The Association between the Dark Triad, Mental Well-Being and Cyberbullying Intentions
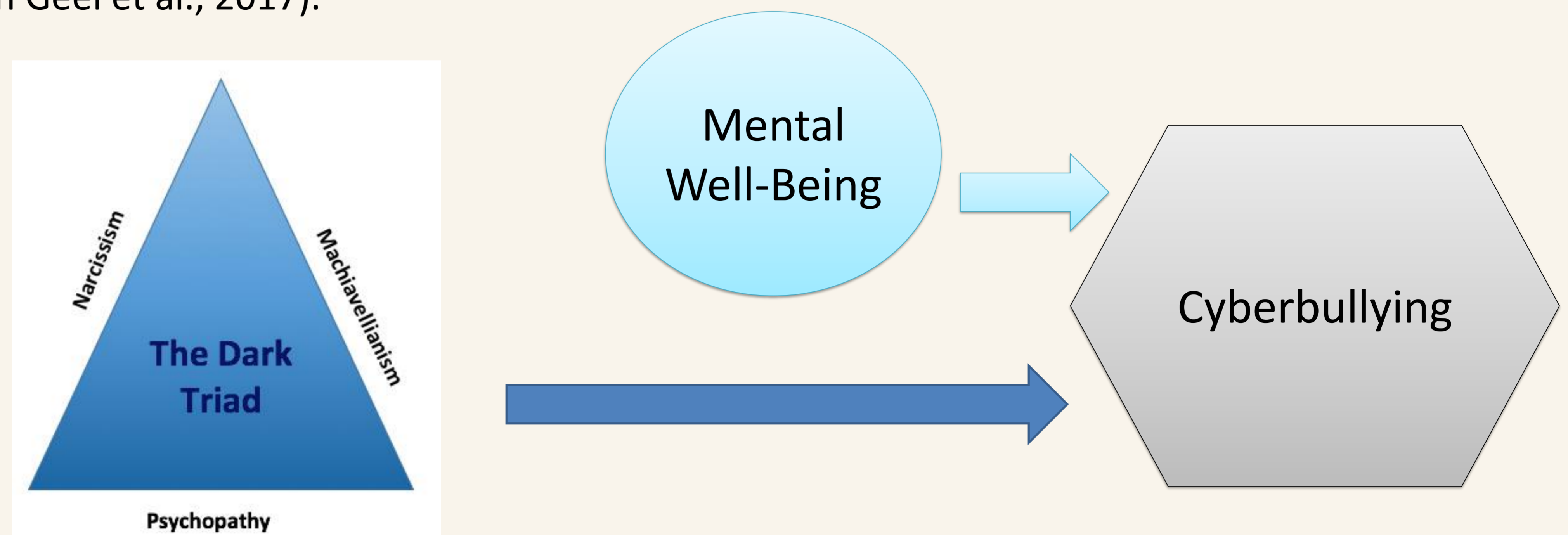
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Background

- Cyberbullying is one of the major issues in Malaysia: more than 40% of young people have experience of cyberbullying and 34% reported to perform online acts that could be considered as cyberbullying (Balakrishnan, 2015).
- Several studies indicate that depression, mental health issues and individual hostile behaviour may contribute to cyberbullying intentions (e.g., Kerig & Stellwagen, 2009; Peeters et al., 2009; Wang et al., 2011).
- The Dark Triad personality traits have been identified as a powerful predictor of cyberbullying actions (Balakrishnan et al., 2019; Goodboy & Martin, 2015; van Geel et al., 2017).

Aim of this study

To determine relationships between the **Dark Triad** personality traits, mental **well-being** and **cyberbullying intentions** among Malaysians

Methods

Participants

- 124 Malaysian participants (77 females; 47 males), aged 19 years old to 29 years old (M = 22.98, SD = 2.55).

Materials

1. The Short Dark Triad questionnaire (Jones & Paulhus, 2014) with three subscales:
   - Machiavellianism;
   - Narcissism;
   - Psychopathy.
2. Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale (Tennant et al., 2007).
3. The cyberbullying perpetration measure (Wong et al., 2014).

Design & Procedure

1. Quantitative research design implemented through an online survey.
2. Convenience and snowball sampling techniques were used.
3. Participants were recruited through social media (e.g. Facebook, Instagram) and after reading the information sheet and providing the consent, completed the survey.

Results

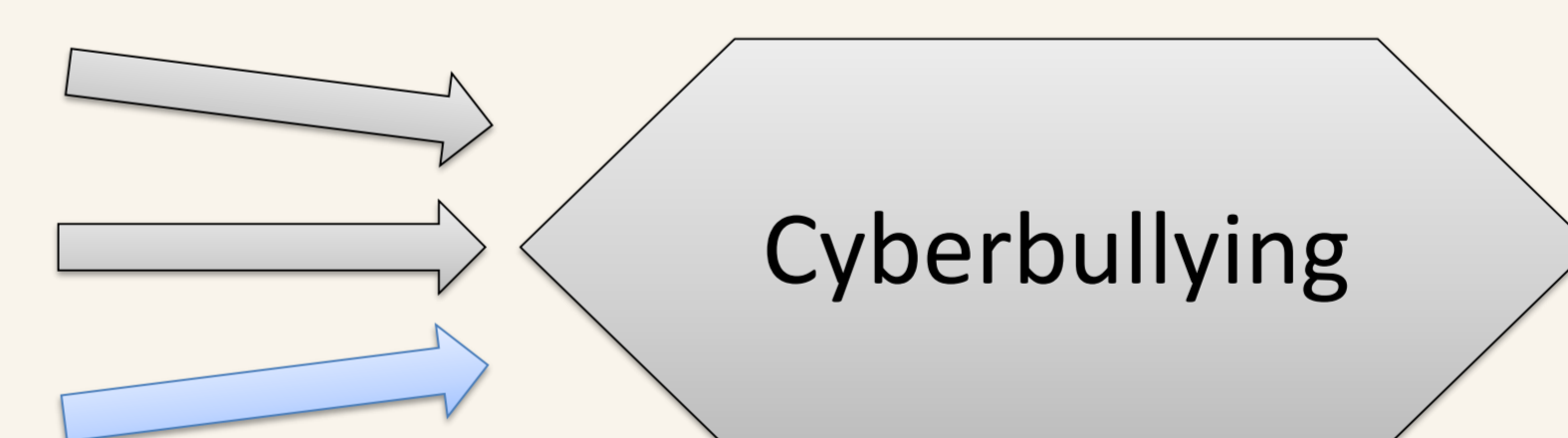Table 1. *Pearson correlations between Dark Triad, Well-being and Cyberbullying*

Cyberbullying	r	p
Total Dark Triad	.50	<.001
Machiavellianism	.39	<.001
Narcissism	.18	.04
Psychopathy	.57	<.001
Well-being	.09	.31

Machiavellianism (β= .13, p = .17)

Narcissism (β= .07, p = .43)

Psychopathy (β= .52, p = <.001)

Cyberbullying

- Positive correlations were found between the total Dark Triad score, Machiavellianism, Narcissism, Psychopathy and Cyberbullying.
- There was no correlation between Mental Well-being and Cyberbullying Intentions.
- Multiple regression showed that the Dark Triad predicts cyberbullying intention with R=.58, R^2=.33, F(3, 120) = 18.84, p < .001.
- Dark Triad personality predicted 33.2% variability in cyberbullying intentions.
- Psychopathy is the most powerful predictor of cyberbullying intentions.

Discussion

- The research showed that individuals who score high in the Dark Triad would potentially carry out the act of cyberbullying intentions.
- It is necessary to explore other potential factors the may prevent cyberbullying or increase a chance of onset of this behaviour, e.g. emotional intelligence, self-esteem or peer influence.
- School counsellors may use the Dark Triad measurement to identify potential at-risk individuals. An intervention could be implemented in order to reduce the cyberbullying rate in Malaysia.

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