*Human Performance*, 21:254–276, 2008



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Narcissism in Organizations:

A Multisource Appraisal Reflects

Different Perspectives

Carrie A. Blair

*College of Charleston*

Brian J. Hoffman

*University of Georgia*

Katherine R. Helland

*The University of Tennessee–Knoxville*

The majority of employees state that their manager is the worst aspect of their job. Over the past decade, a considerable amount of research has been devoted to identi- fying factors that contribute to immoral and ineffective leader behavior. Researchers have continually linked personality, and in particular narcissism, to the proclivity of leaders to behave ineffectively and unethically. This study represents an initial at- tempt to examine the relationship between narcissism and leadership in an organiza- tional setting to determine the extent to which narcissism is related to managerial ef- fectiveness and integrity. Results indicated that narcissism was negatively related to supervisor ratings of interpersonal performance and integrity. In contrast, narcissism was unrelated to subordinate ratings of interpersonal performance and integrity. Fur- thermore, narcissism was unrelated to supervisor and subordinate ratings of concep- tual performance. The unique relationship between narcissistic leaders and their fol- lowers is offered as an explanation for these findings.

Hogan and Kaiser (2005) noted that it is important to distinguish between good and bad leadership, as “good leadership promotes effective team and group perfor- mance. … Bad leadership degrades the quality of life for everybody associated with it” (p. 169). Unfortunately, “bad” leadership may be more common than

Correspondence should be sent to Carrie A. Blair, College of Charleston, School of Business and

Economics, Department of Management and Entrepreneurship, 66 George Street, Charleston, SC

29464. E-mail: blairc@cofc.edu

“good” leadership. That is, Hogan, Raskin, and Frazzini (1990) maintained that nearly every working adult has reported that he or she has worked for an intolera- ble boss at one point in his or her lifetime. Subordinates are not the only ones af- fected by bad leadership. In the 2002 fiscal year alone, 354 American business leaders including 25 CEOs were charged with some form of corporate fraud (Cor- porate Fraud Task Force, 2003). In addition, corporate abuses are estimated to cost U.S. organizations more than $600 billion annually (Niehoff, 2003). Indeed, Mitchell (1993) argued that one of the most serious threats to society today is a lack of moral leadership.

Given the prevalence and threat of managerial incompetence and immoral leader behavior, researchers have devoted considerable attention during the past decade to identifying factors that contribute to the ineffective practices and lack of integrity among leaders (e.g., Conger, 1990; Conger & Kanungo, 1998; Helland & Blair,

2005; Hogan et al., 1990; House & Howell, 1992; Howell & Avolio, 1992; Levinson,

1994; Niehoff, 2003; O’Connor, Mumford, Clifton, Gessner, & Connelly, 1995; Winter, 1991). Although the conclusions have varied from researcher to researcher, the one constant across researchers has been that personality is a key determining factor of unethical and ineffective leadership. More specifically, the one construct that researchers have continually linked to a leader’s proclivity to behave ineffec- tively and unethically is narcissism (e.g., Conger & Kanungo, 1998; Hogan et al.,

1990; House & Howell, 1992; Kets de Vries & Miller, 1985).

Narcissism is a broad personality construct that includes an exaggerated sense of self-importance, fantasies of unlimited success or power, need for admiration, entitlement, lack of empathy, and exploitation of others (American Psychiatric As- sociation [APA], 1994). According to Kernberg (1979), these characteristics drive individuals to seek positions of power; thus, narcissistic individuals are often found in positions of leadership. Yet, although these individuals are driven to seek positions of power, there is evidence to suggest that these individuals make inef- fective leaders who lack integrity. For instance, Kets de Vries and Miller (1985) proposed that high levels of narcissism negatively impact a manager’s interper- sonal and conceptual skills. Furthermore, Helland and Blair (2005) found that nar- cissism was related to behaviors associated with counterproductive leadership as captured in an assessment center. Narcissism has also been found to be negatively related to integrity (Mumford, Connelly, Helton, Strange, & Osburn, 2001).

Nevertheless, although there has been a wealth of theoretical articles (e.g., Kets de Vries & Miller, 1985) and a few laboratory studies (e.g., Helland & Blair, 2005) linking narcissism to ineffective and immoral leadership, the authors were unable to locate any studies investigating these relationships in an organizational setting. Thus, the purpose of this article is to fill this void in the literature. That is, the intent of this article is to examine the relationship between narcissism and leadership in an organizational setting to determine the extent to which narcissism is related to managerial effectiveness and integrity.

NARCISSISM AS A PRECURSOR TO MANAGERIAL INEFFECTIVENESS

Leadership researchers have long investigated the relationship between personal- ity and managerial effectiveness. Two dimensions that have been used to classify managerial skill and performance are interpersonal performance and conceptual performance (Conway & Huffcutt, 1997; Katz, 1974; Yukl, 2006). In general, in- terpersonal performance deals with people interactions, and conceptual perfor- mance deals with ideas and concepts (Katz, 1974; Yukl, 2006). What follows is an elaboration on these two dimensions, an explanation of how they are important for managerial effectiveness, and a discussion of their proposed relationship with narcissism.

Interpersonal Performance

Managerial interpersonal skills typically include an understanding of human dy- namics and processes, an aptitude to communicate clearly, and an ability to take the perspectives of and establish relationships with others (Yukl, 2006). The ability to work interpersonally with others is a vital part of nearly everything that a man- ager does (Katz, 1974). Accordingly, interpersonal skills are often key dimensions in taxonomies of managerial skill requirements (e.g., Borman & Brush, 1993) and are associated with leader effectiveness (Boyatzis, 1982; McCall & Lombardo,

1983; Spencer & Spencer, 1993).

More specifically, Boyatzis (1982) found that interpersonal skills (i.e., percep- tual objectivity or sensitivity to others) are a key competency of managerial effec- tiveness. Furthermore, according to Spencer and Spencer (1993), interpersonal skills reliably differentiate between superior managerial performance and average managerial performance. Similarly, McCall and Lombardo (1983) found that the inability to recognize others’ perspectives differentiated managers who derailed from managers who succeeded. In particular, the authors found that those manag- ers who remained successful were able to confront others without offending them, work well with others in spite of disagreement, and generally get along with the majority of the people with whom they worked.

Like the derailed managers in McCall and Lombardo’s (1983) study, narcissis- tic individuals lack empathy or the ability to recognize how others feel (APA,

1994; Watson, Grisham, Trotter, & Biderman, 1984). Thus, they treat others as ob- jects and have a tendency to think that it is fully within their right to make demands of other people (Dimaggio et al., 2002). In addition, rather than establishing mean- ingful relationships with others, narcissistic individuals attempt to dominate and defeat others because they see life as a competition in which there can only be one winner (Raskin, Novacek, & Hogan, 1991). Accordingly, narcissists are unlikely to allow coworkers and subordinates to participate in organizational decision mak-

ing. Moreover, narcissists may appear cold, arrogant, and stubborn (Kets de Vries

& Miller, 1985). In short, narcissists are unable to see issues from others’ perspec- tives or to empathize with others’ feelings. Consequently, coworkers are likely to view narcissists as displaying poor interpersonal skills. Thus, the following was hypothesized:

H1: Narcissism will be negatively related to interpersonal performance.

Conceptual Performance

Managerial conceptual skills include a general ability to think analytically and log- ically, to analyze the environment for trends, and to solve problems based on acquired information (Yukl, 2006). Yukl maintained that conceptual skills are es- sential for effective planning, organizing, and problem solving as well as under- standing how changes in the internal and external environment will impact the or- ganization. Furthermore, according to Katz (1974), conceptual skills are key to successful decision making. Specifically, Katz noted that the success of a decision is contingent upon the conceptual skills of the individuals who make and execute the decision.

Like interpersonal skills, conceptual skills are key dimensions in taxonomies of managerial performance requirements (e.g., Borman & Brush, 1993) and have been shown to differentiate between effective and ineffective managers (Boyatzis,

1982). According to Boyatzis, conceptual skills distinguish poor performers from superior performers in multiple types of industries (e.g., private sector and public sector) and in multiple levels of the organizational hierarchy (e.g., entry-level man- agement, midlevel management, and executive-level management). Moreover, there is compelling evidence that conceptual or cognitive ability is related to mana- gerial effectiveness (Schmidt & Hunter, 2004). As previously noted, it seems that with limited conceptual skills one would have a difficult time successfully solving problems and rendering decisions.

Analytical, decision-making, and planning skills (i.e., conceptual skills) have been proposed to decrease with increased levels of narcissism (Kets de Vries & Miller, 1985). According to the authors, narcissistic individuals seldom engage in environmental scanning, believing that they already know the best decision. In ad- dition, the extreme narcissist is likely to have problematic analytical skills, as he or she has a grandiose self-image and fails to see the merits of others’ suggestions (Dimaggio et al., 2002; Hogan et al., 1990). This type of leader often pursues bold projects doomed for failure because he or she is unwilling to listen to others (Kets de Vries & Miller, 1985) and often discounts negative feedback (Kernis & Sun,

1994). Accordingly, narcissists’ decision-making skills are limited by their ego- centric approach (Kets de Vries & Miller, 1985), as their decisions are based on

personal goals rather than meeting others’ needs or organizational objectives. Thus, the following was hypothesized:

H2: Narcissism will be negatively related to conceptual performance.

NARCISSISM AND LACK OF MANAGERIAL INTEGRITY Integrity

Integrity indicates that a person is trustworthy, ethical, and honest (Yukl, 2006). Key indicators of integrity include (a) the ability to keep promises, (b) the ability to keep confidential information secret, (c) the ability to take responsibility for one’s actions, (d) the extent one is truthful rather than deceptive, and (e) the extent to which one’s behavior is consistent with his or her espoused values (Yukl, 2006). According to Yukl, integrity is invariably linked to ethical leadership. Integrity also appears to be fundamental to moral or authentic leadership (Avolio, 1999; Gardner, Avolio, Luthans, May, & Walumbwa, 2005). Specifically, Avolio and Gardner and colleagues argued that leaders who lack integrity by displaying be- haviors that are inconsistent with their espoused values are inauthentic leaders.

Furthermore, not only is integrity important to ethical and authentic leadership, but it also appears to be important for effective leadership. Specifically, McCall and Lombardo (1983) found an association between integrity and successful lead- ership as well as an association between lack of integrity and leadership derail- ment. In their report, McCall and Lombardo stated that it is critical that managers’ actions are consistent with their promises. Indeed, they noted, “Integrity … seems to be the core method of keeping a large, amorphous organization from collapsing on its own confusion” (p. 11).

Both empirical and theoretical evidence suggests that narcissistic individuals lack integrity. For instance, narcissism has been found to be negatively related to integrity outside of organizational settings (Mumford et al., 2001). Furthermore, there are several behaviors associated with narcissism that are also key indicators that a manager lacks integrity. Specifically, narcissists fail to admit when they have made a mistake and frequently blame others for their own errors (Kets de Vries & Miller, 1985). In addition, they are self-aggrandizing and often take unwarranted credit for success (Rhodewalt & Morf, 1995; Rhodewalt, Tragakis, & Finnerty,

2006). Moreover, extreme narcissists have a proclivity to exploit, deceive, and ma- nipulate others to reach their own hedonistic goals (Kets de Vries & Miller, 1985). Thus, the following was hypothesized:

H3: Narcissism will be negatively related to performance appraisals of integrity*.*

EFFECTS OF RATING SOURCE

There is also reason to believe that the proposed relationships just discussed will depend on the source providing the ratings of managerial performance and integ- rity. For example, Conway, Lombardo, and Sanders (2001) conducted a meta-anal- ysis of the relationship between traits and performance ratings provided by raters from different organizational levels. Briefly, the results of this meta-analysis indi- cated that personality constructs were differentially related to performance, de- pending on the source providing the performance ratings. Furthermore, Conway and Huffcutt (1997) observed that interpersonal and conceptual performance rat- ings had different reliabilities for different sources. That is, subordinate ratings on interpersonal dimensions had higher reliabilities than did supervisor ratings on in- terpersonal dimensions, whereas subordinate ratings on conceptual dimensions had lower reliabilities than did supervisor ratings on cognitive dimensions. To date, research has not investigated the extent to which the source providing the per- formance ratings impacts this relationship between narcissism and performance. However, gaining a better understanding of different sources of feedback is benefi- cial, especially as the use of multifeedback increases (Conway & Huffcutt, 1997). Consequently, analyses investigating the extent to which narcissism–performance relationships vary depending on the source providing the rating will be exploratory in nature.

RQ1: Will the relationship between narcissism and managerial performance dif- fer depending on the source providing the performance ratings?

METHOD Participants and Procedures

One-hundred fifty-four (81% male, 19% female) professionals enrolled in an exec- utive MBA program at a large southeast American university between the years

2002 and 2005 served as the participants for this study. These participants repre- sented a variety of industries including banking, insurance, manufacturing, health care, and military. Furthermore, the participants held a wide variety of managerial positions including safety manager, head controller, chief of staff, and vice presi- dent of sales. On average, they had a substantial number of years of supervisory (*M*

= 11.43, *SD* = 7.61) and executive experience (*M* = 9.73, *SD* = 7.46). Prior to en- rolling in the program, the participants completed a personality inventory. In addi- tion, the participants’ immediate supervisors and employees were asked to com- plete an appraisal of the participants’ managerial performance.

Measures

Narcissism. Wink and Gough’s (1990) Narcissism scale from the California Psychological Inventory (CPI) was used in this study. This scale was developed to capture narcissism in nonclinical populations (Wink & Gough, 1990), and is based on narcissism as defined in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disor- ders* (4th ed.; *DSM–IV*; APA, 1994; see also Wink, 1991). In developing the Nar- cissism scale, Wink and Gough focused on retaining items that would maximize internal consistency; thus, the measure is best used as a unidimensional assessment of narcissism. Furthermore, although Wink and Gough initially extracted five or- thogonal factors from the CPI Narcissism scale, the factors are somewhat problem- atic in that they only accounted for 28% of the cumulative variance. In addition, to the authors’ knowledge these factors have yet to be replicated in published studies or in the current study, and research utilizing other measures of narcissism produce inconsistent factor structures (Emmons, 1984; Kubarych, Deary, & Austin, 2004; Raskin & Terry, 1988). Accordingly, for the purposes of this study, only the total narcissism score was used in analyses. Respondents answered “true” or “false” for each of the 49 items. The coefficient alpha reliability of this scale was acceptable ( = .78). Furthermore, Wink and Gough demonstrated construct validity for this scale.

Managerial performance. For each manager, the immediate supervisor and three to five subordinates completed professional evaluation forms. The forms in- cluded nine work-related dimensions: 5 items to measure analysis (e.g., “Identifies problems, inconsistencies, or discrepancies not obvious to others”), 5 items for judgment and decision making (e.g., “Applies sound logic and forethought when making decisions”), 3 items for participative leadership (e.g., “Shares organiza- tional problems with employees and gets their input”), 3 items to measure team building (e.g., “Promotes cooperation within groups/teams”), 7 items to indicate confrontation effectiveness (e.g., “Keeps conflicts from escalating and becoming unproductive”), 4 items to measure sensitivity (e.g., “Behaves in a polite and cour- teous manner towards others”), 5 items for integrity (e.g., “Does not misrepresent him/herself for personal gain”), 4 items for planning and organizing (e.g., “Uses a system to organize and keep track of information and outcomes”), and 4 items for initiative (e.g., “Approaches situations in a proactive rather than a reactive man- ner”). The items were measured on a 5-point Likert-scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*).

To ensure adequate agreement between subordinates on the performance rat- ings, with-in rater agreement (*r*wg) was calculated (James, Demaree, & Wolf,

1984). *Rwg* is a statistic used to assess interrater agreement based on a comparison

of observed within-group agreement to the agreement one would expect by chance

(James et al., 1984). James and colleagues argued that *r*wg is a more accurate, real-

istic method of assessing interrater agreement than traditional interrater reliability coefficients. These analyses were conducted to provide empirical justification for aggregating follower ratings (*n* = 577 followers). Analyses indicated that sufficient agreement existed to aggregate subordinate responses (*M r*wg = .95, *Mdn r*wg = .95).

Two subject matter experts (SMEs) experienced with the performance appraisal

instrument examined the instrument’s subscales and extracted scales indicative of Interpersonal Effectiveness, Conceptual Effectiveness, and Integrity. The SMEs then each independently classified the subscales into the three broad categories of Interpersonal Effectiveness, Conceptual Effectiveness, and Integrity. The initial classification suggested by the two SMEs corresponded completely and was later corroborated by two additional SMEs familiar with the dimensions and constructs. Thus, the classification was used in this study. The SMEs each categorized partici- pation, team building, confrontation effectiveness, and sensitivity as indicative of interpersonal skills, and analysis, judgment and decision making, planning and or- ganizing, and initiative as indicative of conceptual skills. Conway and Huffcutt (1997) used a similar classification system in their meta-analysis of multisource performance ratings. The ninth subscale assessed by the performance measure- ment, integrity, was classified as a “stand-alone” dimension of manager perfor- mance. As these dimensions were considered in the context of a specific manage- rial role, we considered these ratings to be indicators of managerial effective and ineffective behavior.

The research hypotheses were tested using two methods. First, Pearson product–moment correlations were used to determine whether narcissism is signif- icantly related to each of the nine subscales measured using the performance eval- uation instrument for each source (supervisors and subordinates). Next, the rela- tionship between narcissism and six latent factors representing each sources’ ratings of the three broad managerial performance dimensions (conceptual skills, interpersonal skills, and integrity) were estimated using Lisrel version 8.5 (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1996).

For both statistical and conceptual reasons, analyses of the performance ratings were based on a technique called item compositing wherein individual items are combined to form composites of related items for the structural modeling analyses. In this study, items from the same subscale were averaged to form a single manifest indicator of that construct. For example, the four items designed to assess “judg- ment and decision making” were combined to form a single manifest indicator of “judgment and decision making.” This procedure has been recommended by Lance, Woehr, and Fisicaro (1991) and West, Finch, and Curran (1995) for a vari- ety of statistical and conceptual reasons.

Conceptually, this approach represents a “latent construct” approach to mea- surement that has been incorporated and recommended by other work perfor- mance researchers (Hoffman, Blair, Meriac, & Woehr, 2006; Lance, Teachout, & Donnelly, 1992; LePine, Erez, & Johnson, 2002). Briefly, the latent construct ap-

proach entails viewing conceptually similar subscales as imperfect indicators of an underlying performance factor. That is, instead of loading items on a single factor, conceptually similar groups of scales are specified to load on an overarching fac- tor. For example, analysis, judgment and decision making, planning and organiz- ing, and initiative were classified as conceptual skills by the SMEs. Thus, this ap- proach specifies that the items from these four subscales be aggregated to form four manifest indicators of conceptual skills. The resulting scale scores for each subdimension are subsequently specified to load on a latent conceptual skills fac- tor. Because this study’s focus is on general factors of performance and is less con- cerned with the operation of specific items, the aggregation approach used here is the appropriate methodology.

Figure 1 presents a graphical depiction of the model that was specified to test the study hypotheses. Because the Narcissism scale and the integrity subscales were measured using single scales, each individual scale was specified as a single manifest indicator (manifest indicators representing narcissism, supervisor ratings of integrity, and subordinate ratings of integrity) in the structural model analyses. Of importance, structural equation modeling is unable to estimate latent factors with single indicators because the resulting matrix will not be identified. Conse- quently, each of the three single indicator factors was constrained such that the fac- tor loading is the square root of the reliability of each of the scales. To determine the relationship between each of the latent performance factors and narcissism, the phi matrix of this model was examined. The phi matrix represents the correlation among latent factors. These analyses also served as an additional test of hypothe- ses concerning the relationship between narcissism and managerial performance.

The evaluation of the appropriateness of the structural model focused on an ex- amination of relevant fit indices. Specifically, model evaluation focused on five overall fit indices, including chi-square test, Steiger’s (1990) root mean square er- ror of approximation (RMSEA), Browne and Cudek’s (1989) Expected Cross Val- idation Index (ECVI), the Tucker–Lewis Nonnormed Fit Index (NNFI; Tucker & Lewis, 1973) and the Comparative Fit Index (CFI; Bentler, 1990). Although the chi-square test is the most common method of examining the fit of measurement models, chi-square tests tend to produce significant results even with a relatively small degree of misfit. Thus, model evaluation largely focused on the four addi- tional fit indices. Browne and Cudek (1989) suggest that RMSEA represents a measure of lack of fit per degree of freedom and that a value of .06 or less repre- sents close fit, whereas values up to .10 represent marginally adequate fit. The ECVI is an indication of model fit that incorporates both model fit and the number of parameters used. Consequently, it is particularly useful to compare alternative models by ranking the models according to their ECVI value and choosing the model with the smallest value as providing the best representation of the data. Both NNFI and CFI are relative fit indices that (a) evaluate model fit relative to a null model and (b) take into account the overall number of model parameters estimated.

FIGURE 1 Narcissism and six performance factors. *Note*. Manifest indicators and distur- bance terms have been omitted from the model. CPI = California Psychological Inventory.















Both the NNFI and CFI typically range from 0 to 1, with values closer to 1.0 indi- cating better model fit. General rules of thumb suggest that CFI and NNFI values between .90 and .95 indicate acceptable model fit, and values above .95 indicate good fit (Loehlin, 2004).

Recent multisource feedback literature has also stressed the importance of dem- onstrating equivalence of performance ratings obtained from different rating sources (cf. Cheung, 1999; Facteau & Craig, 2001). In essence, this approach seeks to determine the degree to which the dimensions of performance load on the

same underlying performance factor, and the dimensions rated across sources have equivalent loadings on latent factors. Researchers use this type of study to deter- mine the extent to which ratings on a given multisource feedback instrument are comparable across sources. Stated differently, “if the underlying characteristics being measured in these rating systems are not on the same psychological mea- surement scale, then observed differences across [rating sources] are possibly artifactual, contaminated, or misleading” (Maurer, Raju, & Collins, 1998, p. 700). Accordingly, this study will seek to establish the equivalence of ratings made across supervisors and subordinates.

The assessment of equivalence proceeded in three hierarchical steps following the recommendations of Vandenberg and Lance (2000). That is, the assessment of equivalence represents a parameter-nested sequence in which models are hierar- chically nested from the most restricted (error variance invariance or parallel), to the next most restricted (metric invariance or tau-equivalence), to the least re- stricted (configural invariance or congeneric). For a measure to be considered equivalent across sources, both configural and metric invariance must be demon- strated (Cheung & Rensvold, 1999; Vandenberg & Lance, 2000). Of importance, error variance invariance is not necessary to conclude that a measure is equivalent across populations. To determine whether ratings made on the multisource feed- back instrument are equivalent across sources, a difference in chi-squared test was examined in conjunction with other fit indices. In such analyses, it is preferable to accept the most restricted model (the model with the largest degrees of freedom) that does not result in a significant reduction in fit over less restricted models (Bollen, 1989).

RESULTS

Tables 1 and 2 present the means, standard deviations, and zero-order correlations among the variables for the supervisor and subordinate ratings, respectively.

The first hypothesis proposed a negative relationship between narcissism and ratings of interpersonal performance. As expected, narcissism was significantly and negatively correlated with supervisor ratings of participation (*r* = –.20, *p* <

.05), confrontation effectiveness (*r* = –.19, *p* < .05), team building (*r* = –.22, *p* <

.01), and sensitivity (*r* = –.19, *p* < .05). However, narcissism and subordinate rat- ings of interpersonal performance were not related. That is, though negative, nar- cissism was not significantly correlated with subordinate ratings of participative management (*r* = –.08, *ns*), confrontation effectiveness (*r* = –.08, *ns*), team build- ing (*r* = –.08, *ns*), and sensitivity (*r* = –.11, *ns*). Taken as a whole, H1 was partially supported.

H2 posited a negative relationship between narcissism and conceptual perfor- mance. In contrast to expectations, narcissism was not significantly related to su-

265

TABLE 1

Correlations, Means, and Standard Deviations Among Narcissism Scores and Supervisor Ratings

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| *Variable* | *M* | *SD* | *1* | *2* | *3* | *4* | *5* | *6* | *7* | *8* | *9* | *10* |
| 1. Narcissism | 24.57 | 6.28 | .78 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2. Participative management | 4.01 | 0.67 | –.199\* | .87 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3. Team building | 4.09 | 0.70 | –.223\*\* | .764\*\* | .81 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 4. Confrontation effectiveness | 3.90 | 0.63 | –.189\* | .711\*\* | .765\*\* | .86 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 5. Sensitivity | 4.21 | 0.61 | –.187\* | .660\*\* | .762\*\* | .783\*\* | .80 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 6. Integrity | 4.31 | 0.49 | –.211\*\* | .636\*\* | .671\*\* | .718\*\* | .684\*\* | .72 |  |  |  |  |
| 7. Analysis | 4.00 | 0.58 | –.065 | .585\*\* | .518\*\* | .681\*\* | .522\*\* | .688\*\* | .82 |  |  |  |
| 8. Judgment and decision making | 4.09 | 0.52 | –.124 | .601\*\* | .563\*\* | .708\*\* | .620\*\* | .703\*\* | .793\*\* | .82 |  |  |
| 9. Planning and organizing | 3.94 | 0.69 | –.091 | .502\*\* | .449\*\* | .520\*\* | .428\*\* | .678\*\* | .695\*\* | .641\*\* | .86 |  |
| 10. Initiative | 4.12 | 0.61 | –.111 | .554\*\* | .495\*\* | .600\*\* | .433\*\* | .685\*\* | .690\*\* | .618\*\* | .680\*\* | .74 |

*Note.* Coeffecient alphas are reported on the diagonal. N = 148–154.

\**p* < .05, two-tailed. \*\**p* < .01, two-tailed.

266

TABLE 2

Correlations, Means, and Standard Deviations Among Narcissism Scores and Subordinate Ratings

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| *Variable* | *M* | *SD* | *1* | *2* | *3* | *4* | *5* | *6* | *7* | *8* | *9* | *10* |
| 1. Narcissism | 24.57 | 6.28 | .78 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2. Participative management | 4.06 | 0.53 | –.083 | .90 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3. Team building | 4.07 | 0.47 | –.082 | .838\*\* | .79 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 4. Confrontation effectiveness | 4.00 | 0.39 | –.084 | .673\*\* | .766\*\* | .87 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 5. Sensitivity | 4.28 | 0.49 | –.111 | .600\*\* | .706\*\* | .817\*\* | .88 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 6. Integrity | 4.28 | 0.39 | –.071 | .633\*\* | .695\*\* | .749\*\* | .711\*\* | .81 |  |  |  |  |
| 7. Analysis | 4.11 | 0.40 | –.091 | .637\*\* | .716\*\* | .718\*\* | .620\*\* | .738\*\* | .83 |  |  |  |
| 8. Judgment | 4.19 | 0.38 | –.056 | .631\*\* | .678\*\* | .758\*\* | .710\*\* | .833\*\* | .844\*\* | .85 |  |  |
| 9. Planning and organizing | 4.01 | 0.46 | .048 | .588\*\* | .658\*\* | .632\*\* | .481\*\* | .687\*\* | .770\*\* | .751\*\* | .82 |  |
| 10. Initiative | 4.18 | 0.41 | –.058 | .668\*\* | .717\*\* | .760\*\* | .664\*\* | .800\*\* | .816\*\* | .804\*\* | .764\*\* | .80 |

*Note.* Coefficient alphas are reported on the diagonal. *N* = 148–154.

\**p* < .05, two-tailed. \*\**p* < .01, two-tailed.

pervisor or subordinate ratings of analysis (*r* = –.07, –.09, *ns*), judgment and deci- sion making (*r* = –.12, –.06, *ns*), planning and organizing (*r* = *–*.09, .05, *ns*), or initiative (*r* = –.11, .06, *ns*). Thus, no support was found for H2. All in all, narcis- sism was not significantly related to supervisor or subordinate ratings of concep- tual performance.

H3 posited a negative relationship between narcissism and managerial ratings of integrity. The relationship between narcissism and supervisor ratings of integ- rity supported this hypothesis (*r* = –.21, *p*  .01). However, the same was not true for narcissism and subordinate ratings of integrity (*r* = –.07, –). Hence, H3 was partially supported.

As previously stated, our study uses an item-composite approach to specifying models. Because this approach involves aggregating scales prior to model specifi- cation, the reliability of each individual scale is critical. That is, if the items com- posing the individual subscales are not reliable, it would make little sense to form item composites. As can be seen in Tables 1 and 2, the coefficient alpha reliabilities for scales rated by each of the sources are in acceptable range (.72–.87 for supervi- sors and .78–.90 for subordinates). Accordingly, we are confident that each of the subscales is internally consistent, and as such, we proceeded with the formation of item composites.

A model specifying seven latent factors consisting of narcissism, conceptual skills, interpersonal skills, and integrity as rated by both supervisors and subordi- nates provided acceptable fit with the data: 2(134) = 359.26, *p* < .01 (RMSEA =

.10, ECVI = 2.96, CFI = .92, NNFI = .90; Figure 1). To rule out alternate models providing a better fit with the data, three other models were examined. Spe- cifically, the a priori model was compared to other models that provided alternative factor structures for the performance appraisal instrument. Thus, models were also tested specifying the following:

1. Five factors including narcissism, and separate factors for interpersonal and conceptual skills with integrity loading on interpersonal skills for both subordinates and supervisors, 2(145) = 407.07, *p* < .01 (RMSEA = .11, ECVI = 3.15, CFI = .90, NNFI = .88).

2. Five factors including narcissism, and separate factors for interpersonal and conceptual skills with integrity loading on conceptual skills for both subordinates and supervisors, 2(145) = 410.13, *p* < .01 (RMSEA = .11, ECVI = 3.17, CFI = .91, NNFI = .90).

3. Three factors including narcissism and one general performance factor for supervisors and subordinates, 2(152) = 669.32, *p* < .01 (RMSEA = .15, ECVI = 4.71, CFI = .85, NNFI = .83).

The a priori model specifying three performance factors for each source and nar- cissism provided a best fit with the data. It should be noted that the fit of this model

may be characterized as adequate at best. Still, because this model was proposed a priori, demonstrated acceptable fit with the data, and displayed better fit with the data than any of the other models tested, we feel that this model is the appropriate model on which to base additional analyses. Consequently, this model was used in subsequent analyses to determine the relationship between narcissism and mana- gerial performance. Again, a graphical depiction of this model can be found in Fig- ure 1.

To ensure that ratings provided by different sources were equivalent, measure- ment invariance constraints were added to this model in accordance with the pro- cess outlined by Vandenberg and Lance (2000). First, a model specifying configural invariance (e.g., the congeneric model) was tested. This model provided an adequate fit with the data: (134) = 345.71, *p* < .01 (ECVI = 2.99, RMSEA =

.10, NNFI = .95, CFI = .96). Thus, the performance appraisal instrument is configurally invariant across raters from different organizational levels. In that the configural invariance model was supported, the metric invariance model was sub- sequently tested. To test this model, the factor loadings of the same subscale across rating sources were set equal to one another. Results of these analyses indicated that this model also provides an acceptable fit with the data, (149) = 349.38, *p* <

.01 (RMSEA = .09, ECVI = 2.82, NNFI = .96, CFI = .96). The chi-square test for a significant difference in chi-square between this model and the configural invariance model was not significant, 2(15) = 3.67, *ns*. This suggests that the performance rating instrument is measuring the same thing across rating sources. Because both the configural and metric invariance models were supported (e.g., the performance model is tau-equivalent), a third model specifying equal error variance across ratings sources was tested (the parallel model). This model also provided an adequate fit to the data, (163) = 416.24, *p* < .01 (ECVI = 3.07, RMSEA = .10, NNFI = .95, CFI = .96). However, the chi-square test for a signifi- cant difference in chi-square between this model and the configural invariance model was significant, 2(29) = 70.51, *p* < .01.

Given that the proposed model provided the best fit with the data of the models tested and that the ratings were invariant to rating source, the phi matrix was used to estimate the correlation among the latent factors. A *t* value above 1.96 indicates a significant relationship between the two factors. Inspection of the phi matrix for this set of analyses indicated that narcissism was significantly related to supervisor ratings of interpersonal performance (*r* = –.25, *t* = –2.95) and integrity (*r* = –.24, *t* =

–2.79). In contrast, narcissism was not significantly related to supervisor ratings of conceptual performance (*r* = –.12, *t* = –1.37), subordinate ratings of interpersonal performance (*r* = –.11, *t* = –1.21), subordinate ratings of conceptual performance (*r* = –.06, *t* = –.71), and subordinate ratings of integrity (*r* = –.08, *t* = –.89). To- gether, the results of these analyses indicate that although narcissism was signifi- cantly related to supervisor ratings of interpersonal performance and integrity, nar- cissism was unrelated to subordinate ratings of managerial performance. With

respect to the research question regarding differential relationships depending on the source providing the rating, the results of these analyses are consistent with prior research on the relationship between personality and performance ratings made by different sources (e.g., Conway et al., 2001). That is, these findings indi- cate that the relationship between trait narcissism and managerial performance varies depending on the source providing the performance rating.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this article was to extend the literature on the dark side of leader- ship by determining the extent to which narcissism was related to managerial ef- fectiveness and integrity. More specifically, it was proposed that narcissism would be negatively related to Interpersonal Effectiveness, Conceptual Effectiveness, and Integrity as measured in an organizational setting. Consistent with expectations, supervisor ratings of Interpersonal Effectiveness and Integrity were negatively re- lated to narcissism. However, the relationships between narcissism and subordi- nate ratings of Interpersonal Effectiveness and Integrity were negligible. Fur- thermore, narcissism was not related to supervisor or subordinate ratings of Conceptual Effectiveness.

The unexpected difference in findings across sources for ratings of interper- sonal effectiveness and integrity is particularly interesting given that researchers suggest that narcissistic individuals have a difficult time relating to others regard- less of the person (Dimaggio et al., 2002). This difference could be attributed to multiple factors. First, Conger and Kanungo (1998) asserted that narcissism is as- sociated with the dark side of charismatic leadership. They argued that the narcis- sistic-charismatic leader establishes a parental relationship with “chosen” follow- ers. These followers are motivated to seek the approval of their leader because they perceive them as a parental figure; thus, the leader’s shortcomings are often not seen by the “chosen” followers (see also Sankowsky, 1995). The tendency of nar- cissists to surround themselves by unquestioning followers may further lend to this relationship. Indeed, in the worst cases, Conger and Kanungo pointed out that rather than recognizing abusive leader actions, these actions are apt to be seen by the followers as justifiable. Given that the managers in this study hand-selected the subordinates whom they wanted to complete their 360-degree rating forms, it is quite possible that they chose subordinates who admired them.

A second explanation for the unexpected findings pertains to the nature of su- pervisor and subordinate ratings. That is, supervisors and subordinates view mana- gerial performance from different perspectives. Supervisors view managerial be- havior from a more experienced vantage point. They may be more likely to have clear expectations for performance, thus are attuned to any incongruence with these expectations. Because of established expectations, supervisors may be espe-

cially apt to recognize shortcomings in interpersonal performance. In contrast, subordinates view managerial performance from a less experienced perspective and may be likely to see the manager as a model of managerial effectiveness. For instance, the narcissistic–charismatic leader is often seen as an innovator with grandiose visions that lack specific details (Conger & Kanungo, 1998). To a super- visor, these leaders may appear interpersonally chaotic because they cannot talk in terms of details; however, to a subordinate these leaders are inspiring visionaries. Hence, the leader’s actions are less likely to be called into question by subordinates than by supervisors. Indeed, in this study, mean scores for subordinate ratings were generally higher than mean scores for supervisor ratings.

The lack of relationship between narcissism and supervisor and subordinate rat- ings of conceptual effectiveness is inconsistent with theoretical assertions (Kets de Vries & Miller, 1985). However, the lack of results for the conceptual behaviors could be a result of the cognitive nature of conceptual skills. In other words, the conceptual effectiveness factor is cognitive in nature and, as a result, may be a function of intelligence rather than personality constructs such as narcissism (Borman & Brush, 1993). Consequently, although narcissism and conceptual skill dimensions have been linked theoretically, the weak relationship between these variables may not be that surprising.

Limitations

A few limitations of this study warrant discussion. The first limitation pertains to the diversity of the sample used in this study. On one hand, this sample consisted of executive-level managers hailing from a number of different work settings (e.g., engineering, manufacturing, medical, etc.). Though the diversity of the sample makes these results generalizable to other executive-level managers, it would be interesting to examine these results based on a comparison of homogenous subsamples of executive-level managers. On the other hand, this sample consisted only of executive-level managers. Thus, conclusions cannot be drawn regarding the generalizability of these results to other populations, such as line-level supervi- sors, educators, or sales supervisors. Hence, the sample used in this study is limited by both its homogeneity and its heterogeneity. A second limitation is the size of the sample. Less than 200 managers were included in this study. Increasing the sample size would lend more power to the analyses. Further, a larger sample may have al- lowed a comparison among individuals from different work settings. More specifi- cally, we were unable to examine the specific work context of our managers, and we have no way to gauge each rater’s opportunity to observe ineffective or low-in- tegrity behaviors. The small sample size and the inability to examine situational factors are important limitations in this study.

Third, this study’s conclusions were based on one measure of narcissism. The study could be extended by utilizing another measure of narcissism, such as the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI; Raskin & Hall, 1979). Further, narcissism is sometimes conceptualized as a multidimensional construct (Emmons, 1987; Raskin & Hall, 1979). Previous research has demonstrated that the dimensions of narcissism have differing relationships with various criteria. For instance, Emmons (1984) found that the Exploitativeness/Entitlement factor of the NPI was the only factor that was positively related to maladaptive personality traits like sus- piciousness and anxiety. In addition, Exploitativeness/Entitlement was the only NPI subscale that was not related to extroversion. Based on these results, it is ex- pected that the subscales of the NPI would differ in their relationships with inter- personal skills and integrity. However, it should be noted that the factor structure of this measure has been inconsistent across studies (Kubarych et al., 2004).

Fourth, some theorize that there are two types of manifestations of narcissism: overt and covert (Wink, 1991). The overt manifestation of narcissism is most simi- lar to the definition provided in the *DSM–IV* (APA, 1994) and describes those nar- cissistic individuals who have grandiose self-fantasies, demand attention, and ap- pear interpersonally charismatic. Covert narcissistic individuals also have grandiose fantasies, but they instead display a lack of self-confidence, coming across as highly sensitive and defensive to criticism. In this study, we used the CPI Narcissism scale, which measures overt narcissism. Reexamining these factors in the context of overt and covert narcissism would be beneficial.

Fifth, the relationship between other personality factors and managerial effec- tiveness and integrity were not evaluated in this study. Other authors have pointed out a pattern of traits related to counterproductive workplace behaviors (Mumford, Gessner, Connelly, & O’Conner, 1993; Penney & Spector, 2002), and some work suggests that situational factors are related to the manifestations of these behaviors (McCall & Lombardo, 1983). Specifically, situational factors may serve as facili- tators or inhibitors to the display of ineffective or low-integrity behaviors. Exam- ining other personality constructs and situational factors in relation to interper- sonal effectiveness, conceptual effectiveness, and integrity may provide a better understanding of the relationship between narcissism and these criterion. In addi- tion, other taxonomies of managerial performance (e.g., charismatic leadership) should be examined in relation to narcissism.

Finally, it should be noted that the data fit the performance model used in our study adequately, at best. Still, because this model demonstrated an acceptable level of fit with the data, demonstrated a better fit than the alternate models tested, and was hypothesized a priori, we feel justified in interpreting the results based on this model. Moreover, narcissism demonstrated differential relationships to the do- mains of managerial effectiveness. This differential relationship provides indirect support for the construct validity of the performance model used in this study.

Implications and Future Directions

This study enhances our understanding of the relationship between narcissism and managerial integrity and effectiveness. First, the relationship between narcissism and integrity demonstrated in this study has important implications for organiza- tional scientists. This study extends previous work by Mumford and colleagues (Mumford et al., 2001; Mumford et al., 1993) in demonstrating that narcissism is not only negatively related to distinct counterproductive work behaviors and pa- per-and-pencil integrity tests but also related to actual ratings of generalized integ- rity as demonstrated in organizations. Hence, the results of this study suggest that measures of narcissism could be extremely useful to organizations focused on the ethical behaviors of employees. More specifically, narcissism measures could be used to make managers aware of their own and their colleagues’ narcissistic charac- teristics and the potential strengths and pitfalls associated with these characteristics.

Furthermore, measures of narcissism may eventually serve as important selec-

tion tools. Although measures of integrity are frequently used in personnel selec- tion contexts, some research has called into question the validity of these mea- sures, particularly when predicting the performance of managers. Specifically, Hoffman, Woehr, and Maldegan (2004) provided a quantitative summary of the re- lationship between measures of integrity and managerial performance and found that measures of integrity were very weakly related to leader effectiveness ( =

.12). The results of our study indicate that narcissism may be a useful predictor of managerial effectiveness. Still, future research should examine the degree to which narcissism explains variance beyond measures of integrity in predicting manage- rial effectiveness. Further, before narcissism is used in a selection context, we cau- tion that it is necessary to better explore the positive and negative outcomes associ- ated with narcissism.

Second, this study identified a negative relationship between narcissism and in-

terpersonal skills as rated by supervisors but not as rated by subordinates. These poor interpersonal skills are likely to have negative implications for narcissistic managers’ subordinates without them realizing it. That is, the narcissistic leader seeks out sycophants for subordinates but ignores their needs and cares little about hurting them (Kets de Vries & Miller, 1985). They may implement an excessively demanding workload, pushing followers to the point of burnout (Sankowsky,

1995). In addition, followers may actually not even recognize the narcissistic man- ager as the source of these negative effects (Conger & Kanungo, 1998). Thus, nar- cissistic personality scales may be used to identify managers less likely to demon- strate effective interpersonal skills. Future research should investigate the extent to which narcissistic managers’ direct reports are more likely to experience work–family conflict and burnout.

Third, the difference between supervisor and subordinate ratings has implica-

tions for our understanding of performance appraisal. In all dimensions except for

integrity, the supervisors used in this study were more critical of the managers’ per- formance compared to the subordinates. The differences between sources for the interpersonal and conceptual dimensions could be because of the general relation- ship between subordinates and supervisors, in that subordinates attribute expert knowledge to supervisors, thus the subordinates assume that the managers’ actions are sound. Further, unlike the subordinates, the supervisors could have a general expectation for managerial interpersonal and conceptual performance, thus react critically when performance varies from these expectations. Moreover, the subor- dinates may have also been more reluctant to portray their manager in a negative light. The difference in ratings of integrity could also be a result of the differing vantage point of the two sources. Subordinates and supervisors may have differing opportunities to observe instances of dishonesty. Future research should further examine these relationships.

Fourth, although not a primary purpose of this study, the results shed light on the taxonomies used to frame managerial performance appraisals. Yukl (2006) de- scribed three factors associated with managerial effectiveness: conceptual skills, interpersonal skills, and technical skills. Moreover, other authors have included job knowledge or technical skills as a conceptual performance factor (Conway & Huffcutt, 1997). Because of the diversity of the sample used in this study, interper- sonal skills and conceptual skills were examined—technical skills were not. A third factor, integrity, was included in the study as a substitute for ethical leader- ship. The result of our confirmatory factor analysis provides support for Yukl’s taxonomy of managerial skills and indicates that an additional factor, integrity, may be added to the taxonomy.

Finally, a study from the Center for Creative Leadership (McCall & Lombardo,

1983) lends credence to our findings. The researchers noted a pattern of character- istics associated with those who derailed in their managerial career. The results of their study indicated that managers who derailed were characterized by poor inter- personal skills and low levels of integrity, whereas both “derailers” and “non-derailers” possessed equitably high levels of task and conceptual skills. The findings of our study echo those reported by McCall and Lombardo. Namely, the narcissists in this study were rated as having low levels of integrity and lacking in interpersonal performance. However, narcissism had little effect on manager’s conceptual performance. Again, based on McCall and Lombardo’s findings that interpersonal skills and integrity distinguished managers who derailed from those who did not, the results of our study suggest that narcissism may be a useful vari- able in the prediction of manager derailment.

In summary, narcissism may be used to aid in our understanding of effective and ineffective management. This study has shown a negative relationship be- tween narcissism and supervisory ratings of managerial interpersonal performance and integrity. Furthermore, the results of this study support previous calls for the investigation of the relationship between negative personality traits and leadership.

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