The Duality of Darkness: When Brands Go Bad (or Not) Depending on Who is Watching

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Paper from the 54th Annual EMAC Conference, Madrid, Spain, May 25-30, 2025

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This research investigates how Dark Triad brand personalities—brand narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy—impact brand trust and consumer punishment intentions, considering the moderating roles of self-congruence and consumers' own Dark Triad traits. A pre-study and two empirical studies were conducted: Study 1 shows self-congruence can mitigate the detrimental effects of Dark Triad brand personality on brand trust. Study 2 extends these findings, revealing that consumers with high Dark Triad traits are surprisingly more inclined to punish brands with similar traits despite their congruence. This research contributes to the literature by demonstrating that the impact of a Dark Triad brand personality is not uniformly negative but moderated by individual differences. This nuanced understanding has key implications for marketers, enabling them to proactively identify and address consumer segments likely to punish Dark brands.