



Research Article

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DARK PERSONALITY TRAITS AND KNOWLEDGE HIDING BEHAVIOR: A STUDY ON FRONTLINE HOTEL EMPLOYEES **

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Abstract

Since personality traits shape individual behaviors in business, discussions surrounding these traits remain a significant focus in the literature. This study aims to examine the relationship between dark personality traits and knowledge hiding behavior among front-line employees in hotel businesses. The research was conducted in 4- and 5-star hotels located in Istanbul and focuses on the presence of dark triad traits—Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy—and their relationship with knowledge hiding. A quantitative research method was employed, utilizing the “Knowledge Hiding Scale” and the “Dirty Dozen Scale” to collect data from 417 front-line hotel employees. The data were analyzed using reliability analysis, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), and Pearson correlation analysis. The findings reveal a significant positive relationship between Machiavellianism and narcissism and two specific knowledge hiding behaviors: “evasive hiding” and “playing dumb.” Moreover, both Machiavellianism and psychopathy were positively related to “rationalized hiding.” These results suggest that dark personality traits are notably associated with how employees choose to withhold knowledge in organizational contexts, potentially impacting communication, collaboration, and overall workplace dynamics.

Keywords: Dark Personality Traits, Knowledge Hiding Behavior, Hotel Businesses, Front-Line Employees

Introduction

Hotel businesses are organizations in which human labor plays a central role in the service delivery process. Since front-line employees interact directly with customers, their attitudes, behaviors, and communication styles significantly influence service quality, customer satisfaction, and organizational performance. Effective knowledge sharing among employees is therefore essential for ensuring operational efficiency and maintaining competitive advantage in the hospitality industry. However, despite its importance, knowledge is not always shared openly, and employees may deliberately engage in knowledge hiding behaviors.

Knowledge hiding, defined as the intentional concealment of requested information (Connelly et al., 2012), can negatively affect teamwork, trust, and organizational learning. In service-intensive sectors such as hospitality, where coordination and rapid information exchange are crucial, knowledge hiding may lead to service failures, misunderstandings, and reduced customer satisfaction. Accordingly, understanding the factors that trigger knowledge hiding behavior has become an important research problem in organizational behavior and tourism studies.

Previous studies indicate that individual personality traits play a significant role in shaping employees' workplace behaviors. In recent years, particular attention has been given to dark personality traits—namely narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy—collectively referred to as the Dark Triad. Individuals with these traits are often characterized by self-centeredness, manipulation, low empathy, and opportunistic tendencies, which may increase their likelihood of engaging in counterproductive behaviors, including knowledge hiding (Pletzers, 2017; Chawla and Gupta, 2019).

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Although existing research has examined the relationship between dark personality traits and knowledge hiding in various organizational contexts, empirical evidence in the hospitality sector remains limited (Pan et al., 2018; Karim, 2020; Nadeem et al., 2021 etc.). Moreover, studies focusing specifically on front-line hotel employees are scarce, despite their critical role in service delivery and customer experience. This indicates a significant gap in the literature regarding how dark personality traits influence knowledge hiding behaviors in tourism and hospitality settings. Addressing this gap is important both theoretically and practically. From a theoretical perspective, examining this relationship contributes to the organizational behavior and tourism literature by extending existing knowledge on the behavioral consequences of dark personality traits. From a practical perspective, understanding these dynamics can help hotel managers develop more effective recruitment, training, and knowledge management strategies aimed at promoting transparency and collaboration.

Therefore, the present study aims to examine the relationship between dark personality traits and knowledge hiding behavior among front-line employees working in 4- and 5-star hotels in Istanbul. By focusing on this specific context, the study seeks to provide empirical evidence on how personality-related factors influence knowledge sharing practices in hospitality organizations and to offer managerial implications for improving organizational effectiveness and service quality.

Conceptual Framework

Personality has been a central topic in psychology since the early development of the discipline. Freud's (1923) theory is considered one of the first modern approaches to personality (Dengiz, 2022). Allport (1961, p. 28) defined personality as "the dynamic organization within the individual of those psychophysical systems that determine his characteristic behavior and thought," while Zak (1982) emphasized behavioral patterns shaped by feelings and preferences. Similarly, McCrae and Costa (2003) described personality as relatively stable patterns of thought, emotion, and behavior. Despite extensive research, there is no consensus on the stability of personality. Some studies emphasize stability (John and Srivastava, 1999; Roberts and Jackson, 2008), whereas others suggest change over time (Roberts and DelVecchio, 2000; Hudson and Fraley, 2015).

In workplaces, personality traits significantly influence employees' attitudes and behaviors and contribute to corporate culture (Erhan, 2022). Although management research has traditionally focused on the Big Five Personality Theory (Zel, 2001), recent studies highlight dark personality traits characterized by manipulation, narcissism, impulsivity, and insensitivity (Kaufman et al., 2019). In recent years, attention has increasingly shifted toward dark personality traits introduced by Paulhus and Williams (2002), particularly in organizational contexts.

In hotel businesses, employees' personality traits are closely linked to customer satisfaction and organizational success (Huynh and Olsen, 2015). Employee–job compatibility is therefore critical for service quality. Research suggests that dark personality traits are associated with workplace outcomes such as knowledge hiding and reduced collaboration. Considering the influence of individuals' dark side on their behavior (Serbest and Sökmen, 2021), examining these traits in the tourism sector is particularly relevant. Accordingly, this study focuses on the relationship between dark personality traits and knowledge hiding behavior among front-line hotel employees.

Dark Personality Traits

Dark personality traits refer to socially undesirable characteristics associated with interpersonal difficulties and potentially harmful behaviors among individuals within the normal population. Although there is no complete consensus on the criteria defining "dark" traits (Zeigler-Hill and Marcus, 2016), Paulhus and Williams (2002) conceptualized these traits under the "Dark Triad," consisting of narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy. These traits share common features such as self-centeredness and manipulation, while also displaying distinct behavioral patterns.

Narcissism

Increased narcissistic tendencies in individualistic societies, influenced by social media (Twenge et al., 2008; Buffardi and Campbell, 2008), are characterized by excessive self-importance, a desire for admiration, and a tendency to dominate others (Ertekin and Yurtsever, 2001; Erhan, 2022). While extreme narcissism may lead to social maladjustment, subclinical levels are more common in organizational settings and within the Dark Triad framework (Raskin and Hall, 1979; Polatçı and Yeloğlu, 2021). Narcissistic individuals often seek high

status and create impressive first impressions (Back et al., 2010); however, over time, they may experience interpersonal conflicts and negative evaluations (Campbell et al., 2005; Rauthmann, 2012).

Due to their strong focus on self-promotion, narcissists may display dismissive and manipulative behaviors in social relationships (Jonason et al., 2010). Their sensitivity to criticism and need for control can intensify workplace conflicts (Baumeister and Vohs, 2004). Individuals with subclinical narcissistic traits tend to lack empathy and strongly emphasize self-enhancement (Fernie et al., 2016). In organizational contexts, they may strategically manage information to maintain a powerful image, leading to selective knowledge sharing and knowledge hiding behaviors.

Machiavellianism

Machiavellianism originates from the ideas of Niccolò Machiavelli, emphasizing that the end justifies the means (Demirtaş and Biçkes, 2014). In personality psychology, it refers to manipulative, strategic, and self-interested behavior patterns (Christie and Geis, 1970). Machiavellian individuals are typically rational decision-makers who prioritize personal gain and evaluate actions based on cost-benefit calculations (Jones and Paulhus, 2010).

These individuals employ various manipulation tactics, including persuasion, flattery, deception, and blame-shifting (Jonason et al., 2012; Dowgwillo et al., 2016). Although Machiavellianism differs from psychopathy (Paulhus and Williams, 2002; Jakobwitz and Egan, 2006), both traits involve low levels of honesty and agreeableness (Ryckman et al., 1994; Lee and Ashton, 2005). Machiavellian tendencies have also been linked to unethical behaviors and sabotage (Jones and Paulhus, 2010; Dahling et al., 2012).

In the workplace, Machiavellian individuals may deliberately withhold information to gain strategic advantages and maintain control. Knowledge hiding is often used as a conscious strategy in competitive environments, which may weaken communication and organizational trust.

Psychopathy

Psychopathy is characterized by low empathy, weak moral conscience, impulsivity, and manipulative behavior (Bailey, 2015). Although historically associated with clinical disorders (Sherwood et al., 1835, as cited in Carlson and Dain, 1962), contemporary research examines psychopathy within the Dark Triad as a subclinical personality trait (Polatçı and Yeloğlu, 2021). It is often regarded as the most harmful component of the triad (Pilch and Turska, 2015).

Psychopathic individuals tend to engage in risky and unethical behaviors and display superficial charm to manipulate others (Babiak and Hare, 2007; Jones and Paulhus, 2010). In organizational settings, they quickly identify power structures and use interpersonal relationships for personal gain (Chiaburu et al., 2013). Their disregard for ethical norms facilitates opportunistic and exploitative behaviors.

Due to their self-centered and indifferent nature, individuals with psychopathic tendencies are likely to engage in knowledge hiding, misinformation, and information manipulation. Such behaviors undermine trust, hinder teamwork, and negatively affect organizational performance.

Knowledge Hiding Behavior

Knowledge is a fundamental organizational resource, and its effective sharing contributes significantly to organizational performance (Berezhnoy et al., 2021). However, despite efforts to promote knowledge sharing, employees may intentionally withhold information from their colleagues. Knowledge hiding is defined as the deliberate concealment of requested knowledge by an employee (Connelly et al., 2012).

Although knowledge hiding does not necessarily aim to cause harm (Connelly and Zweig, 2015), it is associated with several negative organizational outcomes. Previous studies indicate that knowledge hiding is closely related to counterproductive work behavior, workplace deviance, organizational silence, and workplace incivility (Connelly et al., 2012; Knoll and Van Dick, 2013). This behavior often emerges in environments characterized by low trust, high competition, and job insecurity, where employees perceive information as a source of personal advantage.

The literature identifies three main forms of knowledge hiding: playing dumb, evasive hiding, and rationalized hiding. Playing dumb involves pretending not to possess the requested information, whereas evasive hiding includes misleading responses or postponing information sharing. Rationalized hiding refers to providing legitimate explanations for withholding information or shifting responsibility to others. Among these

strategies, playing dumb and evasive hiding are considered more covert and deceptive, while rationalized hiding represents a more explicit form of knowledge concealment (Connelly et al., 2012; İspirli, 2014).

Knowledge hiding strategies differ in terms of their level of deception. Evasive hiding is regarded as the most deceptive form, followed by playing dumb (Connelly et al., 2012). In contrast, rationalized hiding may sometimes serve protective purposes, such as safeguarding confidential information or organizational interests (Connelly and Zweig, 2015). Recent studies suggest that when supported by valid justifications, rationalized hiding may not necessarily involve intentional deception (Andreeva and Zappa, 2023). Nevertheless, all forms of knowledge hiding reflect an employee's conscious decision to withhold information.

Empirical research indicates that situational factors influence the choice of knowledge hiding strategy. The complexity of the requested information plays a key role in this process (Connelly et al., 2012; Connelly and Zweig, 2015; Huo et al., 2016). Employees tend to use playing dumb and rationalized hiding for simple information requests, whereas evasive hiding is more common when the information is complex (Anand et al., 2022; Koon, 2022). Moreover, deceptive forms of knowledge hiding may trigger retaliatory behaviors and damage interpersonal relationships (Cerne et al., 2014; Connelly and Zweig, 2015).

In conclusion, understanding knowledge hiding in organizational settings requires examining both how frequently employees engage in this behavior and which strategies they adopt (Connelly et al., 2012; Serenko and Bontis, 2016). This comprehensive perspective is essential for identifying the factors that shape knowledge hiding and its consequences in hospitality organizations.

The Relationship Between Dark Personality Traits and Knowledge Hiding Behavior

Employees' knowledge hiding behavior is closely related to individual personality characteristics. In particular, dark personality traits are associated with self-centered and strategic behaviors in organizational relationships. Previous studies indicate that the Dark Triad (narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy) is significantly related to employees' reluctance to share knowledge. These traits are generally driven by individuals' efforts to maximize personal benefits, which in turn increase their tendency to hide knowledge (Pletzers, 2017; Chawla and Gupta, 2019).

Recent empirical studies strongly support this relationship across different sectors. For example, a study conducted by Zhuang et al. (2025) in the hospitality sector revealed that narcissistic and Machiavellian tendencies significantly predict knowledge hiding behaviors among hotel employees, highlighting the sector-specific effects of dark personality traits. Similarly, Wang et al. (2024), in their study of bank employees, found that Dark Triad traits increase knowledge hiding behavior through perceived organizational politics.

In the manufacturing sector, Yan et al. (2024) demonstrated that employees with high levels of dark personality traits are more prone to knowledge hiding due to low generativity motivation. This finding indicates that a weakened sense of responsibility toward the organization's future strengthens the tendency to conceal knowledge. Karim (2022) also reported that Dark Triad traits increase knowledge hiding behavior through psychological entitlement. This suggests that individuals who perceive themselves as more privileged and entitled are more likely to withhold information to gain personal advantages.

Empirical evidence further reveals that Machiavellianism is strongly associated with knowledge hiding. Machiavellian individuals tend to adopt strategic and distant interaction styles to maintain control and deliberately withhold information. Similarly, narcissistic employees may perceive knowledge requests as threats to their self-image, which increases their reluctance to share information (Wu and LeBreton, 2011; O'Boyle et al., 2012; Hernaus et al., 2018; Chawla and Gupta, 2019). Psychopathy is also linked to knowledge hiding through low empathy and insensitivity to social norms. Individuals with psychopathic tendencies tend to disregard others' needs and use information for personal gain (Hare, 1999; Jones and Paulhus, 2010; Boddy, 2017). Recent studies further indicate that individuals with dark personality traits prioritize short-term personal gains over collaborative goals, thereby weakening knowledge sharing within organizations (Pan et al., 2018; Karim, 2020; Nadeem et al., 2021).

Overall, the existing literature consistently demonstrates that dark personality traits constitute a strong antecedent of knowledge hiding behavior. However, studies focusing specifically on front-line employees, particularly in the hospitality sector, remain limited. Therefore, the present study aims to examine the relationship between dark personality traits and knowledge hiding behavior in hospitality organizations and to contribute sector-specific empirical evidence to the literature. Accordingly, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1. Narcissism is significantly associated with the dimensions of knowledge hiding behavior.

H1a. Narcissism is positively related to playing dumb.

H1b. Narcissism is positively related to evasive hiding.

H1c. Narcissism is positively related to rationalized hiding.

H2. Machiavellianism is significantly associated with the dimensions of knowledge hiding behavior.

H2a. Machiavellianism is positively related to playing dumb.

H2b. Machiavellianism is positively related to evasive hiding.

H2c. Machiavellianism is positively related to rationalized hiding.

H3. Psychopathy is significantly associated with the dimensions of knowledge hiding behavior.

H3a. Psychopathy is positively related to playing dumb.

H3b. Psychopathy is positively related to evasive hiding.

H3c. Psychopathy is positively related to rationalized hiding.

Methodology

This study adopted a quantitative research design and employed the survey method as the primary data collection technique. Surveys are widely used standardized instruments designed to gather data from a large number of individuals within a defined population (Ural and Kılıç, 2006, p.55). The research was conducted in 4- and 5-star hotels operating in Istanbul that voluntarily agreed to participate, focusing on front-line employees working in these hotels.

Istanbul was selected as the research setting due to its status as a major tourism destination hosting a large number of hotels, which facilitated access to the target population. In addition, city hotels typically accommodate a high proportion of repeat guests, resulting in frequent and intensive interactions between employees and customers. This context increases the importance of cooperation and knowledge sharing among employees.

Since it was not possible to determine the exact population size and reach all employees, convenience sampling was employed. This method enabled the researcher to collect data from readily accessible and willing participants (Altunışık et al., 2004, p.129). Data were collected through face-to-face surveys between November 1 and November 30, 2023. Prior to data collection, necessary permissions were obtained from hotel management, and all participants were informed about the purpose of the study and provided voluntary consent. A total of 417 questionnaires were collected, and all were deemed valid and included in the analysis.

Data Collection Instruments

This study employed two validated measurement instruments that had previously been adapted into Turkish. Knowledge hiding behavior was measured using the Knowledge Hiding Scale developed by Connelly et al. (2012) and adapted into Turkish by İspirli (2014). The scale consists of 12 items and three dimensions: playing dumb, rationalized hiding, and evasive hiding. Dark personality traits were measured using the Dark Triad Scale (Dirty Dozen) developed by Jonason and Webster (2010) and adapted into Turkish by Toplu Yaşlıoğlu and Atılğan (2018). This scale includes 12 items measuring narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy. All scale items were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from “1–Strongly Disagree” to “5–Strongly Agree.”

In addition, the questionnaire included demographic questions related to gender, age, education level, department, and length of employment. Permission to use both scales was obtained from the original authors via email. *Ethics committee approval for this study was obtained from the Kahramanmaraş İstiklal University Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee (Date: 18.04.2023, Meeting No: E-75258786-640-16995).*

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using SPSS 25.0 and AMOS 23.0. Initially, reliability analyses were conducted to examine the internal consistency of the measurement instruments. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was performed to test the construct validity of both the Knowledge Hiding Scale and the Dark

Personality Scale. CFA was used to examine the relationships between observed variables and their underlying latent constructs and to evaluate the overall fit of the measurement models (Özdamar, 2004).

Following the validation of the measurement models, Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine the direction and strength of positive relationships between dark personality traits and the dimensions of knowledge hiding behavior. In line with the research hypotheses (H1–H3), these analyses tested whether narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy were positively associated with playing dumb, evasive hiding, and rationalized hiding.

Findings

Demographic data of front-line employees of 4- and 5-star hotels operating in Istanbul are given in Table 1. When examining the distribution of participants based on their departments, it is observed that 51.1% work in the front office, 3.8% work in sales and organization, and 45.1% work in food and beverage. Among the participants, 38.8% are female and 61.2% are male. When examining the distribution of participants by age, it is found that 48.9% are under 28 years old, and 51.1% are 28 years old or older. Regarding the education level of the participants, 36.5% graduated from high school, 30.7% from associate degree programs, 32.4% from bachelor's degree programs, and 0.5% holds a master's degree or higher. Regarding the participants' length of employment at the Hotel, it was found that 29% had worked for less than a year, 50.6% had worked between 1 and 5 years, and 20.4% had worked for more than 5 years at the same hotel.

Table 1. Demographic Findings

	Variables	n	%
Department	Front Office	213	51,1
	Sales and Marketing	16	3,8
	Food and Beverage	188	45,1
Gender	Female	162	38,8
	Male	255	61,2
Age	Under 28	204	48,9
	Over 28	213	51,1
Education Level	High School	152	36,5
	Associate Degree	128	30,7
	Bachelor's Degree	135	32,4
	Master's Degree and Above	2	0,5
Length of Employment at the Hotel	Under 1 year	121	29,0
	Between 1 and 5 years	211	50,6
	More than 5 years	85	20,4
Total		417	100.0

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

The first-order multi-factor Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was conducted to examine the construct validity of the Knowledge Hiding Behavior Scale (KHB) and to verify whether the three-dimensional structure proposed in the literature—playing dumb, evasive hiding, and rationalized hiding—was supported by the data. This analysis was performed to test the relationships between the observed items (KHB1–KHB12) and their underlying latent constructs and to determine whether each item adequately represented its respective factor.

As presented in Figure 1 and Table 2, the CFA results indicate that all items loaded significantly on their corresponding factors. Factor loadings ranged from 0.766 to 0.894 and exceeded the recommended minimum threshold of 0.40, demonstrating adequate convergent validity. All t-values were statistically significant ($p < 0.05$), confirming that the observed variables were meaningfully associated with their latent dimensions.

The correlations among the three latent factors—playing dumb, evasive hiding, and rationalized hiding—were also examined. The results show strong and significant relationships between these dimensions, indicating that although they represent distinct strategies of knowledge hiding, they are conceptually related components of the same construct. These relationships support the multidimensional structure of knowledge hiding behavior.

Reliability analyses were conducted to assess the internal consistency of the scale. Cronbach's alpha coefficients were found to be 0.907 for playing dumb, 0.910 for evasive hiding, and 0.892 for rationalized hiding. The overall reliability coefficient of the scale was 0.957, indicating excellent internal consistency. Since Cronbach's alpha values above 0.60 are considered acceptable, these findings demonstrate that the scale is highly reliable and suitable for further statistical analyses.

Overall, the CFA results provide strong empirical support for the three-factor structure of the Knowledge Hiding Behavior Scale and confirm that the instrument accurately measures employees’ tendencies toward playing dumb, evasive hiding, and rationalized hiding within organizational contexts.

Figure 1. First-Order CFA Model of the Knowledge Hiding Scale

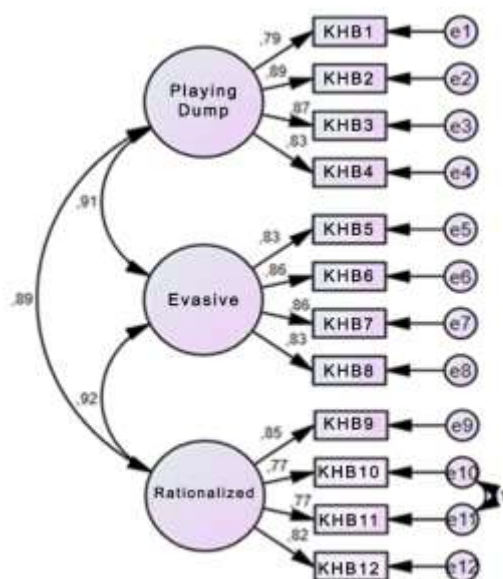


Table 2. Results of The Measurement Model For The Knowledge Hiding Behavior Scale

Factors	Expressions	Factor Loadings	Standard Error	t-Values	p-Values
F1: Playing dumb $\alpha=0.907$	KHB1	0.793	-	-	-
	KHB2	0.894	0.055	21.201	***
	KHB3	0.867	0.052	20.336	***
	KHB4	0.829	0.051	19.117	***
F2: Evasive $\alpha=0.910$	KHB5	0.833	-	-	-
	KHB6	0.863	0.047	21.942	***
	KHB7	0.865	0.050	22.023	***
	KHB8	0.832	0.049	20.714	***
F3: Rationalized $\alpha=0.892$	KHB9	0.850	-	-	-
	KHB10	0.773	0.049	18.540	***
	KHB11	0.766	0.051	18.262	***
	KHB12	0.816	0.047	20.190	***
Total Reliability $\alpha=0.957$					

*** $p<0.05$

As presented in Table 3, the goodness-of-fit indices of the structural model for the Knowledge Hiding Behavior Scale indicate an acceptable level of model fit. The chi-square to degrees of freedom ratio (CMIN/DF = 4.800) is below the recommended threshold of 5, suggesting an adequate fit between the proposed model and the observed data. The root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA = 0.096) and the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR = 0.034) also fall within acceptable limits, indicating a reasonable approximation of the population covariance matrix (Hu and Bentler, 1999; Kline, 2016).

In addition, incremental and comparative fit indices, including the goodness-of-fit index (GFI = 0.910), adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI = 0.859), comparative fit index (CFI = 0.957), Tucker–Lewis index (TLI = 0.943), incremental fit index (IFI = 0.957), relative fit index (RFI = 0.929), and normed fit index (NFI = 0.946), all exceed the minimum acceptable threshold of 0.80, as suggested in the literature (Kline, 2016; Hair et al., 2017). These results demonstrate that the proposed structural model adequately represents the observed data. Overall, the goodness-of-fit indices provide empirical evidence that the measurement model of the Knowledge Hiding Behavior Scale is valid and suitable for subsequent structural analyses.

Table 3. Goodness-of-Fit Indices of The Structural Model For The Knowledge Hiding Behavior Scale

	Structural Model Values	Recommended Values
CMIN/DF	4.800	≤5
RMSEA	0.096	≤0.10
GFI	0.910	≥0.80
AGFI	0.859	≥0.80
CFI	0.957	≥0.80
TLI	0.943	≥0.80
IFI	0.957	≥0.80
RFI	0.929	≥0.80
NFI	0.946	≥0.80
SRMR	0.034	≤0.10

In this study, CFA was conducted to examine the construct validity of the Dark Personality Scale (DP) and to test whether the three-factor structure consisting of Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy was supported by the data. The analysis aimed to verify the relationships between the observed items (DP1–DP12) and their corresponding latent dimensions and to evaluate the adequacy of the proposed measurement model.

Initially, CFA results were examined, and modification indices were reviewed to identify potential sources of model misfit. Based on these indices, theoretically meaningful covariances were added between certain error terms with high residual correlations in order to improve overall model fit. These modifications were applied cautiously to enhance model fit without compromising the conceptual integrity of the scale. Following these adjustments, the model was re-estimated, and the goodness-of-fit indices were reassessed.

As presented in Figure 2 and Table 4, all items loaded significantly on their respective factors, with standardized factor loadings exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.40. All factor loadings were statistically significant ($p < 0.05$), indicating that each item adequately represents its corresponding construct and supporting the convergent validity of the scale. With regard to reliability, the overall Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of the Dark Personality Scale was calculated as 0.951, indicating a high level of internal consistency. The reliability coefficients for the sub-dimensions of Machiavellianism ($\alpha = 0.883$), narcissism ($\alpha = 0.910$), and psychopathy ($\alpha = 0.928$) also demonstrate satisfactory reliability. These findings confirm that the three dimensions are empirically distinguishable and reliable constructs within the present sample.

Figure 2. First-Order CFA Model of the Dark Personality Scale

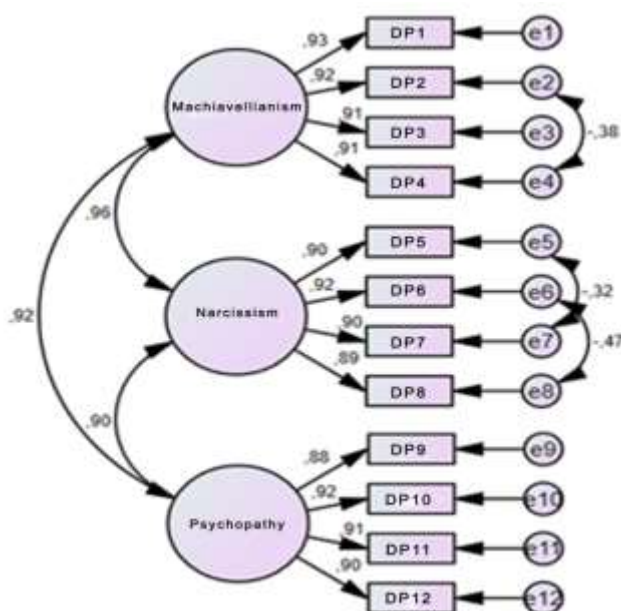


Table 4. Results of The Measurement Model For The Dark Personality Scale

Factors	Expressions	Factor Loadings	Standard Error	t-Values	p-Values
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F1: Machiavellianism $\alpha=0.883$	DP1	0.926	-	-	-
	DP2	0.919	0.024	43.835	***
	DP3	0.910	0.031	31.496	***
	DP4	0.913	0.023	41.915	***
F2: Narcissism $\alpha=0.910$	DP5	0.901	-	-	-
	DP6	0.922	0.024	41.599	***
	DP7	0.900	0.030	32.739	***
	DP8	0.891	0.030	32.196	***
F3: Psychopathy $\alpha=0.928$	DP9	0.882	-	-	-
	DP10	0.916	0.027	36.731	***
	DP11	0.909	0.031	32.442	***
	DP12	0.903	0.027	37.273	***
Total Reliability $\alpha=0.951$					

Following the validation of factor structure and reliability, model fit was evaluated using commonly accepted goodness-of-fit criteria in the literature. As presented in Table 5, the recalculated fit indices indicate that the measurement model demonstrates an acceptable level of fit. Specifically, the ratio of chi-square to degrees of freedom ($CMIN/DF \leq 5$), root mean square error of approximation ($RMSEA \leq 0.10$), and standardized root mean square residual ($SRMR \leq 0.10$) fall within acceptable thresholds (Hu and Bentler, 1999; Kline, 2016; Hair et al., 2017).

In addition, incremental and comparative fit indices, including the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Tucker–Lewis Index (TLI), Incremental Fit Index (IFI), Normed Fit Index (NFI), and Relative Fit Index (RFI), exceed the minimum acceptable values, indicating an adequate model fit. Absolute and parsimonious fit indices, such as the Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI) and Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index (AGFI), also fall within acceptable ranges.

Table 5. Goodness-of-Fit Indices of The Structural Model For The Dark Personality Scale

	Structural Model Values	Recommended Values
CMIN/DF	4.929	≤ 5
RMSEA	0.092	≤ 0.10
GFI	0.960	≥ 0.80
AGFI	0.936	≥ 0.80
CFI	0.890	≥ 0.80
TLI	0.849	≥ 0.80
IFI	0.892	≥ 0.80
RFI	0.818	≥ 0.80
NFI	0.868	≥ 0.80
SRMR	0.098	≤ 0.10

The results of the normality analysis are presented in Table 6. The skewness and kurtosis values of all variables fall within the range of ± 3 , indicating that the data are normally distributed and suitable for parametric analyses.

Table 6. Results of The Normality Analysis of The Variables

Variables	Skewness	Kurtosis	Status
Playing Dump	0.473	-1.189	Normal
Evasive	0.202	-1.369	Normal
Rationalized	0.156	-1.381	Normal
Machiavellianism	0.158	-1.329	Normal
Narcissism	0.370	-1.251	Normal
Psychopathy	-0.386	-1.293	Normal

Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationships between dark personality traits and knowledge hiding behaviors. As presented in Table 7, statistically significant and positive relationships were found between playing dumb and Machiavellianism ($r = 0.170$, $p < 0.05$) and narcissism ($r = 0.192$, $p < 0.05$). Similarly, evasive hiding was positively associated with Machiavellianism ($r = 0.122$, $p < 0.05$) and narcissism ($r = 0.121$, $p < 0.05$). In addition, rationalized hiding showed significant positive relationships with Machiavellianism ($r = 0.102$, $p < 0.05$) and psychopathy ($r = 0.138$, $p < 0.05$).

Table 7. Relationship Between Variables

Variables	Machiavellianism		Narcissism		Psychopathy	
	r	p	r	p	r	p
Playing Dumb	0.170	0.000*	0.192	0.000*	0.017	0.726
Evasive	0.122	0.013*	0.121	0.014*	0.059	0.230
Rationalized	0.102	0.037*	0.078	0.113	0.138	0.005*

Based on these results, the research hypotheses were tested. Narcissism was found to be significantly related to playing dumb and evasive hiding, while its relationship with rationalized hiding was not significant. Accordingly, H1a and H1b were supported, whereas H1c was not supported, indicating that H1 was partially supported. Machiavellianism demonstrated significant positive relationships with all three dimensions of knowledge hiding. Therefore, H2a, H2b, and H2c were supported, and the main hypothesis H2 was fully supported. Regarding psychopathy, a significant positive relationship was observed only with rationalized hiding, whereas no significant relationships were found with playing dumb and evasive hiding. Thus, H3c was supported, while H3a and H3b were not supported, indicating partial support for H3 (Table 8).

Overall, the findings suggest that Machiavellianism is the most consistent predictor of knowledge hiding behavior among front-line hotel employees. In contrast, narcissism and psychopathy exhibit more selective effects on specific knowledge hiding strategies.

Table 8. Hypothesis Testing Summary

Hypothesis	Relationship	Result
H1	Narcissism → Knowledge hiding dimensions	Partially Supported
H1a	Narcissism → Playing dumb	Supported
H1b	Narcissism → Evasive hiding	Supported
H1c	Narcissism → Rationalized hiding	Not Supported
H2	Machiavellianism → Knowledge hiding dimensions	Supported
H2a	Machiavellianism → Playing dumb	Supported
H2b	Machiavellianism → Evasive hiding	Supported
H2c	Machiavellianism → Rationalized hiding	Supported
H3	Psychopathy → Knowledge hiding dimensions	Partially Supported
H3a	Psychopathy → Playing dumb	Not Supported
H3b	Psychopathy → Evasive hiding	Not Supported
H3c	Psychopathy → Rationalized hiding	Supported

Discussion

The findings of this study provide empirical evidence that dark personality traits are significantly associated with knowledge hiding behavior among front-line hotel employees, although the strength and pattern of these relationships vary across the three personality dimensions. In general, the results support the theoretical argument that individual personality characteristics play a critical role in shaping employees' interpersonal behaviors in organizations, particularly those related to knowledge exchange and cooperation (Chawla and Gupta, 2019; Pan et al., 2018).

One of the most important findings of the study is that Machiavellianism emerged as the most consistent predictor of knowledge hiding behavior, demonstrating significant positive relationships with all three dimensions: playing dumb, evasive hiding, and rationalized hiding. This result strongly aligns with prior research suggesting that Machiavellian individuals tend to adopt strategic and manipulative interaction styles in organizational settings (Christie and Geis, 1970; Jones and Paulhus, 2010). Since such individuals prioritize personal advantage and control over information, knowledge may be perceived as a valuable resource to be managed strategically rather than shared collaboratively. Previous empirical studies similarly report strong links between Machiavellianism and knowledge hiding (Hernaus et al., 2018; Chawla and Gupta, 2019; Zhuang et al., 2025). The present findings therefore reinforce the view that Machiavellianism is a central personality-based antecedent of knowledge concealment behaviors, particularly in competitive and interdependent environments such as hotels.

The results also indicate that narcissism is positively related to playing dumb and evasive hiding, while its relationship with rationalized hiding is not statistically significant. This partial support suggests that narcissistic employees may be more inclined toward deceptive or avoidance-based forms of knowledge hiding rather than openly justified withholding. Narcissistic individuals often seek admiration and maintain a positive self-image (Campbell et al., 2005; Back et al., 2010), and knowledge may function as a symbol of competence

and superiority. Consequently, they may conceal knowledge when sharing it threatens their perceived status. This interpretation is consistent with previous research indicating that narcissistic individuals prioritize self-enhancement over collective outcomes (O’Boyle et al., 2012) and may engage in selective information management to maintain power (Fernie et al., 2016). However, the absence of a significant relationship with rationalized hiding may indicate that narcissistic employees prefer covert strategies that protect their image rather than explicit refusal to share information. This nuance contributes to the literature by demonstrating that narcissism may influence the type of knowledge hiding strategy adopted rather than the overall tendency alone.

Regarding psychopathy, the findings reveal a significant positive relationship only with rationalized hiding, while no significant relationships were observed with playing dumb or evasive hiding. This pattern differs somewhat from the broader literature, which generally associates psychopathy with manipulative and harmful workplace behaviors (Jones and Paulhus, 2010; Boddy, 2017). However, the result may be explained by the low empathy and moral disengagement characteristics of psychopathic tendencies (Hare, 1999). Individuals with such traits may feel less social pressure to justify their actions and may therefore rely more on direct or rationalized forms of withholding knowledge rather than deceptive tactics. Another possible explanation is that front-line hospitality roles involve continuous social interaction with colleagues and customers, which may constrain overtly deceptive behaviors while still allowing justified forms of knowledge withholding.

Overall, the findings support the broader theoretical framework suggesting that dark personality traits are associated with self-interest-driven workplace behaviors and reduced willingness to engage in reciprocal knowledge exchange (Pletzers, 2017; Karim, 2022). Consistent with social exchange theory, employees with higher levels of dark traits may perceive organizational relationships as competitive rather than cooperative, thereby increasing their tendency to hide knowledge for personal advantage (Pan et al., 2018). The results also align with recent sector-based research demonstrating that dark personality traits predict knowledge hiding across different industries, including hospitality, banking, and manufacturing (Wang et al., 2024; Yan et al., 2024; Zhuang et al., 2025).

Importantly, this study contributes to the literature by providing sector-specific evidence from the hospitality industry, where interpersonal coordination and information sharing are essential for service quality. Front-line hotel employees frequently depend on shared knowledge regarding customer preferences, operational procedures, and service recovery strategies. When such knowledge is intentionally withheld, operational efficiency may decline, service failures may increase, and customer satisfaction may be negatively affected. Moreover, persistent knowledge hiding may weaken organizational learning and innovation capacity.

From a managerial perspective, the findings highlight the importance of incorporating personality-related considerations into human resource management practices. Recruitment and selection processes may benefit from personality assessments that help identify extreme dark trait tendencies. Training programs focusing on ethical awareness, emotional intelligence, and teamwork may reduce the negative behavioral consequences associated with these traits. Additionally, organizational climates characterized by trust, fairness, and psychological safety may discourage knowledge hiding by reducing employees’ perceptions of competition and insecurity. Leadership styles emphasizing transparency and supportive communication may also play a key role in mitigating opportunistic behaviors linked to dark personality traits.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the sample consisted only of front-line employees working in four- and five-star hotels in Istanbul, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other regions, cultures, or types of hospitality organizations. Future studies may include more diverse samples across different geographical locations and hotel categories to improve external validity.

Second, the data were collected using self-report questionnaires, which may introduce common method bias and social desirability effects. Participants may have underreported undesirable behaviors such as knowledge hiding or manipulative tendencies. Future research could incorporate multiple data sources, including supervisor ratings or peer evaluations, to obtain more objective measurements.

Third, the cross-sectional design restricts the ability to draw causal conclusions. Longitudinal studies could provide deeper insights into how dark personality traits influence knowledge hiding over time. Experimental research designs may also help clarify the psychological mechanisms underlying these relationships.

Future research may further explore mediating and moderating variables such as organizational commitment, leadership style, perceived organizational politics, job satisfaction, and organizational culture. Examining these factors may provide a more comprehensive understanding of how and under what conditions dark personality traits influence knowledge hiding behavior. Comparative studies across different service industries may also help determine whether the observed relationships are specific to hospitality contexts or generalizable across sectors.

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