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REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF THE PhD THESIS TOPIC

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Name of the study programme	PhD in Business Economics
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1. TITLE OF THE PROPOSED TOPIC
1.1. Croatian
Tamna trijada i tamna kreativnost marketinških profesionalaca: moderatorska uloga kreativne samoeфикаsnosti i pozicije moći
1.2. English
<i>Dark Triad and dark creativity of marketing professionals: the moderating roles of creative self-efficacy and power position</i>
1.3. Area/field
Social sciences / Economics

2. PROPOSED OR POTENTIAL SUPERVISOR(S)		
2.1. Supervisor(s)		
Title, first and last name	Institution, country	E-mail
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Minimal general criteria for supervisor selection:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">has to hold a PhD degree and be awarded a scientific rank.		

- has to have at least two years of postdoctoral experience,
- has to have a lead (co-lead or partner) position in a national or international project, or in some other way be able to ensure support for scientific research,
- has to satisfy the minimal criteria of excellence.

If the supervisor is not an employee of the University of Rijeka, a co-supervisor from the University's constituent unit implementing the postgraduate study programme is assigned to the PhD candidate.

2.2. Co-supervisor

Title, first and last name	Institution, country	E-mail
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3. TOPIC OUTLINE

3.1. Summary in Croatian

(no more than 1000 characters with spaces)

U današnjem svijetu obilježenom konkurencijom i inovacijama, kreativnost se može smatrati temeljem uspjeha u marketingu. Međutim, kreativnost nije nužno inherentno pozitivna – može dovesti do štetnih posljedica, fenomen poznat kao tamna kreativnost. Unatoč rastućem fokusu na etičke marketinške prakse, uloga individualnih psiholoških karakteristika u tamnoj kreativnosti ostaje nedovoljno istražena, posebno u kontekstu marketinških profesionalaca.

Ovo istraživanje ispituje međusobni odnos između osobina Tamne trijade – narcizma, makijavelizma i psihopatije – i tamne kreativnosti, s kreativnom samoefikasnošću i pozicijom moći kao moderatorskim varijablama. Oslanjajući se na teoriju marketinga i psihološka istraživanja, ovo istraživanje primjenjuje koncept tamne kreativnosti u marketinškoj industriji, što je područje koje je nedovoljno zastupljeno u postojećoj literaturi. Istraživanje se temelji na okvirima poput inicijative Better Marketing for a Better World i doprinosi razumijevanju tamne kreativnosti unutar profesionalnog okruženja kroz istraživanje odnosa tamnih osobina ličnosti i tamne kreativnosti kod marketinških profesionalaca kao i analizu moderatorskog utjecaja kreativne samoefikasnosti i pozicije moći u hijerarhiji organizacije.

Koristeći validirane mjerne skale i robustan konceptualni model, ovo istraživanje će primijeniti kvantitativnu metodu ankete među marketinškim profesionalcima u Hrvatskoj, uz zadatke za procjenu tamne kreativnosti. Nalazi će pridonijeti razumijevanju tamne kreativnosti u marketingu, pridonoseći dosadašnjim teorijskim spoznajama. Praktične implikacije uključuju podizanje svijesti o potencijalnim štetama koje uzrokuje tamna kreativnost i otvaranje diskusije za razvoj konkretnih smjernica za inovativne marketinške prakse bez negativnih posljedica.

3.2. Summary in English

(no more than 1000 characters with spaces)

In today's world where competition and innovation drive success, creativity is pivotal in the marketing industry. However, creativity is not inherently positive – when used unethically, it can lead to harmful outcomes, a phenomenon termed 'dark creativity'. Despite the growing focus on ethical marketing practices, the role of individual psychological traits, particularly the Dark Triad personality traits—narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy—remains underexplored in this context. Understanding how these traits influence dark creativity among marketing professionals is critical for mitigating negative consequences in organisational settings.

This research investigates the relationship between Dark Triad traits and dark creativity, with creative self-efficacy and power position as moderating variables. Grounded in marketing theory and psychological research, this study situates dark creativity within the professional marketing context. By extending the "Better Marketing for a Better World" initiative, this research contributes to understanding the psychological and contextual factors that drive harmful creative behaviour.

The study employs a robust conceptual model and validated measurement scales in a quantitative survey of

marketing professionals in Croatia, complemented by scenario-based tasks to evaluate dark creativity. The findings are expected to advance theoretical knowledge by mapping the interplay between dark personality traits, creativity and organisational dynamics. Practical implications include raising awareness of the potential harms associated with dark creativity and providing actionable insights for fostering innovation in marketing practices while minimising harmful outcomes.

3.3. Introduction and overview of previous research

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In an era of heightened competition and rapid innovation, marketing professionals face increasing pressure to stand out through creativity. However, the understanding of how marketing practices impact both businesses and society remains limited (Chandy et al., 2021). While creativity is often celebrated as a positive force in marketing, its darker dimensions – including ethical lapses and harmful consequences – are still inadequately investigated (Palmer et al., 2020).

Chandy et al. (2021) provide a theoretical framework that serves as a starting point for this research, suggesting that marketing's impact goes beyond corporate profits and shareholder value to broader societal outcomes (Fig 1). This duality raises the possibility of "the dark side of marketing", a win-lose scenario, where business success comes at the expense of societal well-being. In the lense of most academics, marketing is a beneficial practice (Kotler & Keller, 2011) and an intricate part of overall economic development. Critics on the other hand find marketing to be central driving force of various unethical activities (Brown, McDonagh & Shultz, 2012).

Good for the world			
		No	Yes
	No	Lose-Lose How to avoid myopic marketing actions?	Lose-Win How to sustain marketing actions that are financially unviable, but can do good?
Good for the firm	Yes	Win-Lose How to expose and avoid the dark side of marketing?	Win-Win How to enable marketing actions that benefit multiple stakeholders?

Table 1., Possible impacts of marketing, adapted from Chandy et al., 2021

Examples of this dark side abound. Consider the promotion of a "green" product through a highly creative advertising campaign, only for the product to be revealed as less environmentally friendly than claimed – an instance of greenwashing (de Freitas Netto, 2020). Similarly, marketing recommendations by professionals to pharmaceutical companies have led to widespread opioid addiction, destroying human lives (Bogdanich and Forsythe 2020). Even small-scale, seemingly innocuous practices, such as designing overly complex cancellation steps for subscriptions – a tactic known as sludging – reflect deliberate manipulation by marketing professionals (Sunstein, 2022). If ethical behaviour in business is gaining significance (Vallaster et al., 2019), addressing and mitigating the dark side of marketing needs to become a focal point of research.

Practicing within the dark side of marketing has negative consequences for the consumers and society but, like a boomerang, it can affect negatively companies and their performance as well: company reputation can suffer if consumers are manipulated (Raina, 2023) or companies can face legal issues both leading to revenue and profitability loss. Negative view on marketing is not a completely new concept, especially from the consumer point of view. Perception of marketing in media is deteriorating (Cluley, 2016) as is consumers' trust in marketing (Heath & Heath, 2008). Besides being ethically significant, researching the dark side of marketing is also important from a commercial standpoint. (Heath, Cluley, O'Malley, 2017; Sheth & Sisodia, 2005). Losing trust in marketing

management and marketing managers' behaviour unavoidably leads to diminishing its efficacy (Badot & Cova, 2008). This challenge invites multiple research avenues, particularly those focusing on the psychological and professional traits of marketing professionals. In this context, reflecting on the ethical implications of creativity and introspecting on the role of marketing professionals themselves becomes imperative (Boring, 1953) as it might be the moment to focus academic efforts to better understanding of the darkness level marketing can incorporate (Brown et al., 2012).

Creativity and dark creativity

Marketing and creativity are connected, intertwined, often making it difficult to distinguish where one begins and other ends. An overarching impression is that nearly every marketer desires to craft creative marketing communication (Fichnova, 2013) and creativity in marketing context represents a competitive advantage (Falat, 2004) and plays a key role in propelling effective marketing initiatives (Bharadwaj & Menon, 2000). Definition of creativity is bipartite and widely accepted: in order for something to be creative it needs to be original and effective (Runco & Jaeger 2012). However, creativity is not inherently positive. Researchers have come to acknowledge that creative processes can also yield harmful outcomes, a phenomenon now recognised as dark creativity (Kampylis & Valtanen, 2010). The concept of dark creativity, first introduced by McLaren in 1993, has evolved to include multiple dimensions - negative creativity, where harm occurs unintentionally (James et al., 1999) or malevolent creativity, where harm is deliberate (Cropley et al., 2008). Both denominations include creativity leading to harm but negative creativity assumes the harm created was done accidentally whereas for malevolent creativity it was intentional (Kapoor, 2023). In this research, we use the term dark creativity in line with recent literature, which assumes that it is challenging to disentangle intent from outcome in behavioural paradigms (Kapoor, 2023). Importantly, even creative ideas with no negative intrinsic can lead to harmful consequences, whether intentional or accidental (Runco, 2010; Cropley, 2010). Recognizing unintentional dark creativity in the real word might be unsettling (Kapoor, 2023) but more peril lies in ignoring dark creativity in research and practice and allowing it to disperse damage in the society and negatively influence societal well-being (Kapoor, 2023). The construct must be analysed in diverse contexts to enhance the potential for mitigating its adverse outcomes. Dark creativity has been researched in the context of video games (Cropley, 2015), education (Kapoor, 2019), dark humour (Kapoor & Karandikar, 2019) and social media and social media (de Saint Laurent, Glaveanu & Chaudet, 2020). Upon this summary of context, advertising is proposed as an interesting future research avenue (Kapoor and Kaufmann, 2021).

Dark creativity in the marketing context

This research focuses on dark creativity in the specific context of marketing professionals. The Four-C model of creativity (Kaufman & Beghetto, 2009a) outlines a useful framework for understanding creativity across different levels of expertise and impact: from mini-c (personal), to little-c (everyday creativity), then to pro-c (professional creativity), and then finally to Big-C (ground-breaking creativity associated with geniuses). This study is concerned with pro-c creativity, which reflects domain-specific expertise within professional settings (Baer, 2012). In the marketing industry – a key part of the “creative industries” (Hartley, 2005) – pro-c creativity plays a central role in shaping innovative and impactful strategies.

Despite its potential for positive impact, marketing also provides fertile ground for dark creativity. Practises like nudges, which encourage better choices (Thaler & Sunstein, 2008), can be twisted to sludges, strategies that add unnecessary complications to decision-making process, often to benefit a company's profits (Soman et al., 2019). The intentional crafting of sludges exemplifies dark creativity, yet this phenomenon is only beginning to receive scholarly attention (Kapoor & Tagat, 2023).

Practical examples of dark creativity in marketing are well-documented but often scattered. For instance, Palmer et al. (2020) mention the infamous Daraprim case, where the CEO of Turing Pharmaceuticals drastically raised the price of a life-saving drug from US\$13.50 to US\$750 a pill. Such cases highlight the need for more systematic investigation of dark creativity within professional contexts. Researchers have called for studies explicitly examining dark creativity in the workplace, particularly its interconnectedness with regular job duties and the psychological factors that underlie harmful creative behaviours (Palmer et al., 2020).

By addressing these gaps, this research aims to further contribute to our understanding of dark creativity within the marketing industry. Specifically, it aims to explore the psychological traits of marketing professionals that may predispose them to darker creativity, contributing to a broader discourse on ethical marketing practices.

Dark Triad of personality`

The individual psychological factors associated with dark creativity point toward the Dark Triad of personality, a

construct comprising three socially aversive traits: narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy (Paulhus & Williams, 2002). These traits, while conceptually distinct, share a common thread of manipulative, self-serving and exploitative behaviours that can manifest in professional settings, including marketing. Narcissism is characterised by egocentric traits, such as self-absorption, sense of grandiosity, uniqueness, entitlement, superiority and need for admiration (Paulhus & Williams, 2002; Wallace & Baumeister 2002). Among the three traits, it is considered the least aggressive (Rogoza, Kowalski, & Schermer, 2019), though its focus on self-enhancement can still contribute to ethically ambiguous outcomes. Machiavellianism indicates a propensity to take advantage of and manipulate others to achieve personal goals (Paulhus & Williams, 2002). Individuals high in this trait tend to prioritise ends over means, often disregarding ethical considerations (Rauthmann, 2012). Psychopathy is often considered the most negative and destructive of the three traits. It is marked by the impulsiveness, thrill-seeking, poor behavioural control, and lack of guilt or remorse (Paulhus & Williams, 2002). These characteristics create a heightened risk of unethical behaviour in professional environments.

Recent advancements in the literature have proposed expanding the Dark Triad into a Dark Tetrad, incorporating sadism as the fourth dimension (Paulhus, et al., 2021); however, empirical validation of this construct remains ongoing. While sadism demonstrates some utility in explaining harmful behaviours, the Short Dark Triad scale remains the most precise and widely used instrument for measuring narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy in research contexts (Blötner & Beisemann, 2022).

Current research indicates a significant connection between dark personality traits and dark creativity. A recent meta-analysis (Lebuda, Figura & Karwowski, 2021) found a small but significant positive association between creativity and narcissism and Machiavellianism but not with psychopathy. However, people with subclinical psychopathy (Kapoor, 2015; Kapoor & Khan, 2016) and everyday sadism (a component of the Dark Tetrad) were more likely to exhibit dark creativity (Kapoor & Kaufman, 2021). These findings suggest that while the expression of dark creativity may differ across traits, individuals with dark personality characteristics might be predisposed to produce harmful or ethically problematic creative outputs.

In the business context, the Dark Triad has garnered increasing attention. For instance, research shows a positive association between Dark Triad traits and entrepreneurial intention (Brownell, McMullen & O'Boyle, 2021), as well as opportunistic decision-making (D'Souza & de Lima, 2015). Notably, higher Dark Triad scores are frequently observed among economics/business students (Vedel & Thomsen, 2017; Bogdanović, Vetrakova & Stanislav, 2018), reflecting a potential predisposition toward self-serving behaviours in competitive professional environments. However, while the Dark Triad has been studied extensively in consumers' context (Razmus, Czarna & Fortuna, 2023; Konuk & Otterbring 2024), its role within the marketing professionals' context remains underexplored. Marketing professionals occupy a pivotal position where creativity intersects with decision-making that can impact both business and society. Exploring the influence of Dark Triad traits on dark creativity in this professional setting is critical for understanding the ethical implications of practitioners' decisions. This research aims to address this gap by examining how Dark Triad traits influence dark creativity among marketing professionals. By situating the study within the broader Better Marketing for a Better World framework, this work contributes to understanding the psychological underpinnings of harmful creative behaviours and their potential consequences for businesses and society.

Power status

Decision making in business context is closely connected to managerial power (Pfeffer, 1981), and evidence suggests that power status can significantly influence creativity (Sligte et al., 2011; Galinsky et al., 2008; Zhang et al., 2015). This research identifies power position/status as the first moderator variable in the possible connection between Dark Triad traits and dark creativity among marketing professionals. Power has a moderating effect on creativity depending on the stability of power hierarchy in an organization (Sligte, De Dreu & Nijstad, 2011) possibly due to approach motivation, which promotes cognitive flexibility and increased creativity (Forster et al., 2006). Individuals who are highly driven have a discernible tendency toward creativity, especially when their efforts are reinforced through positive outcomes (Fodor & Carver, 2000; Fodor & Greenier, 1995). Moreover, creativity tends to flourish when it aligns with achieving personal or professional objectives (Gervais, Guinote, Allen, & Slabu, 2013). A recent study (Palmer et al., 2020) reported surprising findings: an individual's ability to complete an immoral activity is independent of the power environment they are placed in. However, a significant limitation of this study is the sample – research participants were mainly university students who were assigned to experimental power groups (high or low), which may not reflect real-world power hierarchies. The present study will provide a more ecologically valid understanding of how power status moderates the connection between Dark Triad traits and dark creativity among marketing professionals from industry who truly hold low, medium or high-power position within organizations.

Creative self-efficacy

Researchers have also tried to understand the connection between Dark Triad and creativity moderated by measures of creativity: self-report or performance-based measures. The strongest link was found between creativity and narcissism, moderated by the choice of creativity measure (Lebuda et al., 2021). Machiavellianism and creativity also showed a positive relationship when self-reports were used to measure creativity. Relationship between creativity and psychopathy was not significant though it was positive in self-report measures of creativity. These findings suggest that dark personality traits appear to be primarily linked to self-rated creativity, which introduces creative self-efficacy as the second moderator variable in this study.

Self-efficacy in general can be defined as a person's belief that he or she can perform successfully in a particular setting (Bandura, 1997). If viewed specifically in creativity, as "the belief one has the ability to produce creative outcomes" (Tierney & Farmer, 2002, 2011), the concept is related to as creative self-efficacy which may predict creative performance or can be a significant motivator in individual creative behaviour (Ford, 1996; Tierney & Farmer, 2002). It represents a recent measure of creativity (Haase et al., 2018) and a member of the metrics group that rely on self-evaluation. Most commonly used measure to assess creative self-efficacy is the Short Scale of Creative Self (SSCS; Karwowski, 2012; Karwowski, Lebuda & Wisniewska, 2018), and recent show its usefulness and appropriateness (Shaw, Kapnek & Morelli, 2021) to measure not only creative self-efficacy but also creative personal identity or CP which is "the belief that creativity is an important element of self-description" (Farmer, Tierney & Kung-McIntyre, 2003). Creative self-efficacy is particularly relevant in this study for its potential to moderate the relationship between Dark Triad traits and dark creativity, within the underexplored context of marketing professionals.

This research, therefore, fills a critical gap by investigating how creative self-efficacy influences dark creativity within marketing professionals, providing insights into the psychological drivers of harmful creativity in the industry.

3.4. Research aim and research hypotheses

(suggested length: 700 characters with spaces)

The research goals are situated within a broader framework where creativity is considered a driving force of human development and a critical asset in a workplace setting, especially in the marketing industry. While creativity is often encouraged to stimulate innovation and competitive advantage, recent research highlights the need to better understand its dark dimensions, particularly in specific business context. This study will examine how dark creativity arises and is shaped by individual and organisational factors in marketing professionals. The specific research goals are as follows:

1. To investigate the impact of Dark Triad traits on dark creativity among marketing professionals.
2. To explore the moderating effect of power status within organizations on the relationship between Dark Triad traits and dark creativity among marketing professionals.
3. To explore the moderating effect of creative self-efficacy on the relationship between Dark Triad traits and dark creativity among marketing professionals.
4. To provide a deeper understanding of dark creativity and its practical implications within a specific business context.

The proposed conceptual research model is outlined in Fig. 1, which visually represents the relationships between Dark Triad traits, dark creativity, and the potential moderating effects of power status and creative self-efficacy.

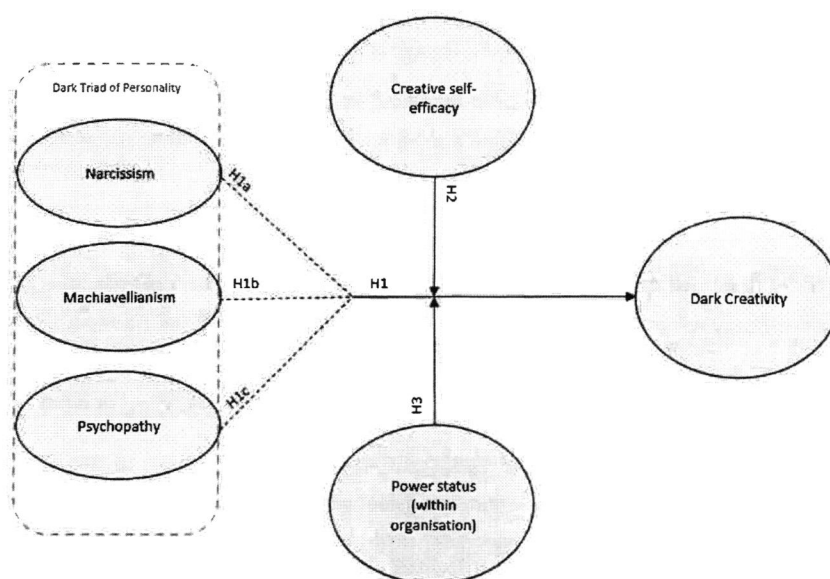


Figure 1., Conceptual view on research model, Source: author's work

Previous research suggests the importance of considering personality factors to better understand dark creativity (Palmer et al., 2020). Narcissism, characterised by grandiosity and a need for admiration, has been linked to self-enhancing behaviours that include overestimating one's creative abilities (Goncalo, Flynn & Kim, 2010). Individuals high in Machiavellianism, known for their manipulative tendencies, are also likely to engage in dark creativity when it serves personal goals (Jonason, Abboud, Abboud, Tome, Dummett, & Hazer, 2017). While the relationship between psychopathy and creativity is less consistent, subclinical psychopathy has been shown to predict dark creativity, particularly when there is a disregard for ethical norms (Kapoor, 2015; Kapoor & Kaufman, 2021). However, a meta-analysis (Lebuda et al., 2021) indicate that these relationships vary depending on creativity measures, with stronger associations emerging in self-reported creativity.

This research aims to clarify these relationships in the marketing professional's context, where creativity and ethical decision-making intersect, often under conditions of high pressure and competition. Based on previous research following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: Marketing professionals who exhibit Dark Triad traits are more likely to display dark creativity.

- ~ H1a: Narcissism will positively predict dark creativity among marketing professionals.
- ~ H1b: Machiavellianism will positively predict dark creativity among marketing professionals.
- ~ H1c: Psychopathy will positively predict dark creativity among marketing professionals.

Creative self-efficacy – defined as one's belief in their ability to produce creative outcomes (Tierney & Farmer, 2002)

– is a strong predictor of creative performance (Ford, 1996; Haase et al., 2018). However, it is also tied to self-perception, which has been shown to interact with personality traits in predicting creativity. For instance, individuals high in narcissism often rate their creative abilities highly, amplifying their engagement in creative processes, including unethical ones (Jonason and Richardson, 2015; Kapoor & Kaufman, 2021).

This research explores the moderating effect of creative self-efficacy in a real-world professional context, addressing a gap where self-belief may influence the expression of dark creativity among marketing professionals. Based on previous research, following hypotheses are proposed:

H2: Creative self-efficacy will moderate the relationship between the Dark Triad traits and dark creativity.

- ~ H2a: Creative self-efficacy moderates the relationship between narcissism and dark creativity.
- ~ H2b: Creative self-efficacy moderates the relationship between Machiavellianism and dark creativity.
- ~ H2c: Creative self-efficacy moderates the relationship between psychopathy and dark creativity.

Power in organisations is known to influence behaviour and creativity (Pfeffer, 1981). Individuals in higher power positions often exhibit approach motivation (Guinote, 2007; Keltner et al, 2003), which promotes cognitive flexibility and risk-taking behaviours, enhancing creativity (Sligte et al, 2011). However, when combined with Dark Triad traits, power can possibly amplify unethical creative outcomes, since it was found that power and creativity were linked with situational goals (Gervais et al., 2013). While Palmer et al. (2020) found no significant connection between power and dark creativity, a limitation was the use of hypothetical power assignments in experimental conditions.

This research aims to address this limitation by studying real-life marketing professionals across low, medium, and high-power positions, offering an ecologically valid understanding of how power status moderates the relationship between Dark Triad traits and dark creativity. Based on previous research, following hypotheses are proposed:

H3: Power status within organization will moderate the relationship between Dark Triad traits and dark creativity.

- ~ H3a: Power status within organization moderates the relationship between narcissism and dark creativity.
- ~ H3b: Power status within organization moderates the relationship between Machiavellianism and dark creativity.
- ~ H3c: Power status within organization moderates the relationship between psychopathy and dark creativity.

3.5. Materials, methodology and research plan
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Desk research will include the inductive and deductive method, the method of analysis and synthesis, the method of generalization and specialization, the method of abstraction and concretization, as well as the method of proving and refuting. Additionally, the descriptive method, comparative method, classification method, and compilation method for integrating existing knowledge will be utilized.

Following constructs will be described and used:

- ~ Dark Triad
- ~ Dark creativity
- ~ Creative self-efficacy
- ~ Power position

For the empirical research and collection of primary data the survey method will be applied. Research will be conducted on Croatian market with marketing professionals across organizations. Sample size, N will be chosen on the basis of statistical power calculation to ensure adequate statistical power (0.8) to detect a moderate effect. Planned number of marketing professionals in Croatia that will participate in the study is currently estimated from three hundred to five hundred participants. Marketing professionals will be considered as employees within the marketing and advertising industry and will consist of various agency professionals (account and project managers, copywriters, designers, social media and content managers etc.) and employees in marketing departments of companies in various industries. It is planned to approach employees in marketing agencies in Croatia through largest Croatian association of marketing agencies – HURA (2021) and for marketing departments' employees it is expected that retail, manufacturing, IT and service industry will prevail as these are the industries with largest numbers of active legal entities (Croatian Bureau of Statistics, 2024).

In the following table, all variables and their planned measurement for this PhD research are outlined as an overview of research operationalisation.

VARIABLE NAME	VARIABLE DEFINITION	MEASUREMENT OF THE VARIABLE
DARK TRIAD	The Dark Triad is composed of three socially aversive components: narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy. Narcissism is connected with egocentric traits, such as self-absorption, sense of grandiosity, uniqueness, entitlement, superiority and need for admiration, and can be considered less aggressive than the other two characteristics. Machiavellianism indicates a propensity to take advantage of and manipulate others. According to Rauthmann (2012) psychopathy is the most negative trait of the Dark Triad with the highest levels	Short Dark Triad Scale: A new and shorter 27-item measure of the Dark Triad traits. Source: Jones & Pauhaus (2014); Jonason, Richardson & Potter (2015) A Likert scale with 5 degrees will be used (1- disagree strongly, 5 – agree strongly)

	<p>of impulsiveness, thrill-seeking, poor behavioral control, and lack of guilt.</p> <p>Sources: Paulhus & Williams (2002); Wallace & Bameister (2002); Rogoza, Kowalski & Schermer (2019); Rauthmann (2012).</p> <p>INDEPENDENT VARIABLE</p>	
<p><i>The Narcissistic Personality Inventory-40 (NPI), Raskin & Hall (1979), Levenson Self-Report Psychopathy Scale (LSRP), Levenson, Kiehl & Fitzpatrick (1995) and Machiavellianism-IV (Mach-IV), Christie & Geis (1970) used for assessing Dark Triad personality traits together have 86 items which is presumed to be too extensive for organizational settings. The Short Dark Triad scale is widely used and shows reliability except that it does not allow examination of lower-order components within psychopathy and narcissism (Jonason, Richardson & Potter, 2015) which is not relevant for this research.</i></p>		
DARK CREATIVITY	<p>It can be defined as creativity that results in harmful consequences. First mention of dark creativity is attributed to McLaren in 1993. In literature, dark creativity can be also found as "negative" (James et al., 1999) or "malevolent" creativity (Cropley et al., 2008). Both denominations include creativity leading to harm but negative creativity assumes the harm created was done accidentally whereas for malevolent creativity it was intentional (Kapoor, 2023).</p> <p>Source: McLaren (1993); James et al. (1999); Cropley et al. (2008); Kapoor (2023).</p> <p>DEPENDENT VARIABLE</p>	<p>A specific unethical marketing task will be developed (possibilities: price increase related, unnecessarily complicated termination of contract or greenwashing related): Participants will be asked to generate as many arguments as possible within three minutes for a planned immense increase in pricing of a specific product. A qualitative aspect will be added to this measure. Participants' answers will additionally be evaluated by two to five independent raters (experienced marketing professionals) based on the bipartite definition of creativity (Example questions: How original you think this idea is on a scale from 1 to 5? and How impactful do you think this idea is on a scale from 1 to 5?). Independent raters will evaluate the answers to provide better understanding of the quality of produced ideas and the measure itself.</p> <p>Source: Palmer et al. (2021).</p>

<p><i>Palmer et al., 2020 unethical marketing task original: "As marketing employees, the employees got an e-mail from the CEO's assistant. Based on Martin Shkreli's Daraprim deal, participants were briefed to generate as many arguments as possible to legitimate an immense increase in the pricing (from 12.99e to 799.99e per pill) of a fictional HIV drug called Pyrizin. The measure for dark creativity comprises the number of arguments generated within three minutes."</i></p>		
CREATIVE SELF-EFFICACY	<p>The belief one has the ability to produce "creative outcomes". The concept is related to as creative self-efficacy which may predict creative performance or can be a significant motivator in individual creative behaviour.</p> <p>Source: Tierney & Farmer (2002, 2011); Ford (1996).</p> <p>MODERATOR VARIABLE</p>	<p>Short Scale of Creative Self is composed of 11 items with six items measuring Creative Self-Efficacy and five items measuring Creative Personal Identity; CSE is often studied together with CPI, but both of the CSE and CPI subscales can be used as stand-alone scales</p> <p>Source: Karwowski (2012); Karwowski, Lebuda & Wisniewska (2018).</p> <p>A Likert scale with 5 degrees will be used (1- disagree strongly, 5 – agree strongly)</p>
POWER STATUS VARIABLE	<p>Power status within an organisation will be used in this research according to Bifactoral Theory of Power where formal power is associated with hierarchy. Decision making in the business context is closely connected to managerial power and power position can contribute to higher creativity.</p> <p>Source: Melia (1984); Melia & Peiro (1984, 2003); Pfeffer (1981); Sligte et al. (2011); Galinsky et al. (2008), Zhang et al. (2015)</p> <p>MODERATOR VARIABLE</p>	<p>Participants will be asked to answer whether their role belongs to lower, middle or high management. Additionally, they will be able to mark if their role is not a managerial one. These answers will be appointed to a low power status group.</p>

Table 1: List of variables for quantitative research

In addition to above mentioned variables, benevolent creativity will also be tested to provide further insight into the dark creativity context and it will be constructed in a similar manner: scenario based ethical marketing task; the number of arguments will comprise the measure for benevolent creativity. At the end of the experiment, to ensure objectivity and reduce social desirability effect, a question will be introduced for participants to rate whether they

find the tasks they completed un/ethical and would they possibly implement it in their organisation. This will provide insight into possible variances between researchers' perception of dark creativity and marketing professionals' one. Participants will also be asked to state their years of experience within marketing industry which will serve to control a possible discrepancy between not holding a managerial role but possibly being an experienced professional in an advisory role with a high impact. Additional control variables that will be checked are company size, industry field (e.g. FMCG), organisational hierarchy type (e.g. horizontal, vertical) and level of decision autonomy.

Analysis

The relationship between the independent and dependent variables of the research model will be quantitatively established using the methods of univariate (sample description), bivariate and multivariate statistical analysis (correlation and hierarchical regression analysis) as well as exploratory factor and confirmatory factor analysis. Also, validity and reliability of identified factors will be analysed. Scenario questions will be analysed quantitatively and qualitatively: number of ideas comprises the measure for dark creativity (Palmer et al., 2020) and ideas will be qualitatively reviewed by 2 to 5 independent marketing professionals in terms of their quality. Idea quality will be reviewed through two questions: level of innovativeness and usefulness of the idea relying on the bipartite definition of creativity.

3.6. Expected scientific contribution of the proposed research

(suggested length: 500 characters with spaces)

This research contributes to the growing body of literature on dark creativity by exploring its relationships with Dark Triad personality traits, power status, and creative self-efficacy in a professional marketing context.

Expected Scientific Contributions

- ~ Advancing theoretical understanding of the relationship between Dark Triad personality traits and dark creativity in the marketing industry, addressing a critical gap in marketing and psychological research.
- ~ Providing a comprehensive review and critical analysis of existing conceptual and empirical studies on dark creativity, its potential for harm, and its relevance in organizational settings.
- ~ Introducing novel variables—creative self-efficacy and power position—as moderators in the relationship between Dark Triad traits and dark creativity.
- ~ Proposing a new conceptual framework to measure and examine the direction and intensity of the impact of Dark Triad traits on dark creativity among marketing professionals.
- ~ Expanding the scope of dark creativity research by applying it to the workplace context, specifically the marketing industry, and highlighting its potential ethical implications and harmful outcomes.
- ~ Contributing to Better Marketing for a Better World research by exploring the ethical challenges posed by dark creativity in marketing and proposing strategies to mitigate its negative consequences.

Expected Methodological Contributions

- ~ Adapting and validating measurement scales for key constructs, including the Short Dark Triad Scale for personality traits, measures for dark creativity, and the Short Scale of Creative Self for creative self-efficacy.
- ~ Designing and testing a robust research model that quantitatively investigates the relationships between personality traits, creative self-efficacy, power position, and dark creativity using advanced statistical methods.
- ~ Developing context-specific scenarios to evaluate dark creativity in marketing professionals, including tasks related to unethical pricing, greenwashing, and contract termination complexity (sludge), supplemented by qualitative assessments from industry experts.

Practical Implications

This research will offer actionable insights for marketing professionals and organizations:

- ~ Raising awareness of the potential harm caused by dark creativity in marketing practices.
- ~ Contributing guidelines to ethical decision-making by identifying psychological and contextual factors that might contribute to harmful creativity in marketing.
- ~ Informing management strategies for fostering creative marketing practices while minimizing negative consequences - balancing innovation with responsibility.

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(no more than 30 references)

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3.7. Total cost estimate of the proposed research
(in HRK)

3.8. Proposed research funding sources

Type of funding	Project name	Project leader	Signature
National funding			
International funding			

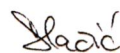
Other project types			
Self-funding			
3.9. Ethics committee meeting at which the research proposal was approved (if applicable)			

CONSENT OF THE PROPOSED SUPERVISOR WITH TOPIC APPROVAL REQUEST

I hereby declare that I agree with the proposed PhD thesis topic.



Professor PhD Joydeep Bhattacharya

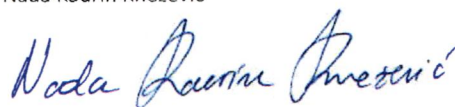


Associate professor PhD Jasmina Dlačić

STATEMENT

I hereby declare that I have not submitted the same PhD thesis topic at any other university.

Nada Kaurin Knežević



Zagreb, 15/01/2025