# Study Links Phone Use While Driving to Dark Personality Traits



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Researchers from the University of Regensburg have identified a correlation between the use of mobile phones while driving and certain dark personality traits. The study, which surveyed 989 German drivers, specifically linked this habit to traits like narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy.

**Key Findings:**

* Psychopathic Traits: Individuals scoring high in psychopathy were found to be a third more likely to have committed a traffic offence in the past year. They also showed less guilt about using their phones while driving.
* Narcissism and Machiavellianism: Respondents with elevated levels of narcissism also exhibited increased phone use and lower levels of remorse. Those with Machiavellian traits often hid their phone usage.
* Driving Offences: The probability of having committed a traffic offence rose significantly with higher psychopathy scores. For example, a score of 4.33 correlates with a 56% chance of committing a traffic offence, according to the researchers’ model.

The study, published in PLOS One, also discovered that problematic smartphone use (PSU) was the strongest predictor of phone use while driving, independent of personality traits. This aligns with data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, showing that 3,142 people in the U.S. died in car crashes in 2019, with 422 deaths linked to phone distractions.

The findings suggest that while dark personality traits can influence dangerous driving behaviors, targeting PSU might be an effective public safety intervention.

**Study Details:**

* **Participants:** 989 drivers from Germany.
* **Method:** Surveys scoring dark triad traits (scale of 1-5) and assessing phone use while driving.
* **Publication:** PLOS One

For further understanding, the researchers emphasize that PSU’s impact on driving is considerable and reducing such behavior may improve road safety overall.