evaluating the path significance, the study assessed the model's predictive power using R^2 values of the criterion variables (Hair et al., 2017). The study model explained 0.454% of the variance in KHB and 0.276% of the variance in psychological entitlement, which are considered as substantial (Cohen, 1988). Finally, the blindfolding procedure with an omission distance of 7 was performed to obtain the Stone-Geisser's Q^2 value in order to measure the model's predictive relevance. The Q^2 values for KHB (0.292) and WI (0.157) are above zero, supporting the presence of predictive relevance of the path model studied.

5. Discussion

This study aimed to investigate the mediating effect of psychological entitlement on the link between dark personality traits (Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy) and KHB of academics at HEIs. Moreover, the study examined the direct effect of the dark personality traits on KHB. As predicted and consistent with LHT theory, all three dark personality traits were found to have a significant direct effect on KHB. The findings of the study are in line with the previous studies that discovered relationship of dark personalities with KHB (Karim, 2020; Pan et al., 2016). The exploitive, amoral, and aggressive nature of Machiavellians, the tendency of violating social norms, impulsivity, and lack of guilt-feeling of psychopaths, and the excessive sense of superiority and lack of empathy of narcissists stimulate them to engage in counterproductive behaviors (Lata and Chaudhary, 2020) and deter them from revealing relevant knowledge at the workplace (Pan et al., 2018; Karim, 2020). DT personalities are socially aversive and insensitive to others (Furnham and Treglown, 2021; Rogoza et al., 2021). From the social exchange viewpoint, they usually lack emotional commitment to others, overlook obligations and reciprocity, injure interpersonal relationships over time, and are thus more prone to participate in interpersonal types of counterproductive behavior (O'Boyle et al., 2012), such as knowledge hiding.

The study also discovered that psychological entitlement mediates the association of DT traits and KHB. The results support the understanding of the TPB and are consistent with prior studies showing that: (1) DT personalities significantly relate to psychological entitlement (Foley, 2020; Lee, 2019; Turnipseed and Cohen, 2015; Žemojtel-Piotrowska et al., 2017), which in return significantly contributes to employees' KHB (Alnaimi and Rjoub, 2021; Khalid et al., 2020). As hypothesized, the results demonstrate that dark traits tend to predict employees' entitled outlooks which may bring numerous negative outcomes for the organizations. Individuals high on dark personality traits display a lack of empathy and caring about others, show a greater sense of selfishness and deservingness, and are less inclined to altruistic activities (Roşca et al., 2021). Generally, individuals low on altruism are likely to engage more in unhelpful and non-cooperative behavior including knowledge hiding at the workplace. From the social exchange perspective, when the unreasonable expectations arising from the entitled outlooks are unmet, entitled individuals are more prone to experience a greater level of unfairness and injustice in the workplace, which undermines their exchange relationships with other co-workers, thereby promoting unwillingness to share knowledge (Khalid et al., 2020).

Table 4. The structural model outcomes.

Hs	Paths	β	SE	T-values	f^2	Q^2	BCCI (5%–95%)	Decision
H1	MAC→KHB	0.189	0.054	3.501 ***	0.058	0.292	[0.096–0.274]	Supported
H2	NAR→KHB	0.113	0.054	2.096*	0.019		[0.021–0.199]	Supported
H3	PSY→KHB	0.403	0.061	6.645 ***	0.234		[0.299–0.498]	Supported
	PE→KHB	0.227	0.061	3.747 ***	0.068		[0.124–0.327]	-
	MAC→PE	0.164	0.066	2.498**	0.034	0.157	[0.051–0.266]	-
	NAR→PE	0.245	0.066	3.680 ***	0.071		[0.128–0.348]	-
	PSY→PE	0.315	0.061	5.189 ***	0.120		[0.212–0.412]	-
H4	MAC→PE→KHB	0.037	0.020	1.910*			[0.011–0.077]	Supported
H5	NAR→PE→KHB	0.056	0.021	2.678**			[0.027–0.096]	Supported
H6	PSY→PE→KHB	0.071	0.022	3.260***			[0.040–0.114]	Supported

Note: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$ (one-tailed test) based on 10,000 bootstrapping. KHB = Knowledge Hiding Behavior, MAC = Machiavellianism, NAR = Narcissism, PSY = Psychopathy, and PE = Psychological Entitlement, BCCI = Bias-corrected Confidence Intervals.

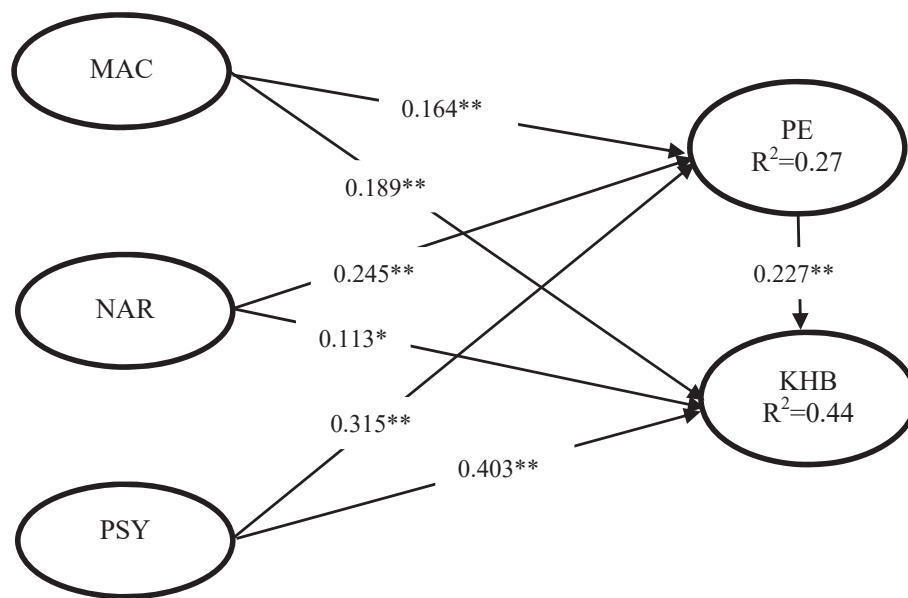


Figure 1. Path model and PLS-SEM results. Notes: *** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$. MAC = Machiavellianism; NAR = Narcissism; PSY = Psychopathy; PE = Psychological Entitlement; KHB = Knowledge Hiding Behavior.

5.1. Theoretical contributions

Despite a surge of academic interest in knowledge sharing practices in diverse organizational settings, research on knowledge hiding remains inadequate, particularly in the domain of HEIs. Thus, this study has contributed to the literature of knowledge hiding by identifying its individual-level antecedents. The study is among the first to examine dark personality traits in the prediction of KHB. Moreover, this study extends the previous literature of the psychological entitlement by linking it with dark personalities and counterproductive knowledge behavior. This study examines the mediating role of psychological entitlement in response to the urge of discovering mediating mechanism between DT traits and KHB (Karim, 2020; Pan et al., 2018).

This study, to the researcher’s knowledge, provides first empirical evidence of studying psychological entitlement as an intervening variable in the DT-KHB relations. The findings of this research also contribute to the LHT by supporting the idea that DT tends to adopt fast life strategies, thereby leading them to engage in non-cooperative behavior. In addition, the study contributes to the TPB by displaying personality traits as distal predictors and an attitude as a proximal predictor of individual behavior.

5.2. Managerial implications

This research has several practical implications for the organizations, especially for HEIs. Administrators of HEIs should be aware of the remarkable presence and the consequences of knowledge hiding practices among the academics. Moreover, university administrators have to understand the horrifying role of dark personalities in manifesting a sense of entitlement and deservingness which stimulate them to engage in damaging behaviors like knowledge hiding in the workplace. As a remedial measure, HEIs should incorporate personality tests in the selection process of their faculty members. It is important to screen out the candidates with undesirable personality traits at the selection stage. Since dark personalities tend to adopt a fast-life strategy, previous life strategies adopted by the job candidates should be assessed while hiring. This can be done during the background investigation of the potential hires. Moreover, Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) can be used to screen out the malevolent personalities. Minimizing the presence of dark personalities appears to create a positive work climate which will help reduce the tendency of knowledge hiding activities.

The study has several shortcomings and reveals future research agenda. First, the study employed convenience sampling technique, which limits generalizability of the findings to the population. To address

the limitation, future studies should adopt a probability sampling technique, especially a systematic sampling method which guarantees evenly sampled data from the entire population, yielding more precise results. Second, the cross-sectional design of the study does not establish causality. Thus, there is a need for longitudinal studies on the research framework to determine causality over time. Third, the study used a unidimensional instrument for measuring KHB. Future endeavors would benefit from research designs adopting the multidimensional measures of KHB, which will help understand the relative presence of the various kinds of knowledge hiding activities. Fourth, the study relied on self-report data which sometimes get distorted due to social desirability of the respondents. Particularly, knowledge hiding practices might be higher than reported by the respondents, despite revealing that CMV is not a concerning issue for this study. Thus, it might be meaningful to study individuals' KHB based on the perception of their co-workers. The research framework should further be investigated across cultures and workplace settings to confirm the study results. The exploitative and devious nature of dark personalities tends to push them to engage in organizational politics (Mahmood et al., 2021) which is again believed to be a strong determinant of KHB (Malik et al., 2019). Thus, future research could investigate potential link of dark personalities with KHB through the mediating role of organizational politics.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, the present study provides empirical evidence of how academics with dark personality traits trigger knowledge hiding activities in HEIs. The findings of the study suggest that DT traits are linked to the beliefs and attitudes of exaggerated deservingness and unreasonable expectations, which may induce them to act selfishly, perceive greater sense of knowledge ownership and disregard the request for knowledge from co-workers. Considering the damaging effect of dark personalities on employee outcomes, HEIs should include personality tests and an assessment of the job candidates' prior life approaches in the selection process in order to screen out those who are high on the DT traits. The study demonstrates that there is a great urgency to limit the presence of dark personalities in the workplace to reduce knowledge hiding practices.

Declarations

Author contribution statement

Dewan Niamul Karim, PhD: Conceived and designed the study; Reviewed literature; Collected, analyzed and interpreted the data; Wrote the paper.

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Data availability statement

Data will be made available on request.

Declaration of interests statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Additional information

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