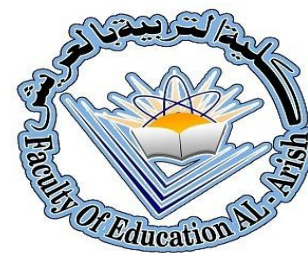




**Arish University
Faculty of Education
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The Effectiveness of an Integrative Program in Reducing the Level of the Dark Triad of Personality Among University Students

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Education
(Major: Mental Health)

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Study Abstract

This study aimed to examine the effectiveness of an integrative program in reducing the level of the Dark Triad of personality among university students, as well as the sustainability of the program's effectiveness during the follow-up period. The study sample consisted of 600 male and female students selected from Arish University. The experimental and control groups comprised 28 female students, equally distributed, aged between 19 and 21 years ($M = 20.28$, $SD = 0.762$). The following instruments were applied: the Dark Triad of Personality Scale developed by Jones and Paulhus (2014), adapted and standardized by the researcher; the Socioeconomic, Social, and Cultural Level of the Family Scale developed by Mohamed Ahmed Ibrahim Saafan and Doaa Mohamed Hassan Khattab (2016); and the integrative program prepared by the researcher. The results indicated the effectiveness of the integrative program in reducing Dark Triad traits among Faculty of Education students, with the effect sustained during the follow-up period.

Introduction

University students encounter numerous negative events, pressures, and psychological challenges in their daily lives, largely imposed by academic demands. Such stressful situations can have a significant impact on an individual's mental health.

The Dark Triad comprises three dimensions—Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy—which are conceptually distinct yet statistically interrelated. Individuals with high levels of Dark Triad traits are characterized by impulsivity, sensation-seeking, tactical manipulation, an inflated sense of grandiosity, social resentment, emotional coldness, aggression, deceit, social hostility, selfishness, betrayal, intolerance, and a tendency to exploit others.

The Dark Triad can profoundly affect a university student's life, diminishing cognitive abilities, negatively altering social relationships, and increasing emotional disturbances. This necessitates intervention through effective counseling services. In this regard, the integrative approach—with its diverse techniques, each rooted in a distinct counseling theory—proves beneficial in reducing Dark Triad traits.

Statement of the Problem

The Dark Triad of personality is prevalent among university students. Findings from studies by Delroy et al. (2001), Michael and Niko (2012), Adrian et al. (2013), Furnham et al. (2013), Elżbieta (2017), Abu Al-Hassan Ibrahim (2016), Peter and James (2015), Kim et al. (2017), Chris (2019), Nadja et al. (2019), Julia et al. (2019), Oli et al. (2020), Delroy et al. (2021), and Truhan et al. (2021) have indicated elevated levels of Dark Triad traits among university students. Moreover, Jafari et al. (2025) reported that narcissism was a positive predictor among a sample of university students.

From the above, it is evident that the prevalence rate of Dark Triad traits is high among university students. In this context, integrative intervention has proven effective in reducing Dark

Triad traits. Studies by Katherine and Neil (2020) and Mahmoud Youssef (2020) concluded that the integrative approach reduces Dark Triad traits among university students.

Based on the preceding discussion and the theoretical framework, the problem of the study can be formulated into the following research questions:

1. Are there statistically significant differences between the mean rank scores of the experimental group in the pre-test and post-test measurements on the Dark Triad of Personality Scale?
2. Are there statistically significant differences between the mean rank scores of the experimental and control groups in the post-test measurement on the Dark Triad of Personality Scale?
3. Are there statistically significant differences between the mean rank scores of the experimental group in the post-test and follow-up measurements on the Dark Triad of Personality Scale?

Study Objectives

This study aimed to examine the effectiveness of the integrative program in reducing the level of the Dark Triad among university students and to assess the sustainability of the program's effectiveness during the follow-up period.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study lies in the following:

1. Focusing on university students is both a scientific and cultural necessity to make use of their capabilities and develop them for the advancement of society, as well as an educational necessity.
2. Examining the Dark Triad of personality is crucial for understanding the personality structure, especially in its emotional and social aspects.
3. The Dark Triad traits affect the academic quality of life of students and their families, which necessitates the design of programs aimed at reducing the severity of these traits.
4. The findings of the study can be valuable in the field of mental health for university students, as they require counseling programs tailored to their personal characteristics to enhance their effectiveness to the highest possible level.
5. The study's importance also lies in applying its findings to guide those responsible for university student welfare, as well as parents, toward the most effective methods for reducing Dark Triad traits among students.

Operational Definitions of the Study

The following section presents the operational definitions of the study variables:

The Dark Triad of Personality

Paulhus and Williams (2002, p. 556) define the Dark Triad of personality as “a set of socially

aversive personality traits that appear relatively stable over time across social situations and can be distinguished in three dimensions,” which include:

- **Machiavellianism:** A tendency to manipulate and deceive others, harshness in dealing with them, efforts to maintain a positive reputation, and a strategic orientation aimed at gaining personal benefits.
- **Narcissism:** A tendency to manipulate others, a growing sense of grandiosity, harshness, an unrealistic sense of superiority, a lack of emotional sharing with others, and exploitation of others.
- **Psychopathy:** Impulsive and reckless behavior repeatedly disapproved of by society, characterized by intense emotionality, harshness toward others, sensation-seeking, and low emotional empathy toward others (Jones & Paulhus, 2014, p. 29).

University Students

For the purpose of this study, the researcher defines a university student as “an individual whose academic competence has allowed them to transition from secondary education to higher education according to their chosen specialization, holding a certificate or diploma qualifying them for university admission, and considered a key element in the educational process throughout the duration of their university studies.”

Integrative Program

For the purpose of this study, the researcher defines the integrative program as “a set of planned and organized procedures, based on scientific principles of integrative counseling, that employs a collection of techniques, each belonging to a specific counseling theory proven effective and appropriate in reducing Dark Triad traits among university students, implemented in a sequential schedule and delivered in the form of counseling sessions.”

Delimitations of the Study

- **Topical Delimitations**
The study is limited to the integrative program and the Dark Triad of personality among students at Arish University.
- **Methodological Delimitations**
The study employed the experimental method with two groups (experimental and control) and both pre-test and post-test measurements.
- **Human Delimitations**
The human sample consisted of 28 female students, divided as follows:
 - **Experimental group:** 14 female students from the Faculty of Education, Arish University, aged between 19 and 22 years ($M = 20.28$, $SD = 0.762$).
 - **Control group:** 14 female students from the Faculty of Education, Arish University, aged between 19 and 22 years ($M = 20.21$, $SD = 0.699$).
- **Temporal Delimitations**
The study was conducted during the first semester of the 2024/2025 academic year (1445–1446 AH). This included pre-test and post-test measurements, in addition to the implementation of the integrative program, which consisted of 27 sessions over 9 weeks,

at a rate of three sessions per week. The duration of each session ranged from 40 to 60 minutes, followed by a follow-up measurement approximately two months later.

- **Spatial Delimitations**

The study was conducted in North Sinai Governorate and applied to students at Arish University.

Theoretical Framework and Previous Studies

1. Concept of the Dark Triad of Personality

The definitions of the Dark Triad vary. Jonson & Webster (2010, p.18) define it as “a maladaptive personality pattern that encompasses a set of negative traits, including self-admiration, exploitation of others, deception, manipulation of emotions and thoughts, and an urgent need for perfection without feelings of guilt or remorse.” Carter et al. (2013, p.2) define it as “a personality construct consisting of a set of negative and maladaptive traits in human nature, namely narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy.”

2. Dimensions of the Dark Triad of Personality

a. Narcissism

Thomaes (2009) defines narcissism as “a dynamic form of personality characterized by an overwhelming sense of grandiosity and self-importance, and a continuous need for self-validation.” The *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (5th ed.; APA, 2013, p.763) defines it as “low and fluctuating self-esteem regulated through the pursuit of approval and attention from others, and covert or overt grandiosity.” Riyadh Al-Asimi (2015, p.1) describes it as “a psychological state manifested in an individual’s love and exaggeration of the self to the extent that they feel the world is entirely at their service, whether in human or material form.” Weiser (2018) defines it as a multidimensional personality trait characterized by grandiose self-views, a sense of superiority, entitlement, and a lack of empathy toward others.

Traits of a Narcissistic Person:

The narcissist is characterized by grandiosity, arrogance, entitlement, dominance, superiority, hypersensitivity, lack of empathy, low self-esteem, feelings of inner emptiness, excessive sensitivity in interpersonal relationships, and hostility toward others when the narcissistic ego is threatened. They may claim to achieve desirable positive outcomes, such as attaining prestigious positions (Muris et al., 2017; Manal Taha, 2022). Narcissists are less honest and less agreeable (Blair, Hoffman, & Helland, 2008). They tend to be popular in the short term and may initially appear likable, attractive, and familiar, but over time they seem less approachable (Back et al., 2010) and more sensitive (Miller et al., 2011).

b. Machiavellianism

Wilson et al. (1996, p.285) define Machiavellianism as “a social behavior strategy involving deception and manipulation of others to achieve personal gain, often at the expense of others.” Hisham El-Khouli (2005, p.11) defines it as “an individual’s resistance to the influence of others,

lack of interest in building personal relationships with them, and exploiting them for self-interest.” El-Khouli (2007, pp. 275–276) further specifies it as “resistance to others’ influence, indifference to building close personal relationships, reliance on an external cognitive orientation rather than an internal one, and exploitation of others as a means for self-interest without adherence to moral codes, feelings of shame, or guilt.”

Traits of a Machiavellian Person:

Machiavellianism is an aggressive and manipulative personality trait (Sinha, 2008; Paulus & Williams, 2002). Machiavellian individuals excel in maneuvering tactics, hold a cynical worldview, and engage in aggressive (revengeful) behaviors (Jones & Paulhus, 2009, p.97). They are less helpful, less socially oriented, and less motivated to work (Judge et al., 2009). They plan for the future, build alliances, and strive to maintain a positive reputation to achieve personal goals (Jones & Paulhus, 2011). They show low emotional involvement, resort to lying, exploit others, and derive satisfaction from successfully manipulating them.

c. Psychopathy

Ahmed Okasha (1998, p.56) defines psychopathy as “a personality disorder characterized by disregard for social obligations, which reflects a familiar and preferred attitude among certain individuals.” Hare & Neumann (2009) describe it as a personality disorder involving antisocial behaviors, interpersonal difficulties, and traits such as selfishness, shallow emotions, deceitfulness, neglect, lack of empathy or remorse, impulsivity, a tendency to violate social norms, criminal behavior, callousness, and manipulation. The *DSM-5* (APA, 2013, p.763) defines it as “failure to conform to lawful and ethical behavior, selfishness, callousness, lack of concern for others, deceitfulness, irresponsibility, manipulation, and risk-taking.”

Traits of a Psychopathic Person:

Psychopaths are often antisocial, lacking empathy and guilt, and display cruelty, aggression, thrill-seeking, and risk-taking (Skeem et al., 2011). They avoid taking responsibility for their actions when situations turn negative and often succeed in achieving short-term goals (Klarskov et al., 2016). Hare (2006) notes that they engage in pathological lying and impulsive, irresponsible lifestyles with antisocial tendencies. They show low empathy, manipulate others, engage in self-destructive behaviors, have poor insight, and fail to apply prevailing moral judgments in their societies (Salekin et al., 2006; Williams et al., 2003).

Causes of the Dark Triad of Personality

1. Genetic and Biological Factors

Research shows that all aspects of the Dark Triad have strong genetic components, especially narcissism and psychopathy, with weaker genetic effects for Machiavellianism (Hudson, 2023). Specific genes, including those linked to dopamine functioning, have been associated with Machiavellianism, along with a demonstrated relationship between these traits and cortisol levels upon waking. Narcissism is linked to structural brain changes, such as reduced gray matter volume in the prefrontal cortex and abnormalities in self-referential neural networks (Visser & Volk, 2016).

2. Environmental and Socialization Factors

Negative childhood experiences, such as neglect, harsh emotional treatment, or sexual abuse, may lead to the development of these traits as coping or protective mechanisms

(e.g., lying or exploitation). International studies have also indicated that social rejection during adolescence can contribute to the emergence of these traits (Grapsas et al., 2020). There is a strong link between deteriorating social environments (poverty, inequality, violence, corruption) and the prevalence of Dark Triad traits. Numerous studies have shown that these factors are associated with higher rates of such traits in societies (Brewer, 2017).

3. **Cultural and Social Factors**

Gender differences indicate that these traits are more prevalent among men than women, potentially due to cultural perceptions of masculinity and aggression. Cultural variations also play a role, with certain regions showing historically higher prevalence rates of these traits in both behavior and attitudes (Jones & Paulhus, 2011; Vernon et al., 2008).

Research Hypotheses

In light of the theoretical framework and previous studies, the research hypotheses can be formulated as follows:

1. There are statistically significant differences between the mean ranks of the experimental group students' scores in the pre- and post-measurements on the Machiavellianism and psychopathy scales.
2. There are statistically significant differences between the mean ranks of the experimental and control groups' scores in the post-measurement on the Machiavellianism and psychopathy scales.
3. There are no statistically significant differences between the mean ranks of the experimental group students' scores in the post- and follow-up measurements on the Machiavellianism and psychopathy scales.

Research Procedures

Research Method

The study adopted the experimental method using two groups (experimental and control) within a pre-test, post-test, and follow-up measurement design.

Study Sample

(a) Study Population

The total study sample consisted of 600 male and female students from Arish University, selected from the following faculties: Education, Science, Commerce, Arts, and Home Economics. Their ages ranged from 19 to 22 years, with a mean age of 19.60 years and a standard deviation of 1.18.

The psychometric properties sample consisted of 100 male and female students from Arish University, aged 19–22 years, with a mean age of 19.43 years and a standard deviation of 1.13.

(b) Main Study Sample

The main study sample consisted of 28 female students from the Faculty of Education, with a mean age of 20.28 years and a standard deviation of 0.762, all of whom scored in the upper quartile on the Dark Triad of Personality scale. The sample was divided into two groups:

- 1. **Experimental group:** Consisting of 14 female students from the Faculty of Education – Arish University, aged 19–22 years, with a mean age of 20.28 years and a standard deviation of 0.762.
- 2. **Control group:** Consisting of 14 female students from the Faculty of Education – Arish University, aged 19–22 years, with a mean age of 20.21 years and a standard deviation of 0.699.

(c) Justification for Sample Selection

The sample was selected from the Faculty of Education as the field for applying the present study for the following reasons:

- 1. The large number of students in the Faculty of Education compared to other faculties.
- 2. Variations in weekly lecture schedules among students in different faculties.
- 3. The ease of conducting the program sessions with students from the Faculty of Education.

(d) Equivalence

Equivalence between the experimental and control groups was verified using the Mann–Whitney U test for the following variables: chronological age, socioeconomic and cultural level, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy. Table (1) shows the Z values for the differences between the experimental and control groups in these variables.

Table 1
Mann–Whitney U Test Results for the Differences Between the Experimental and Control Groups in Chronological Age, Socioeconomic and Cultural Level, Machiavellianism, and Psychopathy

Variable	Group	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	U	W	Z	Sig.
Chronological age	Experimental	14	15.11	211.50	89.50	194.50	0.42	n.s.
	Control	14	13.89	194.50				
Socioeconomic & cultural level	Experimental	14	16.71	235.00	66.00	171.00	1.47	n.s.
	Control	14	12.21	171.00				
Machiavellianism	Experimental	14	16.68	233.50	67.50	172.50	1.40	n.s.
	Control	14	12.32	172.50				
Psychopathy	Experimental	14	16.11	225.50	75.50	180.50	1.04	n.s.
	Control	14	12.89	180.50				

Note. n.s. = not statistically significant. Results indicate no statistically significant differences between the experimental and control groups in any of the pre-test variables, confirming the equiv

3. Study Instruments

The Short Dark Triad (SD3) Scale

The Short Dark Triad (SD3) scale was developed by Jones and Paulhus (2014, pp. 30–37) through an extensive review of the literature. A sufficient number of items covering the three dimensions (Machiavellianism, Narcissism, and Psychopathy) were compiled, and several statistical analyses were conducted to verify the validity and reliability of the scale.

The initial version of the scale consisted of 41 items. The Machiavellianism items focused on tactics involving cynicism and manipulation of others; the Narcissism items emphasized grandiosity and self-centeredness; while the Psychopathy items centered on thrill-seeking and impulsivity.

The final version of the scale consisted of 27 items. However, item number 26 was removed due to its sexual nature and unsuitability for the Egyptian context. Response alternatives ranged from 1 to 5, where:

- *Strongly Disagree* = 1
- *Disagree* = 2
- *Neutral* = 3
- *Agree* = 4
- *Strongly Agree* = 5

For negatively worded items (items 11, 15, 17, 20, 25), scoring was reversed. The scale developer emphasized the importance of maintaining the original order of items. A higher score indicates a higher level of Dark Triad personality traits.

Psychometric Properties of the Short Dark Triad Scale

1. Validity

The psychometric properties of the scale were assessed using the following methods:

a. Content Validity (Expert Judgment)

The scale was presented to ten faculty members from the Department of Psychology and Mental Health at the Faculty of Education, Arish University, Mansoura University, and Kafrelsheikh University. They were asked to provide precise evaluations regarding any problems in comprehension, phrasing, or relevance of items to the intended purpose. Items receiving 90% or more approval from the experts were retained, and minor wording adjustments were made without altering item content. As a result, the scale was finalized with 26 items.

b. Internal Consistency Validity

Internal consistency validity in the present study was assessed by calculating the correlation between each item's score and the total score of the corresponding subscale (after excluding the item's score from the total subscale score), as well as the

intercorrelations among subscales (Abdel-Khalek, 1993; Abu Hatab, Osman, & Sadiq, 1993). The following tables present these results.

Table 2
Correlation coefficients between item scores and their respective subscale total scores for the Short Dark Triad (SD3) scale

Item	Machiavellianism	Item	Narcissism	Item	Psychopathy
1	0.37**	10	0.51**	19	0.64**
2	0.25*	11	0.33**	20	0.39**
3	0.57**	12	0.48**	21	0.67**
4	0.56**	13	0.52**	22	0.57**
5	0.41**	14	0.61**	23	0.014
6	0.35**	15	0.47**	24	0.40**
7	0.55**	16	0.098	25	0.35**
8	0.51**	17	0.49**	26	0.65**
9	0.36**	18	0.37**		

Note. $p < .05$; $p < .01$.

It is evident from Table 2 that all correlation coefficients were significant at the .05 and .01 levels, except for items 16 and 23.

Table 3
Correlation coefficients among the subscales of the Short Dark Triad (SD3) scale

Dimensions	Machiavellianism	Narcissism
Machiavellianism	—	
Narcissism	0.25*	—
Psychopathy	0.27**	0.28**

Note. $p < .05$; $p < .01$.

As shown in Table 3, all correlations between the subscales of the SD3 were significant at the .05 and .01 levels.

2. Extreme Group Comparison Method

The extreme group comparison method was applied by dividing criterion scores into two levels. Two extreme groups of participants were selected based on their total scores for each subscale (Abu Hatab et al., 1993, p. 146). In this study, the total subscale score was considered as the criterion. Accordingly, the top 27% and bottom 27% of scores were identified, and differences in item scores were calculated using the t -test.

Ezzat Abdel-Hamid (2016, p. 302) noted that although the t -test is primarily designed for small samples ($n < 30$), it can still be used for larger samples. In the present study, t -values for

Machiavellianism items ranged from 3.90 to 4.45, for Narcissism items from 3.36 to 4.57, and for Psychopathy items from 3.12 to 4.35, with significance levels ranging between .01 and .05.

3. Reliability of the Scale

The reliability of the scale was calculated using the following methods:

- **Cronbach's Alpha and Split-Half Reliability:**

The reliability coefficient was calculated using Cronbach's alpha, as well as the Spearman–Brown and Guttman split-half formulas, applied to the pilot sample ($n = 100$). The results are shown in Table 4.

Table 4

Reliability coefficients for the dimensions of the Short Dark Triad scale using Cronbach's Alpha

Dimension	Cronbach's Alpha
Machiavellianism	0.68
Psychopathy	0.67
Narcissism	0.70

The results in Table 4 indicate that the reliability coefficients for the scale's dimensions are relatively high, which provides evidence of the scale's internal consistency.

Based on the above, the final version of the Short Dark Triad scale consisted of 26 items.

General Objective of the Program

The integrative program aims to reduce levels of Machiavellianism and Psychopathy among female students at the Faculty of Education, Arish University.

Main Features of the Program

The program consisted of 27 sessions, delivered at a rate of three sessions per week. The duration of each session ranged between 40 and 60 minutes. The program was implemented at the Faculty of Education, Arish University during the first semester of the 2024/2025 academic year.

Program Evaluation

The program evaluation was based on the following:

- Preliminary evaluation
- Formative evaluation
- Summative evaluation
- Follow-up evaluation

A set of recommendations and proposals was formulated in light of the study procedures and results.

Statistical Methods

The following statistical methods were employed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS, Version 21):

- 1. Mann–Whitney test to examine differences between the mean ranks of two independent groups.
- 2. Wilcoxon signed-rank test to examine differences between the mean ranks of related groups.

First: Presentation of the Study Results Related to the Dark Triad of Personality

Presentation of the First Hypothesis

The first hypothesis states:

"There are differences between the mean ranks of the experimental group students' scores in the pre- and post-measurements on Machiavellianism and Psychopathy, with the differences favoring the post-measurement."

This hypothesis was tested using the **Wilcoxon signed-rank test** for the significance of differences in related samples. The dimension of **Narcissism** was excluded due to its positive correlation, in light of the study by *Jafari et al.* (2025) and the results of the current research. The results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5

Results of the "Z" value calculation for the mean ranks of the experimental group students' scores in the pre- and post-measurements on Machiavellianism and Psychopathy

Measurement (Dark Triad)	N	Mean Ranks	Sum of Ranks	Z Value	Sig. Level	Effect Size
Machiavellianism	Negative ranks	14	7.50	105.00	3.30	0.01
	Positive ranks	0	0	0		
	Ties	0				
Psychopathy	Negative ranks	14	7.50	105.00	3.30	0.01
	Positive ranks	0	0	0		
	Ties	0				

Interpretation

The results in Table 5 indicate the presence of statistically significant differences between the mean ranks of the experimental group students' scores in the pre- and post-measurements on Machiavellianism and Psychopathy, with the differences favoring the post-measurement, at the 0.01 significance level.

Presentation of the Second Hypothesis

The second hypothesis states:

"There are differences between the mean ranks of the experimental and control group students' scores in the post-measurement on Machiavellianism and Psychopathy, with the differences favoring the experimental group."

To test this hypothesis, the **Mann–Whitney U test** was used to determine the significance of differences for independent samples. The results are presented in Table 6.

Table 6

Results of the "Z" value calculation for the mean ranks of the experimental and control group students' scores in the post-measurement on Machiavellianism and Psychopathy

Variable	Group	N	Mean Ranks	Sum of Ranks	Z Value	Sig. Level	Effect Size	Strength
Machiavellianism	Experimental	14	7.93	111.00	4.23	0.000	0.93	Strong
	Control	14	21.07	295.00				
Psychopathy	Experimental	14	7.79	109.00	4.33	0.000	0.95	Strong
	Control	14	21.21	297.00				

Interpretation

The results in Table 6 indicate statistically significant differences between the mean ranks of the experimental and control group students' scores in the post-measurement on **Machiavellianism** and **Psychopathy**, in favor of the experimental group, at the **0.01 significance level**.

Presentation of the Third Hypothesis

The third hypothesis states:

"There are no differences between the mean ranks of the experimental group students' scores in the post- and follow-up measurements on Machiavellianism and Psychopathy."

To test this hypothesis, the **Wilcoxon signed-rank test** was used to determine the significance of differences in related samples. The results are presented in Table 7.

Table 7

Results of the "Z" value calculation for the mean ranks of the experimental group students' scores in the post- and follow-up measurements on Machiavellianism and Psychopathy

Measurement	N	Mean Ranks	Sum of Ranks	Z Value	Sig. Level	Sig. Status
Machiavellianism (Negative ranks)	2	1.50	3.00	1.34	0.180	Not sig.
Positive ranks	0	0.00	0.00			
Ties	12					
Psychopathy (Negative ranks)	2	2.00	4.00	0.577	0.564	Not sig.
Positive ranks	1	2.00	2.00			

Measurement	N	Mean Ranks	Sum of Ranks	Z Value	Sig. Level	Sig. Status
Ties	11					

Interpretation

The results in Table 7 indicate **no statistically significant differences** between the mean ranks of the experimental group students’ scores in the post- and follow-up measurements on **Machiavellianism** and **Psychopathy**.

Interpretation of the Study Results (Tables 5 and 6)

The results presented in Tables 5 and 6 can be interpreted in light of the techniques employed in the program. The **discussion and dialogue technique** played an essential role in building a positive relationship between the researcher and the student. It also clarified the importance and nature of the integrative program in reducing the levels of **Machiavellianism** and **Psychopathy**. Through the **teaching technique**, the student learned to acquire new skills for handling situations and to adopt new strategies to correct her distorted, rigid, and irrational cognitive beliefs about herself and the surrounding world. This was achieved through a series of confrontations demonstrating that these beliefs were false and unfounded, which subsequently improved the student’s reasoning ability and judgment accuracy.

The results can also be explained in light of the **positive and effective impact of progressive muscle relaxation** in alleviating the symptoms of tension and stress experienced by the university student. This technique provided a state of complete tranquility, comfort akin to happiness, and relief from the consequences of mental distress. Moreover, it improved her ability to manage pressures in many daily life situations. The **imagery-based relaxation technique** emphasized imagining pleasant and joyful scenarios while in a relaxed state—such as hearing soothing sounds, breathing in delightful scents, experiencing the harmonious sight of water and greenery, feeling the gentle breeze mixed with light raindrops, watching the graceful sway of tree branches, and listening to birds singing above, with white clouds in the sky.

Through such training, the student learned to divert her attention from distorted and negative thoughts by engaging in pleasant activities that induce comfort, peace of mind, and resilience.

The **cognitive restructuring technique** significantly improved the ability to identify maladaptive thoughts and beliefs, highlighting their negative effects, rigidity, and role in hindering the student from fulfilling life demands, reducing the use of available opportunities, impairing reasoning, fostering absolutist judgments, and increasing anxiety.

The **systematic desensitization technique** effectively curbed responses related to Machiavellianism and Psychopathy by constructing a hierarchical anxiety list while the student was in a relaxed state, pairing anxiety-provoking stimuli in the hierarchy with an alternative response (relaxation).

The **assertiveness training technique** was effective in reducing Machiavellianism and Psychopathy by training the student to express emotions freely, honestly, and courageously. This, in turn, strengthened and improved her relationships with others and increased mutual trust.

The **problem-solving technique** played a tangible role in reducing Machiavellianism and Psychopathy by training the student to precisely define all aspects of a problem in operational terms, generate hypotheses, and test them in real life.

The **homework assignments technique** had a substantial impact on reinforcing integrative counseling with its various techniques. It helped assess the student's ability to perform in an environment different from the training setting, provided opportunities to detect cognitive factors related to problem-solving, improved rapport between the researcher and the student, maintained the skills acquired, and reduced symptoms by integrating learned concepts into daily life. Homework assignments also served as a key mechanism for facilitating work between sessions, fostering progress, enhancing self-directed learning, collecting relevant data, regulating thoughts, emotions, and behaviors, and testing personal beliefs and ideas.

Interpretation of the Study Results (Table 7)

The results presented in Table 7 indicated no statistically significant differences between the post-test and follow-up mean ranks for the experimental group on **Machiavellianism** and **Psychopathy**. This stability is attributed to the experimental group's exposure to the program and its activities, while the control group did not undergo any of the program's techniques or activities.

Conclusion and Recommendations

1. The study findings demonstrated the effectiveness of the integrative program, with its various techniques, in reducing the level of the **Dark Triad of personality**. This highlights the importance of utilizing the program's techniques to alleviate tension and anxiety experienced by university students, and the necessity of expanding the application of relaxation techniques in a wide range of contexts both within and beyond the university setting.
2. It is essential to promote integration between the university, the family, and other community institutions that provide care and attention to this group, by identifying the nature of the Dark Triad personality traits and working to reduce them through various activities, seminars, and appropriate guidance conferences.
3. The effectiveness of the integrative program produces **dramatic behavioral changes** in students, fostering positive attitudes among those around them, which in turn reflects positively on their overall life.
4. University faculty members and staff should be trained to apply the integrative program's techniques to help students discover their capabilities and potential through interactive learning experiences. Such training should also prepare students to cope effectively with exam-related situations and focus on reducing tendencies toward manipulation, law violations, theft, fraud, deception, and hypocrisy. Moreover, the program enhances sincerity, fairness, social appreciation, social courage, sociability, vitality, self-confidence, social interaction skills, appreciation of artistic and natural beauty, curiosity, imagination, interest in unconventional ideas, trust in others, constructive criticism, and self-control.

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