Dark Triad Personality Traits and Self-Esteem Among Emerging Adult Online Shooter Gamers and Online Brain Gamers

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Abstract— Dark triad refers to the constellation of three negative personality traits such as Narcissism, Machiavellianism and Psychopathy. Self-esteem refers to one's judgment about himself or herself. The present study is aimed to analyze the significant difference in Dark triad and self-esteem among online shooter gamers and brain gamers. The sample consisted of 200 emerging adults of which 100 were online shooter gamers and 100 were online brain gamers. Sample was collected using convenient sampling. Assessment tools used in the study were Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale and Short Dark Triad Scale. The collected data were analyzed using SPSS and Mann-Whitney U test was used to analyze the difference between two groups. The findings showed that there exists a significant difference in Dark triad and Self-esteem among shooter gamers and brain gamers. Narcissism and psychopathy were high for online shooter gamers while Machiavellianism and Self-esteem were high for online brain gamers.

Indexed Terms—Dark triad, Self-esteem, shooter gamers, brain gamers, psychopathy, Narcissism, Machiavellianism, emerging adult

I. INTRODUCTION

Emerging adulthood is a phase of life between adolescence and full-fledged adulthood, with distinctive demographic, social, and subjective psychological features (Arnett, 2000). In the span of development, this stage applies to individuals aged between 18 and 25 years. In short, this is the phase of life where an adolescent soul is captured in an adult's body. In this stage, the individual is free from the frustrations of puberty and ought to take the responsibilities of an adult. The social and intimate relationships become more firm and they look for more long-lasting relationships. In the collectivistic culture, the skill and career oriented training starts at this stage. This stage sets one of the major transition points of an individual's life and they are supposed to become more economically and socially independent. These individuals might experience constant pressures from the family as well as society as they are in the phase of being autonomous. Most of the emerging adults find some ways to escape from the pressures of life by being engaged in some form of entertainment. Some might find entertainment by playing different types of online games like shooting games or mind games. Playing different kinds of shooter games as well as brain games were popular during the pandemic time. Individuals started spending long hours playing different types of games like PUBG, Call of Duty, Mini Militia, Free Fire, Candy crush, Temple run, Ludo etc. Most of them have become addicted to online games. Much research has been conducted to establish the relationship between gaming and personality traits. According to Ko. et.al., there is a link between addictive gaming and personality traits.

Personality is defined as unique, stable and enduring characteristics of an individual. During the emerging adulthood phase the personality lays its foundation for being stabilized as well a person's self-esteem gradually increases. Self-esteem is defined as how a person evaluates himself or herself. Some people have complex personalities that cause difficulty to deal with themselves as well as with others. Some people possess a combination of complex traits that makes it much more difficult. Dark triad is one such combination of three personality traits such as narcissism, Machiavellianism and psychopathy. The concept of dark triad was proposed by Delroy Paulhus and Kevin Williams in 2002. The three personality traits are said to be negative traits. Narcissism means self-love and giving importance to themselves. Machiavellianism means exploitation and manipulation of others and psychopathy in the dark triad means lack of empathy and impulsivity. According to Hokemeyer, people with dark triad personality are reluctant to any challenges that expect them to change and these personality traits that make up a dark triad are deeply embedded in their psyche.

II.   METHOD

2.1 Objective

The objective of the study is to assess significant differences in three Dark triad personality traits- Narcissism, Machiavellianism, psychopathy- and Self-esteem between emerging adult online shooter gamers and online Brain gamers.

2.2 Variables and operational definition

2.2.1 Dark Triad

Dark triad is the constellation of three negative personality traits- Narcissism, Machiavellianism and psychopathy. Narcissism can be defined as a self-centered personality, being entitled and who have high grandiosity. Machiavellianism can be defined as being manipulative, cunning, and prone to lying and who took advantage of situations that benefit them. Psychopathy can be defined as being impulsive, lacking empathy and prone to take significant risks.

2.2.2 Self esteem

Self-esteem can be defined as the value judgment of a person about himself/herself.

2.2.3 Online shooting gamers

People who play online shooter games like PUBG, Call of duty, Half-life etc.

2.2.4 Online Brain gamers

People who play online brain games like Sudoku, crossword, Lumosity etc.

2.3 Sample

2.3.1 Sample size of the study

The sample consists of 200 emerging adults who fall in the age range 18 to 25. The participants were from different colleges from various parts of Kerala, India. In order to choose the sample, convenient sampling was used.

2.3.2   Inclusion criteria

Emerging adults of the age range between 18 -25 who spend three hours continuously playing any online shooter games like PUBG, Call of duty and half-life and online mind games like Sudoku, Crossword and luminosity are included in the study.

2.3.3   Exclusion criteria

Emerging adults of other than age range of 18 -25 who do not play any kind of games and who do play kind of games mentioned other than in inclusion criteria.

2.4 Assessment tools

2.4.1. Rosenberg Self-esteem scale

A 10-item scale that measures global self-worth by measuring both positive and negative feelings about the self (Rosenberg, 1965).

2.4.2 Short Dark Triad (SD3)

A 27 item scale to assess dark triad in Likert type format with anchors 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). It was developed by Delroy Paulhus and Daniel Jones in 2011.

2.5 Research Design

Descriptive research design was employed to study the Dark triad and self-esteem among emerging adult shooting gamers and mind gamers. Questionnaires were used to reach this goal.

2.6 Data Collection Procedure

Tools for collecting data were finalized and for the purpose of data collection, permission was taken from the respective colleges. Each participant was contacted individually by the researcher. Rapport was established with the participants and they were assured about the confidentiality of their responses. After explaining the purpose of study, the individual consent of each participant was taken and only those willing to participate were given the questionnaire. Instructions on how to mark the answers were also given. The data were collected and analyzed using SPSS.

2.7 Statistical Technique

The data was analyzed using SPSS. Mann-Whitney U test was used to analyze significant differences between two independent groups.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Result

Table 3.1

Mean Rank, U-value and p-value of Dark triad among Online shooter gamers and online brain gamers

Variable	Group	N	Mean of Rank	Sum of rank	U-value	P-value
Narcissism	Shooter gamers	100	144.5	14450	600	0.00001
	Brain gamers	100	56.5	5650		
Machiavellianism	Shooter gamers	100	71	7100	2050	0.00001
	Brain gamers	100	130	13000		
Psychopathy	Shooter gamers	100	132	13200	1850	0.00001
	Brain gamers	100	69	6900		

Table 3.1 indicates Mean Rank, U-value and p-value of Dark triad among Online shooter gamers and online brain gamers. For the subscale Narcissism, Mean of rank for shooter gamers is 144.5 while for brain gamers is 56.5. For shooter gamers, the sum of rank is 14450 and for brain gamers is 5650. The U- value is 600 and the corresponding p- value is 0.00001.

Mean of rank for the subscale Machiavellianism among shooter gamers is 71 while for brain gamers is 130. Sum of rank for shooter gamers and brain gamers are 7100 and 13000 respectively. The U-value is 2050 and the p -value is 0.00001.

Mean of rank for the subscale Psychopathy among shooter gamers is 132 while for brain gamers is 69. The sum of rank for shooter gamers and brain gamers are 13200 and 6900 respectively. The U-value is 1850 and the corresponding p-value is 0.00001.

Table 3.2

Mean Rank, U-value and p-value of Self-esteem among Online shooter gamers and online brain gamers

Variable	Group	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	U-value	P-value
Self-esteem	Shooter gamers	100	61	6100	1050	0.0001
	Brain gamers	100	140	14000		

Table 3.2 indicates Mean rank, U-value and p- value of self-esteem among Online shooter gamers and online brain gamers. Mean rank for shooter gamers and brain gamers are 61 and 140 respectively. Sum of ranks are 6100 and 14000 respectively. U value is 1050 and p value is 0.0001.

3.2 Discussion

The analysis of three dimensions of dark triad personality showed that there exist a significant difference in narcissism between online shooter gamers and brain gamers which is significant at 0.01 level. Narcissism was high among shooter gamers when compared to brain gamers. Shooting games are very popular among the people since it gives them a feeling of power, success and freedom. But it is not good for the mind as it can lead to mental issues like depression, anxiety etc. When playing online shooter games they may get a safe environment to express their grandiose feelings and unknowingly they may take control over other people which satisfies them. Online shooter gamers very much obsessed with their success and if they fail they might not be able to withstand the failure.

From the result it is clear that there exists a significant difference in Machiavellianism between emerging adult online shooter gamers and brain gamers which is significant at 0.01 level. But Machiavellianism was higher for brain gamers than shooter gamers. Although personality traits such as Machiavellianism are often associated with cunning and manipulation, the relationship between personality and brain games is not as simple. Many studies have shown that individuals who play brain games on a daily basis might have a higher chance of developing Machiavellianism. Brain games can also influence our personality: As they use their brains to solve

various mind games they show some cunning behaviour and as well as take advantage of situations that are suitable for them. People high in the personality trait of Machiavellianism may not have a lot of formal power but employ techniques to bolster their self-esteem. High Machiavellians will do something that is self-serving and not necessarily in their own best interest. Mind gamers may use gaming as a platform to boost their own self worth.

The third dimension of the dark triad is psychopathy. There exists a significant difference in psychopathy between emerging online shooter gamers and brain gamers which is significant at 0.01 level. Psychopathy was higher among online shooter gamers than online brain gamers. Violent video games such as PUBG and Call of duty facilitate feelings of aggression, hostility and deaden the player to violence. From a psychological perspective, this is because violent video games mimic real life aggression by encouraging players to kill people. Researches have shown a link between psychopathy and criminal behaviour. Players are more likely to become aggressive when playing violent video games than when playing nonviolent video games. Pedigree and structural violence in sociocultural systems that rely on these three categories of violence (familial, institutional, and symbolic) in turn make it more likely for individuals to engage in criminal activity.

From the result it can be inferred that there exists a significant difference in self-esteem between online shooter gamers and online brain gamers which is significant at 0.01 level. Self-esteem was higher for online brain gamers than online shooter gamers. According to a study by Dr. Greg West, psychologist and neuroscientist of the University of Washington, people playing competitive games online have higher levels of self-confidence, while the brain gamers have more positive feelings towards themselves. Monotonous success in playing brain games like solving a problem which evokes curiosity and challenging might have contributed to their inflated self-esteem. This finding supports the established relationship between success and self-esteem.

According to Kowert (2014) video game addiction can lead to a number of problems, including: the lack of real-world friends and stress, as well as unhealthy methods of coping. For those with psychological difficulties, video games may present a welcome alternative to real-life challenges. People who do not cope well with real-world problems may be more likely to engage in excessive playing of video games. In addition, some people with mental illness can establish strong social connections through interaction with others in an online gaming environment. Video games offer a chance for socially isolated people to connect with others and to build a sense of community, despite their psychological problems.

IV. CONCLUSION

The study was aimed to find out the difference between online shooter gamers and brain gamers in three personality traits of dark triad and self-esteem. From findings it can be concluded that there is significant difference in Machiavellianism, psychopathy, Narcissism and self-esteem between online shooter gamers and brain gamers. Narcissism and psychopathy was high for shooter gamers while Machiavellianism and self-esteem were high for online Brain gamers.

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