



Who cheats? An examination of light and dark personality traits as predictors of infidelity

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ABSTRACT

Acts of infidelity are violations of the exclusivity norm of close relationships, and some individuals engage in infidelity more than others. Previous studies show that individuals high in the Dark Triad, the malevolent side of personality, are more likely to engage in infidelity, however not much is known regarding the relationship of infidelity and benevolent personality traits, the Light Triad. This study ($N = 309$) aimed to examine the relations between dark and light side of personality traits and infidelity. Two separate regression analyses were conducted using the Dark Triad and the Light Triad as predictors of infidelity attitudes and infidelity behaviors. The results showed that psychopathy and Kantianism were significant predictors of infidelity attitudes, while only psychopathy emerged as the significant predictor of infidelity behaviors. The findings where the Dark and the Light Triad were simultaneously modeled shows that dark and light personality traits are separate constructs uniquely predicting infidelity attitudes and for infidelity behaviors the malevolent may have more predictive power than the benevolent.

People in exclusive romantic relationships have a common understanding of commitment to emotional and sexual exclusivity. This can be considered as a norm of romantic relationships that regulates emotional and/or sexual closeness with other people. Acts of infidelity are violations of this norm in exclusive relationships. Different behaviors from flirtatious acts to sexual intercourse may be considered as infidelity. Due to this wide range of definitions rate of infidelity also varies. Twenty to 70% of relationships are reported to include acts of infidelity (Birnbbaum et al., 2019) and some people are more inclined to engage in infidelity than others (Urgancı & Sevi, 2019).

Regardless of relationship satisfaction, individual differences play a role in proneness to engage in infidelity (Weeks, Gambescia, & Jenkins, 2003). For instance, people who previously engaged in infidelity, who were exposed to parental infidelity, and who had greater number of sexual partners before marriage are more likely to engage in infidelity (Fincham & May, 2017). Moreover, people with an unrestricted sociosexual orientation demonstrate greater willingness to engage in infidelity (Wilson, Mattingly, Clark, Weidler, & Bequette, 2011) and individuals with insecure attachment report more permissive attitudes towards infidelity and actual infidelity behaviors (DeWall et al., 2011).

Personality is another individual difference variable that has been examined as a predictor of infidelity. The Big Five personality traits

(openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism) have been a topic of study to predict infidelity. For example, people with higher levels of neuroticism are more likely to engage in sexual infidelity behaviors (Whisman, Gordon, & Chatav, 2007). The Big Five are also related to infidelity by interaction with other variables. It is reported that high neuroticism and low agreeableness predict infidelity motivated by anger and high neuroticism predicts infidelity motivated by neglect, whereas extraversion predicts infidelity motivated by dissatisfaction with a partner (Barta & Kiene, 2005). Further, people with lower levels of conscientiousness and agreeableness report less marital satisfaction, which leads to greater probability of extramarital involvement (Shackelford, Besser, & Goetz, 2008). Other than the Big Five, the *Dark Triad* (DT) of personality is another set of personality traits that have been shown to play a role in infidelity.

DT consists of three personality traits that are correlated but conceptually distinct from each other (Paulhus & Williams, 2002). People high in *Machiavellianism* are considered highly strategic and manipulative. High *narcissism* is characterized by feelings of superiority, dominance, and entitlement. Individuals high in *psychopathy* display lack of empathy and high impulsivity. People who possess higher levels of these dark traits tend to have less restricted sociosexuality (Stolarski,

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Czarna, Malesza, & Szymańska, 2017), more sexual partners (Jonason, Li, Webster, & Schmitt, 2009), and lower standards when choosing short-term mates (Jonason, Valentine, Li, & Harbeson, 2011). Moreover, the scores on the DT are also related with rates of poaching mates from others for new relationships and being by poached by others (Jonason, Li, & Buss, 2010). It can be argued that these personality traits and their correlates may set up an environment in romantic relationships that is conducive of infidelity.

To our knowledge, there are two empirical studies that examined the relation between DT and infidelity behaviors. First, Jones and Weiser (2014) reported that DT traits were all positively correlated with having committed infidelity. When the predictive value of the distinct DT traits was tested by examining all traits simultaneously in a regression model, psychopathy emerged as the only significant predictor of committing infidelity. Secondly, Brewer, Hunt, James, and Abell (2015) studied women who were involved in romantic relationships. They reported that higher levels of infidelity behaviors were correlated with narcissism and psychopathy. Tests on the predictive value of the distinct DT traits showed that narcissism was the only significant predictor of committing infidelity.

These studies offer the first empirical evidence on the relation between DT and infidelity. Building on these previous findings, the current study aims to examine the relation between DT and infidelity behaviors and extend these findings by also examining the relation between DT and attitudes towards infidelity. We expect to see a positive correlation between DT and both infidelity behaviors and attitudes. We will also explore the unique predictive value of the three distinct DT traits on infidelity attitudes and behavior.

DT is a construct that has been widely studied in relation to many different variables (Dinić & Jevremov, 2019). However, not much is known about the benevolent side of human personality. To close this gap, a scale has been developed that assesses three light personality traits, *The Light Triad* (LT; Kaufman, Yaden, Hyde, & Tsukayama, 2019). *Kantianism*, the trait of treating people as ends unto themselves, not as mere means to an end. *Humanism*, valuing the dignity and worth of each individual. *Faith in Humanity* the trait of believing in the fundamental goodness of humans and acceptance of others. These traits have been shown to be independent and internally consistent constructs. LT is negatively correlated with DT and they show opposing correlations with different variables. For example, it was reported that higher scores on LT are correlated with lower levels on sociosexual orientation and higher levels on love styles of Storge (i.e., friendship love) and Eros (i.e., passionate love), while these relations were in the opposite direction for DT (Kaufman et al., 2019). Further, after controlling for other well-established personality traits, such as agreeableness from the Big Five and honesty-humility from HEXACO, LT was still positively associated with love styles of Eros, Storge, Agape (i.e., altruistic love), and negatively associated with Ludus (game-playing love), supporting that LT is a distinct set of personality traits.

To our knowledge, the relation between LT and infidelity is unexplored, and the benevolent side of personality may also play a detracting role on infidelity. Therefore, the present study aims to investigate the possible links between LT and infidelity attitudes and behaviors. Considering the contrast between the Light and Dark personality traits, we expect that higher levels of LT will show negative correlations with both infidelity attitudes and behaviors. As we will examine with DT, the predictive value of the three distinct LT traits on infidelity attitudes and behaviors will also be explored.

Further, in order to present a comprehensive understanding of infidelity, we aim to explore the unique predictive values of the distinct Dark and Light personality traits in forecasting infidelity by testing them simultaneously in the same models. Understanding the nature of these attitudes are of value as attitudes are argued to be predictors of behaviors (Ajzen, Fishbein, Lohmann, & Albarracín, 2018) and infidelity attitudes have been reported as predictors of infidelity behaviors (Toplu-Demirtaş & Fincham, 2018). Therefore we will first test a

model for predicting infidelity attitudes by running DT and LT as predictors and then we will test another model for predicting infidelity behaviors by running DT, LT, and infidelity attitudes. We don't have specific predictions regarding DT and LT, yet we expect infidelity attitudes to emerge as positive predictors of infidelity behaviors.

1. Method

1.1. Participants and procedure

According to a power analysis using G*Power 3.1 (Faul, Erdfelder, Buchner, & Lang, 2009), for a multiple linear regression with ten predictors, at $\alpha = 0.05$, a minimum sample size of 213 is needed to provide 80% power to detect a small to moderate effect size. As part of a larger project on interpersonal relationships, we collected data from 309 participants residing in the United States (156 female; age range: 18–70 years, $M_{age} = 37.36$, $SD_{age} = 11.45$, $Mdn_{age} = 35$; 233 in a relationship).¹

We used Amazon MTurk to recruit participants for our online study. The study was advertised as an investigation of attitudes in certain relationship contexts. The measures were presented in randomized order and the survey lasted approximately 15 min. Participants were given monetary compensation after completion. To eliminate possible “bot” use as well as inattentive participants, we restricted our study to be eligible only for workers who had an approval rate of 95% or higher and eliminated participants who failed attention check and open-ended questions ($n = 34$).

1.2. Materials

1.2.1. The Short Dark Triad Scale (Jones & Paulhus, 2014)

The scale consisting of 27-items was used to assess Machiavellianism (e.g., “I like to use clever manipulation to get my way”; $\alpha = 0.89$), narcissism (e.g., “I have been compared to famous people”; $\alpha = 0.82$), and psychopathy (e.g., “Payback needs to be quick and nasty”; $\alpha = 0.86$). The response format ranged from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). Composite scores were created for each dark personality trait by averaging the scores on each item of the subscale.

1.2.2. The Light Triad Scale (Kaufman et al., 2019)

The 12-item scale was used to assess Kantianism (e.g., “I prefer honesty over charm”; $\alpha = 0.80$), Humanism (e.g., “I tend to applaud the successes of other people”; $\alpha = 0.83$), and Faith in Humanity (e.g., “I tend to trust that other people will deal fairly with me”; $\alpha = 0.84$). The response format ranged from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). Composite scores were created for each light personality trait by averaging the scores on each item of the subscale.

1.2.3. Attitudes Toward Infidelity Scale (ATIS; Whatley, 2012)

This 12-item unidimensional measure was used to assess people's attitudes towards infidelity. The scale includes items such as “Infidelity is morally wrong in all circumstances regardless of the situation” (reverse item), “I would have an affair if I knew my significant other would never find out” and “Infidelity in a marital relationship is grounds for divorce” (reverse item). The response format ranged from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). The composite score was created as the sum of all items so that higher scores mean greater acceptance of infidelity ($\alpha = 0.89$).

1.2.4. Infidelity behaviors

Adapted from Fincham, Lambert, and Beach (2010), we used a

¹ Reported data and used syntax can be accessed at osf.io/arf58/?view_only=30e9d0675e124b26a21a8e19406e0877.

Table 1
Descriptive statistics and correlation coefficients of study variables.

	<i>M (SD)</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Machiavellianism	3.83 (1.35)	–	0.43**	0.66**	–0.16**	–0.08	–0.27**	0.38**	0.34**		
2. Narcissism	3.55 (1.15)	0.48**	–	0.46**	0.13*	0.12*	–0.20**	0.27**	0.20**		
3. Psychopathy	2.79 (1.32)	0.68**	0.52**	–	–0.16**	–0.19**	–0.38**	0.63**	0.53**		
4. Faith in humanity	4.84 (1.31)	–0.12*	0.14*	–0.09	–	0.67**	0.44**	–0.20**	–0.10		
5. Humanism	5.27 (1.11)	–0.11	0.08	–0.22**	0.65**	–	0.54**	–0.27**	–0.08		
6. Kantianism	5.55 (1.12)	–0.31**	–0.25**	–0.42**	0.41**	0.55**	–	–0.46**	–0.19**		
7. Infidelity attitudes	30.33 (14.56)	0.43**	0.38*	0.67**	–0.15**	–0.29**	–0.49**	–	0.54**		
8. Infidelity behaviors	1.91 (2.16)	0.37**	0.25**	0.55**	–0.07	–0.09	–0.24**	0.56**	–		
9. Age	37.36 (11.45)	–0.23**	–0.23**	–0.31**	–0.01	0.09	0.18**	–0.21**	–0.13*	–	
10. Sex	0.01 (1.00)	–0.15**	–0.23**	–0.32**	–0.08	0.13*	0.15**	–0.14**	–0.24**	0.19**	–
11. Relationship status	0.51 (0.86)	0.09	0.04	0.11	0.15**	0.05	0.00	0.08	0.09	–0.09	0.08

Notes. Sex is coded as Male = –1, Female = 1; Relationship status is coded as not in a relationship = –1, in a relationship = 1. The lower diagonal represents bivariate correlations, the upper diagonal represents partial correlations between study variables controlling for age, sex, and relationship status.

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

measure that assessed whether participants engaged in six extradyadic behaviors (e.g., going on a date, kissing, sexual intercourse) with someone other than their romantic partner while in a committed monogamous relationship. Responses were dichotomous (1 = yes, 0 = no). The composite score was calculated as the sum of all items so that higher scores reflected higher levels of infidelity behaviors ($\alpha = 0.87$).

2. Results

Bivariate correlation analyses were conducted between DT, LT, infidelity attitudes, infidelity behaviors, age, sex, and relationship status (Table 1).² More positive attitudes towards infidelity were correlated with younger age, higher levels of all the traits of DT, and lower levels of LS ($r_s = -0.49$ – 0.67). Higher infidelity behaviors were correlated with younger age, higher levels of DT, and lower levels of Kantianism ($r_s = -0.24$ – 0.55). Kantianism was negatively correlated with all DT traits ($r_s = -0.25$ to -0.42), humanism was negatively correlated with psychopathy ($r = -0.22$), and faith in humanity was negatively correlated Machiavellianism ($r = -0.12$) while it was in positive relation with narcissism ($r = 0.14$). Infidelity attitudes and behaviors were positively correlated with each other ($r = 0.56$).

To test the predictive value of the distinct DT traits on infidelity attitudes and infidelity behaviors, two hierarchical regression analyses were conducted (see Table 2). Age, sex, and relationship status were entered as control variables in step 1 and the DT were entered in step 2. Among the DT, psychopathy was the only dark personality trait that was a significant predictor of attitudes towards infidelity ($\beta = 0.70$, $p < .001$, adjusted $R^2 = 0.44$, $F(6, 299) = 41.61$, $p < .001$, max. VIF = 2.29), and infidelity behaviors ($\beta = 0.59$, $p < .001$, adjusted $R^2 = 0.29$, $F(6, 299) = 22.07$, $p < .001$, max. VIF = 2.29).

Next, to explore the possible predictive value of the distinct LT on infidelity attitudes and infidelity behaviors, two more hierarchical regression analyses were conducted (see Table 2). While controlling for age, sex, and relationship status, Kantianism was the only light personality trait that was a significant predictor of attitudes towards infidelity ($\beta = -0.44$, $p < .001$; adjusted $R^2 = 0.28$, $F(6, 299) = 20.32$, $p < .001$, max. VIF = 2.15) and infidelity behaviors ($\beta = -0.22$, $p < .01$; adjusted $R^2 = 0.06$, $F(6, 299) = 4.37$, $p < .001$, max. VIF = 2.15).

Then, to examine the unique predictive value of the Dark and Light

personality traits on infidelity attitudes, we ran another regression analysis where we entered both Dark and Light personality traits in the same model. In the first step, we entered the control variables age, sex, and relationship status. In the second step, we entered both DT and LT together and regressed them on infidelity attitudes (see Table 3). The results showed that higher levels of psychopathy predicted more positive attitudes towards infidelity ($\beta = 0.60$, $p < .001$), while higher levels of Kantianism predicted more negative attitudes towards infidelity ($\beta = -0.24$, $p < .01$; adjusted $R^2 = 0.49$, $F(9, 296) = 34.41$, $p < .001$, max. VIF = 2.49).³

Finally, to examine the unique predictive value of infidelity attitudes, DT and LT personality traits on infidelity behaviors, we ran a final regression model (see Table 4). In the first step, we entered the control variables age, sex, and relationship status. In the second step, we entered infidelity attitudes, DT and LT traits and regressed them on infidelity behaviors. The results showed that infidelity attitudes were a significant predictor of infidelity behaviors ($\beta = 0.39$, $p < .001$). Among the personality traits, psychopathy was the only significant predictor where higher levels predicted more infidelity behaviors ($\beta = 0.36$, $p < .001$; adjusted $R^2 = 0.39$, $F(10, 295) = 18.55$, $p < .001$, max. VIF = 3.22).^{4,5}

3. Discussion

Exclusive relationships come with an unwritten agreement of loyalty to one's partner. Acts of infidelity would be violations of this agreement and have adverse effects on the relationship, sometimes as serious as dissolution. The definition of infidelity varies and the likelihood of a person to engage in infidelity also shows substantial variance with respect to different individual factors (Fincham & May, 2017). Past studies have examined how the personalities of individuals may play a role in infidelity (e.g. Shackelford et al., 2008). Building on the previous literature, this study aimed to explore how Dark and Light personality traits may be playing a role in attitudes towards infidelity and infidelity behaviors.

Previous studies on DT have shown a positive relation between higher levels of dark personality traits and infidelity (Brewer et al.,

³ When the regression was modeled with the control variables at step 1, only DT in step 2, and LT in step 3, the step with LT had a significant R^2 change of 0.06 ($p < .01$).

⁴ When the second step was run without the infidelity attitudes and only with Dark and Light personality traits, there was no change, the results were in the same direction.

⁵ When the regression was modeled with the control variables at step 1, infidelity attitudes and DT in step 2, and LT in step 3, the step with LT did not have a significant R^2 change ($p > .05$).

² The subscales of the two personality trait measures (i.e., DT and LT) were positively correlated within each other (DT $r_s = 0.48$ – 0.69 ; LT $r_s = 0.41$ – 0.65). The subscales of both the DT and LT were also correlated with the infidelity measures in the expected directions. These suggest good criterion validity of measures.

Table 2

Standardized and unstandardized regression coefficients for the DT predicting infidelity attitudes and infidelity behaviors, and the LT predicting infidelity attitudes and infidelity behaviors.

DT	Infidelity attitudes			Infidelity behaviors		
	β	<i>B</i> (<i>SE</i>)	95% CI	β	<i>B</i> (<i>SE</i>)	95% CI
Machiavellianism	−0.05	−0.55 (0.65)	−1.82, 0.73	−0.01	−0.01 (0.11)	−0.22, 0.20
Narcissism	−0.01	−0.17 (0.65)	−1.46, 1.12	−0.05	−0.09 (0.11)	−0.31, 0.12
Psychopathy	0.70**	7.75 (0.71)	6.35, 9.15	0.59**	0.97 (0.12)	0.73, 1.20

LT	Infidelity attitudes			Infidelity behaviors		
	β	<i>B</i> (<i>SE</i>)	95% CI	β	<i>B</i> (<i>SE</i>)	95% CI
Faith in humanity	0.03	0.37 (0.75)	−1.10, 1.84	−0.05	−0.08 (0.13)	−0.32, 0.17
Humanism	−0.05	−0.64 (0.93)	−2.48, 1.19	0.07	0.13 (0.16)	−0.18, 0.44
Kantianism	−0.44**	−5.58 (0.79)	−7.33, −4.23	−0.22**	−0.42 (0.13)	−0.68, −0.16

Notes. Age, sex, and relationship status were entered as covariates.

** $p < .01$.

Table 3

Standardized and unstandardized regression coefficients for control variables, DT, and LT predicting infidelity attitudes.

	β	<i>B</i> (<i>SE</i>)	95% CI	ΔR^2
Step 1				0.09
Age	−0.16**	−0.20 (0.07)	−0.34, −0.06	
Sex	−0.22**	−3.22 (0.82)	−4.83, −1.62	
Relationship	0.09	1.52 (0.94)	−0.33, 3.38	
Step 2				0.42
Machiavellianism	−0.05	−0.59 (0.63)	−1.82, 0.65	
Narcissism	−0.01	−0.18 (0.66)	−1.48, 1.11	
Psychopathy	0.60**	6.63 (0.71)	5.24, 8.03	
Faith in humanity	0.03	0.34 (0.64)	−0.91, 1.59	
Humanism	−0.05	−0.68 (0.79)	−2.24, 0.89	
Kantianism	−0.24**	−3.21 (0.71)	−4.61, −1.82	
Total R^2				0.51

Notes. Sex is coded as Male = −1, Female = 1; Relationship status is coded as not in a relationship = −1, in a relationship = 1.

** $p < .01$.

Table 4

Standardized and unstandardized regression coefficients for control variables, infidelity attitudes, DT, and LT predicting infidelity behaviors.

	β	<i>B</i> (<i>SE</i>)	95% CI	ΔR^2
Step 1				0.04
Age	−0.10	−0.02 (0.01)	−0.04, 0.00	
Sex	−0.13*	−0.28 (0.12)	−0.53, −0.04	
Relationship	0.09	0.22 (0.14)	−0.06, 0.51	
Step 2				0.35
Infidelity attitudes	0.39**	0.06 (0.01)	0.04, 0.08	
Machiavellianism	0.01	0.01 (0.10)	−0.19, 0.22	
Narcissism	−0.06	−0.10 (0.11)	−0.32, 0.11	
Psychopathy	0.36**	0.59 (0.13)	0.33, 0.85	
Faith in humanity	−0.05	−0.08 (0.11)	−0.29, 0.13	
Humanism	0.09	0.17 (0.13)	−0.09, 0.43	
Kantianism	0.07	0.14 (0.12)	−0.09, 0.38	
Total R^2				0.39

Notes. Sex is coded as Male = −1, Female = 1; Relationship status is coded as not in a relationship = −1, in a relationship = 1.

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

2015; Jones & Weiser, 2014). We expected that LT will be negatively associated with infidelity. Our findings were aligned with previous findings and our predictions. The results showed that the people who reported higher levels of the DT personality traits had more positive attitudes towards infidelity and reported more infidelity behaviors. The

results of LT were in the opposite direction for infidelity attitudes. People who reported higher levels of LT had less positive attitudes towards infidelity. For infidelity behavior, only Kantianism showed a significant relation with infidelity behaviors, where higher levels of Kantianism were related to fewer infidelity behaviors.

As for the unique predictive values of DT traits on infidelity attitudes and behaviors, psychopathy emerged as the only significant predictor for both infidelity attitudes and behaviors, where higher levels predicted more positive attitudes and more behaviors. These results on infidelity behaviors replicated previous findings by Jones and Weiser (2014) and the results on attitudes towards infidelity extended the relation between DT and infidelity. These findings can be explained by callousness, thrill seeking, and impulsivity that is typically observed in people high in psychopathy (Lilienfeld & Andrews, 1996). Lacking concern and empathy for others while being unable to control urges might lead these individuals to have more permissive attitudes towards infidelity and also engage in infidelity more as compared to people low in psychopathy. We should note that our results were not aligned with the findings of Brewer et al. (2015) who reported that narcissism as the only predictor of infidelity behaviors among the DT. They had a sample comprised of only women, while in our study we had participants from both sexes. A study that examined the intention aspect of infidelity reports that DT levels are more strongly correlated with infidelity intentions for females (Moore, Ross, & Brosius, 2020). Although sex was controlled for in the current analyses the said difference between the two samples may have resulted in this discrepancy. Another reason for the discrepancy could be the used measures. The used scales to assess DT and infidelity differ between the current study and Brewer et al. (2015). Differences between used measurements for DT is known (Maples, Lamkin, & Miller, 2014), therefore use of different measures may also be a reason for the differences in findings.

When the unique predictive values of the LT were examined, it was observed that Kantianism panned out as the sole predictor among the LT, where higher levels predicted fewer positive attitudes towards infidelity and fewer infidelity behaviors. This specificity of Kantianism was also seen in a study of LT and motivations to use online dating for short-term mating. A higher level of Kantianism was related to a lower motivation of using online dating for short-term mating, while no significant relations emerged for humanity or faith in humanity (Sevi & Doğruyol, 2020). Kantianism may be explaining infidelity while the other two traits do not, as it is the distinct trait that captures the elements of personality that involve being honest and authentic in interactions with others and not manipulating them.

Another aim of this study was to examine DT and LT simultaneously in one model to see how they would uniquely predict infidelity. The results of the regression for infidelity attitudes showed that

psychopathy and Kantianism came out as significant predictors of infidelity attitudes, consistent with the preceding models. This finding also provided further insight by offering evidence that these two constructs are not merely opposites of each other (Kaufman et al., 2019), and LT is a useful explanatory construct that explains unique variance distinct from DT.

As for infidelity behaviors, to see how good infidelity attitudes were at predicting the behaviors and if the predictive values of Dark and Light personality traits would remain statistically significant when also controlling for infidelity attitudes, we examined attitudes towards infidelity in the same model with the personality variables. The results showed that infidelity attitudes were a significant predictor of behavior where more positive attitudes predicted more infidelity behaviors, consistent with Toplu-Demirtaş and Fincham (2018). Of the DT traits, psychopathy again was a significant predictor of infidelity behaviors, however none of the LT personality traits was a significant predictor of infidelity behaviors. This finding is particularly interesting since the preceding results had shown that both malevolent and benevolent sides hold unique predictive value for infidelity attitudes, while for actual behaviors, only the “Dark” side explains variance above and beyond attitudes. It can be speculated that the beneficent side of personality might not be enough to explain the transition from attitudes to behaviors whereas psychopathy, which is related to pathological lying and lack of guilt (Baughman, Jonason, Lyons, & Vernon, 2014), is the only predictor that explains actual engagement in infidelity. Of note, this interesting finding is in line with the literature showing “bad” holds more predictive value as compared to “good” in a wide range of psychological domains. Among other findings, adverse outcomes in close relationships have been shown to be better predicted by the destructive partner behaviors than they are by constructive behaviors. Bad (but not good) parenting predicts child outcomes more strongly than genetic influences, and negative emotions are better predictors of cognitive processing than positive ones (Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Finkenauer, & Vohs, 2001).

The limitations of this study should also be noted. First, this study was reliant on self-report measures. Since infidelity is considered as a socially undesirable behavior, this might have influenced the responses. Second, recruitment through Amazon MTurk is commonly used, yet “MTurkers” may differ in personality (Colman, Vineyard, & Letzring, 2018). Therefore, future studies using more representative samples would help in understanding the relationship of infidelity and personality traits better. Finally, this study was designed to investigate the role of the malevolent and beneficent sides of personality on infidelity and did not have enough power to test the interactions with possible moderating variables, such as sex differences or relationship characteristics. Future work would benefit from testing such interactions to see the extent to which observed results would differ via these factors.

By examining Dark and Light personality traits both separately and in the same models with respect to infidelity attitudes and behaviors, we aimed to draw a comprehensive picture of the relation between these personality traits and infidelity. Overall, the findings show that both Dark and Light sides of personality may play important roles in our attitudes towards infidelity, while infidelity behaviors are more likely to be predicted only by a dark personality trait, psychopathy. These findings bear practical implications for clinical psychologists and couples counselors working with the detrimental effects of infidelity on romantic relationships. Further research employing integrative approaches with measures of different personality traits and infidelity would help better understand how personality plays a role on infidelity.

CRedit authorship contribution statement

Barış Sevi: Conceptualization, Methodology, Resources, Investigation, Writing - original draft, Formal analysis. **Betul Urganci:** Conceptualization, Methodology, Resources, Investigation, Writing - original draft. **Ezgi Sakman:**

Conceptualization, Methodology, Resources, Writing - review & editing.

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