



Attachment Styles and Unwanted Consensual Sex: Mediating Role of Dark Triad Traits

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Abstract

Past research has shown that insecure attachment, particularly anxious attachment has a role to play in consenting to unwanted sex. While previous studies have taken various factors that may come into play in consenting to unwanted sex, they have not focused on understanding the role that the personality traits of the Dark Triad could play on unwanted consensual sex, particularly in the context of individuals' attachment styles, we are studying the participants not as perpetrators of abuse, rather how they can be susceptible to giving consent to sex when they don't want to due to underlying factors like attachment and personality traits, particularly the Dark Triad traits of personality. The current study has 274 participants (Females = 55.50%, Males = 43.80% and Non-Binary = 0.70%) and examines the role of personality traits of the Dark Triad on the relationship between attachment styles of participants and their unwanted consent to sex. We assumed that all three traits machiavellianism, narcissism and psychopathy would explain unwanted consensual sex and attachment styles, but only machiavellianism and psychopathy showed a partial role in explaining the relationship between both anxious attachment and avoidant attachment with unwanted consent to sex or sexual activity. This study can be used to help in understanding the lesser discussed nuances of what underlies sexual abuse.

Keywords

unwanted consensual sex, anxious attachment, avoidant attachment, Dark Triad, machiavellianism, narcissism, psychopathy

Unwanted consensual sex is an act of saying “yes” to sex or acts of sexual nature even when the individual doesn't want to, in the era of Me Too and Time's Up, it has been stated clearly that ‘No means No’, but the aspect of when someone says ‘Yes’ even when they want to say ‘No’ is yet to be studied further. In this study, we try



to understand if Attachment styles predict individuals giving consent to unwanted sex and we further try to understand if the Dark Triad of personality traits mediates the relationship between attachment and unwanted sexual consent, the participants are the ones giving the unwanted consent to sex and therefore are victims, not perpetrators.

Unwanted Consensual Sex

Past research on sexual behaviour has been primarily focused on non-consensual behaviour, such as antecedents of rape and its consequences on psychological and physical well-being (Cling, 2004; Walker et al., 2005). There has been much debate about expressing non-consent at the time of a sexual encounter in being able to identify an incident as rape (Donat & White, 2000), and examine definitions and terms critically as to what criteria establish non-consent and sexual assault (Muehlenhard et al., 1992). Recent research has focused on the negative implications on those involved in non-consensual sexting and understanding the motives and attributes of individuals who in turn share these intimate images they have received without consent (Barrense-Dias et al., 2020; Naezer & van Oosterhout, 2021). Attempts have also been made to understand some probable psychological tenets which may help in understanding why and how people are involved in a wide variety of non-consensual sexual image offences like up skirting, revenge pornography, cyber flashing and production of deepfake media (Harper et al., 2021).

While there has been much focus on non-consensual sexual behaviour, an interest has developed in understanding sexual behaviour which is unwanted but is not turned down by the partner who doesn't have the desire to be involved in it. When one person in a relationship doesn't wish to engage in sexual activity while their partner does, and the person who doesn't want to engage gives consent even when they don't want to it is referred to in research as Unwanted Consensual Sex or Consenting to unwanted sexual activity. "People may say yes to sex when they want to say no for a number of reasons, including verbal pressure from partner, need to conform to peer standards, and desire to maintain the relationship" (Sprecher et al., 1994). In simple terms, the person who doesn't want to engage in sexual behaviour says yes even when they mean to or want to say no, this is not defined as rape on the spectrum of sexual coercion and violence as the partner who doesn't desire it, consents to the sexual behaviour (Walker, 1997).

Attachment

Attachment theory postulates that individuals in their infancy and childhood develop beliefs about their "self" (whether they are deserving of love), and "others" (whether others are likely to be supportive), based on their interaction with their parent or primary caregiver, which is referred to as 'working models' (Bowlby, 1973) which eventually shape the way they relate to themselves and others, their behaviours and thoughts in

both social interactions and intimate relationships. Ainsworth et al. (1978) in their study of the strange room situation gave three patterns of attachment based on parent-child attachment, this was further conceptualized to study adult attachment as a romantic process (Hazan & Shaver, 1987) and categorised attachment into secure, anxious and avoidant attachment styles. Several studies in the past show that securely attached individuals are usually comfortable with close relationships and are less insecure about how others will respond to them (Hazan & Shaver, 1987), they also show that securely attached individuals have a greater likelihood of being in long, stable committed relationships (Kirkpatrick & Davis, 1994; Kirkpatrick & Hazan, 1994). The insecure attachment styles, anxious and avoidant are not as comfortable and confident about themselves and others' responses towards them. Individuals who are anxiously attached are insecure about both themselves as well as how other people will respond to them in intimate relationships, while they have a strong desire for intimacy, they also have a great fear of separation or rejection from their romantic partners, and they also indulge in high levels of self-disclosure and show a higher level of engagement in intimate behaviours within their romantic relationships with their partners (Collins & Read, 1990; Guerrero, 1996). Individuals who are anxiously attached are also highly demanding of their partners especially to be able to meet their attachment needs. (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991).

Individuals who are avoidantly attached feel insecure about others, especially their intentions, thereby preferring to be distant in their relationships and are uncomfortable with closeness (Collins & Read, 1990; Hazan & Shaver, 1987) due to which there is less self-disclosure when it comes to Avoidantly attached individuals. Those with anxious attachment, seek more intimacy, while those with avoidant attachment seek distance from their partners. As a result, anxiously attached individuals may be willing to engage in unwanted consensual sex so as to promote intimacy with their partner, while individuals who are avoidantly attached may refrain from engaging in unwanted consensual sex as a way to avoid intimacy with their partners.

Dark Triad

The concept of the Dark Triad was first introduced by Paulhus and Williams (2002) in their seminal paper, wherein they proposed three dimensions of personality namely, Machiavellianism, Narcissism and Psychopathy as socially aversive or malevolent personalities. However literature shows that these dimensions were introduced individually by different researchers, narcissism was introduced by Ellis (1927) and was named after a Greek mythological character Narcissus. Raskin and Hall (1979) conceptualized modern subclinical narcissism or 'normal' narcissism when they tried to delineate a subclinical version of the narcissistic personality disorder in the DSM. Subclinical Narcissism predominantly is characterised by grandiosity, entitlement, dominance, and superiority (Raskin & Hall, 1979). Machiavellianism is more recent among the constructs of the Dark Triad and was brought in by Christie (1970). Machiavellianism gets its name from the

Italian diplomat and philosopher 'Niccolò Machiavelli' who subscribes to the idea, "ends justify means". The traits of individuals with this facet are callous, strategically manipulative, lack conventional morality, and have a cynical outlook on human nature (Christie, 1970). Subclinical psychopathy is the third trait and is perceived as the darkest of the three (e.g., Rauthmann, 2012). Subsequently, psychopathy has oftentimes been analysed in the subclinical arena of personality (Ray & Ray, 1982). Subclinical psychopathy can be identified by impulsiveness (e.g., Sanecka, 2022), thrill-seeking, and lack of empathy (Hare, 1985).

Even though the three traits of the Dark Triad, Narcissism, Machiavellianism, and Psychopathy have diverse origins, they share certain features, they all entail a socially malevolent character to varying degrees and have behavioural tendencies towards duplicity, callousness, aggression, and self-aggrandisement (Muris et al., 2017; Paulhus & Williams, 2002).

Dark Triad traits are expected to debilitate intimate relationships as they are generally seen as socially aversive, subclinical traits, and have been found to be negatively associated with relationship components like intimacy (Ali & Chamorro-Premuzic, 2010). The Dark Triad traits of personality correlate negatively with agreeableness and conscientiousness (Jakobwitz & Egan, 2006).

Previous research shows that individuals for whom Dark Triad traits are relatively higher tend to prefer relationships which are short-term and avoid commitment in relationships. Jonason and Buss (2012) found that Dark Triad personality traits are positively correlated with "tactics used to avoid entangling commitments". Jonason et al. (2012), show that Narcissism and Psychopathy are negatively related to a preference for "serious romantic relationships". Psychopathy has been associated with lower success with mating (Diener & Seligman, 2002), Narcissism on the other hand has been associated with low intimacy and relationship commitment (Campbell & Foster, 2002).

Anxious and avoidant attachment orientations have been linked with Machiavellianism in attachment research, and both anxious and avoidant attachment styles have shown positive associations with Machiavellianism and psychopathy, whereas, narcissism had a negative correlation with anxious attachment style (Nickisch et al., 2020). As Machiavellianism is strategic in nature, individuals in their need for independence may push their partner in order to avoid attachments, it is linked with a conviction that others will be manipulative and disbelief in humanity and therefore prefer relationships which are emotionally detached (Ali & Chamorro-Premuzic, 2010) and their relationship commitment is low (Jonason & Buss, 2012).

In the past research has been done with individuals with Dark Triad personality dimensions as perpetrators of sexual coercion, while there hasn't been much focus on them as recipients or victims of coercion and there isn't any literature in this context. Therefore, in this study, we are trying to understand if a personality dimension of the Dark Triad can be prone to unwanted consensual sex.

The Present Study

There were three goals in this study. Understanding the relationship between attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance with unwanted consensual sex was the first goal. Given that anxiously attached individuals are insecure in their relationships, and are preoccupied with separations and seek intimacy, we propose that greater anxious attachment predicts consent to unwanted sex. Since avoidantly attached individuals are uncomfortable with closeness and intimacy and prefer to be distant, we propose that greater avoidance does not predict consent to unwanted sex.

Our next objective was to understand the relationship between the Dark Triad of personality traits with unwanted consensual sex. We propose that the personality traits of the Dark Triad predict unwanted consensual sex.

Our next goal was to see if the dark traits of personality mediate the relationship between attachment styles and unwanted consensual sex. Since Machiavellian individuals are deceitful and manipulative, anxiously attached individuals would indulge in unwanted consensual sex as a way to manipulate their mate or partner to continue to stay in a relationship with them. Avoidantly attached individuals though feel discomfort with intimacy may use sex as a manoeuvre and may therefore give consent to sex even when they do not want to due to their nature to be strategic and operate with self-interest. Narcissistic individuals while primarily concerned with self-interest can also be manipulative and attention seeking, therefore individuals with anxious or avoidant attachment style high on narcissism may consent to unwanted sex as a way to serve their attachment functions of getting intimacy (in the case of anxiously attached) or avoiding confrontation (in the case of avoidantly attached). Psychopathic individuals are impulsive and manipulative, and anxiously attached individuals are preoccupied with intimacy, therefore, anxiously attached individuals who are high on psychopathy may consent to sex even when they don't want to as they act on the impulse of maintaining intimacy with their partner. Avoidantly attached individuals feel discomfort with confrontation and therefore avoidantly attached individuals who are high on psychopathy may act on the impulse of complying to unwanted sex as a way to avoid a confrontation or discussion on commitment. Therefore, we propose that all the dimensions of the Dark Triad of personality will mediate the relationship between Attachment and Unwanted Consent to Sex.

Method

Sample

This study had a sample of 274 students altogether, of whom, 152 (55.50%) were females, 120 (43.80%) were males and 2 (0.70%) were non-binary. The individuals who participated in the study were students from Post Graduate courses and PhD scholars from the

campus of Pondicherry University. The age range was 21–30 years ($M = 24.17$). Of the 274 participants, 224 (81.76%) were heterosexuals, 31 (11.31%) were bisexuals, 13 (4.74%) were gay and 6 (2.19%) preferred not to disclose their sexual orientation. As past research has shown that attachment styles were similar for heterosexual and same-sex couples and the association of attachment styles and working models and sexual attitudes for same-sex samples support those that are based on heterosexual samples as well (Ridge & Feeney, 1998), the responses of those who identified as gay or bisexual and those who preferred not to disclose were also included in this study. While using Gender as a parameter, the non-binary individuals were excluded as the number was too small in comparison to the female and male participants, however, their responses were included in the overall analysis where gender was not used as a construct of analysis. As the number of participants in terms of sexuality was lopsided as well, sexuality was not used in any comparative analysis, rather the sample was taken as a whole to test the objectives of this study using correlation, regression and mediation.

Measures/Tools

Attachment Style

The ECR-R (Revised Experience in Close Relationships) was used for Attachment styles. This is a revised version and items are taken from various questionnaires like the old ECR, the Adult Attachment Scales, RSQ (Relationship Styles Questionnaire), and attachment scales (Fraley et al., 2000). There are 36 items which are divided into two factors, anxious behaviours and avoidance behaviours and they are each measured by 18 items. Each of these statements is evaluated on a 7-point Likert scale where 1 is “strongly disagree” and 7 is “strongly agree”, and participants were asked to read each of the statements and indicate their responses based on how they relate to close relationships by choosing how much they agree or disagree with the statements. The scale has a good internal consistency with a score of 0.90 for attachment related avoidance and a score of 0.86 for attachment related anxiety.

The Dark Triad (SD3)

For the Dark Triad component, participants were given the “SD3” also known as the “Short Dark Triad scale” which has been made by Jones and Paulhus (2014). This scale has 27 items and the scale is divided into three subscales for Machiavellianism, Narcissism and Psychopathy, each of them is measured by 9 items. All 27 items are statements which are measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 as “Disagree Strongly” to 5 as “Agree strongly”. 5 items are reverse scored in this scale, three of which fall under the subscale of Narcissism namely, 11, 15 and 17 and two fall under the subscale of Psychopathy, items 20 and 25. The internal consistencies of the subscales are as follows; Machiavellianism subscale 0.726, Narcissism subscale 0.6 and Psychopathy 0.624, all of which are in the acceptable range.

Unwanted Consensual Sex

For Unwanted Consensual Sex the scale developed by Humphreys and Kennett (2008) called RCUSS (“Reasons for Consenting to Unwanted Sexual Activity Scale”) was used. This scale consists of 18 items. Each of these items tries to measure the extent to which each of these reasons for consenting to sexual activity even when it is unwanted, is relatable to the participant. Each of the statements is graded on a 9-point Likert scale which is graded from 0 which indicates “not at all characteristic of me” to 8 indicates “very characteristic of me”. The Cronbach alpha for this scale is 0.928.

Procedure

The participants were made aware of what the study comprised of and informed consent was taken from each of them to participate in this study. A few questions about demography variables like age, gender and sexual orientation were included along with the “Experiences in close relationships – revised (ECR – R)”, the “Short Dark Triad Scale (SD3)” and the “Reasons for Consenting to Unwanted Sexual Activity Scale (RCUSS)”. The participants were thanked for their participation.

Analyses

In this study, we performed correlation, regression, and mediation analyses, and used SPSS and AMOS software to do the same. We did a linear correlation analysis to understand the relationship between the variables, and regression analysis was performed to check for linear causality between attachment and unwanted consent to sex, Dark Triad traits and Unwanted consent. Mediation analysis was then performed to see whether the Dark Triad traits of personality mediate the relationship between attachment styles and unwanted consent to sex. We first checked if both the attachment styles (independent variable) and the Dark Triad traits of personality (mediating variable) predict unwanted consent to sex (dependent variable) and then tested for the mediation if attachment styles have an indirect effect on unwanted consent to sex through the Dark Triad traits of personality; in other words, if the Dark Triad traits of personality mediate the relationship between attachment styles and unwanted consent to sex. This is in accordance with the segmentation approach to mediation proposed by Rungtusanatham et al. (2014), wherein, the independent variable (X) must predict the dependent variable (Y) and the mediating variable (M) must predict the dependent variable (Y) as well and X has an indirect effect on Y through M, or that M mediates the relationship between X and Y.

Results

Tests of Mean for the Sample

Preliminary analysis was conducted to see if there were any differences between the male and female participants for the variables, particularly when it comes to unwanted consensual sex, the mean for male participants (54.03) was higher than that of the female participants (38.87), which was tested for significance with a *t*-test and it proved that the difference between the male and female participants consenting to unwanted sex for this sample is significant. The means and standard deviations for the sample and the two groups, male and female have been depicted in Table 1. The mean for male participants is significantly higher for Unwanted consensual sex when compared to the female participants.

Table 1

Means and t-Tests of the Participants by Gender

Variable	Women		Men		Total		<i>t</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	
1. Anxious Attachment (ANX)	65.96	24.45	63.15	19.38	64.72	22.36	1.058
2. Avoidant Attachment (AVO)	49.44	18.65	48.81	16.11	49.17	17.54	0.294
3. Machiavellianism (M)	3.13	0.86	3.36	0.66	3.23	0.79	-2.490*
4. Narcissism (N)	2.93	0.71	3.01	0.53	2.96	0.64	-1.036
5. Psychopathy (P)	1.98	0.64	2.30	0.59	2.12	0.64	-4.266***
6. Unwanted Consensual Sex (UCS)	38.87	34.20	54.03	29.39	45.56	32.99	-3.929***

p* < .05. **p* < .001.

Correlations

Table 2 shows the correlation of both independent and dependent variables, we can see that there is a positive relationship between Unwanted consensual sex and all the independent variables anxious attachment ($r = .367^{**}$) and avoidant attachment ($r = .338^{**}$), Similarly, there is a positive correlation with unwanted consensual sex and machiavellianism ($r = .371^{**}$), narcissism ($r = .178^{**}$), psychopathy ($r = .398^{**}$). Anxious attachment also showed a positive relationship between the mediating variables in the study.

Table 2*Correlation Among Attachment, the Dark Triad and Unwanted Consensual Sex*

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. ANX	1					
2. AVO	.483**	—				
3. M	.341**	.297**	—			
4. N	.145*	.002	.317**	—		
5. P	.263**	.182**	.343**	.433**	—	
6. UCS	.367**	.338**	.371**	.178**	.398**	—

Note. ANX = Anxious Attachment; AVO = Avoidant Attachment; M = Machiavellianism; N = Narcissism; P = Psychopathy; UCS = Unwanted Consensual Sex.

* $p = 0.05$. ** $p = 0.01$.

Avoidant attachment ($r = .483^{**}$), machiavellianism ($r = .341^{**}$), narcissism ($r = .145^{**}$), and psychopathy ($r = .263^{**}$). While avoidant attachment showed a positive relationship with both machiavellianism ($r = .297^{**}$) and psychopathy ($r = .182^{**}$) there was no correlation between avoidant attachment and narcissism.

Regression of Attachment and Unwanted Consensual Sex

Regression analysis was performed to test if insecure attachment styles (anxious and avoidant) predicted unwanted consent to sex. The results are indicated in Table 3 wherein the regression coefficient, standard error and p -values for attachment (anxious and avoidant) and unwanted consensual sex.

Table 3*Regression Analysis of Attachment on Unwanted Consensual Sex*

Effect	Estimate	SE	p
ANX → UCS	.405	.094	< .001
AVO → UCS	.378	.119	.002

Note. ANX = Anxious Attachment; AVO = Avoidant Attachment; UCS = Unwanted Consensual Sex.

The regression coefficient for anxious attachment style and UCS is 0.405, which is significant at the 0.001 level and for avoidant attachment and UCS is 0.378 which is significant at the 0.05 level. This shows that attachment style predicts unwanted consensual sex for the sample.

Table 4 shows the regression coefficient, standard error and p -values for the Dark Triad traits of personality, namely machiavellianism, narcissism and psychopathy and

unwanted consensual sex. The regression coefficient for machiavellianism and UCS is 11.561 and is significant at the 0.001 level for the sample. The regression coefficient for narcissism is -2.418 and the p -value indicates that it is not significant. The regression coefficient for psychopathy is 16.445 and is significant at the 0.001 level. This shows that machiavellianism and psychopathy both predict UCS at the 0.001 level for the sample whereas, the regression coefficient for narcissism is not significant.

Table 4

Regression Analysis of the Dark Triad on Unwanted Consensual Sex

Effect	Estimate	SE	p
M → UCS	11.561	2.444	< .001
N → UCS	-2.418	3.161	.444
P → UCS	16.445	3.188	< .001

Note. M = Machiavellianism; N = Narcissism; P = Psychopathy; UCS = Unwanted Consensual Sex.

Mediation of Anxious Attachment and Unwanted Consensual Sex by the Dark Triad

To test the mediating effect that machiavellianism, narcissism and psychopathy had on the relationship between attachment styles (anxious and avoidant) and unwanted consensual sex, path analysis was done.

Table 5 shows the indirect effects of the Dark Triad traits of personality, namely machiavellianism, narcissism and psychopathy on the relationship between anxious attachment and unwanted consensual sex for the whole sample. Anxious attachment and unwanted consensual sex are mediated significantly by two of the Dark Triad traits, machiavellianism with an effect size of 0.072 which is significant at the 0.001 level and psychopathy with an effect size of 0.075 which is also significant at the 0.001 level. narcissism on the other hand has an effect size of -0.006 on the relationship between anxious attachment and unwanted consensual sex, which is not significant.

From Table 5, it can also be seen that the direct effect of anxious attachment on UCS is .341, despite the presence of mediators, which is significant at the 0.001 level. This indicates that the mediators, machiavellianism and psychopathy partially mediate the relationship between anxious attachment and unwanted consensual sex. The direct effect of anxious attachment on UCS and the indirect effects anxious attachment on UCS through the Dark Triad traits of personality (machiavellianism, narcissism and psychopathy) are depicted in Figure 1, and the significant effects are indicated in bold.

Table 5

Indirect Effect of Anxious Attachment on Unwanted Consensual Sex Through the Dark Triad

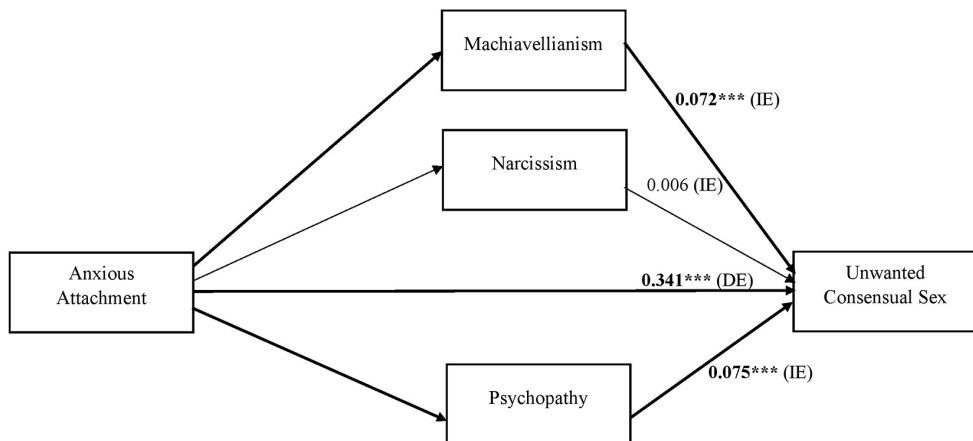
Indirect Path	Unstandardized				p	Standardized Estimate	Direct Effect
	Estimate	LL	UL				
ANX → M → UCS	0.106	0.054	0.184	0.001	0.072***	.341***	
ANX → N → UCS	-0.008	-0.057	0.008	0.352	-0.006	.341***	
ANX → P → UCS	0.110	0.063	0.183	0.000	0.075***	.341***	

Note. ANX = Anxious Attachment; M = Machiavellianism; N = Narcissism; P = Psychopathy; UCS = Unwanted Consensual Sex.

****p* < .001.

Figure 1

The Direct and Indirect Effect of Anxious Attachment on Unwanted Consensual Sex Through the Dark Triad



Mediation of Avoidant Attachment and Unwanted Consensual Sex by the Dark Triad

Table 6 shows the indirect effects of the Dark Triad traits of personality, namely machiavellianism, narcissism and psychopathy on the relationship between avoidant attachment and unwanted consensual sex for the whole sample. Avoidant attachment and unwanted consensual sex are mediated significantly by two of the Dark Triad traits, machiavellianism with an effect size of 0.062 which is significant at the 0.001 level and psychopathy with an effect size of 0.050 which is also significant at the 0.01 level. Narcissism on the other hand has an effect size of 0.000 on the relationship of avoidant attachment and unwanted consensual sex, which is not significant. From Table 6, it can also be seen that the direct effect of avoidant attachment on UCS is 0.418, despite the presence

of mediators, which is significant at the 0.001 level. This indicates that the mediators, machiavellianism and psychopathy partially mediate the relationship between avoidant attachment and unwanted consensual sex. The direct effect of avoidant attachment on UCS and the indirect effects of avoidant attachment on UCS through the Dark Triad traits of personality (machiavellianism, narcissism and psychopathy) are depicted in Figure 2, and the significant effects are indicated in bold.

Table 6

Indirect Effect of Avoidant Attachment on Unwanted Consensual Sex Through the Dark Triad

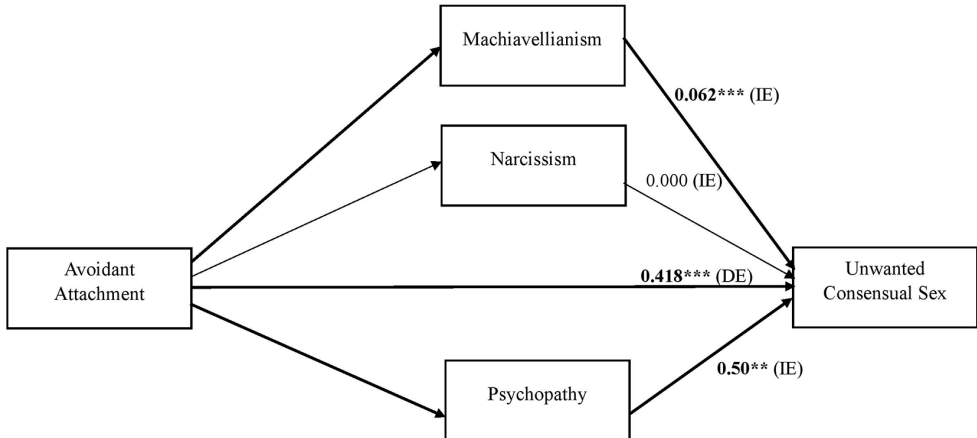
Indirect Path	Unstandardized				Standardized Estimate	Direct Effect
	Estimate	LL	UL	p		
AVO → M → UCS	0.117	0.057	0.201	0.001	0.062***	.418***
AVO → N → UCS	0.000	-0.019	0.019	0.992	0.000	.418***
AVO → P → UCS	0.095	0.032	0.177	0.006	0.050**	.418***

Note. AVO = Avoidant Attachment; M = Machiavellianism; N = Narcissism; P = Psychopathy; UCS = Unwanted Consensual Sex.

p* < .01. *p* < .001.

Figure 2

The Direct and Indirect Effect of Avoidant Attachment on Unwanted Consensual Sex Through Dark Triad



Discussion

The preliminary analysis showed that men have a higher consent to unwanted sex than women and the group, which is an interesting finding. The number of men and

women in our sample are relatively close with women being 152 in number and men being 120 in number, therefore, it is important to discuss the significant difference in consenting to unwanted sex between men and women in our study. A seminal study on men's reports on unwanted sexual activity by Muehlenhard and Cook (1988), showed that men experienced more unwanted sex than women and that this may be due to sex role concerns, peer pressure, inexperience and popularity; studies have shown how men with no previous sexual interaction are more anxious and lack self-confidence (Komarovsky, 1976) and how men are expected to be experienced and should want to have sex (Zilbergeld & Zilbergeld, 2004). Recent research by Khera et al. (2022), also confirms these findings, stating that men don't say no to unwanted sexual activity due to various reasons such as traditional gender role endorsement and belief in male sexual stereotypes and other factors such as sexual inexperience, peer pressure, popularity and sex-role concerns. While this may be the reason why heterosexual men give consent to unwanted sex, the situation is slightly different for gay and bisexual men. Research shows that gay and bisexual men give consent to unwanted sex as they are made to believe in the narrative that "this is what happens to gay and bisexual men" (Gaspar et al., 2021); lack of sexual scripts in sexual interactions, "perceived and embodied masculinity" of partners during sexual encounters, of GBM and fear of being outed by partner also leads to unwanted consensual sex in gay men (Ford & Becker, 2020). Since our sample consists of heterosexual men and GBM, subscribing to traditional gender roles or male sexual stereotypes, anxiety stemming from inexperience, fear of being outed, peer pressure, and lack of sexual scripts may be some of the reasons why men in our sample have shown to consent to unwanted sex than women.

With regard to the relationship between unwanted consent and anxious and avoidant attachment, this study supports previous findings in this area. We hypothesised that individuals who were highly anxiously attached would give in more to unwanted consensual sex. As expected, our findings provide support for this: Anxiously attached individuals give consent to sexual activities even when they don't want to. Previous research has shown that anxiously attached individuals tend to have a higher engagement in intimate behaviours in their romantic relationships (Guerrero, 1996) and have been reported to have been unable to resist unwanted sexual advances (Feeney et al., 2000), and they feel that refusing their partners would jeopardize their relationship (Impett & Peplau, 2003).

It was expected that avoidant individuals would not consent to unwanted sexual activity as they refrain from intimacy and are uncomfortable with getting close to others and prefer to be distant, but contrary to this our findings showed that avoidant individuals also engage significantly in unwanted sexual activity and give their consent. A similar result was found in the previous studies (Gentzler & Kerns, 2004; Impett & Peplau, 2002) wherein individuals who were avoidantly attached engaged in unwanted consensual sex. Research done in the past shows that avoidant individuals have a relatively low desire to indulge in intimate behaviours like kissing or cuddling and even sexual behaviours

like stimulating of partner's genitals or intercourse (Brennan et al., 1998). Despite their low desire, they may engage in sex or sexual activity that is unwanted so as to fulfil their relationship obligations, or as way to compensate for their lack of commitment to their partner (Gentzler & Kerns, 2004; Impett & Peplau, 2002). Avoidant individuals may give consent to sex or sexual activity even when they don't want to so as to avoid confrontations or conversation about relationship commitment or may simply perceive it as something they need to do in order to 'get over with it'.

Our next hypothesis was that the Dark Triad traits machiavellianism, narcissism and psychopathy would have a significant relationship with consenting to unwanted sex. Our findings show that individuals who are high on machiavellianism and psychopathy engage in unwanted consensual sex, whereas individuals who scored high on narcissism didn't engage in unwanted consensual sex. Usually, the Dark Triad traits of personality are studied in the context of the perpetrator, it is not explored in the context of the individual facing coercion. In this study, we wanted to explore this relationship as to whether individuals who consent to unwanted sex rather than those coercing it also have any of the Dark Triad traits of personality. Though the dimensions of the Dark Triad of personality traits are overlapping, we found in our study that not all the personality traits have a relationship with unwanted consent, machiavellianism and psychopathy were able to predict unwanted consensual sexual activity, while narcissism was not. Past research shows that individuals who score relatively higher on these two traits, machiavellianism and psychopathy tend to be sexually less assertive, on the contrary, individuals high on the narcissism trait are relatively more sexually assertive (Pilch & Smolorz, 2019), therefore individuals with high machiavellianism and psychopathy may give into unwanted consensual sex while individuals high on narcissism may not.

The next hypothesis of the study was that the three personality traits of the Dark Triad mediate the relationship between anxious attachment and unwanted consensual sex and the relationship between avoidant attachment and unwanted consensual sex. The findings show that while machiavellianism and psychopathy successfully play a role in attachment predicting unwanted sex, the same is not the case for narcissism. The Dark Triad predominantly measures the grandiose phenotype of narcissism and grandiose narcissism in romantic relationships shows less anxiousness and higher security (Brewer et al., 2018). Self-confidence and self-esteem have been seen as definitory features of narcissism (Krizan & Herlache, 2018), and may induce a feeling of relationship security. Our study primarily focuses on insecure attachment and previous research has shown that the secure attachment style has been associated with narcissism (Bloxsom et al., 2021; Jonason et al., 2014), as people with narcissism tend to have feelings of superiority and entitlement, they may not feel the need to fulfil relationship obligations or to feel anxious about their partner leaving them, therefore they may not consent to unwanted sex. In this context narcissism may not be pathological, rather it shows a sense of

sociability and emotional stability which is linked to positive social support as well (Egan & Bull, 2020).

People who are high on machiavellianism are manipulative and therefore use deceptive sexual behaviours such as avoiding confrontation with their partners or gaining other resources through sex (Dussault et al., 2013) and self-gain (Giammarco et al., 2013; McLeod & Genereux, 2008). Individuals who are high on machiavellianism are manipulative and may give consent to sex or sexual activity even when it is unwanted, the reasons for giving consent for Machiavellian individuals may differ based on their attachment style, anxiously attached individuals may give consent to unwanted sex as a way of making their partner stay in the relationship, whereas avoidantly attached individuals, on the other hand, may consent to unwanted sex to avoid confrontation.

Our findings also showed that psychopathy also mediated the relationship between anxious attachment and unwanted consensual sex as well as the relationship between avoidant attachment and unwanted consensual sex. Research indicates that psychopathy is associated with both the insecure attachment styles: avoidant and anxious (Conradi et al., 2016). The Dark Triad typically measures the secondary trait of psychopathy and impulsivity, thrill-seeking and short-term thinking are some traits that are associated with secondary psychopathy. Their impulsiveness and short-term thinking may prompt avoidant individuals to give consent to unwanted sex. Individuals high on psychopathy also have an intense response to emotional events (Hervé, 2017) and have been reported to experience multiple difficulties in relationships (Savard et al., 2006) and this could be the reason why anxiously attached psychopathic individuals engage in unwanted consensual sex to overcome the anxiety of fear or separation from partners. Individuals high on psychopathy have been seen to engage in risky sexual and deviant sexual behaviours as well, more research on what sex means to psychopathic individuals would give a greater insight into why they give consent to unwanted sex.

Implications

Sex education on campuses is still not put into practice in various educational institutions, especially in India, sex is still a taboo topic in most places and therefore young adults are ambiguous about what constitutes sexual abuse. Popular culture normalises abusive behaviours such as stalking and coercion, and individuals are conditioned to believe that such problematic behaviours are 'okay'. Our research provides some insight into what factors contribute to unwanted consensual sex and may help in developing a better curriculum and provide insights on what kind of psychological support is to be given and the desensitising programmes that could be developed for students on campus. This is especially important because it takes the perspective of those who are giving consent to unwanted sex. Most studies on coercion and Dark Triad are done with subjects who are perpetrators rather than the victims. Even when studies on unwanted consensual sex are done, the subjects of the study are usually women, our study shows

that men also undergo sexual compliance and, in our study, they showed higher consent to unwanted sex than the women in the sample, which goes to show that male sexual abuse is also a subject that needs to be researched further.

Limitations and Future Directions

Our study was limited to a sample from one university due to the paucity of time, expanding this study to a bigger sample especially with a sizeable number of queer subjects as well might help us understand patterns of unwanted consensual sex better. Including more relationship variables such as relationship satisfaction, emotional abuse, relationship quality, sexual beliefs etc., might provide greater insights.

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