



## The two faces of Narcissus? An empirical comparison of the Narcissistic Personality Inventory and the Pathological Narcissism Inventory

Kendal Maxwell<sup>a</sup>, M. Brent Donnellan<sup>b,\*</sup>, Christopher J. Hopwood<sup>b</sup>, Robert A. Ackerman<sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Eastern Michigan University, MI 48197, USA

<sup>b</sup> Michigan State University, MI 48824-1116, USA

### ARTICLE INFO

#### Article history:

Received 7 June 2010

Received in revised form 17 November 2010

Accepted 26 November 2010

Available online 30 December 2010

#### Keywords:

Narcissism

Narcissistic Personality Inventory

Pathological Narcissism Inventory

Self-esteem

Personality assessment

### ABSTRACT

Areas of convergence and divergence between the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI; Raskin & Terry, 1988) and the Pathological Narcissism Inventory (PNI; Pincus et al., 2009) were evaluated in a sample of 586 college students. Summary scores for the NPI and PNI were not strongly correlated ( $r = .22$ ) but correlations between certain subscales of these two inventories were larger (e.g.,  $r = .71$  for scales measuring Exploitativeness). Both measures had a similar level of correlation with the Narcissistic Personality Disorder scale from the Personality Diagnostic Questionnaire-4 (Hyler, 1994) ( $r = .40$  and  $.35$ , respectively). The NPI and PNI diverged, however, with respect to their associations with Explicit Self-Esteem. Self-esteem was negatively associated with the PNI but positively associated with the NPI ( $r = -.34$  versus  $r = .26$ ). Collectively, the results highlight the need for precision when discussing the personality characteristics associated with narcissism.

© 2010 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

### 1. Introduction

The appropriate conceptualization and measurement of narcissism generates intense debate (e.g., Brown, Budzek, & Tamborski, 2009; Cain, Pincus, & Ansell, 2008; Miller & Campbell, 2008; Pincus & Lukowitsky, 2010; Rosenthal & Hooley, 2010). One contentious issue concerns the distinction between normal and pathological narcissism. Normal narcissism reflects seemingly healthy expressions of self-enhancement whereas pathological narcissism reflects clinically significant impairments stemming from a brittle sense of self (Pincus et al., 2009). Pincus and his colleagues suggest the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI; Raskin & Terry, 1988), the most popular measure of the construct in social/personality psychology (Cain et al., 2008), assesses normal narcissism whereas their newly developed Pathological Narcissism Inventory (PNI; Pincus et al., 2009) assesses pathological narcissism. The objective of the present study is to provide additional data on these two approaches for measuring narcissistic attributes. In particular, we evaluate how these inventories are related to each other and how these inventories relate to criterion-related variables including symptoms of narcissistic personality disorder (NPD) and Explicit Self-Esteem.

#### 1.1. Background and measurement issues

Arrogance, feelings of entitlement, and grandiosity are key manifestations of narcissism across different theoretical accounts (e.g., Millon, 1996; Pincus & Lukowitsky, 2010; Rhodewalt & Peterson, 2009). There are disagreements, however, regarding other attributes associated with narcissism. One such disagreement concerns whether narcissistic individuals are emotionally brittle and insecure. In particular, there are differing perspectives concerning the connections between self-esteem and narcissism (e.g., Horvath & Morf, 2010). For instance, some have argued that the construct of narcissism itself involves high self-esteem (e.g., Miller & Campbell, 2008) whereas other scholars disagree (see Rosenthal & Hooley, 2010). Empirically, self-report self-esteem measures tend to be positively associated with the NPI summary score (e.g.,  $r = .29$ ; Trzesniewski, Donnellan, & Robins, 2008). However, it is sometimes overlooked that Explicit Self-Esteem appears to have different relations with the various aspects of personality measured by the NPI (see Trzesniewski et al., 2008).

To be sure, some researchers have argued the NPI contains a “confusing mix of adaptive and maladaptive content” (Cain et al., 2008, p. 643). This criticism is supported by factor analytic research showing there are multiple dimensions of personality embedded within the NPI (e.g., Ackerman et al., in press; Cory, Merritt, Mrug, & Pamp, 2008; Emmons, 1987). The competing factor solutions for the NPI create practical concerns in terms of which solution should be used in research. There is no consensus on this issue so we use two of the proposed structures for this inventory –

\* Corresponding author. Address: Department of Psychology, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI 48824-1116, USA. Tel.: +1 517 432 8392; fax: +1 517 432 2476.

E-mail address: [donnel59@msu.edu](mailto:donnel59@msu.edu) (M.B. Donnellan).

the original 7-component solution identified by the creators of the NPI (Authority, Exhibitionism, Superiority, Entitlement, Exploitativeness, Self-Sufficiency, and Vanity; Raskin & Terry, 1988) and the newly identified 3-factor solution forwarded by Ackerman and his colleagues (in press) (Leadership/Authority, Grandiose Exhibitionism, and Entitlement/Exploitativeness).

Both factor solutions separate NPI content related to leadership and social potency from feelings of entitlement and a willingness to manipulate others. This can help to distinguish the adaptive NPI content from the maladaptive content (see Barry, Frick, & Killian, 2003). The Raskin and Terry solution is more established in the literature whereas the Ackerman et al. solution is more recent. The Ackerman et al. solution is perhaps more useful because it is simpler and still preserves distinctions between grandiosity and entitlement. This is important in light of recent theoretical arguments suggesting a difference between interpersonal manifestations of narcissism related to feelings of entitlement and intrapersonal manifestations of narcissism related to feelings of self-importance (Brown et al., 2009). The former might be especially socially toxic and Ackerman et al. (in press) found their Entitlement/Exploitativeness scale was consistently linked with maladaptive outcomes such as roommate dissatisfaction and psychopathic tendencies. This scale was also related to low self-esteem.

Accordingly, low self-esteem may help identify pathological manifestations of narcissism. Indeed, pathological narcissism is thought to be rooted in psychological vulnerabilities related to maladaptive self-regulation processes. Further, there are grandiose and vulnerable expressions of this construct (Pincus & Lukowitsky, 2010; Pincus et al., 2009; Wright, Lukowitsky, Pincus, & Conroy, 2010). Narcissistic grandiosity, strongly emphasized in the DSM-IV description of NPD (American Psychiatric Association, 1994), is characterized by feelings of entitlement, a sense of superiority, and exploitative behaviors. Narcissistic vulnerability, in contrast, "... involves the conscious experience of helplessness, emptiness, low self-esteem, and shame" (Pincus et al. 2009, p. 367). Pincus and his colleagues (2009) developed the self-report PNI to assess seven dimensions of personality associated with pathological narcissism. Wright et al. (2010) recently confirmed a structure for the PNI that distinguishes elements of pathological narcissism related to themes of grandiosity (indicated by the subscales of Exploitativeness, Self-Sacrificing Self-Enhancement, and Grandiose Fantasy subscales) from those related to vulnerability (indicated by the Entitlement Rage, Contingent Self-Esteem, Hiding the Self, and Devaluing subscales).

## 1.2. Present study

As it stands, more information is needed to better understand the areas of convergence and divergence between the NPI and PNI. The NPI is widely used in social/personality psychology and researchers have articulated the nomological network for the NPI summary score (for a recent review, see Ackerman et al., in press). For instance, the NPI summary score is correlated with Extraversion, low Agreeableness, and counterproductive behaviors (Ackerman et al., in press). The recently developed PNI is not as well established in the literature as the NPI but there is emerging evidence for the validity of this measure. For example, PNI summary scores predicted the use of primitive defenses, identity diffusion, and impaired reality testing, consistent with the prediction that the measure is sensitive to clinically relevant personality pathology (Pincus et al., 2009). Moreover, scores on the PNI were associated with clinically related outcomes such as suicide attempts and the use of psychiatric medications in a small clinical sample (Pincus et al., 2009).

Consistent with previous work, we expect only a small to modest association between summary scores for the NPI and PNI (around  $r = .13$ ; Pincus et al., 2009). In contrast, we expect stronger overlap between the NPI and the PNI for those scales that reflect more socially toxic elements of personality. In addition to evaluating convergence across inventories, we provide further insight into the connections between the NPI and PNI by embedding both inventories in a nomological net that includes symptoms of narcissistic personality disorder, Explicit Self-Esteem, and Counter Productive School Behavior. The use of a measure of NPD symptoms will help us evaluate whether the NPI measures pathological content. In the present study, these symptoms are measured by the self-report NPD scale from the Personality Diagnostic Questionnaire-4 (Hyler, 1994), a well-used assessment tool in the clinical literature modeled on DSM-IV criteria (see Miller & Campbell, 2008). Here we expect to find both the NPI and the PNI relate to the NPD scale. In terms of connections with Explicit Self-Esteem, we expect a modest positive association for the NPI and a negative association for the PNI. Further, we expect the association between the PNI and low self-esteem will be driven by vulnerable manifestations of pathological narcissism given research and theoretical claims by Pincus et al. (2009). For counterproductive behavior, we expect generally positive associations for the NPI and PNI subscales reflecting entitlement and exploitation.

## 2. Method

### 2.1. Participants

Data were drawn from the responses of 597 college students from a large Midwestern University who completed questionnaires in exchange for course credit or extra credit during the fall semester of 2009. Data from 10 participants were discarded because they failed to answer affirmatively to a final question "I answered all of these questions honestly." Moreover, 1 participant did not complete any of the narcissism items and was removed from the analyses. The final sample of 586 college students (50.3% women) consisted primarily of European American participants (83.8%), the majority of whom were 18 (28.2%), 19 (25.6%), 20 (21.3%), or 21 (14.7%) years of age. Questionnaires were completed online through a secure web site. We collected approximately equal numbers of women and men by designating separate but identical questionnaires through the online subject pool software that restricted participation by gender (e.g., only women were eligible to complete the survey for women). Each study had a maximum cap of 300 participants.

### 2.2. Measures

Descriptive statistics and information about internal consistency for each scale are reported in Table 1. Space limitations prevent us from providing sample items but a complete list of item content is available upon request. Gender differences were quantified using Cohen's  $d$  (negative scores indicated men scored higher than women). These are included because mean-level differences in narcissism are often reported for men versus women (e.g., Corry et al., 2008).

#### 2.2.1. NPI (Raskin & Terry, 1988)

The NPI consists of 40 forced-choice items in which one point is scored for each narcissistic response. To create summary scores for the NPI scales, we averaged responses for the relevant items so that each scale mean reflected the proportion of narcissistic items endorsed. We created a summary NPI variable as well as variables for the seven Raskin and Terry scales and the three Ackerman

متن کامل مقاله

دریافت فوری ←

**ISI**Articles

مرجع مقالات تخصصی ایران

- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه تمام متن مقالات انگلیسی
- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه ترجمه شده مقالات
- ✓ پذیرش سفارش ترجمه تخصصی
- ✓ امکان جستجو در آرشیو جامعی از صدها موضوع و هزاران مقاله
- ✓ امکان دانلود رایگان ۲ صفحه اول هر مقاله
- ✓ امکان پرداخت اینترنتی با کلیه کارت های عضو شتاب
- ✓ دانلود فوری مقاله پس از پرداخت آنلاین
- ✓ پشتیبانی کامل خرید با بهره مندی از سیستم هوشمند رهگیری سفارشات