



Scientific article

UDK 159.923

<https://doi.org/10.21702/rpj.2026.1.3>

The Bright and Dark Personality Traits of Modern Students: The Influence of Value Orientations and Basic Beliefs

Vladimir G. Maralov^{1*} , Marina A. Kudaka¹ , Vyacheslav A. Sitarov² ,
Larisa V. Romanyuk² , Irina I. Koryagina³ 

¹Cherepovets State University, Cherepovets, Russian Federation

²Moscow City Pedagogical University, Moscow, Russian Federation

³Ivanovo State Medical University, Ivanovo, Russian Federation

*Corresponding author: vgmaralov@yandex.ru

Abstract

Introduction. The relevance of the problem is determined by the significance of identifying psychological factors that determine the functioning of integrated personality characteristics, which may include constructs of the Dark (Machiavellianism, narcissism, psychopathy) and Light (belief in humanity, humanism, Kantianism) triads of personality. The novelty of the study lies in identifying the relationship between value orientations, basic beliefs, and traits of the Dark and Light triads of personality among students. **Methods.** The following questionnaires were used: the PVQ Portrait Questionnaire. Schwartz's adaptation by N.M. Lebedeva, R. Janoff-Bulman's Basic Beliefs Questionnaire adapted by M.A. Padun, A.V. Kotelnikova, D.N. Jones and D.L. Paulhus's Short Dark Triad Questionnaire adapted by M.S. Egorova, M.A. Sitnikova, and O.V. Parshikova, and S.B. Kaufman's Light Triad Questionnaire. Adapted by D.S. Kornienko, V.K. Vyazovkina, and A.N. Nevryuev. The study involved 406 students (30.54% male) aged 17 to 25 ($M = 19.03$; $SD = 1.27$) from various universities in the Russian Federation. **Results.** It has been established that the manifestations of Machiavellianism are influenced by the disregard of dangers, low level of universalism, the belief in the injustice of the world, the manifestations of narcissism are influenced by the power and value of the self, and the manifestations of psychopathy are influenced by the value of stimulation in combination with the disregard of dangers and low level of universalism. Faith in humanity is associated with the belief in the justice of the world, while humanism is associated with security, benevolence, universalism,

and the belief in the justice of the world. The manifestations of Kantianism are influenced by benevolence and universalism. **Discussion.** The study concludes that the traits of the Dark and Light triads of personality are not only interconnected with value orientations and basic beliefs, but also serve as predictors of each other. The findings can be used in the process of communicating with students to help them develop their individual self-development trajectories.

Keywords

dark triad, light triad, value orientations, basic beliefs, students

For citation

Maralov, V. G., Kudaka, M. A., Sitarov, V. A., Romanyuk, L. V., Koryagina, I. I. (2026). Bright and dark personality traits of modern students: influence of value orientations and basic beliefs. *Russian Psychological Journal*, 23(1), 41–60, <https://doi.org/10.21702/rpj.2026.1.3>

Introduction

University training and the development of educational and professional activities require students to have not only special competencies, but also certain personal qualities. Among these qualities, there are certain personality characteristics that integrate typical traits. These include psychological constructs known as the Dark and Light Triads of Personality.

These constructs have only recently been used in modern psychology. The Dark Triad was described by D. L. Paulhus and K. M. Williams in 2002 (Paulhus & Williams, 2002), and the Light Triad was described even later in 2019 by a group of authors consisting of S. B. Kaufman, D. B. Yaden, E. Hyde, and E. Tsukayama (Kaufman et al., 2019). The dark triad consists of the following: Machiavellianism, which is expressed in the use of manipulation in interactions with people; non-clinical narcissism (hereinafter referred to as narcissism), which is the individual's perception of themselves as exceptional and deserving of admiration; and non-clinical psychopathy (hereinafter referred to as psychopathy), which is characterized by arrogance, impulsive reactions, and hostile and aggressive behavior.

The Light Triad is the diametric opposite of the Dark Triad, and it is represented by: a belief in humanity, which is based on the belief that people are inherently good and kind; humanism, which is based on the belief that people deserve recognition and respect; and Kantianism (named after the German philosopher Immanuel Kant), which is based on the view that people are valuable and not just a means to an end. To be fair, it should be noted that there are also alternative approaches to highlighting the features of the Bright Triad of personality (Johnson, 2018; Musek & Grum, 2021; Gouveia et al., 2021, etc.). In this work, we will adhere to the position of S.B. Kaufman, which is the dominant one in modern science.

It should be noted that there is an extensive bibliography of research on the relationship between triads, especially the Dark Triad, and various personality traits, including those of students. For example, the relationships of the Dark triad with the sexual characteristics of the students (Deris, 2019), the manifestations of aggression (Kajonius, Persson & Jonason, 2015), depressive symptoms (Li et al., 2024), the role of Light and Dark triad committing academic misconduct by students (Chabrol et al., 2009), have shown the influence of the Dark triad traits to choose from in the process of interaction positions of coercion and manipulation, and the Light of the triad, the choice of the position of non-violence (stags, Kudakov, Smirnova, 2024).

As a special problem, we would like to point out the importance of identifying the relationships between the traits of the Dark and Light triads of personality and the values and basic beliefs of the individual. This is because a person's life and actions are influenced by their values and beliefs, which directly or indirectly affect their behavior. As behavioral patterns become established, they become traits of the personality, including the traits of the Dark or Light triads, which in turn influence the value system. Knowledge of such relationships will provide a basis for developing special programs aimed at developing pro-social values and personal qualities, which are necessary for specialists in various fields of life.

In modern psychology, there is a significant number of approaches to defining and highlighting human values. In this paper, we rely on the classical approach of S. Schwartz (1994), who identified ten values that reflect significant motivational aspects of a person. They were grouped into four types: values of openness to change (independence, stimulation); values of self-determination (universalism, benevolence), values of self-affirmation (achievement, power, hedonism); values of preservation (conformity, tradition, security). Subsequently, this concept was revised by the author, and eventually, the number of values was increased (Schwartz, 2012).

Along with the concept of values, modern psychology widely uses the concept of basic beliefs, which logically complement the concept of personality value orientations. Thanks to the research of R. Janoff-Bulman (Janoff-Bulman, 1989) : 1) benevolence/unbenevolence of the surrounding world; 2) justice/unjustice of the surrounding world; 3) the idea of oneself as a worthy or unworthy person (the value of "I") were included. Later, when adapting the R. Yanoff-Bulman questionnaire to the Russian-speaking sample by M.A. Padun and A.V. Kotelnikova (2012), two more beliefs were added: the ability to control the situation – the individual's belief that they can control the events that happen to them; and luck – the individual's belief that he/she is a lucky person.

Literature review

Let us turn to the analysis of some works that reveal the relationship of the Dark and Light triads of personality with value orientations in the context of the concept of S. Schwartz. In particular, P.J. Kajonius et al. (Kajonius et al., 2015) have concluded that there is a positive relationship between Machiavellianism and narcissism with the values of achievement and power, and psychopathy with the values of hedonism and power. In a study by P.K. Jonason

et al. (Jonason et al., 2018), the relationship between the Dark Triad traits and hedonism and achievement was identified. Similar results were obtained by V. Lim and G. Feldman (Lim & Feldman, 2020), who found that the traits of the Dark Triad show a positive correlation with self-assertion (power, achievement, and hedonism) and openness to change (self-reliance and stimulation), and a negative correlation with self-determination (universalism and benevolence) and preservation (conformity, tradition, and security).

As for the relationship between the Light Triad and values, there is much less research in this area. First of all, we would like to mention a work by S.B. Kaufman et al. (Kaufman et al., 2019), in which the authors found a strong positive association between the Light Triad and values of self-determination, and a strong negative association with values of self-assertion.

Let's turn to the second part of our problem, which is identifying the relationships between the traits of the Dark and Light triads and the underlying beliefs.

Since the early works of R. Yanoff-Bulman (Janoff-Bulman, 1989), basic beliefs have been studied in connection with psychological trauma and post-traumatic stress, which is largely caused by their destruction, while the world begins to be perceived as unfair and hostile. L.T. Mathews and S.J. Marwit (Matthews & Marwit, 2004). They carried out a differentiated analysis of the impact of various types of losses on the basic beliefs of parents. P.K. Ferrajão and A. Elklit (Ferrajão & Elklit, 2020) showed that interventions aimed at restoring ideas about the benevolence of the world and increasing the value of the Self should be the focus of attention in post-traumatic stress therapy.

Gradually, the scope of research on the role of basic beliefs in human life expanded significantly. It has been proven that basic beliefs are associated with well-being (Markina, 2023; Poulin & Cohen Silver, 2008), with dispositional personality traits, locus of control, and life satisfaction (Chertkova and Zyryanova, 2019), and with trust in people (Zhang, 2021). I.A. Filenko et al., 2023) found that basic beliefs act as predictors of the psychological health of students. N.A. Tsvetkova and K.E. Lagvilava (Tsvetkova and Lagvilova, 2022) identified differences in basic beliefs among working and non-working students.

Unfortunately, we have not found any special works that discuss the relationship between students' basic beliefs and the Dark and Light triads of personality, with the exception of one study (Pustovik, Khramtsova, 2022). However, there are related studies that address this issue. For example, in a study conducted by I. Correia and C. Dalbert (Correia & Dalbert, 2008) on a sample of Portuguese adolescents, it was found that the stronger the adolescents' belief in a just world, the less likely they were to engage in peer bullying, which is a negative trait associated with the Dark Triad. Alternatively, in another study by Y. Guo et al. (Guo et al., 2022) the relationship between belief in a just world and prosocial behavior, which is one of the components of the Light Triad personality has been proven.

Thus, based on the analysis of the literature, it can be concluded that in modern psychology, the relationship between value orientations and the traits of the Dark Triad has been studied to a greater extent, while the relationship between value orientations and the traits of the Light Triad has been studied to a lesser extent, and the relationship between basic beliefs and the traits of the Dark and Light Triads has not been studied at all.

The purpose of the study is to identify the relationship between the traits of the Dark and Light Triads and the value orientations and basic beliefs of modern students, as well as the characteristics of their mutual influence on each other.

The research hypotheses are as follows:

1) based on the available literature, it can be assumed that the Dark and Light triads of personality traits are interconnected with the values of self-assertion (achievement, power) and the values of self-determination (benevolence, universalism), where the Dark triad is interconnected with the values of self-assertion and the Light triad is interconnected with the values of self-determination.

2) traits of the Dark Triad, such as Machiavellianism and psychopathy, should show a negative relationship and mutual influence with the basic beliefs in the benevolence of the world, the justice of the world, and the value of the self, while narcissism, on the other hand, should show a positive relationship and mutual influence with the belief in the value of the self; traits of the Light Triad should show a positive relationship and mutual influence with the beliefs in the benevolence, justice of the world, and the value of the self.

Methods

Sample

The study was conducted using a survey of students in March-May 2024. The study sample consisted of students from Moscow City Pedagogical University, Ivanovo State Medical University, and Cherepovets State University, representing various specialties and fields of study, with a total of 406 participants aged 17 to 25 ($M = 19.03$; $SD = 1.27$). The sample included 30.54% male participants and 69.46% female participants.

Research methods

The methodological basis of this study was formed by the theoretical provisions on value orientations of Sh. Schwartz, basic beliefs of R. Yanovoff-Bulman, the concept of the Dark Triad of D.L. Paulhus and K. M. Williams, the concept of the Bright Triad of S.B. Kaufman et al.

The following diagnostic tools were used:

1) The Short Dark Triad Questionnaire by D.N. Jones and D.L. Paulhus, adapted by M.S. Egorova, M.A. Sitnikova, and O.V. Parshikova (2015);

2) The Light Triad Questionnaire by S.B. Kaufman et al. adapted by D.S. Kornienko, V.K. Vyazovkina, and A.N. Nevryuev (2023);

3) Portrait Questionnaire (PVQ) by S. Schwartz, adapted by N.M. Lebedeva (2023), to identify students' value orientations;

4) Basic Beliefs Inventory by R. Janoff-Bulman, adapted by M.A. Padun and A.V. Kotelnikova (2012).

Statistical analysis

The raw scores on all questionnaires were converted into a standard 10-point scale. Statistical analysis was performed using descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and regression analysis in Excel and PSPP.

Results

Let's look at the results of the study. Table 1 shows some descriptive statistics for all the variables.

Table 1

Results of descriptive statistics of value orientations, basic beliefs, and traits of the Dark and Light triads of personality in students (N = 406)

Investigated parameters	M	SD
Value orientations		
Independence	8.22	1.51
Stimulation	6.33	2.1
Hedonism	7.82	1.85
Achievement	7.58	1.81
Power	6.51	1.83
Security	7.03	1.75
Conformity	6.4	1.91
Tradition	5.25	2.12
Benevolence	7.78	1.65
Universalism	7.36	1.66
Basic beliefs		
The goodwill of the world	5.8	2.17
Justice of the world	6.05	2.27
The value of "I"	6.78	2.5
Luck	6.73	2.31
Control	6.69	2.17

Investigated parameters	M	SD
Features of the Dark Triad Personality		
Machiavellianism	6.33	1.26
Narcissism	5.86	1.3
Psychopathy	4.87	1.6
Features of the Light Triad Personality		
Faith in humanity	7.34	1.58
Humanism	7.86	1.44
Kantianism	7.66	1.51

As can be seen from Table 1, the leading role in the structure of students' value orientations is played by such values as independence ($M = 8.22$, $SD = 1.51$), hedonism ($M = 7.82$, $SD = 1.85$), benevolence ($M = 7.78$, $SD = 1.65$), achievement ($M = 7.58$, $SD = 1.81$), universalism ($M = 7.36$, $SD = 1.66$) and security ($M = 7.03$, $SD = 1.75$). The middle position is occupied by the values of power ($M = 6.51$, $SD = 1.83$) and conformity ($M = 6.4$, $SD = 1.91$). The value of tradition closes the list ($M = 5.25$, $SD = 2.12$).

The basic beliefs are generally at the average and above-average levels of expression. The dominant position is occupied by basic beliefs in the value of the "I" ($M = 6.78$, $SD = 2.5$), in luck ($M = 6.73$, $SD = 2.31$), and in control ($M = 6.69$, $SD = 2.17$). Lower scores were obtained for beliefs in justice ($M = 6.05$, $SD = 2.27$) and in the benevolence of the surrounding world ($M = 5.8$, $SD = 2.17$).

As expected, the traits of the Light Triad dominate the traits of the Dark Triad. Humanism ($M = 7.86$, $SD = 1.44$) takes the first position, followed by Kantianism ($M = 7.56$, $SD = 1.51$) and faith in humanity ($M = 7.34$, $SD = 1.58$). All the traits of the Dark Triad are less pronounced. Machiavellianism has a higher score ($M = 6.33$, $SD = 1.26$), followed by narcissism ($M = 5.86$, $SD = 1.3$), and psychopathy ($M = 4.87$, $SD = 1.6$).

Overall, the results are quite satisfactory. A study conducted at three universities in the Russian Federation shows that modern students value independence, achievement, security, benevolence, and universalism, but they also have a desire for sensual pleasure. They have basic beliefs in the value of the self, their own luck, and control, but they have lower levels of beliefs in the fairness and benevolence of the world.

They are mostly humanistic in their attitude towards other people, but in some cases they are prone to manipulation and impulsive and aggressive behavior. There are also students who believe in the exceptional and unique nature of their own personalities.

In the second stage of this study, a correlation analysis was conducted using the Pearson linear correlation coefficient. The results of the correlation analysis are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

*Matrix of correlations between value orientations and basic beliefs and the traits of the Dark and Light triads of personality**

Investigated parameters	Machia- vellyme	Narcis- sism	Psycho- pathia	Faith in humanity	Huma- nism	Kantia- nism
Value orientations						
Selfnost	-0.08	0.21***	-0.07	0.24***	0.25***	0.22***
Stimulationnie	0.03	0.23***	0.15**	0.13**	0.14**	0.12*
Hedonism	-0.01	0.25***	-0.02	0.18***	0.19***	0.10*
Achievement	0.06	0.23***	-0.08	0.25***	0.23***	0.11*
Power	0.07	0.32***	0.03	0.13**	0.12*	0.03
Safety	-0.12*	-0.05	-0.29***	0.33***	0.38***	0.28***
Conformism	0.01	-0.13**	-0.22***	0.22***	0.24***	0.11*
Tradition	-0.01	0.01	-0.13**	0.29***	0.24***	0.17***
Benevolent- ness	-0.15**	0.01	-0.19***	0.41***	0.51***	0.39***
Universalism	-0.17***	-0.04	-0.26***	0.45***	0.50***	0.40***
Basic beliefs						
The benevolence of the world	0.03	-0.05	-0.01	0.19***	0.18***	0.10*
Justice of the world	-0.12*	0.09	-0.11**	0.46***	0.40***	0.28***
Value "I"	-0.07	0.36***	-0.06	0.16***	0.22***	0.02
Good luck	-0.01	0.22***	-0.05	0.12**	0.15**	-0.07
Control	0.04	0.19***	-0.09	0.17***	0.15**	0.12

Note: * - $p \leq 0.05$; ** - $p \leq 0.01$; *** - $p \leq 0.001$

As can be seen from Table 2, of the traits of the Dark Triad, Machiavellianism found three weak negative relationships with value orientations and one negative relationship with a basic belief. Negative associations were found with the values of security ($r = -0.12$, $p \leq 0.05$), benevolence ($r = -0.15$, $p \leq 0.01$), and universalism ($r = -0.17$, $p \leq 0.001$), and with the belief in a just world ($r = -0.12$, $p \leq 0.05$) among the basic beliefs.

Narcissism showed positive associations with both value orientations and basic beliefs. A moderate positive relationship was found with the value of power ($r = 0.32$, $p \leq 0.001$), and weak relationships were found with independence ($r = 0.21$, $p \leq 0.001$), stimulation ($r = 0.15$, $p \leq 0.01$), hedonism ($r = 0.25$, $p \leq 0.001$), and achievements ($r = 0.23$, $p \leq 0.001$).

A weak negative correlation was found with conformity ($r = -0.13$, $p \leq 0.01$). Of the basic beliefs, a moderate positive association was found with a belief in the value of "I" ($r = 0.36$, $p < 0.001$), weak positive associations with a belief in one's luck ($r = 0.22$, $p < 0.001$) and with the belief that everything is under control ($r = 0.19$, $p < 0.001$).

Psychopathy found one positive association with the value of stimulation ($r = 0.15$, $p < 0.01$) and four negative associations with the values of safety ($r = -0.29$, $p < 0.001$), conformity ($r = -0.22$, $p < 0.001$), tradition ($r = -0.13$, $p < 0.01$), benevolence ($r = -0.19$, $p < 0.001$) and universalism ($r = -0.26$, $p < 0.001$). No connections were found with basic beliefs.

Thus, narcissism has the highest number of positive associations with value orientations and basic beliefs (eight), Machiavellianism has four negative associations, and psychopathy has one positive and five negative associations.

The analysis of the relationships between the traits of the Light Triad of Personality and value orientations and basic beliefs revealed a significant number of positive correlations. Belief in humanity has a positive correlation with all the studied parameters. The highest correlation coefficients were obtained with such a basic belief as the justice of the world ($r = 0.46$, $p \leq 0.001$), the values of universalism ($r = 0.45$, $p \leq 0.001$), benevolence ($r = 0.41$, $p \leq 0.001$), and security ($r = 0.33$, $p \leq 0.001$). In addition, although weak, but a significant connection was identified with all basic beliefs.

Similar conclusions can be drawn regarding humanism. Here, moderate positive associations were found with benevolence ($r = 0.51$, $p \leq 0.001$), universalism ($r = 0.5$, $p \leq 0.001$), world justice ($r = 0.4$, $p \leq 0.001$), and security ($r = 0.38$, $p \leq 0.001$). There were also weak associations between humanism and all the core beliefs.

As for Kantianism, the general trend in the nature of the relationships identified regarding faith in humanity and humanism remains unchanged. At the same time, there are no statistically significant connections with the value of power, as well as with such basic beliefs as the value of the self and luck.

The general conclusion that follows from the analysis of the relationships between the traits of the Light Triad and the value orientations and basic beliefs of students is that all three traits are closely related to the values of benevolence, universalism, security, and the basic belief in the justice of the world.

As is known, correlation analysis makes it possible to identify relationships between the factors under study, but it does not allow us to draw conclusions about what affects what and whether it affects anything at all. Therefore, the results of the correlation analysis were supplemented by the results of the regression analysis. During the regression analysis, regression equations were constructed, where the dependent variables were the traits of the Dark and Light triads of personality, and the independent variables were the value orientations and basic beliefs. Then, on the contrary, value orientations and basic beliefs were used as dependent variables, while the traits of the Dark and Light triads were used as independent variables. As a result, a number of statistically significant regression models ($p = 0.000$) were obtained, with satisfactory coefficients of the Darbin-Watson test.

The value orientations and basic beliefs were identified as predictors of the Dark and Light triad personality traits, as well as the Dark and Light triad personality traits that, in turn, were predictors of certain value orientations and basic beliefs. The results are shown in Figures 1 and 2.

Figure 1

The influence of students' value orientations and basic beliefs on the traits of the Dark Triad personality, and the influence of the traits of the Dark Triad personality on students' value orientations and basic beliefs

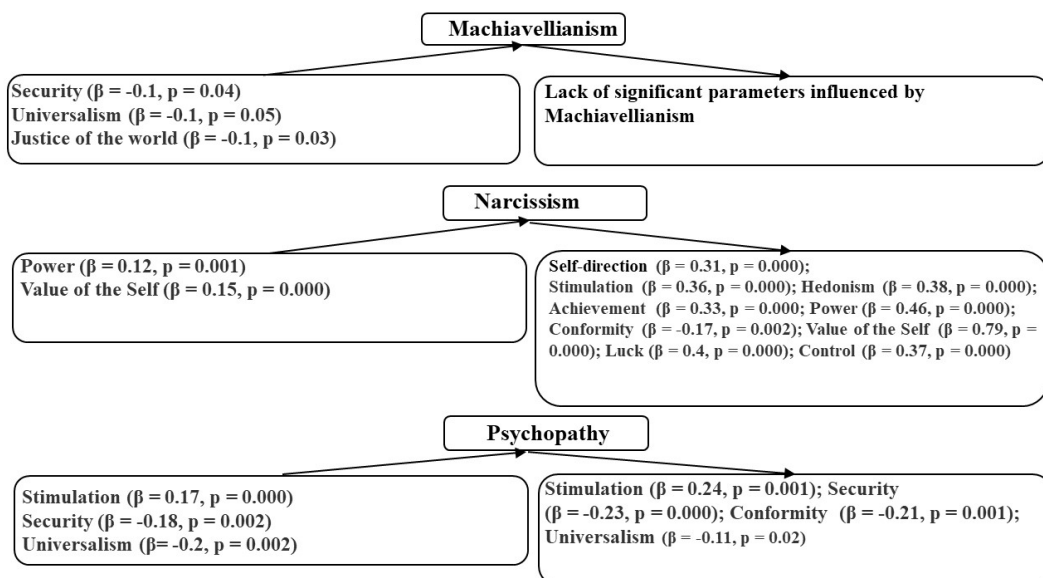
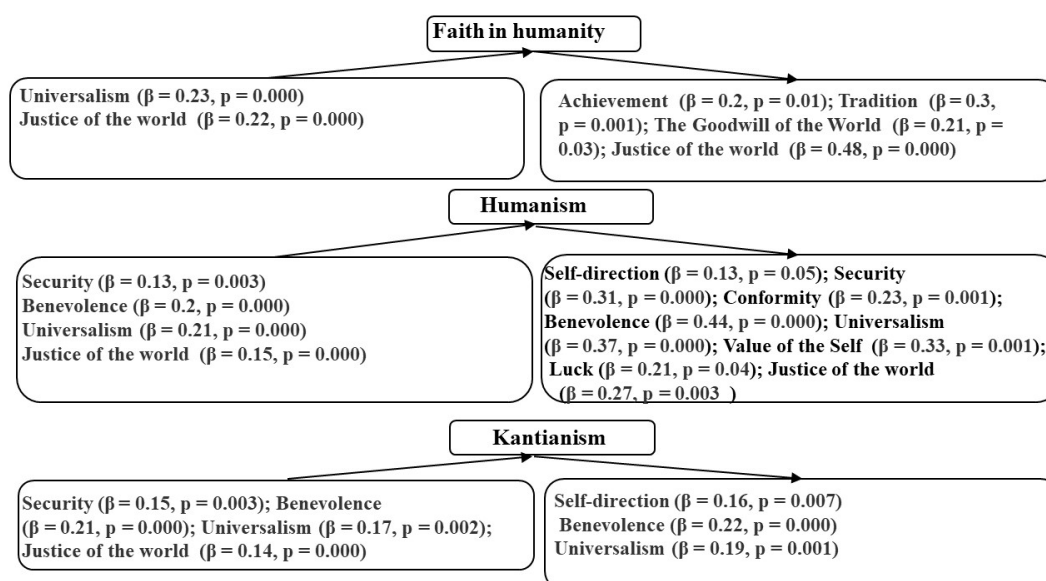


Figure 2

The influence of value orientations and basic beliefs of students on the features of the Light Triad of Personality, and the influence of the features of the Light Triad of Personality on value orientations and basic beliefs



Machiavellianism (see Fig. 1) is influenced by a low level of security values ($\beta = -0.1, p = 0.04$) and universalism ($\beta = -0.1, p = 0.05$), combined with a basic belief in the absence of a just world order ($\beta = -0.1, p = 0.03$). No significant effects of Machiavellianism were found in this study.

Narcissism is influenced by the value of power ($\beta = 0.12, p = 0.001$) in combination with a belief in a high level of self-value ($\beta = 0.15, p = 0.000$). In turn, narcissism can act as a predictor of such value orientations as independence ($\beta = 0.31, p = 0.000$), stimulation ($\beta = 0.36, p = 0.000$), hedonism ($\beta = 0.38, p = 0.000$), achievement ($\beta = 0.33, p = 0.000$), power ($\beta = 0.46, p = 0.000$), low level of conformity ($\beta = -0.17, p = 0.002$), and such basic beliefs as the value of "I" ($\beta = 0.79, p = 0.000$), luck ($\beta = 0.4, p = 0.000$) and control ($\beta = 0.37, p = 0.000$).

Psychopathy is influenced by a desire for new experiences (stimulation) ($\beta = 0.17, p = 0.000$), combined with a disregard for danger (low value for safety) ($\beta = -0.18, p = 0.002$), and a low level of universalism ($\beta = -0.2, p = 0.002$). A high level of psychopathy can, in turn, affect the development of the value of stimulation ($\beta = 0.24, p = 0.001$), the formation of a desire to ignore dangers ($\beta = -0.23, p = 0.000$), a low level of conformity ($\beta = -0.21, p = 0.001$), and a low value of universalism ($\beta = -0.11, p = 0.02$). As we can see, three factors play a leading role: the value of stimulation (positive mutual influence), the values of security and universalism (negative mutual influence).

On the other hand, the manifestations of faith in humanity (see Figure 2) are influenced by a high level of universalism ($\beta = 0.23$, $p = 0.000$) and a belief in a just world order ($\beta = 0.22$, $p = 0.000$). A high level of faith in humanity, in turn, stimulates an individual to achieve new things ($\beta = 0.2$, $p = 0.01$), contributes to the development of the value of traditions ($\beta = 0.3$, $p = 0.001$), basic beliefs in benevolence ($\beta = 0.21$, $p = 0.03$), and the justice of the world ($\beta = 0.48$, $p = 0.000$). The central idea here is the belief in the justice of the world, which affects the belief in humanity, and the belief in humanity, in turn, affects the strengthening of the belief in the justice of the world.

Similarly, the manifestations of humanism and Kantianism are influenced by the values of safety ($\beta = 0.13$, $p = 0.003$ and $\beta = 0.15$, $p = 0.003$), benevolence ($\beta = 0.2$, $p = 0.000$ and $\beta = 0.21$, $p = 0.000$), universalism ($\beta = 0.21$, $p = 0.000$ and $\beta = 0.17$, $p = 0.002$) and the belief in the justice of the world ($\beta = 0.15$, $p = 0.000$ and $\beta = 0.14$, $p = 0.000$). In turn, both humanism and Kantianism promote the development of independence ($\beta = 0.13$, $p = 0.05$ and $\beta = 0.16$, $p = 0.007$), benevolence ($\beta = 0.44$, $p = 0.000$ and $\beta = 0.22$, $p = 0.000$) and universalism ($\beta = 0.37$, $p = 0.000$ and $\beta = 0.19$, $p = 0.001$), and humanism, in addition to the above, contributes to the formation of the values of security ($\beta = 0.31$, $p = 0.000$) and conformity ($\beta = 0.23$, $p = 0.001$), basic beliefs in the justice of the world ($\beta = 0.27$, $p = 0.003$), the value of "I" ($\beta = 0.33$, $p = 0.001$) and luck ($\beta = 0.27$, $p = 0.003$). Humanism and Kantianism have discovered two connections based on mutual influence: benevolence and universalism. In addition, humanism was found to be related to the belief in the justice of the world.

Discussion

Various aspects of the relationship between the traits of the Dark and Light triads of personality and value orientations and basic beliefs are actively discussed in modern psychology. This interest is driven by a number of factors, primarily the desire of psychologists to understand the mechanisms of interaction between a person's value system and their behavioral patterns.

The relationship between value orientations and the Dark triad of personality has been extensively studied. Most often, the traits of the Dark Triad are positively associated with the values of self-assertion and openness to change, and negatively with the values of self-determination and preservation (see, for example, Lim & Feldman, 2020). In the present study, this pattern was generally confirmed. Narcissism showed associations based on the mutual influence of factors on each other with the value of power, and psychopathy with the value of stimulation.

All three traits of the Dark Triad were negatively correlated with the values of security, benevolence, and universalism to varying degrees.

The relationship between the traits of the Light Triad and value orientations is less studied in psychology, although the issue of the relationship between values and prosocial behavior is actively discussed in modern science. However, several studies have found that the Light Triad is positively correlated with the values of self-determination and negatively correlated with the values of self-assertion (see, for example, Kaufman et al., 2019). In this work, the

first part of this conclusion was fully confirmed, i.e., it was found that both humanism and Kantianism are influenced by the values of self-determination (benevolence and universalism), which in turn act as predictors of benevolence and humanism. However, the second part of the conclusion regarding the negative association between the traits of the Light Triad and the values of self-assertion was not confirmed.

This can be explained by the fact that for the surveyed contingent of students with traits of the Bright Personality Triad, the values of self-affirmation are important, especially for such values as achievement, which are positively correlated (see Table. 2) both with faith in humanity ($r = 0.25, p < 0.001$) and with humanism ($r = 0.23, p < 0.001$). In addition, faith in humanity acts as a predictor of the value of achievement. High achievements are an integral part of our culture, which is reflected in the results we have obtained.

The relationship between the traits of the Dark and Light triads of personality and basic beliefs has been studied even less. As for the relationship between the Dark triad and basic beliefs, we have found only one study that attempts to identify its nature.

It is a work by V.A. Pustovik and L.M. Khramtsova (2022), where the authors identified a positive association between narcissism and the belief in the value of the self and control, and a negative association between Machiavellianism and psychopathy and the belief in the justice of the world and luck. We also found a negative correlation between Machiavellianism and psychopathy and the belief in the justice of the world, but this was not confirmed by regression analysis. Only one relationship based on mutual influence was identified: the relationship between narcissism and self-worth.

We have not found any special studies that discuss the relationship between the Light Triad and basic beliefs. There is only indirect evidence that such a relationship exists. If we take into account the fact that basic beliefs are closely related to the parameters of the six-factor model of personality (Chertkova, Zyryanova, 2019), and these parameters, in turn, are closely related to the traits of the Light Triad of personality (Ilyichev, Zolotareva, 2023), then it is logical to assume that the traits of the Light Triad will also be related to the basic beliefs of personality. This assumption was confirmed by the present study, but with certain reservations. It has been established that not all, but only one basic belief plays a fundamental role in the mutual determination of faith in humanity, humanism, and basic beliefs: the belief in the justice of the world.

This fact can probably be explained by the fact that for the mentality of modern domestic students, the concept of justice is a much more significant phenomenon than other provisions that are part of the basic beliefs of the individual.

Based on the conducted research, it is possible to give brief characteristics of the traits of the Dark and Light triads of personality from the point of view of their relationship with value orientations and basic beliefs.

Machiavellianism, as is known, manifests itself in the strategy and tactics of skillful manipulation. During the manipulation, all means are widely used, flattery, deception, cunning, etc. are used. The use of these means is justified by the basic belief of the Machiavellian that

the world is unfairly arranged, so there is nothing shameful in their application. This belief is organically connected with the neglect of security against the background of intolerant attitude towards people. The data obtained in the present study are well correlated with the results of other authors.

In particular, K. Blötner and C. Bergold (Blötner & Bergold, 2022) note in their article that Machiavellianism has common links with malevolence, dishonesty, and cynicism. The same conclusions are reached by Zh.G. Garanina and N.E. Kuleshova, who, based on an empirical study, concluded that Machiavellianism in students manifests itself in an individual's ability to dominate while maintaining a low level of friendliness towards others (Garanina, Kuleshova, 2022).

Narcissism is characterized by a strong emphasis on self-importance. According to S.L. Kjaervik and B.J. Bushman (Kjaervik & Bushman, 2021), people with high levels of narcissism believe that they are special and deserve special treatment. When their expectations are not met, they tend to react aggressively. To maintain a high opinion of their own personality, they need a tool in the form of prestige, social status, or anything else that gives them a sense of dominance and control over others.

This tool is power, which was proven in our study. On the one hand, the value of the "I" and power influence the formation of narcissistic traits, and on the other hand, these traits themselves create the preconditions for the development of a specific spectrum of value orientations and beliefs not only in the uniqueness of one's personality, but also in luck and control.

Psychopathy completes the Dark Triad. M.S. Egorova and M.A. Sitnikova, summarizing research on psychopathy, identify several of its characteristics. These include: low anxiety and fearlessness; impulsivity and irresponsibility; emotional coldness, and a tendency to deceive and manipulate (Egorova, Sitnikova, 2014). The data we obtained complement this characteristic. It was found that the value of stimulation has a positive effect on psychopathy, which is based on the need for new experiences, and a negative effect on the values of security and universalism.

The traits of the Light Triad, as our study has shown, form a closer connection with each other than the traits of the Dark Triad, which indicates that they form a closer complex or even a conglomerate of personality traits that are interconnected with both value orientations and basic beliefs. For students with a predominance of Light personality traits, the values of security and a benevolent, tolerant attitude towards people (universalism) come to the fore, accompanied by the belief that the world is governed by the laws of justice. The presence of this set of qualities creates favorable conditions for the development of a number of values, including the values of achievement, adherence to traditions, and almost all of an individual's basic beliefs, with the belief in the justice of the world playing a leading role. In general, it should be noted that our hypotheses were only partially confirmed.

According to the first hypothesis, the positive relationship based on mutual influence between narcissism and the value of power, and the negative relationship between psychopathy

and the value of universalism, as well as the positive relationship between humanism and Kantianism and the value of universalism, were confirmed. However, the negative relationship based on mutual influence between narcissism and the value of self-assertion was not confirmed.

According to the second hypothesis, a positive relationship based on mutual influence between narcissism and self-esteem, as well as a positive relationship based on mutual influence between faith in humanity and humanism and the belief in the justice of the world, was confirmed. The remaining hypothesized relationships were not confirmed. However, a negative relationship was found between the belief in the justice of the world and the manifestation of Machiavellianism, and a one-sided positive relationship was found between humanism and self-esteem and luck.

The limitations of the study are due, firstly, to the specifics of the contingent, which was based on female representatives (69.46%); secondly, to the predominance of undergraduates, since by the senior years there is a reduction (especially at the medical university); thirdly, the predominance of self-assessment research methods that contribute to certain distortions in the real picture of the expression of certain personality qualities, an objective assessment of which is possible only as a result of long-term observation or expert assessment.

Nevertheless, the results obtained in this study on a significant number of students from various universities in Russia provide confidence in their reliability and potential use in practical work with students.

Conclusion

Summing up the results of the conducted research, it should be noted that the Dark and Light triads of the personality of modern students are indeed integrated characteristics that describe the uniqueness of their interactions with others, which develop and manifest themselves in close correlation and mutual influence with their value orientations and basic beliefs. In general, it was confirmed that the dominant traits are those of the Light Triad, and the dominant values are independence, achievement, hedonism, benevolence, and universalism. Among the basic beliefs, the leading role belongs to the value of one's own personality and the belief in one's own luck, which is consistent with the age characteristics of the modern student.

Correlation and regression analysis allowed us to establish complex relationships and interdependencies between the traits of the Dark and Light triads, value orientations, and basic beliefs. We identified the following: 1) a one-way relationship between low values of security and universalism, and beliefs in the injustice of the world, and Machiavellianism; 2) a one-way relationship between values of power and self-value, and narcissism; 3) values of stimulation combined with low levels of security and universalism, and psychopathy; 4) beliefs in the justice of the world, and faith in humanity; 5) values of security, benevolence, universalism, and beliefs in the justice of the world, and humanism; 6) benevolence and universalism, and Kantianism.

The general conclusion that can be drawn from this study is the recognition of the importance of developing the traits of the Bright Triad of Personality in students, especially for professions of the socioeconomic type that involve working with people. To achieve this, it is necessary to pay special attention to the formation of three value orientations: security, benevolence, and universalism, as well as the belief in the justice of the world, which, on the one hand, serve as predictors of the traits of the Bright Triad of Personality, and on the other hand, create a favorable environment for the development of a humanistic personality in students.

Prospects for further research

The study also raised a number of important questions, including the possible connection between the traits of the Dark and Light triads and the irrational beliefs of students, which will be the subject of further research.

The results obtained can be used both in research and in practical activities with students in the process of providing assistance in choosing a trajectory of self-development, cultivating personal qualities that contribute to building positive relationships with other people.

References

- Blötner, C., & Bergold, S. (2022). To be fooled or not to be fooled: Approach and avoidance facets of Machiavellianism. *Psychological Assessment, 34*(2), 147–158. <https://doi.org/10.1037/pas0001069>
- Chabrol, H., Van Leeuwen, N., Rodgers, R., & Séjourné, N. (2009). Contributions of psychopathic, narcissistic, Machiavellian, and sadistic personality traits to juvenile delinquency. *Personality and Individual Differences, 47*(7), 734–739. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2009.06.020>
- Chertkova, Yu. D., & Zyryanova, N. M. (2019). Relationship of basic beliefs with dispositional personality traits, locus of control, and life satisfaction. *Social and Human Sciences: Theory and Practice, 1*(3), 775–789.
- Correia, I., & Dalbert, C. (2008). School Bullying: Belief in a Personal Just World of Bullies, Victims, and Defenders. *European Psychologist, 13*(4), 248–254. <https://doi.org/10.1027/1016-9040.13.4.248>
- Derish, F. V. (2019). Gender Differences in the Relationship between the Dark Triad of Personality and Emotional Intelligence. *Bulletin of Perm University. Philosophy. Psychology. Sociology, 3*, 356–371. <https://doi.org/10.17072/2078-7898/2019-3-356-371>
- Egorova, M. S., & Sitnikova, M. A. (2014). The Dark Triad. *Psychological Research, 7*(38). <https://doi.org/10.54359/ps.v7i38.580>
- Egorova, M. S., Sitnikova, M. A., & Parshikova, O. V. (2015). Adaptation of the Short Dark Triad Questionnaire. *Psychological Research, 8*(43). <https://doi.org/10.54359/ps.v8i43.1052>
- Ferrajão, P. C., & Elklit, A. (2020). The contributions of different types of trauma and world assumptions to predicting psychological distress. *Traumatology, 26*(1), 137–146. <https://doi.org/10.1037/trm0000208>

- Fileenko, I. A., Bogomaz, S. A., Atamanova, I. V., & Levitskaya, T. E. (2023). Basic Beliefs and Psychological Health of Modern Youth: A Mediation Analysis of Gender-Related Interactions. In *Current Issues in Modern Social Psychology and Its Subfields* (pp. 522–530). Moscow: Institute of Psychology of the Russian Academy of Sciences.
- Garanina, Zh. G., & Kuleshova, N. E. (2022). Psychological Features of the Relationship between Manipulative Tendencies and Interpersonal Relationships of Students. *Humanitarian: Current Issues in the Humanities and Education*, 22(4), 477–486. <https://doi.org/10.15507/2078-9823.060.022.202204.477-486>
- Gouveia, V. V., de Oliveira, I. C. V., de Moura Grangeiro, A. S., Monteiro, R. P., & de Holanda Coelho, G. L. (2021). The bright side of the human personality: Evidence of a measure of prosocial traits. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 22(3), 1459–1480. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-020-00280-2>
- Guo, Y., Chen, X., Ma, J., Li, Y., & Hommey, C. (2022). How belief in a just world leads to prosocial behaviours: The role of communal orientation. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 195, Article 111642. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2022.111642>
- Ilichev, R. I., & Zolotareva, A. A. (2023). Pilot Assessment and Preliminary Psychometric Properties of the Russian Version of the Light Triad Scale. *National Psychological Journal*, 2(50), 3–13. <https://doi.org/10.11621/npj.2023.0201>
- Janoff-Bulman, R. (1989). Assumptive worlds and the stress of traumatic events: Applications of the schema construct. *Social Cognition*, 7(2), 113–136. <https://doi.org/10.1521/soco.1989.7.2.113>
- Johnson, L. K. D. (2018). *The Light Triad Scale: Developing and Validating a Preliminary Measure of Prosocial Orientation* [Doctoral dissertation, Western University]. Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Repository. <https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/etd/5515>
- Jonason, P. K., Foster, J. D., Kavanagh, P. S., Gouveia, V. V., & Birkás, B. (2018). Basic Values and the Dark Triad Traits. *Journal of Individual Differences*, 39(4), 220–228. <https://doi.org/10.1027/1614-0001/a000267>
- Kajonius, P. J., Persson, B. N., & Jonason, P. K. (2015). Hedonism, Achievement, and Power: Universal values that characterize the Dark Triad. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 77, 173–178. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2014.12.055>
- Kaufman, S. B., Yaden, D. B., Hyde, E., & Tsukayama, E. (2019). The light vs. dark triad of personality: Contrasting two very different profiles of human nature. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 10, Article 467. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.00467>
- Kjaervik, S. L., & Bushman, B. J. (2021). The link between narcissism and aggression: A meta-analytic review. *Psychological Bulletin*, 147(5), 477–503. <https://doi.org/10.1037/bul0000323>
- Kornienko, D. S., Vyazovkina, V. K., & Nevryuev, A. N. (2023). The Bright Triad: Adaptation and Psychometric Indicators. *Psychological Journal*, 44(5), 66–75. <https://doi.org/10.31857/S020595920027725-3>
- Lebedeva, N. M. (2023). *Ethnopsychology*. Moscow: Yurayt.
- Li, J., Liu, C., Albertella, L., Rotaru, K., Li, K., Zhou, Y., Wei, X., Yuan, S., Liu, X., & Ren, L. (2024). Network analysis of the association between Dark Triad traits and depression symptoms in university students. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 218, Article 112495. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2023.112495>

- Lim, V., & Feldman, G. (2020). Values and the dark side: Meta-analysis of links between Dark Triad traits and personal values [Registered Report Stage 1]. <https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.21755.05920/2>
- Maralov, V. G., Kudaka, M. A., & Smirnova, O. V. (2024). Choosing Interaction Positions: The Dark and Light Triads as Predictors of Behavior. *Russian Psychological Journal*, 21(2), 222–239. <https://doi.org/10.21702/rpj.2024.2.13>
- Markina, O. S. (2023). The Role of Basic Beliefs for the Psychological Well-Being of an Individual in a Transitive Society. *Bulletin of the Moscow State Regional University. Series: Psychological Sciences*, 2, 61–73. <https://doi.org/10.18384/2310-7235-2023-2-61-73>
- Matthews, L. T., & Marwit, S. J. (2004). Examining the Assumptive World Views of Parents Bereaved by Accident, Murder, and Illness. *OMEGA - Journal of Death and Dying*, 48(2), 115–136. <https://doi.org/10.2190/KCB0-NNVB-UGY6-NPYR>
- Musek, J., & Grum, D. K. (2021). The bright side of personality. *Heliyon*, 7(3), Article e06370. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2021.e06370>
- Padun, M. A., & Kotelnikova, A. V. (2012). Mental Trauma and the Worldview: Theory, Empirical Research, and Practice. Moscow: Institute of Psychology of the Russian Academy of Sciences.
- Paulhus, D. L., & Williams, K. M. (2002). The Dark Triad of personality: Narcissism, Machiavellianism and psychopathy. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 36(6), 556–563. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0092-6566\(02\)00505-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0092-6566(02)00505-6)
- Poulin, M., & Cohen Silver, R. (2008). World benevolence beliefs and well-being across the life span. *Psychology and Aging*, 23(1), 13–23. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0882-7974.23.1.13>
- Pustovik, V. A., & Khramtsova, L. M. (2022). The Relationship of the Dark Triad Components with Basic Beliefs and Empathy. In Systemic Research of the Individuality of a Growing Person as an Subject of Education: Proceedings of the All-Russian Scientific and Practical Conference with International Participation, Perm, December 16, 2021 (pp. 308-313). Perm: Perm State Humanitarian Pedagogical University.
- Schwartz, S. H. (1994). Are there universal aspects in the structure and contents of human values? *Journal of Social Issues*, 50(4), 19–45. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4560.1994.tb01196.x>
- Schwartz, S. H. (2012). An Overview of the Schwartz Theory of Basic Values. *Online Readings in Psychology and Culture*, 2(1). <https://doi.org/10.9707/2307-0919.1116>
- Tsvetkova, N. A., & Lagvilava, K. E. (2022). Values and Basic Beliefs of Working and Non-Working Students. *University Bulletin*, 8, 203–211. <https://doi.org/10.26425/1816-4277-2022-8-203-211>
- Zhang, M. (2021). Assessing Two Dimensions of Interpersonal Trust: Other-Focused Trust and Propensity to Trust. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12, Article 654735. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.654735>

Received: September 22, 2025

Revision received: November 11, 2025

Accepted: January 12, 2026

Author Contribution

Vladimir Georgievich Maralov – formulation of the main concept of research; development of research methodology; selection of diagnostic tools, secondary processing of results, preparation of conclusions and the final version of the article text.

Marina Aleksandrovna Kudaka – participation in the literature analysis, collection and primary processing of the results on the contingent of students of Cherepovets State University, preparation of the initial version of the article text.

Vyacheslav Alekseevich Sitarov – participation in the formulation of the research concept, development of the methodology, secondary processing of the results, preparation of the conclusions and the final version of the article text.

Larisa Valerievna Romanyuk – participation in the literature analysis, collection and primary processing of the results on the contingent of students of the Moscow City Pedagogical University, preparation of the initial version of the article text.

Irina Ivanovna Koryagina – participation in the literature analysis, collection and primary processing of the results on the contingent of students of the Ivanovo State Medical University, preparation of the initial version of the article text.

Author Details

Vladimir Georgievich Maralov – Dr. Sc. (Psychology), Professor, Professor of the Department of Psychology at Cherepovets State University, Cherepovets, Russian Federation; Researcher ID: X-5925-2018, Scopus ID: 57128513900, Author ID: 633771, ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9627-2304>; e-mail: vgmaralov@yandex.ru

Marina Aleksandrovna Kudaka – Cand. Sc. (Psychology), Associate Professor, Head of the Department of Psychology at Cherepovets State University, Cherepovets, Russian Federation; Researcher ID: V-2277-2018, Author ID: 371039, ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0352-390X>, e-mail: kydakam@mail.ru

Vyacheslav Alekseevich Sitarov – Dr. Sc. (Pedagogy), Professor of the Department of Pedagogy, Moscow City University, Moscow, Russian Federation, ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8426-7487>, e-mail: sitarov@mail.ru

Larisa Valerievna Romanyuk – Dr. Sc. (Pedagogy), Professor of the Department of Pedagogy, Moscow City University, Moscow, Russian Federation, ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2764-8205>, e-mail: lora1408@mail.ru

Irina Ivanovna Koryagina – Cand. Sc. (Pedagogy), Associate Professor, Head of the Department of Psychology and Pedagogy, Ivanovo State Medical University of the Ministry of Health of the Russian Federation, Ivanovo, Russian Federation, ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7821-6819>, e-mail: koryaginairina@mail.ru

Conflict of Interest Information

The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.