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Article

Associations Between Basic Personality Traits and the Dark Triad and Risky Sexual Behavior Among Youth

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Abstract: Risky sexual behavior represents a significant public health concern, and examining the factors that contribute to its occurrence among young people has become increasingly important. Personality traits, as defined by Zuckerman's alternative five-factor model (Activity, Aggression-Hostility, Impulsive Sensation Seeking, Neuroticism-Anxiety, Sociability), along with the traits of the Dark Triad (psychopathy, narcissism, and Machiavellianism), are often associated with high-risk behaviors-both in the context of sexual relationships and broader social and emotional conduct. This study aimed to explore the relationship between the basic personality traits of Zuckerman's alternative five-factor model and the of the Dark Triad traits in the context of risky sexual behavior among youth. The sample consisted of 252 participants (204 women and 48 men), with an average age of 24.4 years (SD = 4.67). Data were collected using the Zuckerman-Kuhlman Personality Questionnaire (ZKPQ-50-CC), the Short Dark Triad Scale (SD3), and the Sexual Behavior Measurement Questionnaire (SBM-Q). Results of the hierarchical regression analysis indicated that Dark Triad traits-particularly psychopathy-significantly predicted risky sexual behaviors, including casual sex, relations with unfamiliar partners, and engagement in risky sexual practices. The personality trait of Sensation Seeking, as defined by Zuckerman's model, was found to be a negative predictor of risky sexual behavior. These findings suggest that both Dark Triad traits and basic personality traits play a significant role in shaping the sexual behavior of young individuals, highlighting the importance of early identification and targeted interventions in this domain.

Keywords: basic personality traits; Dark Triad; risky sexual behavior

1. Introduction

Personality is understood as a system of psychological traits and mechanisms that are organized and enduring, situated within the individual, and that influence adaptation to intrapsychic, social, and physical environments [1]. Various theories and models of personality have been proposed. This study examines personality through Zuckerman's alternative five-factor model-a biologically based framework focused on exploring and understanding the nature and origins of fundamental personality traits [2]. Through a series of studies utilizing instruments for assessing basic personality traits, Zuckerman and Kuhlman [3] developed the Zuckerman-Kuhlman Personality Questionnaire (ZKPQ), which identifies five traits:

Activity-a need for general activity, impatience and restlessness, as well as a tendency toward demanding and challenging tasks that require high energy and effort; **2. Aggression-Hostility**-a tendency toward verbal aggression and offensive, inconsiderate, or antisocial behavior; **3. Impulsive Sensation Seeking**-a tendency toward impulsive behavior, poor planning, and a desire for

excitement and risky behaviors, such as substance abuse and risky sexual experiences; 4. **Neuroticism-Anxiety**-emotional instability, tension, worry, indecisiveness, and sensitivity to criticism; 5. **Sociability**-enjoyment of parties, a large circle of friends, and intolerance of social isolation and loneliness [4].

The concept of the Dark Triad of personality was introduced into psychology by Paulhus and Williams [5]. As noted in the literature, this construct emerged from a meta-analysis of studies focused on socially aversive behavior, revealing that various forms of maladaptive and amoral behavior largely stem from three conceptually distinct yet interrelated personality traits: Machiavellianism, subclinical narcissism, and subclinical psychopathy [6]. All three variables within this construct are operationalized dimensionally, meaning that narcissism and psychopathy are regarded as personality traits rather than as clinical disorders. Narcissism refers to an exaggerated tendency to overvalue one's self-worth while simultaneously devaluing others [7]. Individuals with pronounced narcissistic traits are characterized by extreme vanity, egocentrism, arrogance, and a sense of entitlement to special privileges [8]. Machiavellianism, as a personality trait, is marked by a negative view of human nature and a tendency to employ manipulative interpersonal strategies for personal gain [9]. These strategies encompass three core components: cynicism, manipulateness, and the belief that the ends justify the means. Psychopathy, as a personality trait, comprises three key traits: an arrogant and deceitful interpersonal style, emotional coldness and deficits in affective experience, and an impulsive and irresponsible behavioral pattern [9]. Among the three Dark Triad traits, psychopathy is considered the most insidious in nature, as evidenced by a wide range of self-reported and behavioral patterns that indicate various forms of antisocial behavior [5].

Sexual risk behavior is a key factor in the study of sexual activity, as engagement in various forms of risky sexual practices can lead to numerous adverse outcomes [10]. To operationalize the construct of sexual risk behavior, Yunengsih and Setiawan defined it as any sexual behavior that increases the likelihood of a negative outcome from sexual contact [11]. This type of behavior includes unprotected vaginal, anal, or oral sex without the use of male or female condoms, diaphragms, or similar forms of protection (except in long-term monogamous relationships), early sexual activity (especially before the age of 18), engagement in sexual activities with multiple partners or with high-risk partners, as well as exchanging sex (i.e., sex work) for drugs or money [12]. Youth and early adulthood, aged 18 to 29, represent one of the most turbulent and dynamic life phases. Numerous physical, psychological, and emotional changes mark this period. Owing to this dynamic nature, young people often engage in high-risk behaviors-ranging from reckless driving, participation in criminal activities, and substance abuse, to involvement in extreme sports and experimentation in the sexual domain [13]. We considered it important to examine the biological underpinnings of risk-taking behavior and the factors that may contribute to sexual risk-taking. GWAS studies conducted in Europe on a sample of over one million individuals have identified 99 loci associated with general risk tolerance. The findings also suggest that the balance between excitatory and inhibitory neurotransmission may contribute to individual variation in general risk tolerance [14]. Engagement in risky behaviors, along with expectations of positive outcomes from risk-taking, has been positively associated with increased activation of the nucleus accumbens during reward anticipation. A recent study has shown that divergent developmental trajectories of brain networks involved in reward processing (i.e., the ventromedial prefrontal cortex and the ventral striatum) and cognitive control (i.e., the dorsal anterior cingulate cortex and the lateral prefrontal cortex) are linked to increased risk-taking decision-making during adolescence. These findings suggest that interactions between these brain regions may contribute to a bias toward either "risky" or "safe" behavior [15]. There is a significant three-way interaction between amygdala activation, ventral striatum (VS) activation, and changes in the number of sexual partners over time. Although relatively increased VS activation predicted a greater increase in the number of sexual partners in both males and females, in men this effect was conditioned by relatively decreased amygdala activation, while in women the effect was conditioned by relatively increased amygdala activation [16]. Our understanding remains limited regarding how the brain integrates various aspects of decision-making under uncertainty,

particularly when it is influenced by random or contextual variables such as affect or prior experience [17,18]. We identified four themes representing predictors of sexual risk behavior among youth: the influence of media on norms (affecting sexual behavior, relationships, and body image), the transition to adulthood (independence, social opportunities), communication difficulties (gender and sexual differences, greater fear of pregnancy than of sexually transmitted infections), and impulsive behavior (disinhibition, substance use) [19]. Early research also suggests that the use of dating applications is a key risk factor for engagement in sexual risk behavior among young people [29].

2. Materials and Methods

Modern society, characterized by rapid social change, digitalization, and the constant availability of information, has contributed to the rise of various forms of high-risk behaviors, particularly among young people. One of the most significant forms of such behavior is sexual risk behavior, which can have numerous adverse consequences for an individual's physical and mental health. Although the literature has identified a range of factors that may contribute to the development of such behavior, there remains a need for a deeper understanding of the internal (psychological) predictors underlying these actions. This research specifically focuses on examining the role of personality traits and dark personality characteristics (the Dark Triad) in predicting sexual risk behavior among young adults. Zuckerman's personality model offers insights into biologically grounded traits such as impulsivity and sensation seeking, which may be associated with a predisposition toward risky behavior. On the other hand, the Dark Triad traits-narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy-are linked to emotional coldness, manipulateness, and socially deviant behavior patterns, which may also influence engagement in risky sexual activities. In light of the above, the central problem of this study can be formulated as the need to determine the extent to which personality traits, as defined by Zuckerman's Alternative Five-Factor Model, and traits of the Dark Triad contribute to the explanation and prediction of sexual risk behavior among young individuals aged 18 to 29.

Previous research has shown that the traits of the Alternative Five-Factor Model (AFFM) of personality, proposed by Zuckerman and colleagues, are significantly correlated with various forms of risk-taking behavior. A study by Kumar and Singh (2015) examined the relationship between five personality traits (Impulsive Sensation Seeking, Neuroticism-Anxiety, Aggression-Hostility, Sociability, and Activity) and five domains of risky behavior: financial, health and safety, recreational, social, and ethical. The results indicated that Impulsive Sensation Seeking was positively correlated with risky behaviors in the financial, health, and social domains, and with the overall score on the risk-taking behavior scale. In contrast, the traits of Neuroticism-Anxiety and Aggression-Hostility showed negative correlations with the health and overall domains of risky behavior. Furthermore, the traits of Activity and Sociability demonstrated significant positive correlations with all domains of risky behavior and with the overall score [21].

Additionally, the Dark Triad of personality traits is strongly associated with sexual risk behavior, as these traits foster tendencies toward impulsivity, manipulation, and a lack of responsibility for the consequences of one's actions. Individuals with high levels of narcissism, psychopathy, and Machiavellianism may be more prone to engaging in sexual, social, and health-related risks, driven by their pursuit of self-fulfillment, control, and gratification of their needs-often at the expense of others [22].

Motivated by these findings, the present study aimed to examine whether the basic personality traits from the Alternative Five-Factor Model (Activity, Aggression-Hostility, Impulsive Sensation Seeking, Neuroticism-Anxiety, and Sociability), together with the Dark Triad traits (Machiavellianism, Narcissism, and Psychopathy), significantly predict the occurrence of sexual risk behavior in youth. The sexual risk behaviors assessed include: sexual risk with casual partners, risky sexual activity, impulsive sexual behaviors, risky anal sexual activity, and the intention to engage in risky sexual activities.

The following instruments were used in the present study:

The **Zuckerman-Kuhlman Personality Questionnaire (ZKPQ-50-CC)** was employed to assess the basic personality traits according to the Zuckerman-Kuhlman personality model [23]. The questionnaire consists of 50 items evenly distributed across five traits: Activity, Aggression-Hostility, Impulsive Sensation Seeking, Neuroticism-Anxiety, and Sociability. The internal consistency of the scales, expressed via Cronbach's alpha coefficient, ranged from $\alpha = .70$ to $\alpha = .78$. The **Serbian adaptation of the Short Dark Triad scale (SD3)** [24] consists of 27 items, with 9 measuring each of the three personality traits: **Machiavellianism**-characterized by manipulateness, cynicism, and an instrumental approach to interpersonal relationships; **Narcissism**-marked by grandiosity, a sense of superiority, and the need for admiration; **Psychopathy**-defined by emotional coldness, impulsivity, and a tendency toward antisocial behavior. The reliability of the subscales is satisfactory, with Cronbach's alpha values of $\alpha = .77$ for Machiavellianism, $\alpha = .71$ for Narcissism, and $\alpha = .76$ for Psychopathy. **Sexual Risk Questionnaire**-This measurement instrument was developed to assess the frequency of sexual risk behaviors among young people over the past six months. The questionnaire consists of 23 items distributed across five subscales: **Sexual risk with casual partners**, Risky sexual activity, Impulsive sexual behavior, Risky anal sexual behavior, Engagement in risky sexual behavior. The reliability of the individual subscales, as measured by Cronbach's alpha, ranged from $\alpha = .63$ to $\alpha = .84$ [25].

The sample consisted of 252 young individuals (48 male and 204 female participants), with a mean age of $M = 24.4$ years ($SD = 4.67$). The study was conducted entirely anonymously, using an online format via Google Forms, and posed no harm to the physical or mental well-being of the participants.

3. Results

Table 1. Model Fit for Hierarchical Regression Predicting Sexual Risk with Casual Partners.

Model	R	R ²	Adj. R ²	F (df)	p	ΔR^2	ΔF (df)	Δp
1	.302	0.091	.073	4.95 (5, 246)	.000	—	—	—
2	.303	0.092	.070	4.13 (6, 245)	.001	.001	4.13 (1, 245)	.723
3	.309	0.095	.069	3.67 (7, 244)	.001	.003	3.67 (1, 244)	.335
4	.379	0.144	.116	5.11 (8, 243)	.000	.049	13.79 (1, 243)	.000

Table 2. Significant Predictors of Sexual Risk with Casual Partners.

Model	Predictor	B	SE	β	t	P
1	Aggression-Hostility	-0.423	0.179	-0.134	-2.36	.042
2	Impulsive Sensation Seeking	-0.422	0.13	-0.195	-3.25	.004
3	Aggression-Hostility	-0.364	0.179	-0.134	-2.03	.043
3	Impulsive Sensation Seeking	-0.378	0.13	-0.193	-2.9	.004
4	Impulsive Sensation Seeking	-0.263	0.129	-0.14	-2.08	.039
4	Psychopathy	0.288	0.078	0.278	3.71	.000

A hierarchical regression analysis was conducted to examine the contribution of personality traits and Dark Triad traits in predicting sexual behavior with casual partners.

Model 1, which included the five personality traits based on the Zuckerman-Kuhlman Personality Questionnaire (ZKPQ), explained **9.1% of the variance** in sexual risk behavior with casual partners ($R^2 = .091$, $p < .001$). Significant **negative predictors** in this model were **Aggression-Hostility** ($\beta = -0.134$, $p = .042$) and **Impulsive Sensation Seeking** ($\beta = -0.195$, $p = .004$), indicating that lower levels of these traits were associated with greater engagement in sexual activity with casual partners.

In **Model 2**, **Machiavellianism** was added as a predictor. However, this addition did **not significantly improve the model** ($p = .723$). Aggression-Hostility and Impulsive Sensation Seeking remained significant predictors, while **Neuroticism-Anxiety** approached significance ($p = .095$).

Model 3 tested the inclusion of **Narcissism**, which also did **not significantly contribute** to the explanation of variance ($p = .335$). **Impulsive Sensation Seeking** continued to emerge as a significant negative predictor.

Model 4 revealed that the inclusion of **Psychopathy** significantly improved the model ($\Delta R^2 = .053$, $p < .001$). In the final model, **Psychopathy** emerged as the **strongest positive predictor** of sexual risk behavior with casual partners ($\beta = 0.278$, $p < .001$), while **Impulsive Sensation Seeking** remained a significant **negative predictor** ($\beta = -0.140$, $p = .039$).

These results suggest that although certain personality traits such as impulsivity and aggression may play a role in sexual risk behavior, the presence of psychopathic traits may be a more robust predictor, highlighting the importance of emotional detachment and disregard for consequences in risky sexual decision-making.

Table 3. Model Fit for Hierarchical Regression Predicting Impulsive Sexual Behavior.

Model	R	R ²	Adj. R ²	F(df)	p	ΔR ²	ΔF(df)	Δp
1	.306	.094	.075	5.08 (5, 246)	.000	–	–	–
2	.336	.113	.091	5.21 (6, 245)	.000	.019	5.38 (1, 245)	.021
3	.350	.122	.097	4.86 (7, 244)	.000	.009	2.57 (1, 244)	.110
4	.419	.175	.148	6.46 (8, 243)	.000	.053	15.61 (1, 243)	.000

Table 4. Significant Regression Coefficients of Predictors of Impulsive Sexual Behavior.

Model	Predictor	B	SE	β	t	P
1	Aggression-Hostility	-0.423	0.179	-0.155	-2.36	.019
	Impulsive Sensation Seeking	-0.422	0.130	-0.216	-3.25	.001
2	Aggression-Hostility	-0.364	0.179	-0.134	-2.03	.043
	Impulsive Sensation Seeking	-0.378	0.130	-0.193	-2.90	.004
	Machiavellianism	0.111	0.048	0.145	2.32	.021
3	Impulsive Sensation Seeking	-0.354	0.131	-0.181	-2.71	.007
4	Impulsive Sensation Seeking	-0.263	0.129	-0.135	-2.04	.042
	Psychopathy	0.229	0.058	0.290	3.95	.000

A hierarchical regression analysis was conducted to examine the contribution of personality traits and Dark Triad traits in predicting impulsive sexual behavior.

Model 1, which included the five personality traits from the Zuckerman-Kuhlman Personality Questionnaire (ZKPQ), explained **9.4% of the variance** in impulsive sexual behavior ($R^2 = .094$, $p < .001$). Significant **negative predictors** in this model were **Aggression-Hostility** ($\beta = -0.155$, $p = .019$) and **Impulsive Sensation Seeking** ($\beta = -0.216$, $p = .001$), suggesting that lower levels of these traits are associated with a greater tendency toward impulsive sexual behavior.

In **Model 2**, the inclusion of **Machiavellianism** led to a **significant improvement in model fit** ($\Delta R^2 = .019$, $p = .021$), with **Machiavellianism** emerging as a **significant positive predictor** ($\beta = 0.145$, $p = .021$), alongside Aggression-Hostility and Impulsive Sensation Seeking.

Model 3, which added **Narcissism**, did not yield a statistically significant improvement in the model ($p = .110$).

In **Model 4**, the addition of **Psychopathy** significantly enhanced the model's explanatory power ($\Delta R^2 = .053$, $p < .001$). In the final model, **Psychopathy** emerged as the **strongest positive predictor** of impulsive sexual behavior ($\beta = 0.290$, $p < .001$), while **Impulsive Sensation Seeking** remained a significant **negative predictor** ($\beta = -0.135$, $p = .042$).

These findings underscore the importance of both dispositional traits and socially aversive personality characteristics in understanding impulsive sexual tendencies in young adults.

Table 5. Model Fit for Hierarchical Regression Predicting Risky Anal Sexual Behavior.

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	F (df)	p	ΔR^2	ΔF (df)	Δp
1	0.228	0.052	0.033	2.705 (5, 246)	0.021	—	—	—
2	0.234	0.055	0.031	2.355 (6, 245)	0.031	0.001	4.13 (1, 245)	0.723
3	0.235	0.055	0.028	2.041 (7, 244)	0.051	0.001	3.67 (1, 244)	0.335
4	0.3	0.09	0.06	3.006 (8, 243)	0.003	0.035	9.280 (1, 243)	0.003

Table 6. Significant Regression Coefficients of Predictors of Risky Anal Sexual Behavior.

Model	Predictor	B	SE	β	t	P
1	Impulsive Sensation Seeking	-0.143	0.06	-0.162	-2.386	0.018
2	Impulsive Sensation Seeking	-0.15	0.061	-0.17	-2.475	0.014
3	Impulsive Sensation Seeking	-0.153	0.061	-0.174	-2.505	0.013
4	Impulsive Sensation Seeking	-0.12	0.061	-0.136	-1.964	0.051
	Psychopathy	0.084	0.027	0.235	3.046	0.003

A hierarchical regression analysis was conducted to examine the contribution of personality traits and Dark Triad traits in predicting risky anal sexual behavior.

Model 1, which included the five personality traits from the Zuckerman-Kuhlman Personality Questionnaire (ZKPQ), explained **5.2% of the variance** ($R^2 = 0.052$, $p = .021$). A significant **negative predictor** in this model was **Impulsive Sensation Seeking** ($\beta = -0.162$, $p = .018$), suggesting that lower levels of impulsivity were associated with higher levels of risky anal sexual behavior.

In **Model 2**, **Machiavellianism** was added as a predictor, but this did **not result in a statistically significant improvement** in model fit ($\Delta R^2 = 0.001$, $p = .723$). **Impulsive Sensation Seeking** remained a significant negative predictor, while **Aggression-Hostility** ($\beta = -0.134$, $p = .043$) also emerged as a significant negative predictor. **Machiavellianism** was non-significant predictor ($p = .430$), and **Neuroticism-Anxiety** remained non-significant predictor ($p = .154$).

Model 3 confirmed that **Impulsive Sensation Seeking** ($\beta = -0.174, p = .013$) continued to be a significant negative predictor of risky anal sexual behavior. The addition of **Narcissism** did not significantly contribute to the model ($p = .655$).

Model 4 showed that including **Psychopathy** significantly improved the model fit ($\Delta R^2 = 0.035, p = .003$). In the final model, **Psychopathy** emerged as a significant **positive predictor** ($\beta = 0.235, p = .003$), while **Impulsive Sensation Seeking** remained a marginally significant **negative predictor** ($\beta = -0.136, p = .051$).

These findings suggest that individuals exhibiting higher levels of psychopathic traits may be more likely to engage in risky anal sexual behavior, while lower impulsivity and aggression levels may also be associated with increased risk in this domain, potentially due to sensation-seeking through unconventional or extreme experiences.

Table 7. Model Fit for Hierarchical Regression Predicting Intentions to Engage in Sexual Behaviors.

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	F (df)	p	ΔR^2	ΔF (df)	Δp
1	0.231	0.054	0.034	2.785 (5, 246)	0.018	—	—	—
2	0.251	0.063	0.04	2.735 (6, 245)	0.014	0.009	2.404 (1, 245)	0.122
3	0.261	0.068	0.041	2.539 (7, 244)	0.015	0.005	1.342 (1, 244)	0.248
4	0.332	0.11	0.081	3.764 (8, 243)	0	0.042	11.571 (1, 243)	0.001

Table 8. Significant Regression Coefficients of Predictors of Intentions to Engage in Sexual Behaviors.

Model	Predictor	B	SE	β	t	p
1	Impulsive Sensation Seeking	-0.138	0.047	-0.201	-2.964	0.003
2	Impulsive Sensation Seeking	-0.128	0.047	-0.186	-2.713	0.007
3	Impulsive Sensation Seeking	-0.122	0.047	-0.177	-2.566	0.011
4	Impulsive Sensation Seeking	-0.093	0.047	-0.135	-1.972	0.05
	Psychopathy	0.072	0.021	0.259	3.402	0.001

Hierarchical regression analysis was conducted to examine the contribution of personality traits and Dark Triad traits in predicting the intention to engage in sexual behaviors. Model 1 explained 5.4% of the variance in intention to engage in sexual behavior ($R^2 = .054, p = .018$). A significant negative predictor in this model was Impulsive Sensation Seeking ($\beta = -0.201, p = .003$). Model 2 included Machiavellianism, but the improvement in the model was not statistically significant ($p = .122$). Impulsive Sensation Seeking remained a significant negative predictor ($\beta = -0.186, p = .007$). Model 3 confirmed that Impulsive Sensation Seeking continued to be a negative predictor ($\beta = -0.177, p = .011$), while the addition of narcissism did not significantly contribute to the explained variance ($p = .248$). Model 4 incorporated psychopathy, which significantly improved the model ($\Delta R^2 = .053, p < .001$). In the final model, psychopathy emerged as the strongest positive predictor ($\beta = 0.259, p = .001$), while Impulsive Sensation Seeking remained a negative predictor ($\beta = -0.135, p = .050$).

4. Discussion

This study was based on the assumption that basic personality traits and Dark Triad traits predict the occurrence of risky sexual behavior.

Using hierarchical regression analysis, results indicated that individuals with pronounced psychopathic traits are more likely to engage in risky sexual behaviors involving casual, unfamiliar, or untested partners, as well as in risky anal sexual behaviors, including unprotected anal intercourse and anal penetration without protection. Psychopathy is characterized by emotional detachment, manipulateness, the impulsive pursuit of gratification, unpredictability, and antisocial behavior [26]. Individuals with pronounced psychopathic tendencies lack empathy, show irresponsible behavior, and tend to exploit others. Among all Dark Triad traits, psychopathy is most consistently associated with antisocial and delinquent behavior, demonstrating the strongest inclination toward

destructive manifestations. It represents a constellation of traits perceived by society as the “darkest” or most socially deviant.

We find it necessary to clarify the distinction between restricted and unrestricted individuals. *Unrestricted individuals* (i.e., individuals with unrestricted sociosexuality) are those who tend to adopt a less constrained approach to sexual relationships and intimacy. They are generally open to engaging with a larger number of partners and are more likely to participate in sexual relations without requiring deep emotional bonds. In contrast, *restricted individuals* (i.e., individuals with restricted sociosexuality) prefer long-term, emotionally intimate relationships and seek higher levels of emotional attachment and commitment. Unrestricted individuals tend to follow faster life strategies, characterized by early sexual initiation, a greater number of sexual partners, and a lower aversion to risk [27]. Moreover, with the increase in impulsive sexual behavior, there is a corresponding rise in sociosexual behaviors, attitudes, desires, and overall sexual orientation. This suggests that impulsive sexual behavior is linked to an unrestricted sociosexual orientation, marked by a willingness to engage in sexual relations without emotional closeness or commitment.

Taking these findings into account, it becomes evident that unrestricted individuals, that is, those who score higher on sociosexuality scales, also demonstrate a higher degree of risky sexual behavior [28,29]. Similar results have been observed in other studies. When examining maladaptive behavior among non-incarcerated individuals, researchers found that Dark Triad traits reliably predict aggressive behavior, risk-taking tendencies, and impulsive reactions [30,31]. These traits have also been linked to social dominance, promiscuity, competitiveness, and the pursuit of high-status positions [32]. Furthermore, individuals high in these traits often exhibit a pronounced tendency toward self-promotion, dominance, manipulateness, emotional coldness, a sense of superiority, and duplicity [33]. A high score on the psychopathy scale is also negatively associated with advanced levels of moral development [34,35]. On the other hand, an unexpected result was that the Impulsive Sensation Seeking personality trait, from Zuckerman’s Alternative Five-Factor Model of Personality, emerged as a negative predictor of risky sexual behavior. Given that the sample consisted of young individuals, we attempted to interpret this finding within the context of age-related factors and peer influence. Specifically, during this developmental period, young people are expected to assume greater responsibility for their own lives, detach from parental authority, and begin making important life decisions independently. Compared to older individuals, youth show a greater tendency to engage in risky sexual behaviors, partly due to the natural decline in sexual activity with age. Several factors contribute to this pattern of behavior—including limited or inaccurate knowledge about sexuality, as well as underdeveloped social skills needed for negotiating mutual decisions in intimate relationships, such as contraceptive use. Additionally, peer pressure can play a significant role in encouraging such behavior [36]. Difficulties in communication with parents also arise. Adolescents typically avoid discussing their sexuality with their parents, while parents often do not perceive their children as being at an age where sexuality is a relevant or necessary topic [37]. Since peer approval is crucial for social inclusion and group belonging, adolescents may engage in risky sexual behaviors primarily to conform to social norms and expectations within their peer groups. Therefore, conformism is also one of the driving factors behind risky sexual behavior [38].

5. Conclusions

Personality traits play a significant role in the prediction of risky sexual behaviors. Our findings hold considerable importance for both theoretical and practical applications, as they examine specific maladaptive personality traits as predictors of various forms of sexting. The development of prevention programs aimed at reducing the consequences of risky sexual behavior can be based on the psychological characteristics of young people. As a future direction for research, it would be advisable to determine whether the findings of this study are applicable across different cultural contexts [39].

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