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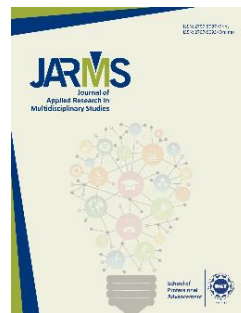
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# Relationship between Personality Traits and Humor Styles and their Impact on Social Support of Young Adults

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## Abstract

The current study aimed to investigate the relationship between light and dark triad of personality traits corresponding with healthy and unhealthy humor styles. Furthermore, it also assessed the impact of light and dark triad of personality traits as well as self-enhancing, affiliative, aggressive, and self-defeating humor styles on the social support of young adults. A quantitative study design was employed. A total of 214 participants were purposively selected from various public sector universities. Standardized instruments, namely Light Triad Scale (LTS), Short Dark Triad (SD3), Humor Styles Questionnaire (HSQ-32), and Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support were utilized for data collection. The data was statistically analyzed using correlation, regression, and t-test. The results showed that significant inverse relationship exists between light triad of personality and affiliative humor style. There is a positive correlation between aggressive humor and light triad traits. Dark triad traits are directly associated with self-enhancing, aggressive, and self-defeating humor styles, however, not with affiliative humor style. The exploration of gender differences revealed that men tend to score higher than women in light triad of personality. Likewise, men score significantly higher in aggressive humor style, whereas women score higher in perceived social support. The multiple linear regression results manifest that self-enhancing humor positively predicts social support, whereas self-defeating humor has negative impact on social support of the young adults.

**Keywords:** humor styles, light and dark triad of personality traits, social support

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## Introduction

Every individual is disparate and distinctive in their own way. Individual differences exhibited by human beings are referred to as psychological attributes. These attributes differentiate one person from another and thus, plays an essential role in defining individuality (Williamson, [2018](#)). An individual's personality is profoundly determined by everything around them, particularly the society which not only develops cognitions, however, also molds ones' perceptions about the world (Khurana, [2019](#)).

Researchers have been putting efforts since ages to explore the occurrence of individual differences. It was identified that these differences are either genetic or acquired (Ubale, [2017](#)). Of all the differences being studied, the most striking ones were found to be intelligence and personality traits (Williamson, [2018](#)). The current study aimed to assess the relationship among two personality traits and various types of humor styles. Furthermore, it also anticipated the social support of individuals by these traits and healthy or unhealthy humor style.

Soto ([2019](#)) believed, "study of personality provides a window into human nature". American Psychological Association ([n.d.](#)) briefly described personality as, "Individual differences in characteristic patterns of thinking, feeling, and behaving". The founder of trait theories, Gordon Allport, held the notion that one of the ideal ways to determine individual differences is to comprehend personality traits. Traits are basically facets of a personality on the basis of which people differ from one another (Matthews et al., [2003](#)). These personality features remain fairly stable over time and are rather consistent (Anusic & Schimmack, [2016](#)).

### Personality Traits

Each individual is characterized by good/bad or light and dark side of their personalities. All these individuals are distinct since they adopt either lighter or darker traits more as their stable and consistent personality characteristics in their daily life (Kaufman et al., [2019](#)). Multiple researchers have shed light on dark traits of personality in the past few decades. According to Moshagen et al. ([2018](#)), any trait which is ethically, morally or socially questionable is considered as dark. Numerous dark traits have been identified in the past few years that are contemplated as antagonistic and dysfunctional characteristics of individuals (Marcus et al., [2018](#)). Of all the traits, the most researched ones were dark triad traits, for

instance Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy (Paulhus & Williams, [2002](#)). Individuals who possess dark triad traits have a strong need for appreciation, seek strong affiliations from people belonging to high social statuses, tend to be manipulative, emotionally cold, and take advantage of others (Mayor et al., [2020](#)).

The dark triad of personality traits provided a deep insight pertaining to the spiteful and malignant aspects of personality. However, it should be recalled here that for every bad there is a good and for every evil there is virtue and morality. Hence, human personality must have a positive, empathetic, beneficent, and humanitarian aspect which could be a counterpoint of the darker side (Seligman, [2012](#)). Kaufman et al. ([2019](#)) made a new contribution to the empirical world by introducing a concept opposite to dark triad of personality traits known as ‘Light Triad’ of personality traits. The light triad of personality traits included traits viz. Humanism, Kantianism, and Faith in humanity. Individuals with light triad of personality traits are more satisfied with their lives and tend to enjoy good well-being. Moreover, they are rather affectionate, intellectual, and agreeable as compared to individuals possessing darker traits of personality (Kaufman et al., [2019](#)).

## **Humor**

Humor plays a key role in our lives, especially when it comes to social relationships. This is because humor can either build relationships or break them. It is considered as a positive phenomenon which aims to make fun and deal with the absurdities of life and might help in relieving stress as well (Leist & Muller, [2013](#)). Recent studies showed that humor may have negative or harmful impacts on human beings, especially if it aims to target others (Dyck & Holtzman, [2013](#); Martin et al., [2003](#)). Martin et al. ([2003](#)) proposed four different types of humor styles. Two of these styles are considered as positive, adaptive, compatible or healthy, whereas the rest of them are negative, maladaptive, incompatible or unhealthy (Dozois et al., [2009](#); Ford et al., [2016](#)).

Studies have suggested that individuals with positive personality traits, such as extraversion, optimism, internal control, and elevated self-esteem tend to adopt healthy humor styles viz. affiliative and self-enhancing humor (Ford et al., [2016](#)). Another study reported that healthy and positive humor styles have positive relationship with extraversion, openness to experience,

conscientiousness, and agreeableness and are negatively related to neuroticism. On the other hand, health-endangering humor styles viz. self-defeating and aggressive humor have direct relationship with negative traits, such as neuroticism and are inversely related to conscientiousness and agreeableness (Plessen et al., [2020](#)).

A study conducted by Masui et al. ([2013](#)) suggested that psychopathy, social exclusion, and aggressive humor are positively correlated, whereas negative association exists between aggressive humor and psychopathy. It also reported that the individuals who scored high on psychopathy and were socially excluded were prone to aggressive humor more than those who were low in psychopathy traits. Studies conducted on other dark triad of personality traits stated that individuals with higher scores on Machiavellianism and psychopathy traits got more tendencies to utilize self-defeating and aggressive humor. Whereas, those who scored higher on narcissism used affiliative humor (Martin et al., [2012](#); Veselka et al., [2010](#)).

### **Social Support**

Social support is a fundamental part of human life. It is fairly evident in promoting the psychological and emotional health of an individual and also acts as a protective shield against stressors or torments (Alsubaie et al., [2019](#)). Studies have suggested that perceived social support is an important determinant of mental health and well-being even more than the actual received social support by the individuals (Hartley & Coffee, [2019](#); Poudel et al., [2020](#); Sun et al., [2020](#)). For the current study, perceived social support was taken into an account. Zimet et al. ([1988](#)) defined the concept of social support as, the perceived availability of support from family, friends, and significant others. It refers to the subjective thoughts and feelings about readily available emotional, material, spiritual or psychological support from others (Sun et al., [2020](#)).

Studies have suggested that individuals with good social support are capable to manage their depressive symptoms, effectively (Ioannou et al., [2019](#); Rawana, [2013](#)). Contrary to this, individuals who had poor social support and experienced greater loneliness predict poor depressive symptoms. Furthermore, management and health-related issues were also more evident in patients who had low social support (Cadzow & Servoss, [2009](#); Wang et al., [2018](#)).

Personality traits and humor styles impact social support of an individual. Martin et al. (2003) concluded that individuals with desirable personality traits, optimism, openness, and high self-esteem had positive styles. Therefore, they were healthier and satisfied interpersonally. It was also proposed that different humor styles influence the quality, amount of support, and relationship among individuals (Martin, 2004). Ford et al. (2016) found that individuals who adopted positive personality traits and positive humor styles were happier than those who exhibited negative traits.

Humor is regarded as an essential tool to initiate and maintain social relationships (Martin et al., 2003). It serves major social functions as it may either enhance or deteriorate relationships among individuals. Jones and Paulhus (2014) reported that individuals with dark personality traits were considered evil and contenders as they adopted manipulative and exploitative behaviors as well as used others for their own motives and personal gains. Consequently, these people had poor and unhealthy social support and their relationships were temporary and pretentious.

### **Gender Differences in Personality Traits, Humor, and Social Support**

Gender differences were evident in light and dark triad of personality traits. Studies have suggested that men score higher in psychopathy, Machiavellianism, and narcissism as compared to women (Sindermann et al., 2018). None of the studies cater gender differences among light triad personality traits since it is a new phenomenon. Research conducted on positive traits of personality found that men tend to be higher in openness to ideas, industriousness, and intellect. Whereas, women are high in warmth, agreeableness, openness to feelings, politeness, orderliness, and compassion (Rahmani & Lavasani, 2012).

Individual differences were seen not only in habitual use of humor among masses, however, also in the way how they perceive, appreciate, and communicate it. Literature suggested that humor differs across gender as well. Men tend to score higher in aggressive humor style, however, the differences in all other traits were not reported by Hofmann et al. (2020). Another study explored gender differences in humor and empathy and found that men used aggressive and self-enhancing humor more as compared to women who were high in the facet of empathy. Women were considered to be more empathetic, so they adopted healthy and compatible humor styles (Wu et al., 2016).

## Rationale

Based on literature review on light and dark triad of personality traits and humor styles, this study aimed to assess their relationships among young adults. Veselka et al. (2010) reported that negative humor styles were exhibited by individuals who scored high on psychopathy and Machiavellianism, whereas narcissists adopted affiliative humor styles. In literature, the areas of light triad of personality traits were under-researched since it is a recent contribution of Kaufman et al. (2019). Therefore, this study aimed to investigate both light and dark triad of personalities in terms of positive and negative humor styles.

The identification of these relationships would help determine the humor styles of individuals with light and dark triad personality traits. Ford et al. (2016) suggested that individuals with positive personality traits (extraversion, optimism, self-esteem, and internal locus of control) use healthy humor styles (affiliative and self-enhancing) and are thus happier than others. It was also identified that individuals who had greater perceived social support adopted positive humor styles and their well-being was high (Dyck & Holtzman, 2013). This study also determined the social support of young adults by their light and dark triad of personality traits and four humor styles. Furthermore, it also assessed gender differences with regard to these two personality traits and their humor styles.

## Research Objectives

The current study aimed to assess the relationship among light and dark triad of personality traits and four types of humor styles. It also identified the impact of these personality traits and humor styles on the social support of young adults. Moreover, it also investigated the gender differences in terms of said personality traits, that is, positive and negative humor styles and social support.

## Hypotheses

- There is a positive relationship among light triad of personality traits and positive humor styles (affiliative and self-enhancing humor)
- There is a negative association between light triad of personality traits and negative humor styles (aggressive and self-defeating humor)

- There is a negative relationship between dark triad of personality traits and positive humor styles (affiliative and self-enhancing humor)
- There is a positive association among dark triad of personality traits and negative humor styles (aggressive and self-defeating humor)
- There are gender differences with respect to personality traits, humor styles, and social support in young adults
- Light and dark triad of personality traits and humor styles predict social support

## Material and Methods

### Research Design

Correlational and causal study designs were utilized to assess the association of light and dark triad of personality traits with positive and negative humor styles and to determine their impact on social support.

### Sample

A total of 214 (i.e., 99 men and 115 women) participants were purposively chosen for the current study. The age range of these respondents was 18 to 26 years and were selected from the government sector universities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad.

### Instruments

#### *Light Triad Scale (LTS)*

The Light Triad Scale (LTS) developed by Kaufman et al. (2019) was used to assess the light triad traits viz. Humanism, Kantianism, and Faith in humanity. This scale was a self-reported scale comprising 12 items; each trait of the triad having 4 items, respectively. Each item was scored on 5-point Likert scale where 1 = *agree strongly*, 2=*agree a little*, 3=*neutral; no opinion*, 4=*disagree a little*, and 5=*disagree strongly*. The internal consistency coefficients of the overall scale were .84, whereas for three domains were .67, .76, and .80, respectively (Kaufman et al., 2019).

#### *Short Dark Triad (SD3)*

The dark triad scale was developed by Jones and Paulhus (2014) to assess the three dark personality traits, namely, narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy. It is a self-reported questionnaire



which is comprised of 27 items. Each domain of dark triad scale has 9 items and its alpha reliability values range from .71 to .80. The items are rated on a 5-point Likert scale coded as, 1=*strongly disagree*, 2=*disagree*, 3=*neither agree nor disagree*, 4=*agree*, and 5=*strongly agree*. Five items of the scale are reversed coded before computing mean scores of the scale (Jones & Paulhus, [2014](#)).

### ***Humor Styles Questionnaire (HSQ-32)***

Martin et al. ([2003](#)) developed humor styles questionnaire to assess the degree to which individuals are involved in certain humor styles. This scale proposed four humor styles divided into two categories, that is, positive/healthy and negative/unhealthy humor. Positive humor style consists of self-enhancing and affiliative humor, whereas aggressive and self-defeating humor are described as unhealthy humor styles. The scale has total 32 items with each humor type consisting of 8 items, respectively. The items of the scale are scored on a 7-point Likert scale where, 1=*totally disagree*, 2=*moderately disagree*, 3=*slightly disagree*, 4=*neither agree nor disagree*, 5=*slightly agree*, 6=*moderately agree*, and 7=*strongly agree*. Eleven items are reverse coded before computing the domain's scores. The results showed that the values of Cronbach's alpha ranged from .77 to .81. Reliability values for affiliative, self-enhancing, aggressive, and self-defeating scales were .85, .81, .80, and .82, respectively (Martin et al., [2003](#)).

### ***Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support***

Zimet et al. ([1988](#)) developed multidimensional scale of perceived social support to assess the perceived availability of social support in individuals. It comprised of 12 items catering perceived social support offered to family, significant others, and friends. Each source has 4 items which are scored on a 7-point Likert scale, where 1=*very strongly disagree*, 2=*strongly disagree*, 3=*mildly disagree*, 4=*neutral*, 5=*mildly agree*, 6=*strongly agree*, and 7=*very strongly agree*. The internal consistency value for the overall scale was .88, whereas the reliability values for its three sources were .85, .75, and .72, respectively (Zimet et al., [1988](#)).

### **Procedure**

Initially, authors' consent was taken to use their scales. A study proposal along with details demanded by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and Ethical Committee (EC) were first sent to the university board. After taking

approval from IRB and EC, permission letters were taken for the administration of various universities. These letters entailed information about the researcher and study for which data was needed to be collected. Participants were selected from various public sector universities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad. They were chosen according to the predefined sampling technique and selection criteria. The respondents were briefed about the study aims and were asked to sign a written consent form in order to get enrolled in the study.

### Statistical Analysis

The raw data collected was computed and analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software for Windows version 26. Data was first described using descriptive analysis. Psychometric characteristics of scales were analyzed using reliability testing. Correlation was used to investigate the association among light and dark triad of personality traits and four humor styles. Independent sample t-test was used to determine gender differences among both personality traits and four humor styles. To predict the social support of young adults by their light and dark triad personality traits and humor styles, multiple linear regression was used.

### Ethical Considerations

All ethical consideration were followed in this study. Permission was taken from authors to use the equipment. Approval was taken from the university’s ethical committee and institutional board to conduct this study. Participants were informed about their anonymity, confidentiality of information, and about the freedom to withdraw at any time. Written consent was taken from respondents and they were also briefed about any queries they had after the data collection.

## Results

**Table 1**

*Demographic Characteristics of the Participants*

Variable	<i>N</i>	%	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Age				
18	13	6.1		
19	23	10.7		
20	30	14.0		
21	37	17.3		

Variable	<i>N</i>	%	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
22	23	10.7	21.93	2.321
23	25	11.7		
24	27	12.6		
25	19	8.9		
26	17	7.9		
Gender				
Male	99	46.3	1.54	.50
Female	115	53.7		
Marital Status				
Single	169	79.0		
Engaged	25	11.7	1.31	.671
Married	19	8.9		
Divorced	1	.5		
Family Structure				
Nuclear	146	68.2	1.32	.467
Joint	68	31.8		
Education				
Intermediate	45	21.0		
Graduate	122	57.0	2.06	.764
Post-Graduate	36	16.8		
Other	11	5.1		

Table 1 shows demographic characteristics of the participants. The average age of sample population was 21.93 with a standard deviation of 2.321. On the basis of gender, women outnumbered men since 115 (53.7%) out of 214 were women and 99 (46.3%) were men. The majority (79%) of participants were single, 11.7% were engaged, 8.9% were married, and only .5% were separated/divorced. With respect to family structure, 146 (68.2%) participants lived in nuclear family and 31.8% lived in a joint family system. Table also shows that 57% of the participants were graduates, whereas 21% held intermediate certificates and 16.8% were either enrolled or completed their post-graduate degrees.

## Table 2

### *Correlations for Study Variables*

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6
1 LTS	—	.093	-.230**	-.108	.358**	.107
2 DTP			-.045	.195**	.402**	.179**

Relationship between Personality Traits...

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6
3 AFH			—	.192**	-.041	-.056
4 SEH			—	—	-.092	.260**
5 AGH			—	—	—	.227**
6 SDH	—	—	—	—	—	—

Note. N=214, \*\*p<.01.

Table 2 shows the Pearson correlation analysis which was used to determine the association of study variables. It was found that a weak insignificant relationship exists between light and dark triad of personality traits. A statistically significant negative relationship was observed among LTS scores and affiliative humor style ( $r=-.230, p < .01$ ). Highly significant positive correlation existed between aggressive humor style and light triad personality traits ( $r=.358, p < .01$ ). Table also showed that dark triad personality scores were positively correlated to all the sub-domains of humor style questionnaire except affiliative humor style and results were highly significant ( $p < .01$ ). Dark triad personality has strongest correlation with aggressive humor style ( $r=.402, p < .01$ ). Statistically significant relationships were found among four types of humor styles as well ( $p < .01$ ).

**Table 3**

*Multiple Linear Regression Results for Study Variables*

Variable	B	SE B	$\beta$	t	p	95% CI
Constant	3.233	.813	—	3.977	.000	[1.630, 4.835]
LTS	.001	.010	.008	.144	.909	[-0.22, .019]
DTP	.004	.007	.040	.540	.590	[-.010, .018]
AFH	.018	.013	.094	1.369	.172	[-.008, .045]
SEH	.049	.012	.299	4.125	.000	[.025, .072]
AGH	-.004	.015	-.022	-.282	.778	[-.034, .025]
SDH	-.021	.011	-.143	-2.034	.043	[-.042, -.001]

Note. N=214, p<.05.

Table 3 presents the multiple linear regression analysis to predict the social support of participants from their personality traits and humor styles. The  $R^2$  value of .117 showed that predictors explain 11.7% of the variance in the outcome variable with  $F(6,207) = 4.55, p < .001$ . Table above also reveals that self-enhancing humor is positively significant ( $\beta = .299, p < .05$ ) to predict social support, whereas self-defeating humor ( $\beta = -.143, p < .05$ ) showed negative impact on social support.

**Table 4**  
*Gender Differences among Study Variables*

Variable	Males		Females		<i>t</i> (212)	<i>p</i>	Cohen's <i>d</i>
	M	SD	M	SD			
LTS	27.79	8.161	25.21	8.779	2.23	.027	.31
DTP	80.71	11.465	78.70	13.645	1.17	.243	.16
AFH	34.54	6.852	35.50	6.028	-1.09	.277	.15
SEH	34.27	7.164	35.23	8.060	-0.92	.356	.13
AGH	28.09	6.161	24.49	6.488	4.16	.000	.57
SDH	32.11	7.016	30.40	9.277	1.53	.127	.21
MSPSS	4.72	1.288	5.37	1.133	-3.88	.000	.54

*Note.* Males  $n=99$ , Females  $n=115$ ,  $N=214$ .  $p < .05$

Table 4 exhibits gender differences among participants in terms of light and dark triad of personality traits and types of humor styles. It was found that gender differences were present among light triad personality traits ( $t = 2.226$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Men scored higher as compared to women with a mean and standard deviation of ( $M = 27.79$ ,  $SD = 8.161$ ). Whereas, women scored lower than men with a mean and standard deviation of ( $M = 25.21$ ,  $SD = 8.779$ ). The Cohen's  $d$  value for the light triad score was .31 which was considered as a small effect size hence, little difference existed in both groups.

Gender differences were also noticed in dark triad personality scores as men ( $M = 80.71$ ,  $SD = 11.465$ ) scored higher than women ( $M = 78.70$ ,  $SD = 13.645$ ). Table also shows differences among four types of humor styles in men and women. Women scored higher than men in both affiliative and self-enhancing humor styles with a mean and standard deviation of (AFH:  $M = 35.50$ ,  $SD = 6.028$ , SEH:  $M = 35.23$ ,  $SD = 8.06$ ). Whereas, men scored slightly lower than women (AFH:  $M = 34.54$ ,  $SD = 6.852$ , SEH:  $M = 34.27$ ,  $SD = 7.164$ ). Men ( $M = 32.11$ ,  $SD = 7.016$ ) scored higher than women ( $M = 30.40$ ,  $SD = 9.277$ ) in self-defeating humor style. However, the effect size showed that these differences are very small and insignificant.

Furthermore, table also shows that noticeably higher gender differences were present in both groups for aggressive humor style ( $t = 4.163$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Men scored higher than women with a mean and standard deviation of ( $M = 28.09$ ,  $SD = 6.161$ ). Whereas, women scored lower than men with a mean and standard deviation of ( $M = 24.49$ ,  $SD = 6.488$ ). The Cohen's  $d$  value for

the aggressive humor style score was .57 which is a medium effect size hence, moderately large difference exists in both groups.

Table 4 also shows that significant gender differences were present in social support of young adults ( $t = -3.881, p < .05$ ). Women scored higher than men with a mean and standard deviation of ( $M = 5.37, SD = 1.133$ ). The mean and standard deviation for men were ( $M = 4.72, SD = 1.288$ ). The Cohen's  $d$  value for the perceived social support was .54 which is a medium effect size hence, moderately large difference exists in both groups.

## Discussion

The current study aimed to investigate the association among personality traits and humor styles. Results (see Table 2) showed that light triad of personality traits has a significant negative relationship with affiliative humor style and an insignificant inverse relationship with self-enhancing humor. This result is contradictory with the existing literature which suggested that positive personality traits, such as openness to experience, extraversion, and agreeableness are positively related to affiliative humor style (Mendiburo-Seguel et al., [2015](#)). Ford et al. ([2016](#)) also reported that individuals high in extraversion, personal control, self-esteem, and optimism adopt healthy humor styles. The use of affiliative and self-enhancing humor helps them in developing healthy relationships and they tend to be more content than those who adopt negative humor styles. A study conducted on individual variations in distinct humor styles explored that individuals who scored below average in positive humor styles were low on extraversion and high on conscientiousness. They have reserved nature, avoid gathering, and tend to be more focused and organized (Galloway, [2010](#)). This could be a reason that in the current study, participants showed a negative relationship towards positive humor styles.

Findings were inconsistent with the study of Vernon et al. ([2008](#)) which reported that conscientiousness and agreeableness have inverse relationship with negative humor styles. Another study found that light triad of personality traits are negatively correlated with negative traits, such as selfishness and aggression (Kaufman et al., [2019](#)). Additionally, it was also determined that individuals with negative humor styles are not open to new experiences, since they are self-critical and negative about others. Studies suggest that such people use unhealthy humor to defend themselves against

others as they believe they can save their self-image in this way (Galloway, [2010](#)).

The analysis showed that this hypothesis was partially correct as dark triad personality traits have a negative relationship with affiliative humor style. The results were congruent with the study of Veselka et al. ([2010](#)) which also suggested that dark triad traits were negatively correlated with positive humor styles. However, narcissists may employ affiliative humor styles to gain other approvals in social groups. The current study showed that dark triad of personality traits has a significant positive relationship with self-enhancing humor style. However, these results were supported by the study of Zeigler-Hill and Besser ([2011](#)). They concluded that narcissism is one of the dark triad of personality traits and is positively associated to both positive humor styles viz. affiliative and self-enhancing humor styles. Machiavellianism and psychopathy (other two dark triad traits) have nevertheless, negative relationship with adaptive humor styles (Veselka et al., [2010](#)).

Exploring the association of dark triad of personality traits and negative humor styles, that is, aggressive and self-defeating humor styles, it was determined that both unhealthy humor styles are positively and significantly correlated to dark triad of personality traits. The results were supported by the findings of Veselka et al. ([2010](#)) and Martin et al. ([2012](#)). Both of these studies explored the relationships among dark triad of personality traits separately with humor styles and reported that dark traits are positively correlated to maladaptive humor styles. The individuals who are either manipulative or high in psychopathy tend to use negative humor styles in order to satisfy their ego and internal self-control. Grandiose narcissists, however, adopt positive humors styles for their own benefits, whereas vulnerable narcissism has a positive correlation with aggressive humor style (Hollandsworth, [2019](#)).

Another hypothesis of the study was that *light and dark triad of personality traits and humor styles predict social support*. The results of regression analysis (see Table 3) showed that 11.7% of the variance in social support was predicted by both personality traits and four humor styles. It was observed that beta coefficient ( $\beta$ ) values for self-enhancing and self-defeating humor styles were higher than other independent variables. The higher the value for beta coefficient, the stronger the effect of that particular variable would be (Glen, [n.d.](#)). The current study showed that self-

enhancing humor has a stronger effect to predict social support among young adults, whereas self-defeating humor has a moderately high and inverse impact on social support.

The results of this hypothesis were supported by the literature, suggesting that self-enhancing humor is positively correlated to social support. However, negative humor styles have inverse relationship with social support of the individuals (Karakus, [2014](#)). Klein and Kuiper ([2006](#)) indicated that human beings use positive or negative humor styles on the basis of their personal demands to achieve acceptance in any social group. It was also considered that individuals who adopt self-enhancing and affiliative humor styles have greater perceived availability of social support. Hence, they have greater subjective well-being as compared to those who use negative humor styles (Dyck & Holtzman, [2013](#)).

Another hypothesis of the study was that *there are gender differences with respect to personality traits and humor styles in young adults*. The results revealed that gender differences, with respect to light triad of personality traits, aggressive humor style, and social support, exist in men and women (see Table 4). Men scored higher than women in light triad of personality traits and aggressive humor styles, whereas women scored higher in perceived social support. The *Cohen's d* values for these variables also supported that differences exist between them in terms of gender as the effect size observed in these cases was small to medium. The differences observed were consistent with the studies of gender differences in positive personality traits. It was found that men scored higher in openness to ideas, industriousness, and intellect, whereas females scored high in warmth, agreeableness, openness to feelings, politeness, orderliness, and compassion (Costa et al., [2001](#); Rahmani & Lavasani, [2012](#); Weisberg et al., [2011](#)).

Men tend to score higher in aggressive humor styles than women, however, gender differences were not reported in literature in all other humor styles (Hofmann et al., [2020](#)). Another study explored the gender differences in humor and empathy and found that men use aggressive and self-enhancing humor styles, whereas women are high in the facet of empathy. The latter ones are more empathic; therefore, they adopt healthy humor styles as compared to men (Wu et al., [2016](#)). Women scored higher in social support than men and the results were consistent with the literature. This is because studies showed that women have higher perceived and



received social support as compared to men. They expect less social support from their families and believe that their friends and significant others are always available for them (Cheng & Chan, [2004](#); Rueger et al., [2008](#); Tifferet, [2020](#)).

The findings did not show any gender differences in terms of dark triad of personality traits (see Table 4). This finding contradicted with the available literature on dark triad of personality traits' differences on the basis of gender. Men scored higher in all dark triad of personality traits, namely psychopathy, Machiavellianism, and narcissism (Jonason & Davis, [2018](#); Sindermann et al., [2018](#)). The possible elucidation for this result could be that both of these studies were conducted on western population where individuals are more independent as compared to the collectivist society where social, spiritual, and moral values are predominant in determining personality traits. Dark triad traits vary in different cultures and may predict antisocial behavior in individuals (Raihani & Deutchman, [2017](#)).

### **Limitations**

Although, the current study made an important contribution to the literature, however, its limitations should be considered. Humor was only assessed on one dimension for the current study which resulted into restricted assessment of sense of humor. Extraneous variables, such as marital status, family system, educational or ethnic background were not controlled. This might have impacted the overall computed results of the study. Data was subjected to the source of bias as instruments used were self-reported measures.

### **Future Directions**

The light triad of personality traits is a new dimension which has been recently introduced opposite to the dark triad of personality traits. Whilst vast literature is available on darker side of personality traits; the light triad of personality traits opens a new doorway to the empirical world. Similarly, this study made a significant contribution in this regard as it explored the relationship of both light and dark triad of personality traits with humor styles and predicted social support of young adults. The limitations of this study provided future directions to conduct more studies in this domain.

It would be beneficial if the studies incorporate not just self-reported instruments but also observational or other-reported measures with an aim

to avoid maximum biasness in results. Relationship and impact of demographics, such as ethnicity, education, and marital status should also be assessed to determine their effect on light or dark triad traits of personality. Future studies should also differentiate between self-reported and perceived humor since the use and perception of humor varies from person to person. For the comprehensive assessment of humor, more instruments of humor should be utilized instead of just relying on its one dimension.

## **Conclusion**

The current study aimed to explore the relationship among light and dark triad of personality traits and positive and negative humor styles. Moreover, it also contributed to predict the social support of young adults by their personality traits and humor. Furthermore, this study also suggested that light and dark triad traits of personality are crucial to determine humor styles and all together they may anticipate weak or strong social support of the individuals. The more someone has a positive outlook towards life and other people, the more they tend to adopt adaptive ways of life and, hence the more content and psychologically healthy they are. There is always an essential question regarding the intervention. Therefore, future studies should explore how one may enhance their light triad traits and minimize the dark traits of their personalities. It should also look into ways of how to use adaptive humor styles in order to improve their psychological health, alleviate stress, and adopt better coping skills.

## **Conflict of Interest**

The author of the manuscript has no financial or non-financial conflict of interest in the subject matter or materials discussed in this manuscript.

## **Data Availability Statement**

The data associated with this study will be provided by the corresponding author upon request.

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