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**Self-Perception and Performance.
Exploratory research into the narcissists' first 20
months within a corporate graduate recruitment
programme.**

**A dissertation presented in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of**

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Human Development Studies

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Dedicated to, Tracy, Sarah, Hannah, and Jamie.

Abstract

The intent of this exploratory study was to examine the nature and impact of narcissism in the early career stages of a graduate cohort, where there has previously been little applied narcissism research. Self-reports on self-perception and critical self-insight were obtained individually from 63 new recruits in a multi-national company as part of a graduate recruitment programme. Self-report data were collected on day one of the recruits' induction programme followed by repeated data collections at nine months and at twenty months into their employment. In addition, at months nine and twenty, two line managers of each recruit completed indicators on their perceptions of the recruits' actual work performance. Using a newly designed narcissistic traits indicator, line managers also indicated their views of each recruit's narcissistic tendencies. Results obtained indicated ten of the sixty three graduates had significant narcissistic tendencies. The self-ratings of recruits were subsequently compared to their actual performance as rated by their managers. The self-perceptions of those identified as having narcissistic tendencies were also compared to self-ratings and performance of peers displaying little or no narcissistic tendencies. In both the first and second years of employment, the results indicated that those viewed as having narcissistic tendencies significantly self-enhanced more than the non-narcissists and despite their comparative higher self-rating, narcissists underperformed in their role in comparison to non-narcissists. Narcissists' self-perception was less consistent over twenty months, indicating a less stable sense of self than the non-narcissists. A critical self-insight (CSI) self-perception gauge was developed for assessing degree and style of self-critique. Although analyses revealed five clusters of sub-scales, the narcissists' CSI was significantly different from non-narcissists on only one of these clusters; they reported as being less emotive-sensitive than did the non-narcissists. Narcissists were overall less self-critical than non-narcissists. In light of these findings, developmental and environmental influences of narcissism are discussed, along with the effect of such traits both for the

hiring organization and for the narcissistic individual within the first 20 months of career induction.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

“One does not become enlightened by imagining figures of light, but by making the darkness conscious”. (Jung, 1967, p.335).

As a psychological concept ‘narcissism’ originated from Greek mythology, which told the story of a young man who ruined his life by becoming obsessively self absorbed and falling in love with his own reflection. In admiring this reflection, Narcissus was ultimately deceived, as he saw only perfection, blinding him to any other aspect of himself – any shadow or faults remained hidden and unacknowledged. According to Miller (1979) this myth is based on the concept of ‘true self’ and ‘false self’ with Narcissus’s death being a consequence of his fixation to a false self. A key moral theme is that full development is dependent on an openness to critical self-insights and the openness to fully experience the less pleasant or acceptable feelings people would rather escape from or deny. The one- dimensional, self-fixation Narcissus enjoyed prevented him from developing any form of object love beyond his own self. Narcissus was basically in love with himself (Elson & Kohut, 1987). As a psychological construct *narcissism* became a term to describe individuals with notable egoistic self-involvement coupled to the denial of personal faults.

Due to the recent upsurge of interest in narcissism, it has grown to become a theoretically complex and often controversial personality construct, having roots embedded within psychoanalytic theory. Since its psychological conception, it has been a construct that has struggled to gain a consensus in terms of consistent definition. Havelock Ellis, in the late 1800s, was one of the first to give narcissism its psychological place by referring to it as a form of autoeroticism – sexual gratification by oneself (Millon, 1996). Complex

models continued to tackle and try to understand its manifestations and broader psychological impact. However, regardless of theoretical orientation, narcissism is characterised by an unusually high degree of self-absorption and has strong social and cultural connotations; to be described as a narcissist or behaving in a narcissistic manner is never intended as a compliment. In the broader social sense, to be so self-absorbed is almost the definition of a vice (Ridley, 1996). It is hardly considered pro-social as societies generally praise and consider selflessness as a higher developmental quality and decry self-centredness unless it is in the normal developmental phase of early childhood. Narcissism in adulthood is often inferred as normal childhood narcissism that never grew up. Prominent narcissism theorists e.g. Kohut (1978) viewed narcissism as healthy or unhealthy based primarily on its age appropriateness. Morf & Rhodewalt (2001) proposed that the narcissist presents with a fascinating combination of features with none more so than the almost infantile characteristics that most people leave behind during their early years of development. Narcissism could be viewed as much a developmental stage as it is a set of distinct behaviours. Keitlen (2001) deems that narcissism forms part of our natural primitive human core, but with normal development it becomes overlaid with more mature attitudes. When those attitudes are not developed, that fundamental core impels the individual towards a dominant drive of self-aggrandisement. Other analytically-orientated theorists such as Reich (1960) have argued that narcissism is a reflection of an immature ego, unable to accurately test reality and form an accurate sense of self.

Despite the largely negative connotation, narcissism is considered to be a reasonably functional trait when compared to other personality disorders, though some commentators have suggested narcissistic problems are characteristic of all disorders of personality (Karen, 1994). It is the narcissists' ability to function socially that distinguishes them from other personality disorders such as anti-social and borderline (Kernberg, 1975). Millon (1996) describes the less extreme forms of narcissism (non-clinical) as being benignly arrogant when compared to other personality disorders. This possibly explains why a narcissist is able to function reasonably effectively

within society, despite not always being particularly likeable or pro-social. Of key interest in this research is the narcissist's potential ability to excel within certain environments, particularly the corporate workplace.

Within the range of negatively-perceived-behaviours projected from narcissism, there are some situations where the narcissist can present in a very positive light, especially when given the opportunity to publicly shine, for example within a job interview situation where the interviewee's primary task is to impress. This, in part, may explain why narcissists can potentially be very successful from a career selection perspective. Ultimately, due to their characteristic self-centredness, the narcissistic personality does run the high risk of conquering, dividing and failing within an organisation, but interestingly the narcissistic personality can also assist a rise to high-ranking positions and the acquisition of power and influence to do so. Thus, while narcissists are often characterised as appearing overly grandiose and potentially exploitive, they often have the capacity to project as articulate, seductive (Akhtar & Thomson, 1992) charming and engaging (Kernberg, 1975). However, the charm and engagement tends to wear off if the narcissist's supply of external reinforcement stops serving as a positive and essential source of self-regard.

Throughout this thesis the term *narcissism* is used as a matter of definitional consistency. Because narcissism has been overused as a term when describing a wide range of behaviours, in this research two major components are emphasised. First; "self-enhancement", defined as holding overly positive self-regard beyond that of the normal human tendency to over rate oneself. Second, 'denial' - specifically, the denial of personal short-comings. The term "extreme self-enhancement" (ESE) is a more accurate description of the narcissistic style being examined within this research.

The Narcissist in Workplace Settings

Few organisations would deliberately set out to hire someone with strong narcissistic tendencies; indeed the DSM IV clinical definition of narcissism would not be a part of any job description. The research around narcissistic traits applied to the workplace (as reviewed in Chapter three) tends to be so negative it is a wonder that any narcissist could ever find a job, far less hold one down. Even so people with these characteristics are not only employed but often promoted to positions of influence (McFarlin & Sweeney, 2000). Possibly, their narcissism is being projected in its more positive form within an environment that overtly or covertly values, or at times even needs, at least some of the characteristics of narcissism. McFarlin and Sweeney (2000) for example, discuss the corporate situational / environmental opportunities that promote an ease of passage for those with narcissistic tendencies to excel. They argue that at particular times an organisation may be vulnerable to the seductive charm and articulate positive persona often associated with a narcissist (Akhtar, 1989). There is probably a fine line drawn between narcissism on the one hand and confidence on the other and that line may be very much in the eye of the beholder. What is self-centred to one observer may be goal-focused to another. Recent research by Blair, Hoffman, and Helland (2008) highlighted how distinctive behaviours can be viewed differently. They found that narcissists in the workplace were rated negatively by their managers in terms of integrity and interpersonal performance. However, when the same narcissists' performance was rated by their own staff who reported to them, neither integrity nor interpersonal performance were identified as problem areas.

Narcissism in general has been the subject of much research over the past three decades, but comparatively little research has focused on the impact of narcissistic tendencies in the workplace (Judge, LePine & Rich, 2006; Dattner, 1999). Historically, where narcissism has been researched in the workplace, the focus has largely been on the impact of narcissists in leadership positions. There appears to be no published research on the

impact of narcissism during the early career period. This research will investigate how those having narcissistic tendencies perform in their workplace roles over a 20-month period. Specifically, this study will follow a group of first year graduates, within a corporate graduate recruitment programme, identifying individuals described by their day-to-day managers as having narcissistic characteristics and will investigate the self-perceptions of those individuals over their first and second years of employment.

Talent identification (or as often referred to as “the war for talent”) and subsequent career development are critical elements to organisational development, as well as a significant company economic investment, especially for organisations that carry out larger scale graduate recruitment programmes. It is therefore of interest to investigate not only the performance of people with narcissistic tendencies but also its longer-term environmental accommodation/promotion or rejection/discouragement.

Theoretical Assumptions

Narcissism is rich in both research and theory. There are common central themes within most theoretical approaches. First, narcissism is generally viewed as a personality style originating from early childhood interactions with key caregivers. Second, poor self-esteem is the key underlying factor of narcissistic individuals. To counter anxiety attributable to self-esteem vulnerability, narcissists need to maintain a positive sense of self. This is achieved by engaging in extreme self-enhancement to maintain that self-image through a series of ego-defensive and self-regulatory behaviours. These behaviours are attempts to not only maintain their sense of ego-ideal but also to regulate and eliminate anxiety. At the core of narcissism is self-centeredness and the personal origins of narcissism are due to a damaged self-image at early stages of development (Stevens & Price, 1996).

The psychometric orientation of this thesis is based on Kernberg’s (1975) model of narcissism, being a reflection of an unrealistic and potentially

dysfunctional proximity to one's "ideal-self" or "ego-ideal". Unlike Narcissus in the myth, normal, healthy and ultimately mature development of self is based on the capacity to integrate both positive and negative self-images into a realistic self-concept. Unlike the balanced and emotionally mature person, a narcissist will disassociate or split off any aspect of negative self-representation, focusing on an exclusively positive self-image. Narcissism's core feature is inflated self-image and the behaviours projected from a narcissistic style are due to an inability to maturely regulate the actual and ideal-self (Millon, 1996). This model of narcissism and ideal-self is extended in Chapter three.

Within a corporate environment, where egotism may or may not be rejected as readily as in other social institutions, I aim to investigate the possible impact narcissistic tendencies have on initial career trajectories of these individuals. For this study I will be employing the theoretical approach of narcissism being a fusion between actual-self and ideal-self, plus denial of personal shortcomings and lack of critical self-insight.

Prompt For This Research

The impetus behind this study arose from my work in organisational psychology and psychometrics. Having interviewed and personality profiled many thousands of employees and prospective employees it became clear that whilst two people score similarly on a standard personality profile, their depth of self-understanding can be vastly different in reference to any particular score on their profile. When asked a seemingly simple question such as, "What does this specific aspect of your personality actually mean?" I have found huge variation in responses. Some people can see and easily articulate a wide variety of self-perspectives, some people only see and talk of their positives, while others simply do not know – they are unable to step outside themselves and look within and lack reflectiveness. Another question I often ask in reference to any personality profile score, which has been even more revealing in terms of individual self-insight, "What is the downside of this aspect of your personality – why does this aspect of yourself not work so well

for you?” Although for most people reflection upon and articulation of one’s shadow or downsides is rarely as easy or comfortable as focusing on their positives, some people respond with calm insight after a little thought. These are characteristics typical of what Loevinger (1976) would describe as a higher stage of ego development (Loevinger’s ego development model is discussed further in Chapter two). Whilst others are completely stumped by this question as they have never really thought about their downsides and therefore genuinely cannot respond. There is another, much smaller group of respondents who react defensively and sometimes confrontationally. They have been the source of inspiration for this study. Within this group, there are some who appear go into denial and simply refuse to answer questions that involve reflection about any negative aspects of themselves. Another subgroup acknowledges they may have downsides but will then state, “That’s for others to deal with. It’s not my problem.” Usually these are people who are able to articulate positive aspects of themselves with ease. They speak highly of themselves and how impressive they are in the eyes of others. “I am a natural leader”, “I inspire people”, “I’m the go-to person” are common self-statements of this group. Many of these individuals will also claim that others are envious of them and their achievements.

From these work-place experiences, the main question I formed about this latter group was, “Does such a largely positive, yet seemingly lop-sided, narrow self-perspective have any impact on how such a person performs in the workplace?” In short, what are the effects of narcissistic traits in terms of workplace performance?

In the following chapters I will undertake an examination of different views which have been advanced and the various perspectives taken to understand narcissism then investigate the self-concept of narcissists and review previous research undertaken on narcissism in the workplace. The specific questions this research will investigate are presented in Chapter five.

CHAPTER TWO

PERSPECTIVES OF NARCISSISM

Research on narcissism suggests it is a multifaceted construct (Bosson, & Prewitt-Freilino, 2007). Due to the volumes of literature about and approaches to the study of narcissism, a concise definition is challenging since, in general, there is a lack of agreement (Miller & Campbell, 2008). The term *narcissism* has therefore suffered from multi-usage and has been used to describe any kind of self-inflation or focus upon oneself (Brown, 1997; Horney, 1951). The following literature review will explore perspectives about narcissism, its defining elements, its psychometric measurement, theories about the origins of narcissism, and developmental views including attachment. Environmental perspectives about narcissism are reviewed in conjunction with narcissism in the workplace, in chapter four.

Defining Characteristics of Narcissism

Freud described narcissism as libidinal cathexis of the ego, whereas Hartman described it as the libidinal cathexis of the self (Westen, 1985). Horney (1951) defines narcissism as a person in love with their own idealized self-image, self-adoring, and requiring endless confirmation of their self-perceived image. Millon (1996) proposes that narcissists' primary motivation is to direct energy towards meeting their own egocentric wishes. Miller (1992) argued that narcissism is best understood as the combination of three dynamic factors:

1. the cause of narcissism being due to a distinct deficit in self-esteem
2. the highly focused effort to compensate for that deficit by pursuing sources of self-affirmation – the narcissistic behaviour and
3. the pursuit of self-affirmation without the risk of interpersonal vulnerability.

An extensive review by Mollon (1993) identified nine prominent and representative models of narcissism. The three most common connecting themes among each model were grandiosity, grandiose self-image, and strong sense of self-sufficiency. Mollon's model of narcissism distinguished nine major characteristics: 1. deceptive self-image, 2. lack of self-knowledge, 3. difficulty in reflection, 4. sado-masochistic interactions, 5. pride and vanity, 6. fear of being possessed, 7. envy, 8. self-absorption, 9. lack of parental support at a young age.

Akhtar (1989) differed somewhat from Mollon's perspective adding that *relationship with others* was a key element when characterising narcissism. Akhtar proposed narcissism was not merely grandiosity but also exploitation of others. Blais, Hilsenroth and Castlebury (1997), reported grandiosity as an essential feature and also argued that lack of empathy for others and a need for admiration were also defining characteristics of narcissism. Rosenthal and Pittinsky (2006) centralised their perspective by identifying arrogance as being the single overriding feature of narcissism.

In an overarching description, Westen (1990) describes narcissism as: "a cognitive-affective preoccupation with the self, where cognitive preoccupation refers to a focus of attention on the self; affective preoccupation refers to a preoccupation with one's own needs, wishes, goals, ambitions, glory, superiority, or perfection; and self refers to the whole person, including one's subjective experience, actions and body" (p.227).

From a clinical and diagnostic perspective the DSM-IV-TR (American Psychiatric Association: APA, 2000) sets out the following criteria to be diagnosed with Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD). The individual must: Exhibit a pervasive pattern of grandiosity (in fantasy or behaviour), have a high need for admiration and exhibit a lack of empathy, beginning by early adulthood and present in a variety of contexts, as indicated by five (or more) of the following:

1. has a grandiose sense of self-importance (e.g., exaggerates achievements and talents, expects to be recognised as superior without commensurate achievements),
2. is preoccupied with fantasies of unlimited success, power, brilliance, beauty, or ideal love,
3. believes that he or she is “special” and unique and can be only understood by or should associate with, other special or high status people (or institutions),
4. requires excessive admiration,
5. has a sense of entitlement, i.e. unreasonable expectations of especially favourable treatment or automatic compliance with his or her expectations,
6. is interpersonally exploitive , i.e. takes advantage of others to achieve his or her own ends,
7. lacks empathy; is unwilling to recognise or identify with the feelings and needs of others,
8. is often envious of others or believes that others are envious of him or her,
9. shows arrogant, haughty behaviours or attitudes,

While anti-social personality disorder and narcissism have often been viewed as very similar, clinical researchers Gunderson and Ronningstam (2001) have differentiated narcissism from anti-social personality disorder based on the following as being more typified by the narcissist; self-perceptions of grandiosity, exaggerated talents, regard for self as unique and sense of superiority.

Several researchers, (e.g. Rose 2002; Wink, 1991; Holmes, 2001; Zeigler-Hill, Clark & Pickard, 2008) have identified two further contrasting dimensions of narcissism – overt and covert, grandiose and vulnerable, or thick and thin-skinned. Narcissism is normally associated with the overt, demanding of others’ attention, accompanied by a grandiose style, whereas the covert narcissist is typified by introversion and lack of overt self-confidence. Both styles are equally self-indulgent and vulnerable to criticism, though research

by Atlas and Them (2008) suggests that overt narcissists tend to be less sensitive to criticism than the covert style. It is in the projection of self-confidence and extroversion where these two styles differ. Wink (1991) identified two distinct orthogonal factors; vulnerability / sensitivity and grandiosity / exhibitionism. Both carried the core narcissist features of self-indulgence, conceit and a disregard for others but the vulnerability / sensitivity factors related to introversion, defensiveness and anxiety, whereas the grandiosity / exhibitionism factors related to extroversion, self-assurance and aggression. The focus of this study is on those with an overt or thick-skinned narcissistic style and does not include covert narcissism.

Further variations of narcissistic sub-types have been identified. For example, Bursten (1973) identified four major types of narcissism: paranoid, manipulative, craving, and phallic. Millon and Davis (1996) also identified four main types that differed somewhat from Bursten's, these being: the unprincipled narcissist, the amorous narcissist, the compensatory narcissist, and the elitist narcissist.

The *unprincipled narcissist* is typified by an anti-social style, unscrupulous, amoral and deceptive tendencies, often accompanied by an intimidating manner and lack of social conscience, on top of the basic narcissistic arrogant sense of their self-worth. The *amorous narcissist* tends to be highly socially seductive with a high need to reinforce self-worth by the demonstration of sexual prowess, whilst being genuinely avoidant of interpersonal intimacy. The *compensatory narcissist* is hugely driven to satisfy a striving for prestige due to a sense of insecurity and weakness and seeks to glorify their public standing. The *elitist narcissist* is deeply convinced of their own superiority and is typified by arrogance and a looking down upon others. Although there is likely to be a degree of blending between each of these sub-categories, an underlying theme of extreme self-enhancement is consistent throughout each.

Narcissism has also been generally viewed as a continuum (e.g., Soyer, Rovenpor, Kopelman, Mullins, & Watson, 2001; Rathvon & Holmstrom, 1996), with healthy, realistic, positive self-esteem at one end and narcissism at the

other. This does raise a question “At what point does healthy self-esteem become narcissism?” (Wink, 1996). In differentiating positive self-esteem from narcissism, Pulver (1970) suggested that positive self-esteem is based on pleasurable affect whereas narcissism is represented by defensive high self-regard, self-centeredness and defensive pride. According to Kernberg (1975) healthy self-esteem is characterised by libidinal investment in the self, however the normal self is integrated as a comprehensive and complex whole involving both positive and negative self-images resulting in a realistic self-concept. With narcissism, negative self-images are dissociated with, or split off. This perspective is also discussed later in this chapter.

Psychometric perspectives

A number of psychometric instruments have endeavoured to measure narcissism. The development of DSM criteria has contributed directly to such measurement tools. Kernberg’s work on narcissism shaped much of the DSM’s initial criteria-structure of narcissism. A number of narcissism self-report scales such as the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI; Raskin & Hall, 1979), Narcissistic Personality Disorder Scales – the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI; Butcher, Dahlstrom, Gahan, Tellegan & Kaemmer, 1989), the California Psychological Inventory narcissism scales (CPI: Gough, 1987) and subsequently narcissism scales utilizing the California Q-Set (CAQ: Block, 1961) are based on DSM criteria (Wink, 1992).

The NPI has been the most utilised psychometric tool in measuring non-clinical narcissism and is constructed around the following scales: Leadership / Authority; Self-absorption / Self-admiration; Superiority/ Arrogance; Exploiteness / Entitlement. While still commonly used in narcissism research, the NPI has been criticised for its narrow breadth of applicability, Campbell and Foster (2007) and insensitivity to the multi-faceted features of narcissism (Wink, 1996).

The Millon Clinical Multi-axial Inventory (MCMI –III: Millon, Millon, Davis & Grossman, 2009) contains a clinical measurement of narcissism and is made up of three scales: admirable self-image, cognitively expansive (preoccupation with immature self glorifying fantasies) and interpersonally exploitive. The scales of the MCMI-III resemble the scales of the NPI, though the MCMI-III is focused on clinical diagnoses of narcissism whereas the NPI is based on narcissism in the general population – or non clinical use.

The Narcissistic Personality Disorder Scales (NPDS; Ashby, Lee, & Duke, 1979; Morey, Waugh & Blashfield, 1985) focuses on the covert, hypertensive aspects of narcissism such as low self-esteem, insecurity and proneness to worry. The MMPI narcissism scales are divided into two main dimensions: vulnerability / sensitivity and grandiosity / exhibitionism (Wink, 1991). This is one of the few measures aimed to detect the contrasting the thick and thin skinned dimensions of narcissism.

Generic personality inventories have identified specific narcissism factors. For example, Wink (1992) using the California Q-set (Block, 1978) identified three prominent factors: wilfulness, hypersensitivity, and autonomy. Higher scores on wilfulness were related to self-confidence, overt narcissism, assertiveness, rebelliousness, and being highly critical. Higher scores on hypersensitivity related to a tendency to be self-centred, withdrawn, under-controlled (impulsive) and lacking in well-being and were characteristic of covert narcissism. Autonomy related to a healthy form of narcissism, this included the presence of self-assurance, creative and intellectual interests, independence, and occupational success.

Big-Five based personality measures have tended to be less sensitive to detecting narcissism (Paulhus & Williams, 2002) with only the extroversion scale showing a consistent correlational relationship. A derivative of the Big Five model, the HEXACO (Lee & Ashton, 2005) reported narcissism positively correlated with extroversion ($r = .49$) and negatively with honesty and humility ($r = -.53$). In looking within the honesty – humility factor, Lee & Ashton found narcissism was most negatively related to modesty ($r = -.78$).

A small group of studies have also shown projective techniques (the Narcissism – Projective and the Rorschach) have also been effective in the classification and differentiation between individuals (Hilsenroth, Fowler, Padawer, & Handler, 1997, Shulman, McCarthy, & Ferguson, 1988).

Narcissism research from a psychometric orientation has tended to view the construct in either its clinical or non-clinical form, although the conceptual difference between these two views is fuzzy. Research by Miller and Campbell (2008) compared two different psychometric tools: the NPI (typically used for non-clinical populations) and the Personality Diagnostic Questionnaire, PDQ-4 (typically used with clinical populations). Miller and Campbell found there was significant overlap in the traits captured by each measure but with some specific areas of difference. The NPI captured emotional resiliency and extroversion, while the PDQ-4 captured emotionally unstable, negative affect and sensitive – introverted narcissism. Both measures highlighted the tendency for narcissism to be typified by an antagonistic interpersonal style.

The Diagnostic Interview for Narcissism (DIN: Gunderson, Ronningstam & Bodkin, 1990) has also been used in both clinical and research arenas and differs from other measures in that it employs a semi-structured interview format. The DIN is made up of 101 questions and grouped in 33 descriptive statements under five topic areas; grandiosity, interpersonal relationships, reactivity, affects and mood states, and social and moral adaptation (Millon, 2004).

Theories of the Origins of Narcissism

Psychoanalytic

Freud

In reference to narcissism Sigmund Freud coined the phrase, “His majesty the baby” (Maniaci, 2007), indicating his view of narcissism as a reflection of immaturity and self-centeredness. Freud essentially saw narcissism as a

result of children's sense of their parents' inability to provide love and reliable emotional protection and that narcissism was a distinctive style of attachment to oneself rather than to others. The result is the withdrawal of libido from others and its reinvestment towards the self. Due to this re-allocation there is little energy left to invest emotionally in anyone other than oneself (Lessem, 2005). Freud's work prompted other theorists to hypothesise about developmental origins of narcissism. The more prominent of these are introduced below.

Kohut

Heinz Kohut, initially a strong follower of Freudian psychology, broke away from Freud's model of narcissism and in the eyes of the self-psychology movement revolutionized psychoanalytical thinking about narcissism (Lessem, 2005). Kohut viewed narcissism as a normal part of infant development. He believed that the positive maturation of narcissism resulted in the development of qualities such as humour, creativity and wisdom. The negative development of narcissism was typified by grandiosity, a sense of entitlement and high self-importance, an unstable self-concept and the inability to relate to other people other than from the perspective of what benefits the person can bring to them.

Kohut's approach was similar to other analytical theorists in that narcissism emerged from the early relationships with critical individuals (i.e. mother and father). Kohut's concept of self-object needs provided an early base for understanding the development of narcissism, specifically, the building and maintenance of self-esteem via mirroring experience and a sense of safety – a sense of idealization (Lessem, 2005).

Longer-term manifestation of positive or negative narcissism was essentially dependent on these two factors: mirroring and idealisation. *Mirroring* referred to the responsiveness of the parent to provide a demonstration of love and attention, particularly in times of the child's distress. Through such interactions, the child is able to gauge their own level of importance.

Idealisation refers to the notion that the child sees the parent as the perfect person, heightening the importance of mirroring as it comes from such an important person (Kohut, 1971). Kohut believed that the absence of empathic caregiver's responsiveness to the child's internal developmental needs results in the inability to develop a secure integrated self-structure (Heiserman & Cook, 1998). This ultimately results in arrested development forming in adulthood as a narcissistic sense of grandiosity, reflecting a yearning for unfulfilled narcissistic needs of early life (Kohut, 1978).

Kernberg

Otto Kernberg's concept of narcissism differed from Kohut's in that he viewed the narcissistic self as pathological, whereas Kohut viewed narcissism as being potentially positive in some areas. Kernberg, like Freud and Kohut, viewed narcissism as a result of dysfunctional early object relationships. Such relationships are characterised by a lack of consistent warmth and love from those primarily responsible for providing such care. Kernberg viewed narcissism as being a manifestation of narcissistic defences, the result of unmanageable degrees of emotional rage and frustration and a sense of loss and abandonment. This rage causes anxiety due to the threat of destroying any loving relationship with a primary care giver. In an attempt to preserve this relationship, the child projects all their bad self-representations outward and internalises only good self-representations (Heiserman & Cook, 1998). To protect oneself and maintain a sense of positive self-esteem developmentally, the narcissist excessively relies on splitting and projection, with ultimately only positive self-representations being internalised. This results in narcissists being unable to tolerate any sense of their negative characteristics being integrated within themselves, leaving only a sense of self-love being acceptable and correspondingly the sense of grandiosity (Kernberg, 1974). Non-narcissists have a higher capability to accept and integrate their more negative aspects of self, whereas the narcissists' lack of tolerance to this task leads to a highly imbalanced sense of self.

Kernberg also wrote extensively on the relationship between narcissists' inability to differentiate between their actual-self and their ideal-self. To the narcissist, these are basically one and the same, there is a seamless fusion.

Millon

Theodore Millon's view of the development of narcissism differs from that of the approach of Kernberg and Kohut. Millon believes narcissism is the result of an over-indulged child. As a result, the individual grows up lacking any motivation to actually work and develop the skills necessary to elicit the tributes they were unconditionally brought up with (Millon, 1996). Millon's viewpoint is that children who are emotionally neglected are more likely to become anti-social rather than narcissistic. The adult narcissist is the result of unrealistic over-evaluation by parents creating a self-image so positive that the world is unable to sustain it. Miller (1981) also proposed narcissism as being the result of children being brought up as a symbol of their parents' glorification rather than people in their own right. Thus, adult narcissism is due to a previous lack of genuine acceptance by parents of the child as an individual.

Stone

Similar to Millon, Michael Stone viewed the development of narcissism as due to either too much or too little adult praise (Stone, 1993). Over-indulged children regard themselves as overly superior to others, while emotionally neglected children build a compensatory sense of specialness; though at a deeper level feel worthless.

Ego Development

Early theorists such as Horney (1951) and later researchers such as Morf and Rhodewalt (2001) have referred to narcissism as a reflection of developmental immaturity. The self-centred, ego-enhancing self-concept is often perceived as childlike. Direct developmental theories have been less frequently applied to understanding narcissism. However, Loevinger's (1976) Ego Development framework provides a relevant model to view narcissism

within a developmental stage perspective. In essence, Loevinger's model maps personality growth as a process that is characterised by moving beyond oneself, where one's own needs, impulses and drivers are not the sole basis of operating, thinking, feeling and interacting. Higher ego development is typified by the recognition of the needs and feelings of others and a reflective capacity and broader cognitive complexity not characteristic of the narcissist (Manner & Durkin, 2000). Within the organisational environment, higher ego development relates to competence and effective decision making among managers (Bushe & Gibbs, 1990).

Within an ego development model, nine distinct stages of ego maturity are offered, ranging from *impulsive* at the lower end to *integrated* at the highest. Descriptions of each progressive stage tend to typify the narcissist as being at lower developmental stages with little relationship to the developmental tendencies at the higher end. The higher developmental stages are typified as follows: Stage 5, the *self-aware* stage, the individual is typified by the ability to self-critique, as well as some awareness of self and others. Stage 6, the *conscientious* stage the individual has developed further self-critical capacity, self-evaluative standards, reflective capacity, broader perspectives, high cognitive complexity, and principled morality. Stage 7, the *individualistic* stage is typified by greater tolerance of both self and others, awareness of inner conflicts, with a greater value placed on relationships rather than achievements. Stage 8, the *autonomous* stage is typified by a capacity to cope with inner conflicts and tolerance of ambiguity, an understanding of the multifaceted nature of people and a cherishing of individual uniqueness. Stage 9, the *integrated* stage equates to a full sense of one's own identity with the ability to reconcile inner conflicts.

These developmental stages hold little resemblance to narcissistic descriptions generally presented within the literature. However, two of the lower developmental stages show some strong similarities; the *impulsive* and *self-protective* stages. The *impulsive* stage (stage 2) as related to adulthood is typified by a need for gratification, particularly sexual and aggressive (Manner & Durkin, 2000). Individuals at this stage are totally egocentric in that

their primary focus is in relation to how things affect them. Impulsivity is characterised by a dispositional lack of self-control, impatience and from a narcissist's perspective this is likely to be in the form of a desire for recognition (Vazire & Funder, 2006). Impulsivity has been suggested as a characteristic of narcissism and has a strong empirical base. In an extensive review, Vazire & Funder (2006) found 21 of the 23 correlation studies showed a relationship between narcissism and impulsivity.

The *self-protective* stage (stage 3) is defined by Hy & Loevinger (1996), as opportunistic hedonism. At this stage, immediate gratification is a prime driver, and interpersonal relationships will be exploited to satisfy one's own needs. Characteristic of this stage is the externalising of blame, a self-protective behaviour often at the core of narcissism. The individual at this stage tends to be vulnerable to expressing hostility and by nature opportunistic. Relevant to this study, Hy & Loevinger (1996) speculate adults at this stage are not necessarily doomed: In reference to the self-protective; "... probably most find a place in normal society and may even be successful, given good luck, good looks, intellectual brilliance, or inherited wealth" (p.5).

However from a developmental perspective, narcissists lack the capacity to grow beyond the early stages of ego-development due to their narrow and defensive cognitive perspective of self. They seek only to confirm their grandiose self-views, condemning or denying information inconsistent with that self-concept.

Manner & Durkin (2000) have argued people who do not advance beyond the lower levels of ego development maintain their current level by selective inattention, bias attribution tendencies and not allowing dis-equilibrating information to enter into their existing cognitive structures. The capacity to accommodate challenging and disconfirming information promotes maturity and growth, but the narcissist seeks only to assimilate confirmational information, specifically information that promotes a highly positive self-image. In their maintenance of a positive sense of self, narcissists have, for example, been shown to consistently associate with high self-forgiveness and low

forgiveness of others (Strelan, 2007; Eaton, Struthers, & Santelli, 2006; Brown, 2004).

Cavell's, (1985), developmental perspective is that narcissism is not a condition of our early development, but about a condition having gone wrong at an early age in extenuating circumstances.

Attachment Theory

Attachment models have also been applied to the study of narcissism. This is understandable due to the belief of many researchers that narcissism has its roots embedded in early key relationships. Attachment theory focuses on personality development being largely dependent on the quality of early attachment relationships thus continuing the analytical theme of early circumstantial influences. The founder of attachment theory, John Bowlby, believed an avoidant attachment style lay at the heart of narcissistic personality disorder (Karen, 1994). Researchers focusing on adult attachment styles such as Bartholomew (1990) have suggested that those with dismissive attachment styles are prone to being preoccupied with achievement. Individuals with dismissive styles are typified as being dominant and competitive, as well as being potentially arrogant and controlling. As has been noted already, these descriptions are common references about narcissists. For example, the dismissive attachment style is typified by a high sense of own self-worth at the expense of intimacy and a largely negative view of others. Research by Campbell & Foster (2002) has supported this position.

Smolewska and Dion (2005) viewed narcissism from both its overt and covert styles. They found that the most prominent relationship was between covert narcissism relating to anxious and avoidant attachment style rather than overt narcissism and dismissive attachment. The covert style, typified by hypersensitivity and vulnerability, related strongly to avoidance. Similarly Dickinson and Pincus (2003) also found overt narcissism related to both dismissive and secure attachment.

The varying perspectives reviewed in this chapter suggest narcissism is a complex personality construct, hence the difficulty in gaining a concise definition. The following chapter focuses on the inner perspective, or self-perception of the narcissist.

CHAPTER THREE

THE NARCISSISTIC SELF-CONCEPT

“At the icy heart of narcissism is the conviction that one is better than others”.

(Campbell & Green, 2008, p.73).

The following chapter addresses perspectives narcissists have of themselves. The relationship between ideal-self and actual-self is discussed and the defence mechanisms and self-regulatory strategies employed to maintain their self-concept is reviewed.

The Ideal-Self and Actual-Self

The ‘ideal-self’ or ‘ego-ideal’ refers to a set of ideal-self representations, a hierarchically organised set of cognitive-affective schema consisting of conscious and unconscious rules, ideals and identifications (Westin, 1985). Originally a Freudian concept, the ego-ideal is conceptually driven within psychodynamic theory; it represents the good world we experience as infants (of which the individual is the centre), and the drive as adults to return to it. As Brown (1997) puts it, the ego-ideal is “Our model of the person that we must become in order for the world to love us” (p.644).

Holmes (2001) proposed that narcissism is best understood in terms of the discrepancy between ideal-self and actual-self. Narcissists have a unique perspective of how close they see themselves to the person they would ultimately like to be, “The gap between actual and ideal is distorted in narcissism. In the ambivalent, echoic negative, hypervigilant type, the gap is too great. In the narcissistic, thick-skinned, obvious type, there is a fusion of ego-ideal” (p.68).

The concept of ego-ideal provides the underlying structure to narcissistic, defensive behaviour. It is what drives narcissists to reject and protect themselves from whatever it may be that they feel is vulnerable or limited about themselves. The ego-ideal represents what we could be if we were able to remove the causes of our anxiety (Schwartz, 1993). In essence, the ego-ideal represents a positive sense of self by way of denial of anxiety; the closer one feels a sense to one's ego-ideal, the lesser the anxiety that is potentially experienced. Goren (1995) for example, views narcissism as a separation of the reflected self from the inner self, resulting in a unique set of psychological dynamics to regulate self-esteem.

Empirical research has found evidence for the narcissism and ideal-self discrepancy relationship. For instance, Kodaira & Oshio (2006) found that narcissists tended to have significantly lower ideal-self /actual-self discrepancies than non-narcissists, and saw themselves as being highly talented and liked by others. Narcissists as measured by the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI) were found to report a greater congruence between their ideal and actual self-concepts (Rhodewalt & Morf, 1995). Further significant relationships between ego-ideal and narcissism were found in a study conducted by Raskin, Novacek & Hogan (1991) that looked at the relationship between the NPI measured narcissism and ideal-self congruency. In addition, Raskin & Terry (1988) reported that the ideal selves of narcissists included characteristics such as aggressiveness, competitiveness and omnipotence indicating that not only do narcissists see themselves as close to their ego-ideal, but their ego-ideals also reflect themes of dominance and grandiosity.

Kernberg (1976) proposed that the narcissist develops a grandiose sense of self by splitting off and denying perceived weakness. To Kernberg, narcissism is essentially a fixation, where a person is unable to differentiate actual-self representations from their ideal-self representations. This grandiose self is ultimately an indication of a lack of integration of a normal self (Kernberg, 2004). The healthy individual has a reasonably accurate (though not perfect) sense of themselves, whereas the narcissist does not

(Westin, 1985). Moreover, the mature person has a reasonably realistic sense of their own positive and negative aspects which is basically in harmony with their ideal-self (Kernberg 1998). The inability to fully integrate the positive and negative aspects of self is considered an indication of an immature self (Watson, Bidermann, 1993).

In a similar vein, Reich's (1960) view of narcissism is essentially the inability of the ego to engage in reality and develop an accurate perspective of self. In essence, a chief characteristic in the manifestation of narcissism is the failure to realistically cope with the difference between one's ideal-self and actual-self. A false sense of one's proximity to ego-ideal is maintained by ignoring and excluding any negative and vulnerable aspects of self. Narcissists dissociate, repress or project onto others all potentially negative aspects of themselves. This is demonstrated by their strong reaction and rejection of any form of negative feedback. The mature personality, in contrast to the narcissist personality, has the fundamental capacity for realistic self-criticism (Kernberg, 2004). Narcissists not only rate themselves very close to their ideal-self, but also remove themselves from any form of critical self-insight or self-critique.

While the narcissists' self-perceived proximity to their ego-ideal functions to maintain their positive self-esteem, two challenging realities remain. The first is that the return to infantile narcissism or the attainment of ego-ideal is not actually possible and secondly, by perceiving oneself to have reached ego-ideal is to deny one's real and more vulnerable self (Schwartz, 1993) thus blocking the opportunity for more complex mature development to occur.

Maintaining the Narcissistic Self

The maintenance of self-esteem due to a fragile sense of self is a central concept in much theory of narcissism (Brown, 1997; Morf & Rhodewalt, 2001). The primary task for the narcissist is the maintenance of a positive sense of self, regardless of anything or anyone. This deep-seated bias of self is primarily achieved through the active use of ego defensive behaviours;

extreme self-enhancement (aggrandizement), denial and attributional egotism and broader self-regulatory mechanisms.

Extreme Self-Enhancement (ESE)

“Even in spite of our most heroic attempts we cannot reach perfection”
(Whitmont, 1991, p.130).

Extreme self-enhancement (ESE) is almost by definition narcissism. To Horney (1951) narcissism is best described essentially as self-inflation (Millon, 1996). Grandiosity that accompanies high self-enhancement is considered by Silverstein (2007) as one of the most accurate criteria for isolating narcissism.

Most people self-enhance to some degree and the tendency to do so does not in itself constitute narcissism. Positive self-esteem and a positive self-view is characteristic of psychological health (Baumeister, Boden & Smart, 1996), however, the narcissist self-reports a distinctly high degree of superiority in conjunction with other activated defence mechanisms. Moreover, with narcissists the self-enhancement is due to deep-ridden, unconscious self-doubt, based on the need to protect themselves and their vulnerable self-esteem. This more extreme form of self-enhancement is the key fundamental and consistent feature of narcissism (Kwan, John, Robins, & Kuang, 2008; Mischel & Morf, 2003; Sedikides & Strube, 1997; Campbell, Reeder, Sedikides & Elliot, 2000; Weston, 1990; Paulhus, 1998; Brown & Zeigler-Hill, 2004). Not only do narcissists believe that they are superior to others but they are also extraordinarily motivated to seek glory, wealth, power and status to reinforce this image (Beck & Freeman, 1990) .

The term extreme self-enhancement (ESE) is applied here to encapsulate two consistent characteristics of narcissism. First, the general tendency to self-enhance to a high degree when compared to others (i.e. I am better than others) and second, a sense of near perfection (i.e. there is little difference between how I see myself currently, and how I would ultimately like to see myself). Researchers have focused on this theme using other related terms

such as egotist (Robins & John, 1997), self-aggrandizement (Brown, 1997) and the elitist narcissist (Millon, 1996). ESE includes the tendency to deny personal shortcoming. Denial is discussed below.

Of the DSM-IV's (APA, 2000) five diagnosable symptoms of narcissism, the first three listed highlight the strong elements of ESE:

1. has a grandiose sense of self-importance
2. is preoccupied with fantasies of unlimited success, power, brilliance, beauty, or ideal love
3. believes that he or she is "special" and unique and can be only understood by, or should be associated with, other special or high-status people.

The DSM-IV also describes a defining characteristic of narcissism as the "exaggeration of one's talents and accomplishments." Millon, (1996) succinctly describes the extreme self-enhancing style of the narcissist as the admirable self-image. "Believes self to be meritorious, special – if not unique – deserving of great admiration and acting in a grandiose or self assured manner, often without commensurate achievements: has a sense of high self-worth, despite being seen by others as egoistic, inconsiderate, and arrogant" (p.405).

The positive relationship between extreme self-enhancement and narcissism is empirically strong. Narcissists are highly sensitive to self-aggrandising opportunities and tend to overrate their abilities across a wide range of domains. For example, narcissists will rate their performance as superior compared to the performance of others (Campbell, Reeder, Sedikides, & Elliot, 2000; Farwell & Wohlwend-Lloyd, 1998) they will rate themselves as more attractive and intelligent (Gabriel, Critelli, & Ee, 1994) and their self-rating will be higher on task specific performances (Gosling, John, Craik, & Robins, 1998). In addition, Narcissists will rate themselves as offering a more positive contribution to a group (John & Robins 1994). Greenwald (1980)

claims the narcissist's self-perception as being motivated by a high need for positive self-worth, even if such a perception is inaccurate.

Paulhus & Johns (1998) describe narcissists as having a superhero self-perception and see themselves as being superior to others on such facets as emotional stability, intelligence and influencing ability. The compulsion for narcissists to self-enhance is so pervasive that they will still exaggerate their abilities even when they can be openly displayed as being wrong (Paulhus, Harms, Bruce, & Lysy, 2003). Nathanson, Kurt and Paulhus (2005) found that high self-rating was a positive indication of security when that same high rating was consistent with others' ratings of that individual. High self-rating, not supported by other raters, correlated with maladjustment.

By their very nature, narcissists report significantly inflated self-descriptions when compared to non-narcissists (Gabriel, Critelli & Ee, 1994).

Correspondingly, narcissism significantly negatively correlates with modesty (-.62) and humility (-.53) (Lee & Ashton, 2005). In essence, narcissists' unrealistic positive self-views are based on the perception that they are exceptional people and superior to others, backed up by their cognitive bias to selectively attend to events and feedback that reinforce this self-perception. The narcissists' downward comparison of others has also shown to increase their sense of positive self-affect (Bogart, Benotsch, & Pavovic, 2004).

In a five year longitudinal study by Colvin, Block, and Funder (1995) the projection of narcissists' self-enhancement tendencies was extensively researched. Table 1 highlights multiple ratings reported by those who were seen as significantly high self-enhancers in their late teens and characteristically described as having high self-enhancement tendencies in their early twenties by clinical researchers, friends and partners.

Table 1

Summary of Descriptions Applied to Male and Female High Self-Enhancers (SE) and Non Self-Enhancers (Non-SE) by Observers

SE Men	Non SE Men	SE Women	Non SE Women
Guileful	Straightforward	Rigid	Introspective
Deceitful	Forthright	Narcissistic style	Interesting
Distrusting	High intellect	Thin skinned	Intelligent
Ego brittle	Consistent mood	Defensive	Relaxed
Hostile	Sympathetic	Hostile	Accepted by others
Unable to delay gratification	Giving of self to others	Self-defeating	Cheerful with social poise
Speaks quickly	Socially skilled	Consistently seeking reassurance	Socially skilled
Interrupts others	Liked by others	Irritable	
Braggs about self		Awkward interpersonal style	

Similarly, Heatherton and Vohs (2000) found that self-enhancers with high self-esteem when experiencing ego threat were described by others as arrogant, dislikeable and antagonistic and peers described narcissists as being aggressive and domineering (Clifton, Turkheimer, & Oltmanns, 2004). More recent research has continued to reinforce the detrimental influence of self-enhancement with Kwan, Oliver, Robins and Kuang, (2008) reporting that self-enhancers score high also on narcissism and were judged by independent clinical observers as being less resilient and more defensive than non self-enhancers.

Denial

“If you cannot let yourself be afraid, that contributes to bravery, but it does not do much for sensing what goes on around you” (Levinson, 1994, p.428).

The function of denial is to distract attention and awareness from a troubling fact. Denial does not lead to realistic appraisals, as highlighted by Levinson’s quote above, but it is a powerful antidote to anxiety (Goleman, 1997). Its functional use in a general sense is to cope with and manage potentially overriding emotional pain, distress and conflict. It is a defence mechanism used periodically by most people, and as proposed by Sullivan (1953), it is part of the ego’s role in anxiety gate-keeping and the maintenance of a positive and coherent sense of self. However, for the narcissist it is a more active part of their fundamental make up, utilised generally and consistently to maintain a sense of confidence and invulnerability. Denial is considered to be one of the more immature forms of defence mechanism (Cramer, 1999).

Like Kernberg, Brown (1997) views denial within the narcissistic personality as being a small gap between ideal-self and actual-self. This small discrepancy or fusion is a measurable indication of denial in action. In a workplace environment, denial is marked by reacting negatively to less than positive feedback, never admitting to mistakes and blaming others for failure (Wohlens & London, 1989). To admit fault would be counter to the narcissist’s need for a sense of superiority. Fundamentally, denial serves to conceal and self-deceptively hide disagreeable truths in order to preserve some positive sense of self-esteem.

Empirical research has supported the relationship between narcissistic tendency and the presence of denial. Block and Thomas (1955) found that people who rated themselves very close to their ideal-self scored significantly high on the denial scale of the MMPI personality measure. Their concluding observation was that extreme self-satisfaction was an unhealthy and

immature state as it overly promoted a denial of the real human state and the suppression of any threatening features.

Likewise, Cramer (1995) found the use of denial and exploitiveness significantly correlated with narcissistic style in late adolescence and similarly Cramer (1999) found positive correlations with university age narcissists and the use of denial. Cramer (2002) reported that people who excessively relied on denial were characterised by self-centredness, ego instability and a lack of impulse control. Block and Block (1980) found in their longitudinal study of adolescent individuals moving into adulthood, those who relied on the usage of denial were also characterised by self-centredness and narcissism.

Denial blocks painful and unattractive features from consciousness, and in the process, appears to have a significant effect on self-accuracy and self-awareness. Girrens (2003) for example reports on the tendency of narcissists to avoid activities that involve introspection. Wohlers and London (1989) found a highly significant negative relationship within the work environment between self-awareness and denial. Moreover, low self-awareness and denial also clustered strongly with high self-promotion, fear of failure and giving up easily and negatively relates to self-objectivity. Fletcher (1997) reported that employees with a more accurate sense of self were fundamentally more self-critical and were more open to feedback as well as having a higher sense of organisational obligation than those with inaccurate, inflated self-perspectives. In addition, Dickinson and Pincus (2003) found that narcissists were often reported as having domineering and vindictive interpersonal problems but despite this, they denied having any interpersonal distress from these problems.

In essence, the use of denial provides an avoidant function for narcissists as it prevents intolerable anxiety within their fragile self-esteems and a self-concept directed towards maintaining a grandiose sense of self. Yet the full development of the self requires accommodation of both the positive and negative experiences. Denial of the negative and the avoidance of learning from mistakes restrict growth (McWilliams, 1994).

Denial is essentially characterised by immaturity (Cramer, 2006) and as Horney (1951) postulated, development is not possible if weakness is not accepted. Educational theorists such as Kid (1973) emphasised that the most important task in learning is the development of a self that is able to successfully deal with reality. Accepting realistic feedback enables individuals to make intelligent changes thereby avoiding making mistakes again.

Attributional Egotism

As part of maintaining a highly positive self-view and self-esteem, narcissists engage in biased cognitive processes. That is, they filter what they need to self-promote and dismiss what they do not. Attributional egotism refers to attributing positive events or outcomes to oneself and attributing failure to causes external to oneself. Greenwald (1980) argued that ego cognitive biases are part of a normal personality; however, subsequent research indicates that the narcissist's cognitive path differs to that of the non-narcissist. The more narcissistic a person is, the greater the tendency to engage in attributional egotism. Rhodewalt and Morf (1998) found that narcissistic individuals significantly reported greater attribution to success and took less blame for failure than non-narcissists. Similarly Stucke (2003) found that following their performance feedback on intelligence tests, narcissistic people showed more self-serving attributions than did non-narcissists. In addition, task failure was attributed by narcissists to task difficulty, whereas non-narcissists attributed failure to their own lack of ability. More generically Ladd, Welsh, Vitulli, Labbe, and Law (1997) found that narcissists significantly differed from non-narcissists in how they made more internal and stable attributions of positive events and external attributions to negative. In terms of memory recollection, Rhodewalt and Eddings (2002) reported that narcissistic men tend to recall positive memories of situations involving rejection, than did non-narcissistic men.

Self-blame and self-critique are not trademarks of narcissism and by attributing failures to external causes this immediately diverts the narcissist

away from any anxiety potentially experienced by failure. Narcissists tend to maintain overly positive self-views even when contradictory evidence is placed before them (Robins & John, 1998). As Stucke (2003) puts it, when failure is attributed to internal causes, one can only blame oneself. Nothing, it would appear, promotes self-esteem like success and the narcissistic mind-set would appear to be highly attuned to taking such perspective.

In essence, the grandiose narcissistic personality fuses ideal-self and actual-self. It is defensive in structure and thus unable to see or accept limitations or faults. Thus, the inability to see and accept oneself as fallible also distorts the ability to see others as independent and separate from oneself. From the psychodynamic perspective of narcissism, the role of others is to promote and maintain this unrealistic, idealised self-image. Therefore, the interpersonal mechanisms used by narcissists are very important in maintaining the narcissistic self and are a key component of more recent self-regulation models of narcissism.

Self-Regulation Models and the Role of the Ego

Self-enhancement, denial and attributional egotism are all prominent components of a broader self-regulation process, though there is almost an unlimited range of self-regulatory techniques employed by narcissists (Campbell & Green, 2008). Contemporary models of self-regulation are reviewed below, though they could also be seen as extended reflections of earlier theoretical perspectives of the function of the ego, such as Sullivan's (1953) model of the self-system. According to Sullivan, the function of the ego is to filter out anxiety and thus the individual tends to recognise only what is already in accord with their existing self-system. The ego, largely unconsciously, maintains its stability and coherence by selectively rejecting information that could be anxiety producing. Therefore, the narcissist's ego runs a very tight filter.

Self-regulation models explain narcissism as a series of interactive traits that mutually feed into one another to maintain the narcissist's positive sense of self.

Morf and Rhodewalt's (2001) self-regulatory processing model is comprised of three interacting units: self-knowledge, interpersonal strategies, and intrapersonal strategies. These make up what Morf and Rhodewalt term the narcissistic self-system and interact and mutually reinforce each other. The self-knowledge component is made up of self-general schemata, self-ascribed traits and believed abilities. The interpersonal component involves for example, surrounding oneself with high status people – positive association, as well as the drive to be admired and to set up social situations that maintain the grandiose self. This is also done through outperforming others in competitive settings and the derogation of those who do not promote that positive self-identity. The drive within the interpersonal component is to be admired. Intrapersonal self-regulation relates to self-aggrandising, the taking credit for positive outcomes (attributional egotism) and viewing self as superior to others (self-enhancement).

While similar in many ways, other researchers have placed different emphases on components of self-regulation models. For example, Campbell and Green's (2008) agency model focuses on the social skills of the narcissist and the manipulation of their social relationships. Their model recognises the basic high agency and low communion aspects of narcissistic self-regulation but focuses on the fuel that maintains the behaviours – particularly how people are utilised. To Campbell and Green five main types of fuel are sought by the narcissist: admiration, association (being with high status people), competition (the opportunity for glory), blame, and status elevation (people who will increase their social standing i.e. the sycophant).

The essence of the self-regulatory models is how narcissists actively manipulate their environment to maintain their much-needed positive sense of self even if this involves manipulation and selective attention. In summary, self-regulatory models focus on how the narcissists' small discrepancy in

terms of ideal-self and actual-self is maintained. Such models incorporate not just the typical defence mechanisms used by the narcissists but also the use of social manipulation. A key question arising is, in what way does the social environment accommodate or even promote the narcissists' strategies? This question forms the basis of discussion in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER FOUR

BROADER ENVIRONMENTAL INFLUENCES ON NARCISSISM AND THE NARCISSIST AT WORK

Bauer & Wayment (2008) stated, "Egotism is in" (p.7). They described our world as a place where egoistic, self-indulgence is promoted and it is okay to look after number one, live for the moment and get anything you want. The focus of this chapter is to review the environment's contribution to narcissistic behaviour and then focus specifically on the effect of narcissism within the workplace.

As discussed in Chapter two, narcissism has been predominantly researched from clinical, personality and developmental perspectives; however, other researchers have proposed that the greater environment is responsible for narcissism. The most prominent of these have been Lasch (1979) who focused primarily on the American culture. Lasch referred to narcissism as the hallmark of American culture, a culture that overemphasised consumerism, promoted the breakdown of family systems, and whose modernisation resulted in too much focus being placed upon individualism. Wirtz and Chiu (2008) have similarly argued that egotism is a direct reflection of a western culture that rewards status, competitiveness and distinction from others. To Wirtz and Chiu such individualistic environments promote unrealistic optimism, self-serving attribution and the self-deceptive view that one is invincible.

Other contemporary researchers have echoed this approach, most prominently traditional personality theorists Campbell and Foster (2007) who propose that almost anyone could become narcissistic if given the right set of environmental circumstances. Their approach is more environmental than developmental (i.e. narcissism is not necessarily a reflection of poor

parenting). They propose that if one takes any person, lavishes them with praise and constantly excuses their failings, this should result in a highly inflated sense of self. In essence, a set of environmental threshold conditions need to be met in order to activate a narcissistic system within any person. This builds upon Lasch's (1979) perspective where he argues, "prevailing social conditions tend to bring out the narcissistic traits that are present, in varying degrees, in everyone" (p.50).

It can most certainly be argued that contemporary western society promotes self-confidence as a desirable psychological state. The plethora of self-help books, seminars and messages regarding power of positive thinking and the absolute benefits of a positive attitude is an entire business in itself. "Promote your virtues and ignore your self-doubts" is the message (Robins & Paulhus, 2001). James (2007) astutely picks up on this theme, "Western positive psychology focuses exclusively on success to keep your pecker up, but that is at the expense of realising what needs to change" (p.202).

More recently, researchers have argued along similar lines to Lasch (1979), that due to societies' growing self-centred culture, narcissism has become more prevalent. Research by Twenge, Konrath, Foster, Campbell & Bushman (2008) has suggested that almost two-thirds of current college-aged students are above the mean narcissism score recorded between the dates of 1979-1985 – resulting in a reported 30% increase. However, Trzesniewski, Donnellan, & Robins (2008) have countered these findings claiming in their research they have found no such evidence indicating contemporary college students have any more inflated self-concepts.

Foster, Campbell & Twenge (2003), found that narcissism declined with age, though were not able to differentiate whether this was due to developmental sequence or birth cohort. That is, recent generations being brought up in a culture of individualism as opposed to older people in collective culture, (e.g. generation Y and X). Figure 1 below highlights the negative relationship between age and narcissism found in research by Foster et al. (2003).

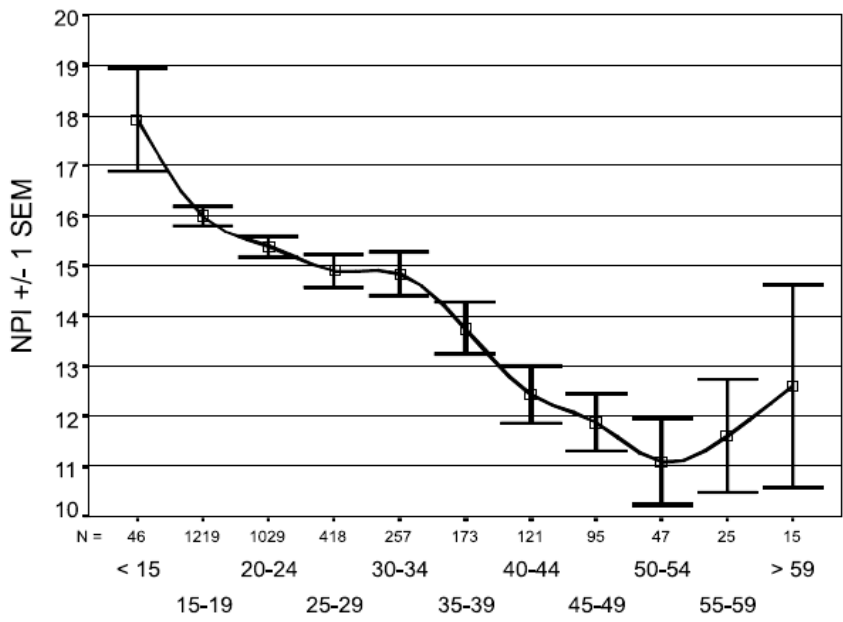


Figure 1. Relationship between age and narcissism. This trend shows a negative relationship with narcissism scores on the NPI decreasing with age. Each plot represents the mean NPI score for each age range. Error bars represent +/- the standard error of the mean. N= the number of total participants for each age group.

Whilst this shows a distinctive pattern, the authors indicate that age explains only around 4% of the variance in reported narcissism.

The narcissism-environment perspective therefore does not view narcissism as an individual disorder of personality as such, but a set of prevailing conditions that encourages narcissism to emerge, particularly within environments that promote individualism. Potentially one such area is the corporate working environment as next discussed.

Narcissism within the Corporate Environment

Lasch (1979) wrote directly and descriptively of the interaction between the work environment and narcissism, “For all his inner suffering, the narcissist has many traits that make for success in bureaucratic institutions, which put a premium on the manipulation of interpersonal relations, discourage the formation of deep interpersonal attachments, and at the same time provide the narcissist with the approval he needs in order to validate his self-esteem.... the management of personal impressions comes naturally to him, and his mastery of its intricacies serves him well in political and business organisations..” (p. 301).

Lasch’s insinuation is that narcissism can find a niche within the corporate world, where such a culture actually values a narcissistic style. The corporate environment is by nature a competitive institution. In this chapter I will review some of the evidence surrounding Lasch’s assertions.

The Narcissistic Personality at Work

The workplace, particularly the corporate environment, provides a potential opportunity for the narcissist to excel due to its competitive environment and hierarchical structure. Whilst narcissism can be viewed as a form of developmental immaturity and corresponding under-developed cluster of behaviours, there are many narcissists that have reached great heights occupationally, both within the business and political worlds. To illustrate this point, Post (1997) claims, with some seriousness, that if leaders who had narcissistic characteristics were removed from the ranks of the public, there would be very few leaders left! This would seem counter-intuitive, as researchers have often tended to paint rather negative portraits of the narcissist, especially when these characteristics are applied to the working environment. Moreover, narcissism has also been shown to be a reasonably

stable set of behaviours over time, at least at the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) level (Chatterjee, Hambrick, 2006). Narcissism has been reported in correlation studies to be negatively correlated with pro-social behaviours such as: agreeableness (Rhodewalt & Morf, 1995), affiliation (Bradlee & Emmons, 1992) and empathy (Watson, Grisham, Trotter, & Biderman, 1984). Narcissism has been positively correlated with hostility, anger and displaced aggression towards innocent others (Martinez, Zeichner, Reidy, & Miller (2008) and similarly, aggression towards others based on entitlement and exploitativeness (Reidy, Zeichner, Foster, & Martinez, 2008), cynicism and mistrust of others (Bushman & Baumeister, 1998), over-rating their performance (John & Robins, 1994), striving to associate only with others of high status (Campbell, 1999; Post, 1986), corruption (Blickle, Schegel, Fassbender, & Klein, 2006), high need for power and low need for intimacy (Carroll, 1987; Joubert, 1998), others' disinterest in interacting with them (Carroll, Hoenigmann-Stovall, & Whitehead, 1996), and lack of empathy (Watson, Grisham, Trotter, & Biderman, 1984). Bizumic and Duckitt (2008) found that narcissists not only held selfish and exploitative attitudes in general but also towards the group they were most closely affiliated with.

Narcissism has also been found to be strongly associated with a high degree of impulsivity and risk-taking. For example, recent research by Foster and Trimm (2008) found narcissists to be highly motivated to achieve desirable outcomes but very weakly motivated to avoid more negative outcomes. Similarly, Lakey, Rose, Campbell, & Goodie (2008) found that narcissists have a heightened risk acceptance based on overconfidence combined with myopic focus on rewards. Rose (2007) reported that narcissism strongly correlated with poor impulse control, materialism and compulsive buying.

Narcissism, when viewed in the commercial world is particularly associated with competitive strivings (Raskin & Terry, 1988; Morf, Weir, & Davidov, 2000) and exploitation (Bennett, 1998). Narcissists, especially at higher levels appear to be active in the manipulation, deception and intimidation of others (Glad, 2001).

The key themes of the narcissistic personality within the workplace environment is that of a high degree of competitiveness combined with an individualistic sense of striving (Morf, Weir, & Davidov, 2000) and a strong, overriding desire for recognition (Morf & Rhodewalt, 2001) and status (Kasser & Ryan, 1996).

Within the corporate environment, ability and impression management are potentially key factors in one's success. McFarlin and Sweeney (2000) extensively portray the narcissist at work as a person pre-occupied with impression management and highly strategic in how they deliver that impression. McFarlin and Sweeney identified that narcissists will most commonly: exaggerate their responsibilities and accomplishments, seek credit for success without acknowledging the input of others, deliver a message that others want to hear rather than what they may need to hear, present and push the unique aspects of their work to others, present their selfish goals in a way that appear to be visionary and inspirational, overemphasize the positive aspects of their message, and underemphasize the negative or potentially negative aspects.

Mitchell (2001) describes the workplace narcissist as someone who overly and detrimentally glorifies his or her own brand. Narcissistic managers, according to Downs (1997) tend to be people who value others only for what those others can do for them, are attracted to high profile projects (if it doesn't put them in the spotlight, they are not interested – the narcissist craves recognition), will surround themselves only with those who reflect their own self-views (their weak ego cannot cope with dissent), never admit to failure and base their self-esteem on the value of their position and/or salary.

The workplace however also requires some degree of integration with others, be they staff, clients or whoever. Rhodewalt, (2005) ran an interesting study to address what factors supported the narcissist's self-esteem within groups. Rhodewalt's results indicated narcissists were happiest and most accepted by the group when they felt admired and when in a position where they felt influential. The narcissists' need to be liked, however, was not evident.

Moreover, Brown & Zeigler-Hill (2004) similarly reported that narcissism was very closely related to a high need for dominance.

To study the effect of narcissistic style, Campbell, Bush & Brunell (2005) ran an in-depth laboratory role play (Tragedy of the Commons), and found narcissists were significantly more competitive than non-narcissists, and when a group of narcissists operated together, they rapidly depleted resources for a short-term gain resulting in a poorer long-term result. In addition, they showed that non-narcissists having to work alongside narcissists tended to suffer most in terms of actual performance. Whilst the highly competitive tendencies of the narcissists were positively associated with short-term, individual gains, the task's resources were quickly depleted resulting in a higher overall social cost. Sedikides, Campbell, Reeder, Elliot & Gregg (2002) found this egoistic theme to be equally prevalent, particularly when activated by competitive situations and narcissists strove to take the psychological lead over others. In addition, they were liable to not only take sole credit for success, but due to their sense of entitlement were also willing to denigrate other people's performance for their own status and gain.

Being prone to such egocentric tendencies as attributing success to their own ability, narcissists also differ significantly from non-narcissists in how they process and react to negative feedback or feedback they perceive as threatening to their fragile ego. The feedback process within the work environment, particularly the corporate workplace, tends to be considered an essential tool of communication and is seen as providing an avenue for development. For narcissists, anything other than positive reaffirmation of their impact and ability is highly threatening. The narcissistic reaction to negative feedback is well documented. In fact, Twenge & Campbell (2003) indicate that narcissism is a significantly differentiating factor in predicting who will and who will not respond aggressively to rejection. Wink (1992) has gone as far to suggest that the narcissist's vulnerabilities and defences are only evident in times of crisis or responses to failure.

In response to negative information about the self, narcissists tend to respond with extreme mood fluctuations, particularly anger (Rhodewalt & Morf, 1998). More recent research by Barry, Chaplin & Grafeman, (2006) again found increased narcissism positively related to increased aggression following negative feedback, though this was more prevalent with narcissistic males. In further differentiation, Stucke & Sporer (2002) found that while narcissists respond with negative emotions and aggression following a sense of failure, non-narcissists tend to show more depression but no aggression.

Not only do narcissists react very negatively to perceived ego threat, they also significantly react against the perceived source of the ego threat – that is the deliverer of the feedback. Narcissists are highly prone to becoming aggressive towards these people (e.g. Barry, et al. Struke & Sporer, 2002; Bushman & Baumeister, 1998). Narcissists are also likely to rate those who provide them with negative feedback as being less competent than those who provide them with positive feedback (Kernis & Sun, 1994). The projection of dislikeable self-traits onto others is part of the more immature defensive resources of the narcissist (Crammer, 2006). In addition, Brown (2004) found that narcissists were significantly more vengeful than non-narcissists.

From the literature, some fundamental themes emerge in terms of the narcissistic personality in the workplace; their intensely competitive nature, yet lack of general focus combined with an overriding desire to be admired creates a potentially explosive cocktail of ambition and insecurity. The narcissist presents a psychological make-up where a weak ego seeks constant reassurance to prop up an ideal-self image, at the same time keeping a sense of vulnerability and anxiety at bay via external sources of social reinforcement. When that delicate balance is tipped, the narcissist does not have the developmental maturity or resources to consider, accommodate and grow psychologically. To reclaim a positive sense of self, the narcissist employs a mode of aggression towards the source of ego threat to maintain the highly favourable self-view (Rhodewalt & Morf, 1998). Baumeister, Smart and Boden (1996) argues that the reactive, aggressive

behaviour is not only employed to re-establish a sense of the narcissist's sense of superiority, but also to punish the source of its perceived threat.

In summary, the literature strongly suggests a narcissist is probably as, if not more, driven to succeed within the workplace than the non-narcissist.

However, narcissists present with a number of negative social characteristics that are typified by competitive striving and are ultimately self-serving and potentially damaging to the wider organisation.

The Performance of the Narcissist

As discussed in Chapter one, extreme self-enhancement is one of the most distinctive characteristics of narcissism. When applied to the workplace, it would be natural to assume that narcissists will rate their performance ability ahead of those around them. The workplace also provides a readily available environment in which such self-attributions can be played out. As Soyer, Rovenpor and Kopelman (1999) put it, "Narcissists need visible manifestations of success to feel good about themselves" (p.289).

Early theorists such as Karen Horney (1951) described workplace narcissists as overrating their talents and being hypersensitive to criticism, though hold a belief that there are few obstacles in their ambitious paths that their abilities cannot overcome. Horney believed that narcissists ultimately fail due to their scattering of interests and energy being displaced in too many directions without the capacity to understand the realistic limits of what they are able to achieve. To Horney, narcissists are ultimately too grandiose in their self-perception to either focus in any detailed way, or to actually put in the hard work required; the two applications are beneath them. "Despite good qualifications, the narcissist is often disappointing in the quality of the work he actually produces, because, in accordance with his neurotic structure, he simply does not know how to work" (p.315). In a similar tone, Stevens and Price (1996) describe the narcissist as a poor reciprocator prone to adopting free-rider strategy where they are able to, due to their high sense of entitlement.

From the review of released literature, seldom has it shown that narcissists' enhanced self-perspective actually relates to superior performance. Typically, narcissists have been shown to overrate their abilities in terms of competence, intelligence, (Gabriel, Critelli, & Ee, 1994), leadership, creativity (Farwell & Wohlwend-Lloyed, 1998) and social judgement (Ames & Kammrath, 2004). They tend to be significantly more over-confident in their decision-making abilities than non-narcissists, though no more accurate. They are more likely to make risky decisions based on their confidence and predict future performance based on high personal expectations rather than on actual performance (Campbell, Goodie, & Foster, 2004). In addition, recent research has indicated that overt narcissists actually ruminate less about their performance than non-narcissists (Altas & Them, 2008).

At the highest level of organisational structures, narcissistic CEOs have been shown to operate significantly differently to non-narcissistic CEOs. Chatterjee and Hambrick (2006) indicated that the approach of the narcissistic CEO is typified by grandiosity and dynamism. Compared to non-narcissistic CEOs, they tend to challenge the status quo and are driven towards more extreme and risky choices resulting in more extreme performances and fluctuating financial company results. The overall results indicate that narcissistic CEOs did not generate significantly better or worse company performance, particularly within a dynamic industry. However, Eggers, Leahy and Churchill (1997) found that CEOs who underrated themselves and continually questioned their abilities actually outperformed those who rated themselves highly.

Within the sales environment, where confidence and extroversion are considered assets, narcissism did not relate to positive performance (Soyer et al., 1999). In recent research, Judge, LePine and Rich (2006) found narcissists significantly overrated their perceived leadership ability compared to others' ratings of them. In addition, narcissism was negatively related to supervisors' reports of contextual performance. Contextual performance in

this study was defined as behaviours which contribute towards a positive social and psychological climate. Narcissism was also positively related to workplace deviance (counter productive workplace performance). In a similar theme, Penny and Spector (2002) reported that degree of narcissism positively related to counter-productive work behaviours (CWB) and emotive expressions of anger. Of significance in this research was the negative relationship between non-narcissistic individuals and CWB.

Grandiose self-enhancement by managers has been reported by Wexley, Alexander, Greenwalt, and Couch (1980) to negatively relate to manager – employee relationships. Employees had reported greater satisfaction with their manager when the manager’s self-rating was similar to those rated by their staff.

Looking at environmental factors and performance of narcissists, Wallace and Baumeister (2002) proposed that performance would positively relate to self-enhancement opportunities. Narcissists performed better when the task was challenging, when they were under some pressure and when they had the opportunity to gain the admiration of others, as well as when their performance was being evaluated by others. Their performance dropped however, when feedback was only known to themselves as they had little interest in proving something if there was no audience. Non-narcissists displayed almost the opposite effect. Their performance did not significantly differ in conditions of high or low self-enhancement opportunity, and in some cases their performance dropped with increased attention placed on them. In essence, narcissists tended to perform below their ability when the task did not provide an opportunity for personal glory, which significantly differed from the non-narcissist.

Overall, the research suggests narcissists rate themselves highly, tend to be quite dynamic in approach and excel in terms of energy when the opportunities to self-promote are provided. There is little convincing evidence to show that their high self-opinion relates to consistent and outstanding

performance despite their ability to often attain leadership positions (Rosenthal & Pittinsky, 2006).

Narcissistic Supply – the Workplace Reservoir

By the mere psychological make-up of a narcissist, it would be fair to assume that narcissists would be drawn and attracted to positions of high status profile. Their constant need for affirmative social reinforcement could be no better served than within the hierarchically-structured world of the workplace. While narcissists may fail in intimate relationships, they may well excel within the competitive corporate environment. Symbols of status project the sense of power narcissists ultimately seek in order to overcome their fragile sense of self. The narcissists' need for power coupled with ambivalence towards social interests and intimacy is a common trademark (Joubert, 1998; Carroll, 1987). According to Robbins, Millett, Cacioppe and Waters-Nash (1998) excessive competitive drive is a valued quality within New Zealand and American corporate cultures and correlates with the successful acquisition of material goods. From the organisational psychodynamic perspective, Schwartz (1993) conceptualised narcissism as a broader collective organisation phenomena. Schwartz argued not only of the individual ego-ideal but also the organisational-ideal, where the individual commits their own personal ideal to the organisation. The more status and hierarchy-based an organisation is, the more magnified the organisational-ideal is projected and the greater likelihood of narcissism in a collective form.

The organisational structure or character/culture can provide what Kernberg (1975) termed the *narcissistic supply*. Narcissistic supply refers to the reinforcing fuel – the environment and/or interpersonal relationships that reinforce the qualities that the narcissist needs, and assists the narcissist to naturally self-regulate towards adulation, affirmation and applause (Wallace & Baumeister, 2002). The narcissist seeks high profile tasks, prizes and rewards that are publicly displayed.

To McFarlin and Sweeney (2000) the narcissist has the opportunity to excel in organisations that have a hierarchical structure, where the organisations'

leaders are provided with significant status symbols, e.g. extremely high pay scales, prime work space within the office (own office), and where the business leaders are seen as heroes.

The actual physical design of the corporate environment can strongly project a sense of organisational grandiosity, symbolic status and ultimately power (Brown, 1997). This depicts an organisational representation of the individual features of narcissism. It is almost a visual manifestation of the narcissists' need to mask their own insecurities. In addition Brown (1997) highlights some corporate organisations' use of ritual (the way in which success is paraded) and reward (promotion and the status and power associated), as reflections of organisational narcissism beyond that of the individual. It is these symbolic demonstrations that provide a path towards the narcissist's version of self-actualisation, namely, status and influence. "We didn't get big by caring", is a common line said in jest in large organisations and projects an element of truth, magnified to the narcissist.

Of interest then is how the narcissist gets in the door to begin with and subsequently moves forward and upward within the corporate world. The narcissist is described throughout the literature as insecure, immature, selfish, fragile and excessively self-enhancing, yet narcissistic behaviour occurs even at the highest organisational and political levels. Some models have tried to explain the success of the narcissist by focusing on the positive projected aspects of the narcissistic personality and the environmental accommodation. Narcissists often possess a number of qualities that can be projected very positively within a corporate setting. For example, they can project huge confidence, assertiveness, drive, ambition, energy and charisma (Soyer, et al., 1999; McFarlin & Sweeney, 2000). They are often seen as people with excellent self-presentation skills, though tend to be hired based on their projected charm rather than actual competence (Kagan, 1990). Paulhus (1998) found that narcissists often came across very positively in initial meetings and in-group tasks, though over a period of only seven weeks, their positive impression markedly changed to being actively disliked. Whilst the narcissist is viewed negatively in the psychological world, at a more superficial

and less intimate level, narcissists may well project as being confident and outcome-focused, which are highly valued attributes within the corporate environment.

In what way would the corporate environment provide a niche for these narcissist behaviours? McFarlin & Sweeney (2000) suggest the narcissist jumps in through a window of opportunity, in terms of both organisational structure and timing. Chatterjee and Hambrick (2006) highlighted that narcissistic CEOs had noticeable effects in terms of performance within dynamic industries, leading them to hypothesise that in more stable work environments, narcissism has a potentially negative impact. To McFarlin and Sweeney the narcissist is likely to flourish only when the conditions are conducive to their aspirations. Conditions that are conducive to the narcissist are when an organisation is at its most vulnerable state of flux. McFarlin and Sweeney identify the following key environmental criteria that provide the window of narcissistic opportunity: organisational change, organisational uncertainty and ambiguity or, in short, organisational vulnerability.

During periods of change, uncertainty and ambiguity, the organisation is most in need of leadership. Due to their projected self-confidence and drive to be successful, narcissists provide a strong and decisive voice especially when that voice delivers a vision of the way forward. Within a secure organisational structure, even within times of uncertainty and change, the narcissist may be viewed with scepticism, which may not be the case with the less mature, growing organisation. Where parameters are loose and organisational vulnerability is high, McFarlin and Sweeney propose that the narcissist, much like the charismatic leader, has an opportunity to shine. The problem is that the narcissist's input is based around a self-serving need for a sense of self-esteem, grandiosity and public reinforcement – not for the good of the organisation as a whole.

Where narcissists may fail in close intimate personal relationships, they have the opportunity to excel within the workplace arena due to an organisation's structure and instability. In essence, the narcissist is also the opportunist.

The organisational environment is seldom static for long and provides opportunities to move forward. The competitive drive to succeed combined with a high degree of self-confidence are, at face level, attractive features to an organisation. The shadow side of these characteristics is not always immediately obvious, but as the literature would suggest, do eventually surface over time.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE CURRENT STUDY

McFarlin and Sweeney (2000) argued that narcissism has the best opportunity to excel within an organisation that flaunts its prestige. They also argued that organisations are most vulnerable to the seductive influence of the narcissist during times of change. It is therefore of significant interest to understand whether the organisation within this study is potentially accommodating to the narcissists' aspirations, both in terms of invulnerability and status.

In terms of prestige, the organisation used in this study is one of the largest professional services firms in the world. It employs over 136,000 people globally (720 in New Zealand) and operates in 143 countries with revenue of approximately \$20 billion (USD) in 2007. In terms of promoting the company's achievements, graduate applicants are provided with a lot of information, which include that the company:

- a) Ranks 5th out of 125 of those companies with the best training programmes, according to the company's training magazine.
- b) Is the preferred employer among the Big Four consulting firms according to CollegeGrad.com.
- c) Was ranked 5th on the list of "50 Best Places to Launch a Career" in 2008 by CollegeGrad.com.
- d) Was named the best big company to work for by *The Times of London* in 2008. This was the fourth consecutive year that it has made it into a top three placement, winning three times in those four years.
- e) Graduates are also informed in the New Zealand chairman's introductory letter to prospective graduates that the company is proud to be the preferred graduate employer in the industry, and attracts the best graduates by offering the best jobs and the best career opportunities and doing business the right way.

As highlighted in Chapter three, competitiveness and status seeking are core components of narcissists' nature within the work environment. Within this particular organisation's environment, success is rewarded with status, and that status is visually recognisable. For example, success is rewarded by having one's own office within an otherwise open plan setting, one's own car park, business-class travel, and large discretionary expense accounts. Thus, it would seem then that any organisation of this firm's size, professional standing and opportunities to excel, could potentially combine as attractive lures for narcissists. It is a company that projects a high degree of visible symbolic power in terms of office and building architecture, as well as branding. There is also a strong hierarchical system within the organisation. Personal and professional prestige grows with career advancement; and advancement is highly dependent on revenue generation within a highly competitive business environment.

At the time of this study, McFarlin and Sweeney's (2000) second point of organisational vulnerability is less evident; however, the recent economic recession may tip further in favour of attracting narcissists and result in their subsequent employment. This organisation has a well-developed governance structure and is considered to be in a secure financial position. Therefore, even if it was going through a vulnerable period, it is unlikely that a graduate-level narcissist would be viewed as 'the' solution to current business problems.

In summary, although this company is stable it does advertise for new graduates by promoting many characteristics which would appeal to narcissists.

The Structure of the Graduate's Career Trajectory

The organisation studied in this research runs a stage-by-stage career-development approach as part of its graduate intake programme. For the first 12 months, new graduates are seen as being in 'learning mode', learning

about cultural and technical aspects of the business under close supervision. In general, these new entrants do not handle high-risk work and are not required to develop new revenue streams. At this stage they tend to be viewed as 'investments with potential'. They are high achievers in terms of their recent academic record but have little practical experience within a specific commercial niche.

With respect to research performance indicators, I interviewed senior managers and partners around their expectations of these year one graduates. The message from each was consistent and clear. The essential requirements of these graduates are: to be committed and open to learning, to become successfully integrated socially, and to be very accurate in work they undertake. The performance gauge used in this research was developed as a result of these meetings and reflects these primary first-year themes.

In subsequent meetings with senior management, performance requirements for their second year graduates appeared to *evol/ve* rather than drastically change in terms of scope and responsibility. Senior managers and partners reported the following competencies to be most important to the success of second year graduates: technical and professional development, ability to work cooperatively within a team, development of internal and external working relationships, proactive communication, consistently high degrees of professionalism and ability to balance differing and competing work demands. In essence, the second year graduates have to apply their learning from year one in a continuing pro-social but significantly increasing professional manner. The expectations are around on-going development of social maturity and high work standards. It is noteworthy that higher developmental competencies such as learning from mistakes, admitting error and open reflectiveness were not included, possibly indicating that these senior executives either took them for granted or did not value them.

Interestingly, the more individual-based factors that were proposed for managers to also consider in the year two performance measures such as: a drive to exceed targets and expectations, initiative and independence were

not viewed as important. These were possibly performance based measures for subsequent years, but not the focus for graduates in either year one or year two of their careers.

The highly pro-social and professional cooperation expectations identified as performance indicators for the graduates are not, at face value, natural behavioural modes for the highly competitive narcissist. However, due to how this organisation markets itself to the graduate applicant, such values would not be immediately evident to the narcissist and thus not affect their application. Its overt references to market positioning plus its sheer size and professional standing would perhaps belie its strong pro-social expectations to graduate applicants. On balance, the organisation would most likely lure narcissists though not actually seek them.

Conceptualisation

Narcissism research has typically focused on correlations between self-views and overt behaviours. For example, the narcissism 'self-view approach' has focused on relationships such as high scoring on the NPI and sense of one's intelligence, abilities and/or good looks. This narcissism 'overt behaviour' approach has looked at higher scores on the NPI, at a person's reactions to negative feedback or at the level of effort put into a task depending on the perceived relevance of the audience present.

It is conceptualized in this research that narcissism is viewed by overt behaviour and what can be observed by others who have regular contact with those displaying such behaviours. Self-enhancement research has shown that while narcissists do self-enhance, not all individuals who have high opinions of themselves are narcissistic. The key then is to identify the disparity between a high self-opinion and how that opinion relates to others' opinions. People who self-enhance may still have a genuine concern for others. However, narcissists will use and manipulate other people as a means for advancing their own strivings. Individuals who highly self-enhance are

emphasising that they are extremely well-adjusted whereas others may well dispute this perception. From this perspective, narcissism can be viewed as a social–cognitive maladjustment of self.

To illustrate this finding, Clifton, Turkheimer, and Oltmanns (2004) found that narcissists who were described by those with regular contact with them as irresponsible, lacking in sincerity, reckless, and unsympathetic, contradictorily viewed themselves as energetic, quick and lively, outgoing, and gregarious. It is this disjunction which becomes a research focus.

The internal self-representation of the narcissist needs an agreeable other-mirror for its expression. It needs an environment in which others reflect desirable forms. As Campbell and Green (2008) note, a narcissist cannot be admired without someone being available to do the admiring. In the eyes of narcissists, large hierarchical and competitive corporate organizations which openly exhibit their success hold much potential to fulfil this continual reflective need for mirrored endorsement.

Current Research Objectives

The focus of this exploratory research is to investigate narcissism within a corporate environment, specifically at graduate recruitment level and what effects this has on the graduate's performance. Little, if any significant research has been undertaken focusing on the narcissist at this early stage of career within a large, known corporate organisation. This is of particular interest and importance since many large organisations place a great deal of emphasis on their graduate recruitment programmes. As noted in the literature review, mistaking narcissists as best candidates often has longer-term negative consequences.

There are three main objectives of this research:

1. To explore the self-concept of those individuals rated by their managers as having narcissistic tendencies. This self-concept is

addressed from two perspectives. First, how do those viewed as being narcissistic report their own self-enhancement? In other words, this research will explore differences between own perceived proximity to ideal-self in comparison to how they view current peer groups.

Second, it will investigate how well identified narcissists engage in self-critique. For example, an exploration will be conducted into whether those viewed by their managers as being narcissistic will have any self-perspective/insights into either their own shortcomings and/or awareness of how others critically view them.

2. To investigate the work-performance behaviours of those seen as having narcissistic tendencies and compare their performance to non-narcissists including those graduates identified as being top performers.
3. To explore short-term developmental shifts over time of those graduates seen as having narcissistic tendencies in year one and to compare these developmental shifts to their non-narcissistic counterparts. For example, whether their self-perceptions remain constant over the first 20 months of their employment.

CHAPTER SIX

METHOD AND PROCEDURE

This chapter describes the participant group and the research procedure. Due to this being exploratory research, a preliminary section is provided to outline the rationale for the methodological approach taken. A number of procedures and tests were used to collect data and detailed explanations of each measure are provided.

Rationale for Approach

Due to the complexities of studying narcissism and the variety of research and theoretical perspectives adopted, there is not a gold standard assessment procedure available. Prominent narcissism researchers Rose and Campbell (2004) clearly articulated the difficulties and challenges of investigating narcissism. "If we cannot agree on how narcissism arises, what narcissism produces, or even what narcissism is, how can anyone decide what should be researched?" (p3). Chapter two presented different measures of narcissism that focus on various aspects of the construct. Rose & Campbell (2004) further highlight this problem by stating that whilst numerous measures of narcissism exist, with reportedly sound technical and psychometric properties, scores from such measures will often not correlate with each other. Therefore, in going forward with new exploratory research into narcissism as a multidimensional construct, it was important to take into account concerns regarding the narrowness and limitations of existing measurement applications as highlighted by previous prominent researchers. While the development and use of instruments such as the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI) have reported internal consistency in regard to test construction, their major disadvantage has been insensitivity to understanding the multifaceted features of narcissism as a construct, thus having poor construct validity (Wink, 1996).

Rose and Campbell (2004) recognised the need to adopt a broader approach when conducting narcissism research, stating, "Multiple perspectives can be liberating to those who seek to maximize the quantity of existing knowledge about narcissism" (p 4). Their observation highlights a need to conduct research into this topic from different perspectives, thereby enhancing the contribution to our understanding of its dynamics. If it is generally agreed that narcissism is a complex multidimensional construct, it would be counter-productive to restrict oneself to a unidimensional instrument or approach to quantify it. From an applied research perspective Chatterjee & Hambrick (2007) emphasise the need for innovation when designing measures to assess narcissism within the corporate business world since conventional approaches are unsuitable. Chatterjee and Hambrick's position is endorsed from my own experience, much of it obtained from working for a number of years in workplace personality measurement and assessment.

The creation and subsequent application of measures of narcissism is highly challenging for researchers. From my own workplace experience and literature available, there seems to remain a gap. The challenge was to try to apply suitable assessment procedures that may contribute to understanding narcissism in a corporate environment. However, to state clearly, it is neither the intention nor focus of this research to attempt to solve the complex issue of narcissism psychometrics. Instead, the current thesis represents an exploratory research approach to investigate aspects of narcissism in a corporate setting where it has rarely been studied either in terms of context or career stage of participants. I have therefore endeavoured to design and apply a suitable methodology for this 'rare to find' applied research opportunity.

The rationale for the methodological approach taken in this research is based on the following considerations and objectives:

First, to apply assessment procedures that were suitable and respectful of the participants and organisation, that is, procedures fit for purpose. It was of critical importance to get both the graduates' and the organisation's

cooperation to study what could be considered a potentially sensitive topic; 'one's performance and one's sense of self'. In this situation the NPI, a commonly used measure in narcissism research, was considered to be unsuitable. Whilst the items within the NPI are considered by some researchers to be reflective of narcissism, items such as, "I like to look at myself in the mirror" or "I can make anyone believe anything I want them to" I considered too obvious in intent to use in a self-reporting questionnaire with this particular group. Furthermore, the suitability of the NPI within corporate environments has been previously questioned by narcissism researchers (see for example Chatterjee & Hambrick (2007) and Dattner (1999), for general criticisms of the NPI's applicability see Campbell and Foster (2007). From my own professional experience of having psychometrically assessed and interviewed hundreds of graduate recruits over a number of years, it could be predicted that recruits' responses to statements within the NPI would probably extend from dismissive (for example "this is ridiculous, I can't be bothered with doing it") to either flippant or humorous. In either case, this could have led to potential data contamination. Furthermore, the organisation's management was reluctant to have new staff completing questionnaires which did not lead to any visible organisational benefits. In my opinion, using assessment instruments such as the NPI would have run the risk of their withdrawing participation and support of this research project. More appropriately, I believe the self-report instrument completed by the graduate recruits needed to be less obtrusive, less direct and seen as more workplace relevant.

When considering the methodological approaches to be undertaken for the current research, the suitability (and acceptability to the organisation) of procedures employed within this specific environment were therefore of prominent importance. It certainly precluded use and application of existing personality measures having narcissism scales built within them (e.g. the MMPI-II and the CPI). As an additional consideration, this organisation specified that in line with current graduate recruitment practices, general personality measures were not to be used with graduate groups. This in-house policy arose since historically, when requesting feedback about recruitment practices, the most common criticism has been based on having

to complete (perceived) needless and time-wasting questionnaires. In effect then, several corporate constraints were working in my favour to explore this territory from another perspective and one that was user-friendly to the participants.

Second, it was necessary to try to assess narcissistic self-perception in a way that is firmly based on a sound and theoretically respected narcissism model. Otto Kernberg has been hugely influential in narcissism research and much of his work formed the basis of narcissism diagnoses used in the DSM-IV-TR (APA, 2000). Kernberg's (1974) model is discussed in Chapter two and the positive relationship between narcissism and proximity to ideal-self is advanced in Chapter three. For Kernberg, self-perceived close proximity to one's ideal-self not only reflects a sense of grandiosity but also the activation of denial. Kernberg's model is employed to form the basis of the self-perception questionnaire subsequently designed for this study.

The third objective was to create and apply a participant self-concept indicator that subtly elicits responses typical of narcissists. This had to be done without raising suspicion of its focus. This is in contrast to existing self-reports to more direct narcissism-based items such as those used in the NPI format, which are quite obvious in their intent.

A further advantage of using Kernberg's (1974) ideal-self model is that it correspondingly measures a participant's tendency to self-enhance. As discussed in Chapter three, self-enhancement is well-recognized as a consistent and core feature of narcissism. A person rating themselves close to their ideal-self can also be an indication of self-enhancement when scores are compared against others' self-ratings within a peer group cohort, as in this study.

The self-concept questionnaire devised for this research addresses self-enhancement in two ways. First, the graduate recruits' self-rating in relation to their ideal-self (based directly on Kernberg's model), and second, how they compare themselves to their peer recruit cohort, providing a gauge of

comparative self-enhancement. This combination is to obtain a broader perspective of participant self-perception. As discussed throughout the introductory chapters of this thesis, narcissists typically rate themselves better than others in a number of different areas, though this is not just a trait unique to narcissists. Previous research by Dunning, Meyerowitz, & Holzberg (1989) found that most people are biased towards rating themselves more highly when comparing themselves to others, particularly if that comparison referent is ambiguous. This could occur, for example, when comparing oneself against 'the average New Zealander' or someone with whom there has been no familiarisation, little interaction or low information. That is, if there are no data then a person will tend to see themselves as being 'better'. However, non-narcissists tend to be less vulnerable to comparative self-enhancement when comparing themselves to people with whom they have contact and whose abilities are more familiar to them (Alicke, Vredenburg, Hiatt, & Govorun, 2001). In contrast, narcissists self-enhance in both contexts, including when comparing themselves to a familiar peer group. Therefore, to reduce the risk of a general self-enhancement tendency, it was important that on the comparative self-enhancement indicator, recruits believed they were comparing themselves to their direct peers (even though no such historic data actually exists). As a point of direct peer-comparative reference, a bell curve was provided on the self-rating scale. The bell curve is also a familiar mathematical figure to this particular graduate group. This format is presented on page 69.

The fourth objective was to extend the existing knowledge-base of narcissism. Extensive amounts of data collected from my own workplace practice of psychological assessment (specifically, the measurement of critical self-insight) were applied in a systematic study. As earlier discussed, self-enhancement is considered to be one essential feature and characteristic of narcissism. A further prominent aspect is denial. Kernberg (1974) describes how the narcissist splits off from conscious awareness any negative aspects of self that could cause anxiety. It was also important therefore to attempt to gauge this aspect of self-perception/self-deception. There appear to be few, if any, established ways of assessing what has come to be called *Critical Self-*

Insight (CSI). However, through anecdotal observations gleaned from my consultancy work, a large amount of self-descriptive information has been collected over many years. In piloting and refining this approach I have regularly asked people to describe their 'more negative aspects' from both their own perspective and also from how they believe others could negatively describe them. Hence I have accumulated a rich source of applied information from which to design a systematic indicator of CSI. The method of bringing this data into a usable format is described further in this chapter on page 69. The CSI Indicator seeks to understand whether narcissists differ in terms of CSI from non-narcissists and if so, to subsequently investigate some of the ways in which they differ from one another.

A fifth objective was to have the presence of graduate recruits' narcissistic tendencies rated by their line managers, people with whom they have regular and frequent daily contact. These managers have a close and extensive working knowledge of recruits' performance and competencies, so could therefore provide suitable information to aid in making comparisons between recruits' own self-perceptions and those of others. Managers completed the Narcissism Traits Indicator for each recruit for whom they were directly responsible.

The Development of the Narcissism Traits Indicator.

The Narcissism Traits Indicator is a measure developed as part of this research to objectively measure narcissistic traits. It contains a wide variety of filler personality items to help disguise its primary purpose (again, unlike the NPI, this measure offers a camouflage cover). The managers were not aware of narcissism being the primary focus, thus combating the confounding threat of demand characteristics. The selection of narcissism items within this questionnaire was based on published, peer-reviewed, empirical research. These items are presented on page 72, Table 3.

The Narcissism Traits Indicator was developed through a multi-dimensional scaling methodology (MDS). MDS is an advantageous method when dealing

with constructs that are multidimensional (Jaworska, Chupetlovska, and Anastasova 2009), and multidimensionality, as mentioned earlier, is appropriate for narcissism as a construct.

The 90 items used in this task were based on findings from Pechtel, Kirkland, & Bimler (2008). The authors identified common internal structures from three well-established personality measures: Eysenck Personality Inventory (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1975), California Adult Q-Sort (Gough, 1987) and NEO – Five Factor Inventory (Costa & McCrae 1985). To identify these structures Pechtel et al. (2008) employed a judgement sorting method the *GOPA* (Group, Opposite, Partion, Adding) (see Bimler & Kirkland, 2001). In brief, similarity-sorting data for 150 personality items were subjected to MDS resulting in a spatial model (map) of the items. From this map a sub-set of items were selected for the Narcissism Traits Indicator, including added narcissism descriptors. Adopting the same similarity-sorting approach another inter-item judgement-sort map was created. For the record, inter-participant correlation for this second map was $r = 0.443$ which is considered satisfactory for the present purpose, namely of creating trilemma sets. Figure 5 (p 71) provides an example of the trilemma formation.

The overall rationale of using a wide variety of personality items was to provide the participating managers with a range of empirically sound, yet contrasting personality items, without presenting a dominant, overt theme of narcissism. A number of contrasting pro-social and adaptive items were also included within the personality questionnaire.

The application of MDS brought a number of benefits to this research. From a practical perspective, once sorted items have been mapped, the solution provides a visual representation among items and likely personality themes, as can be seen from Figure 2. Points that are presented closer together represent similarly interpreted items, whilst points that are further apart represent dissimilar items. The spatial map relays important relationships in an economic manner (Mugavin, 2008).

Carefully selected and equi-distant mapped items form the basis for the three way choice (trilemma) tasks, as was completed by the managers. This procedure is further discussed on page 71. Figure 2 shows the item map in which geometrically dissimilar trilemma item sets were created.

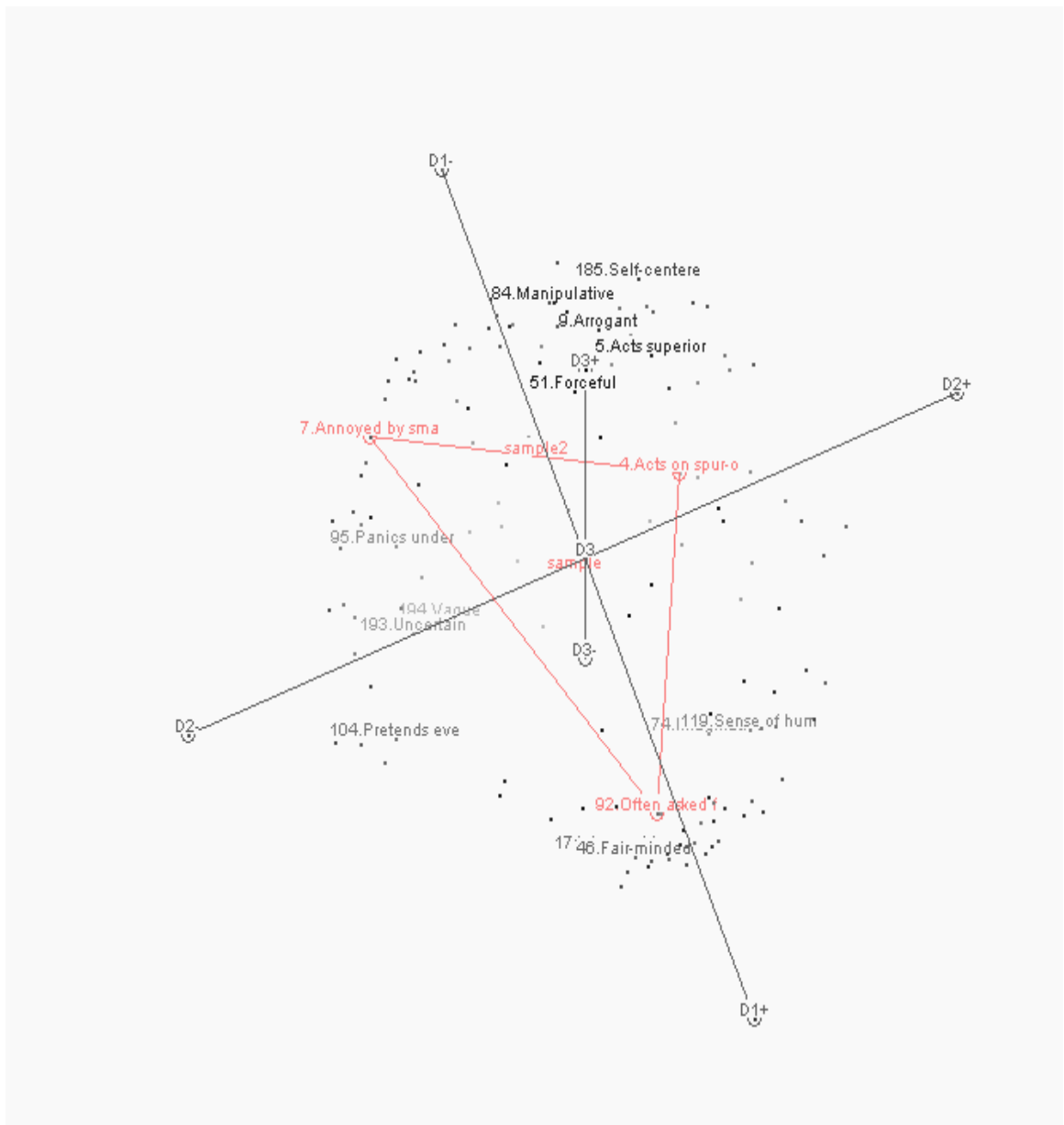


Figure 2. Mapped items used for creation of narcissism trilemma's. One trilemma is shown as an equilateral triangle.

The efficiency of the online trilemma format created from the spatial map was particularly suitable for the managers involved in this study. Being reasonably

fast and easy to complete, it did not present as an onerous task to undertake (an important consideration in real-world setting to ensure participatory willingness). Furthermore it provides a different and more engaging response format than the usual assignation of numerical values to a set of personality items, where response bias is typical.

MDS is a widely recognized and well established methodology extensively used in social science and other research traditions. Amongst other things it can provide visual representations of similarities and dissimilarities amongst items and observations. In essence, it identifies latent structure by rescaling a set of (dis)similarity judgements into distances between specific locations in a spatial configuration (Ding, 2006). MDS is used extensively in social science research (Davidson & Skay 1991; Weller & Romney, 1988; Tsogo, Masson & Bardot, 2000; Jaworska & Chuptlovska- Anastasova, 2009; Mugavin, 2008; Nezlek, Austin-Jane & Null, 2001; Ding, 2006; Young & Hamer, 1987).

As examples from an extensive, ongoing list, MDS has been applied in a wide range of research including: personality mapping (Bimler & Kirkland, 2007), motivation in the study of psychology (Stewart, Hill, Stewart, Bimler, Kirkland, 2005), school truancy (Bimler & Kirkland, 2001a), expression of emotion (Bimler & Kirkland, 2001b; Bimler & Paramei, 2006), the measurement of individual differences (Cavenagh & Davey, 2001; Darcy, Lee & Tracey, 2004), self-concept (DeSteno & Salovey, 1997), mood disorders (Whaley, 1999), cognitive processes and mental health (Carter & Neufeld, 1999), sensory experience (Rosett & Klein, 1995; Treat, McFall, Viken, Nosofsky, Mackay & Kruschke, 2002), pain research (Clark, Carroll, Yang & Janal, 1986), perceived social structures (Nezlek, Austin-Jane & Null, 2001), memory (Rather, Goldman, Rochrich & Brannick, 1992), the concept of *amae* (Bimler, Kirkland, Yuhara, Kurosaki & Coxhead, 2005), test structures (Oltman, Stricker & Barrows, 1990), colour vision (Tarow, 1988), counselling effectiveness (Fitzgerald & Hubert, 1987), smoking (Bimler & Kirkland, 2003), leisure (Russell & Hultsman, 1988), and emotions (Morgan & Heise, 1988).

A further consideration when creating a performance gauge was the importance of ensuring the specific areas to be evaluated actually reflected this organisation's requirements of its graduate recruits, in both their first and second years of working for the company. This was established through a number of arranged meetings with the organisation's senior managers who have many years experience supervising graduate appointees. This senior management group also have extensive institutional knowledge and it was important to this organisation that their knowledge input was utilised and was reflected in the performance indicators to be created. This ensured the items included had perceived credibility and relevance to managers subsequently participating in rating the graduates' performance. The organisation's current competency model was used as a guideline in these meetings, though managers consistently emphasised the need for a shorter and more refined procedure. These meetings were held in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch and involved 18 managers who oversaw all the graduate recruits. The final performance items subsequently created for this study had the overall approval of those 18 managers who took part in this process.

Participants

Participants were graduate commerce / business students accepted into the company's graduate programme of 2007. During the initial application process, the company's human resources department screened all applicants on the basis of their university results and Curriculum Vitae. For the final phase, short listed candidates were interviewed in April 2006 by two senior managers and they completed two in-house cognitive ability tests (verbal and numerical comprehension). Persons accepted into this programme were of high standard, showed considerable potential and in terms of time and expense, were deemed worthy of company investment. Seventy-six applicants (39 female, 37 male) accepted job offers and commenced work in February 2007. It is to be noted that 20 months later (time three -T3) of this study) 63 participants (32 female, 31 male) remained with the company. For most of these successful applicants, this was their first full-time post-university

job. Two participants could be considered 'mature' graduates, aged in their forties and had worked full-time elsewhere.

For the present study the following procedures were administered only to those who accepted job offers. On each data collection occasion, participants were informed both verbally and in writing that their participation was voluntary and that their individual responses would not be made known to their employer (guarantee of anonymity). It was explained to the recruits that their participation was not a requirement of the organisation and they could withdraw from the study at anytime. The recruits were also informed that this study was approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee and was considered 'low risk'. The meaning of the 'peer- evaluated low- risk' was explained to the recruits prior to taking part in the study.

Design of Data Collection

This research followed a short-term longitudinal design with three sampling phases. Time one (T1) represented data collected on day two of the graduate recruits' orientation week. This collection point was important as it sought to obtain base-line data for each recruit's self-view, hopefully prior to any significant workplace environmental effects. At time two (T2) data were collected after nine months employment and time three (T3), represented data collected at 20 months.

At T1, T2 and T3 recruits completed both a self-enhancement indicator and critical self-insight questionnaire. At T2 their line- managers (from here on referred to as managers) completed a personality indicator for each recruit containing a number of items indicative of narcissism. At both T2 and T3, managers completed a performance review for each recruit.

Data were collected in two formats. Recruits completed the self-perception questionnaire in a single, large, group-setting at the company's 'induction camp' at T1. Subsequent (T2 and T3) self-perception questionnaires were completed in smaller groups at various office locations. The completion of

each questionnaire took approximately 10 to 15 minutes and was done in pencil and paper format. Managers' ratings of participants for both narcissistic tendency and for job performance were carried out electronically via email (performance) and on-line questionnaires (narcissistic tendency). The performance review took approximately five to 10 minutes to complete and the narcissism indicator between 10 to 15 minutes. Table 2 summarises the data collection sequence.

Table 2
Sequence of Data Collection

Group	Measure	Time period
Graduate recruits	Self-Perception Indicator	T1, T2, T3
	Critical Self-Insight Indicator	T1,T2, T3
Managers	Performance indicator 1	T2
	Narcissism Traits Indicator	T2
	Performance indicator 2	T3

Procedures and Indicators

Self-Perception Indicator

Self-enhancement

Using Kernberg's model of narcissism as a starting point a straightforward self-report indicator associated with perceived proximity to ideal-self was devised. In this scheme, a series of self-rated competencies was selected with the intention of tapping into both self-perceived occupational competency and personal abilities. Ten items were chosen from the Cubiks Competency Model (2001) with input from the organisation's senior management group as part of the meetings held to also identify items for the performance gauge. By

way of brief background, the Cubiks model was developed from an extensive review of current competency models in commercial use. It was further refined from a competency analysis research project undertaken with 17 global companies that focused on identifying the most common areas of competencies against which these companies seek to develop and measure staff. Of the 52 competencies within the Cubiks model, the following 10 were selected. (Many of the other Cubiks competencies focused on people management and operational strategic thinking, so were not applicable to this stage of the graduates' position).

1. *Stress tolerance.* Your ability to maintain a calm, controlled and positive manner when under pressure.
2. *Flexibility / Adaptability.* Your ability to adapt to new situations and new ways of working. Your receptiveness to changes and your willingness to adapt to them effectively.
3. *Self-Reliance.* Your ability to independently carry out tasks and consult with others when necessary for effective completion of a project.
4. *Integrity.* Your maintenance of high standards of honesty and trustworthiness.
5. *Mature assertiveness.* Your ability to assert yourself firmly and maintain composure across all situations, without the expression of any negative emotion (e.g. aggression).
6. *Problem Solving.* Your ability to break down and analyse information effectively, e.g. identify the causes of problems and propose practical solutions to address these difficult issues.
7. *Self-Confidence.* Your belief in your own self-worth and ability, even when placed in uncertain or new situations.
8. *Self-Awareness.* Your understanding of your own emotions and how they affect your actions.
9. *Openness to Ideas.* Your receptiveness to new ideas and approaches. Building on these ideas and actively incorporating them into your own way of thinking.
10. *Interpersonal Skills / Communication.* Your ability to communicate very clearly in any situation. Your ability to adapt your interpersonal style

according to the situation and audience while maintaining the same standard of communication.

On each of these 10 competencies, recruits were asked to rate themselves from 2 different perspectives on a scale of 0 – 20, where 20 was the highest rating possible on a scale, indicating an absolute match between actual-self and ideal-self, and were provided with both verbal and written instructions prior to undertaking the questionnaires. Figure 3 presents an example of a self-rating. Participants were first asked to rate how closely they perceived themselves to be to their fully developed ideal-self. They were then asked to rate themselves again on each of the same competencies but this time from the perspective of how they perceived themselves in comparison to their graduate peers. Both scales were presented together and participants completed these concurrently. As a graphic guideline, a normal distribution curve was placed on each scale to provide an anchor at the value of 10. While this distribution curve was not based on any specific empirical data, it was included to provide a responsive guideline and opportunity to rate oneself as superior, similar, or under- developed compared to peers.

1. Stress tolerance / Management

Your ability to maintain a calm, controlled and positive manner when under pressure and remain focused on the task.

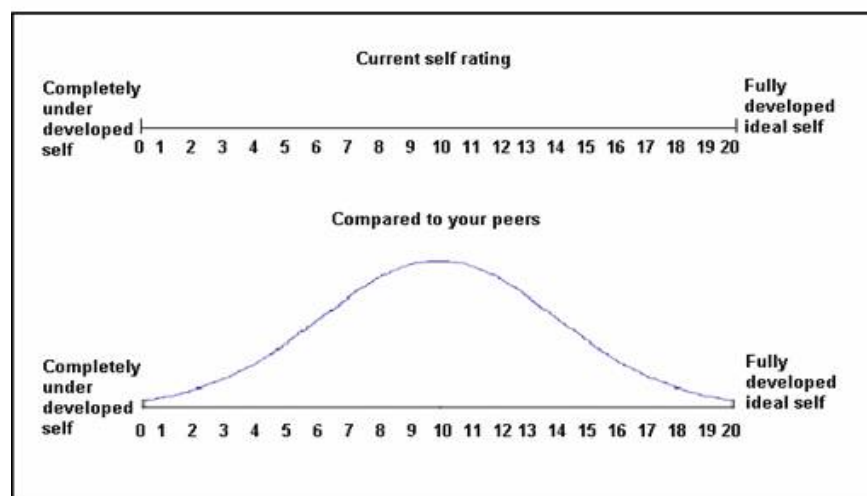


Figure 3. This figure represents an example of the self-enhancement-self-rating scales used to measure each of the 10 competencies. On the above Likert scale, the recruits indicated their current self rating in regards to the given competency; on the bell curve below recruits indicated where they perceived themselves to be in comparison to their peers for the given competency.

Critical Self-Insight Indicator (CSI)

A critical self-insight item list was developed to gauge the degree to which participants critically appraised themselves and in what manner (that is, what was it they were self-critical of). The item list was created from an extensive data base of over 500 historical job applicant interviews conducted by the researcher. Responses to the question “At work, how do you think you would be described by a cynic or someone who may not like working with you?” formed the basis of the CSI indicator. From this preliminary collection, fifty-one of the most common responses were noted. Using these fifty-one items, participants in this study were asked to complete two tasks which involved critically evaluating themselves from two different perspectives. The first task was to indicate by ticking from the list those items they felt others would probably view them as being like. The second was to identify from the same list, those items that in their own self-perception they believed to be true. An example of this task is provided in Figure 4.

Statement	Others' view	Self-view
Overly emotive		
Overly opinionated		
Indecisive		

Figure 4. Example of critical self-insight items. Recruits indicated which items from the list others would describe them as being like, and what they described themselves as being like.

Due to this being a newly created indicator based on historic employee interview data, subsequent factor analyses (a principal-components analysis

followed by Varimax rotation to simple structure) were carried out to investigate inter-relationships between items. The factor analyses identified five clusters (C):

C1 - Dominance

C2 - Unmotivated - Disengaged

C3 – Narrow – Rigid

C4 – Avoidant

C5 – Under-Controlled – Emotive - Sensitive

These clusters were subsequently used to identify styles of CSI response. The factor analysis data is presented in Appendix F.

Narcissism

The degree to which a graduate recruit showed evidence of narcissistic tendencies was established from analysis of observational ratings obtained from managers who had regular day-to-day contact with each recruit. Managers provided these data by completing an online trilemma exercise at T2, for each recruit for whom they were responsible. As previously explained, a 'trilemma' is a 3-way choice, or triad between equal-distant mapped items. Each trilemma contained items that were uncorrelated within each set, that is, the items were geometrically dissimilar. Managers were electronically presented with 30 trilemma sets and were asked to choose an item within each trilemma set that they perceived as *most* like the target recruit and an item they perceived as *least* like the recruit. Figure 5 shows an example of the trilemma format presented to managers.

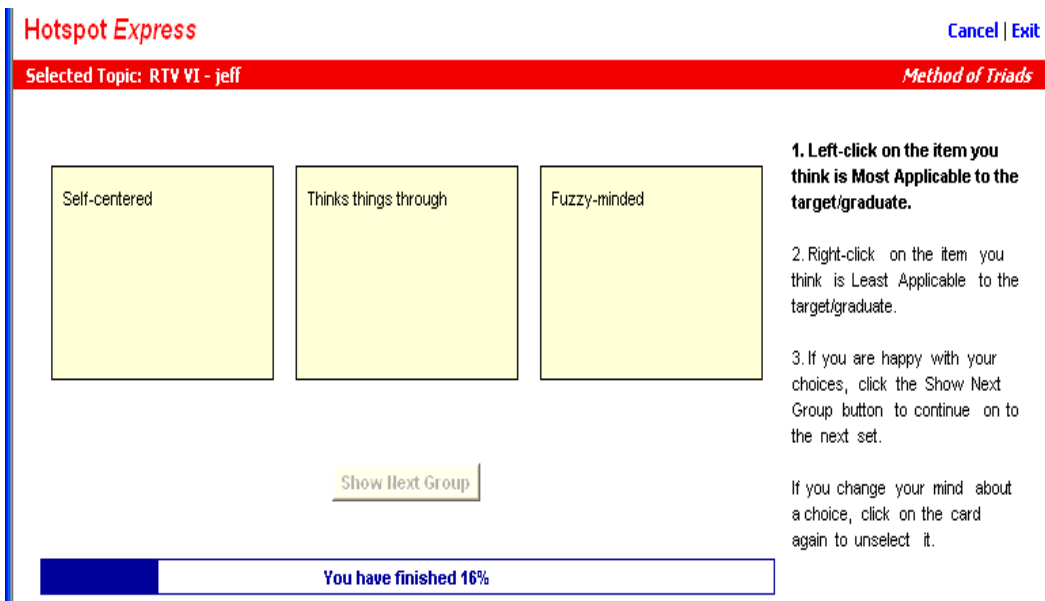


Figure 5. Screen shot example of trilemma format. The manager is electronically presented with three descriptions. From these descriptions, the manager must select one which is most like the individual being described and a description which is least like the individual.

The most and least descriptive items in a triad received a score of 1 and -1, although fractional scores were allocated where only one option was made (e.g. 'most applicable' made to one item of the triad and no 'least applicable' choice made). The trilemma sets in which managers responded to is fully automated and runs until all items have been exhausted. The same randomised sequence of triads was used throughout this task.

Items within the trilemma sets that were typical descriptors of narcissism based on published research are presented on Table 3.

Table 3.

Narcissism Items and Their Source.

Narcissism Item	Source
Acts Superior	Raskin & Terry, 1988; Wexley, Alexander, Stenwalt, Couch, 1980; Judge, Lepine, Rich, 2006.
Arrogant	DSM-IV-TR., Rosenthal & Pittinsky, 2006
Competitive	Raskin & Terry, 1988; Morf, Weir, Davidson, 2000; Campbell, Bush, Brunell, 2005; Sedikides, Campbell, Ruder, Elliot, Gregs, 2002.
Glory Seeker	Kasser & Ryan, 1996., Mitchell, 2001.
Impulsive	Chatterjee & Hambrick, 2006; Foster & Trimm, 2008; Altas & Them, 2008., Lakey, Rose, Campbell, Goodie, 2008; Vazre & Funder, 2006.
Needs an Audience	Morf & Rhodewalt, 2001; Rhodewaly, 2005; Blais, Hilsenroth, Castlebury, 1997.
Self Centred	Mollon, 1993; Raskin & Terry, 1988; Morf & Rhodewalt, 2001.
Show off – Know it all	Raskin & Terry, 1988; Wink, 1991; Chatterjee & Hambrick, 2006.
Strives to be Centre of Attention	Wallace & Baumeister, 2002; Raskin & Terry, 1988.
Vain	Egan & McCorkinkle, 2007; Mollon, 1993., Raskin & Terry, 1988.

To be rated as having significant narcissistic tendencies, a participant needed to yield an overall positive score on the 10-item narcissistic subset. For example, if a participant had been rated on 5 of the items as being “most applicable”, and “least applicable” on the other 5 items, they would have obtained an accumulated score of zero, which was therefore viewed as not relevant.

Performance

Two performance indices were developed, one for T2 (month nine), and the second for T3 (month 20) reflecting the different stages of graduate recruits' careers and associated required competencies. As mentioned previously,

these were created from the discussions with senior managers within the organisation, as well as utilising the organisation's existing competency framework. The objective was to create a time-efficient appraisal tool that reflected the most important facets of the recruits' roles. Each recruit's performance was rated by two high-contact managers. The performance items were presented as Likert scales and the mean score from each pair of supervisors was accepted as a performance gauge. In the majority of cases, the same two supervisors rated graduates' performances at T2 and T3. Only three of the graduates had one new manager rating them at T3. On no occasion did a completely different pair of supervisors rate a graduate's performance between years one to two.

First impression –Impact at initial interview

Interviewer impressions were also recorded for each graduate applicant's employment interview. Graduates were interviewed using the same standard interview format by two experienced managers responsible ultimately for the decision whether or not to make an employment offer. Impression data provided an opportunity to gauge how each graduate presented at their first company meeting. These interview impressions are discussed further in the results and discussion sections below.

Cognitive Ability Testing – Pre-Employment. The Cubiks Reasoning for Business Verbal and Numeric Graduate Level Tests.

As part of the recruiting process, following an interview with the hiring manager each applicant completed two standard cognitive ability tests: graduate level reading and numeric comprehension. This organisation has collected data from conducting these same tests for a number of years with well over 1000 historic scores to compare each graduate against. The narcissistic group scored in the mid to slightly upper levels on these tests with an average score in the 58th percentile in the reading comprehension and in the 61st percentile in the numeric comprehension test when compared to the historic data set. In terms of the intellectual ability these tests assess, the narcissistic sub-group's results were not distinguishable from those of the non-narcissists.

Statistical Analysis

There are four main ways in which short term longitudinal designs can be analysed (Nakai & Weiming, 2011). These are namely analysis of change-scores using Univariate Analysis (ANOVA) or Multivariate Analysis (MANOVA), using a Mixed-effect Regression Model (MRM) or a Generalised Estimating Equation (GEE). Each of these analyses has its merits and demerits and there are ongoing debates about which method is superior (Nakai & Weiming, 2011).

Via the analysis of change-scores (ANOVA or MANOVA), the question of *how groups change over time* can best be answered and group means can be compared across time. MANOVAS have been suggested to be superior to ANOVAS when comparing population means of several groups (Vallejo & Ato, 2011). Some reasons for this are that a more detailed description of the phenomenon under investigation can be obtained, researchers can obtain a better chance of discovering the overall impact of the treatment effect, researchers control the overall alpha level at the desired level and statistical power is increased (Vallejo & Alto, 2011). However, the use of MANOVAS are cautioned against when the dependent variables being assessed are highly correlated (Farivar, Cunningham & Hays, 2007: Tabachnick & Fidell 2007). Due to the dependent variables measuring self enhancement being highly correlated at T1 and T2, T1 and T3 and T2 and T3 in the narcissistic group (see Table 4) the MANOVA as an option for analysis was rejected. With these considerations in mind, analyses using change scores such as repeated measures ANOVAs and independent samples t-tests with Bonferroni corrections were deemed most appropriate to assess for differences in self enhancement in the narcissist and non-narcissist group at T1, T2 and T3.

Table 4

Pearson's Correlation Coefficients between Self Enhancement Scores at T1, T2 and T3 for Narcissists and Non-narcissists

	Narcissists			Non-Narcissists		
	T1	T2	T3	T1	T2	T3
T1	-	.85**	.70*	-	.64**	.47**
T2	-	-	.83**	-	-	.54**

Note. Narcissists, N= 10, Non-Narcissists, N=50, * $P < .05$, ** $P < .01$

CHAPTER SEVEN

RESULTS

This chapter will present the level of agreement between managers in their ratings of recruits' narcissistic traits and explore the relationship between narcissism and self-perception. First, the self-perception of the narcissists' sub group will be examined from two perspectives: self-enhancement (SE) which is the self-rated proximity to ideal-self and critical self-insight (CSI). Second, the self-perceptions from the narcissist sub-group will be compared to the non-narcissistic group. Third, changes in self-perception over 20 months of both the narcissists' sub group and the non-narcissist group will be reported, followed by comparisons between the narcissist sub-group and top performers in both personality and performance. Finally, the relationship between narcissism and performance will be presented, including additional information from the initial candidate interviews. At the conclusion of this chapter, reference will be made to the validity and reliability of the procedures used.

Preliminary Statistics

Mixed ANOVAS, independent samples t-tests and correlation coefficients were used to analyse the data using SPSS Statistic (Version 19.0).

Preliminary statistics were conducted to ensure that assumptions underlying the statistical analyses used were met.

There are three critical assumptions which underlie the independent samples t-test. These are: that the data are normally distributed, that the data are interval data, and there is homogeneity of variance across the groups (Markoski & Markoski, 1990). For the Mixed ANOVA, the repeated measures variable (in this study it was the individuals' test scores) must be interval data, and the between subjects factor must define the group (Narcissistic tendencies or non Narcissistic tendencies). Additionally, the assumption of normality for the repeated measure (test scores) and the assumption of sphericity for the within subjects factor (time) and the assumption of

homogeneity of variance for the between subjects factor must be met. Preliminary analyses ensured these assumptions were all satisfied prior to analysing the data. Descriptive statistics and graphical visual analyses were calculated to assess the distributional characteristics of all data. Skewness and kurtosis was examined to ensure data were normally distributed. Skewness should be between -1 and 1, and kurtosis should fall between -2 and 2 (Hammer & Landau, 1981). All results fell within the recommended range. Levene's tests for homogeneity were non-significant for all dependent variables indicating that data variance was homogenous. Mauchly's tests of sphericity were non-significant for mixed-ANOVAS.

Prior to conducting Pearson's correlation coefficients, the four assumptions: interval measurements, normal distribution, linear relationships within the variables and homoscedasticity of the data were checked and met. Data were also checked for outliers. No outliers were found and all data could be included in the analyses.

As the prevalence of narcissism has been reported at between 1-15% (Kay, 2008) it was expected that there would be far fewer narcissists than non-narcissists. This was indeed found to be the case for this study; with the scores on the narcissism subset dividing the participant sample into a group of 11 recruits with narcissistic tendencies, and 65 recruits that did not have narcissistic tendencies. Due to the small prevalence of narcissism in the workplace and the resulting small sample of individuals with narcissistic personalities, the power of the statistical tests was conservatively limited by that of the smaller narcissistic group. Thus, when making comparisons between a small sample group and a large sample group, the larger group does not alter the statistical power, and analyses was accepted as valid.

All statistical tests were set at an alpha value of $\alpha=0.05$ unless stated otherwise, and all tests were two-tailed, as this is exploratory research all tests were two-tailed to allow the possibility of findings in either direction. All statistical results were rounded to two decimal places, with the exception of p -values where were rounded to three.

Rate of Narcissism and Agreement among Managers

Of the 76 recruits, 11 obtained an overall positive score on the narcissism scale (14% of the entire group). Of the 63 recruits who remained within the study over the three data collection periods, 10 were recorded with a positive narcissism score (15%).

The intra-class correlation coefficient (ICC) was calculated to determine the inter-rater reliability of the managers' ratings of all recruits on across the 10 narcissism items. A two-way mixed ICC (3,K) was used to assess reliability of 'absolute agreement' between the manager's ratings. Inter-rater reliability was strong, and a high, significant, positive ICC indicated that manager's generally tended to agree in their ratings across all recruits on all 10 narcissism items ($r=0.83$, $p= 0.010$).

Further ICC (3,K)s were conducted for just the recruits who had been categorised as having high narcissistic traits. These correlations demonstrated the extent to which the managers 'agreed' on each of the ratings for these select individuals. Table 5 presents the ICC for each narcissism item, and the corresponding probability value for each.

Table 5

Degree of Agreement between Managers on Individual Narcissism Items

Narcissism item	ICC	<i>P-Value</i>
Acts Superior	.38	.265
Arrogant	.74	.010
Competitive	.78	.018
Glory Seeker	.16	.422
Show off – know it all	.35	.280
Strives to be Centre of Attention	.14	.428
Vain	.23	.488
Needs an Audience	.90	.000
Impulsive	.49	.183
Self-Centred	.83	.010

Inter-rater reliability correlations were all positive, though not all strong or significant. This is likely to be due to the small number of narcissists in the study, and consequently the lower statistical power. Inter-rater reliability for self-centredness, needing and audience, competitiveness and arrogance were all strong ($> r .70$). Intra-class correlation coefficients were statistically significant at the alpha level of 0.05 for the following items: self centeredness, needing an audience, competitiveness, and arrogance.

Self-Enhancement Tendency across all Recruits

Self-enhancement refers to a recruit's rating of their actual-self's proximity to their ideal-self. Recruits' responses to the self-enhancement measure showed some consistency. Table 6 shows that the average response rating was typically between 12 and 13 on most items ($M=12.77$, $SD=0.90$). The exception was on the *integrity* item where participants tended to rate themselves more closely to their ideal-self and as more developed than their peers ($M=15.06$, $SD=2.74$).

Table 6

Mean and Standard Deviation Scores across all Time Periods of Self-Enhancement Items.

Self-enhancement item	Mean	Standard Deviation
Stress	12.59	2.83
Flexibility	12.21	2.64
Self-reliance	13.18	2.81
Integrity	15.06	2.74
Mature assertiveness	12.12	2.88
Problem solving	12.53	2.91
Self-confidence	12.01	3.30
Self-awareness	13.21	2.83
Openness to ideas	12.33	2.29
Interpersonal skills	12.45	3.39

Recruits also displayed a high degree of similarity in their response ratings between their ideal-self rating (proximity to their ideal-self) and rating of themselves against their peers. For example, if they rated their actual-self as

very close to their ideal-self on an item, they tended to also rate themselves higher on that item than they perceived their peers to be. Table 7 shows a strong positive correlation between the two perspectives at each sampling period.

Table 7

Correlations between Actual-Self and Ideal-Self Rating and Self-Rating against Peers on Self-Enhancement Items over T1, T2 and T3.

Self-Enhancement Item	T1	T2	T3
Stress	.62	.77	.58
Flexibility	.67	.81	.65
Self-reliance	.75	.82	.75
Integrity	.73	.70	.78
Mature assertiveness	.74	.83	.73
Problem solving	.72	.83	.71
Self-confidence	.88	.84	.87
Self-awareness	.85	.65	.79
Openness to ideas	.72	.78	.73
Interpersonal skills	.89	.87	.87

Note: All correlations were significant at the 0.01 alpha level (two tailed).

Due to such strong correlations between ratings of the ideal self and the actual self for each SE item, the mean of the two perspectives was taken as an individual score on each self-enhancement item. The scores on each item presented in this result section are the combined means of (a) How close I see myself to my ideal-self (ideal self) and (b) How I compare myself to my peers (actual self).

Narcissism and Self-Perception

The scatter plot graphs (Figures 6, 7 and 8) show an overall comparative relationship of averaged SE and CSI scores over the three separate time periods comparing the narcissist sub-group and non-narcissist sub-group. Each plot represents the mean score over both perspectives of self-rating on SE and CSI. That is, for SE: (a) How closely participants rate themselves to

their ideal self and (b) How participants rate themselves against their peers. For CSI: (a) How others see me, and (b) How I see myself.

Figures 6, 7 and 8 show the narcissist sub-group tend to fall in the higher band zone of self-enhancement while the CSI tendency appears to be more typical of the non-narcissist group in general. Subsequent analyses were undertaken to investigate if the tendency for narcissists to fall in the higher band zone for SE was significant. CSI analyses are presented on page 95.

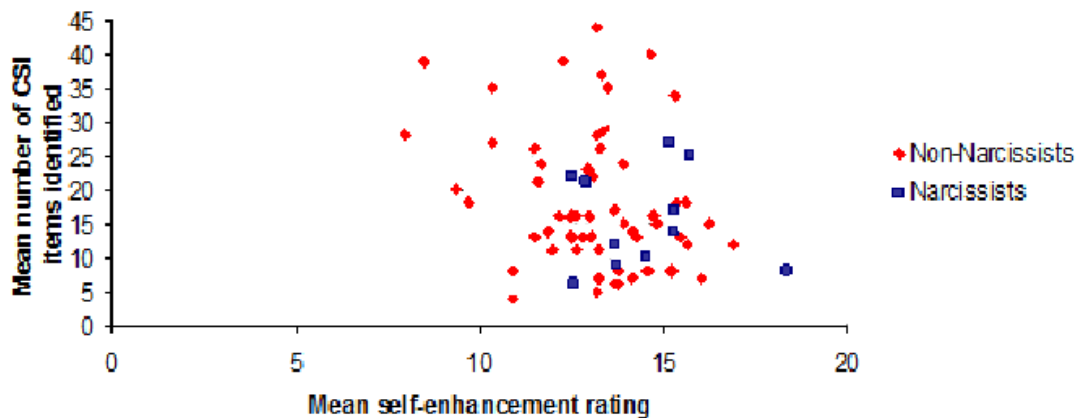


Figure 6. This scatter plot presents the mean CSI and SE scores for the Narcissist sub-group and the Non-Narcissist sub-group for T1.

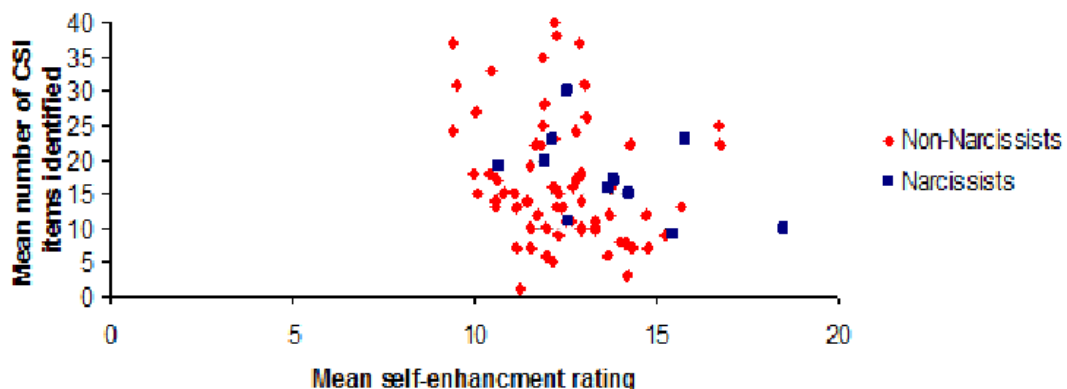


Figure 7. This scatter plot presents the mean CSI and SE scores for the Narcissist sub-group and the Non-Narcissist sub-group for T2.

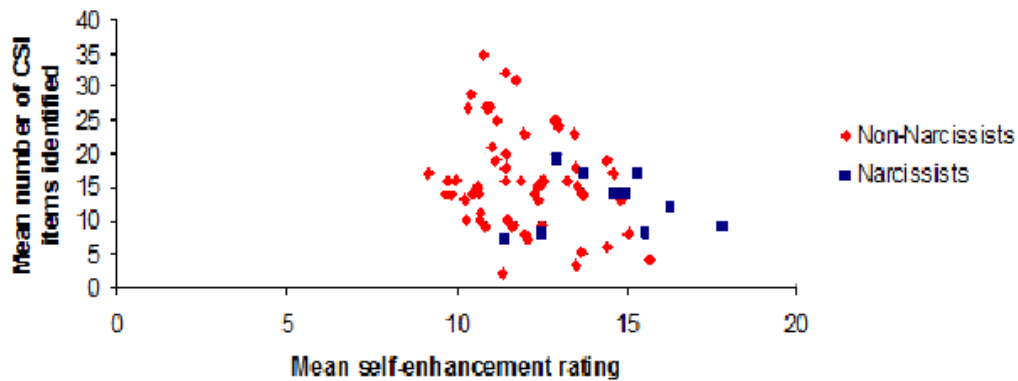


Figure 8. This scatter plot presents the mean CSI and SE scores for the Narcissist sub-group and the Non-Narcissist sub-group for T3.

Self-Enhancement, Narcissists and Non-Narcissists

Figures 6, 7 and 8 show a general pattern for narcissists to fall in the higher zone of self-enhancement. To investigate this trend Pearson's correlations were conducted to look at the overall relationship between managers' rating of narcissism and graduates' ratings of their self-perceived closeness to their ideal-selves. At T1 and T2 relationships were found, though these didn't quite reach statistical significance. The correlation for the relationship at time T1 was positive and moderate ($r(61) = .243, p = .059$) as was the correlation for T2 ($r(61) = .24, p = .056$). At T3 there was also a positive moderate correlation, this time reaching statistical significance ($r(61) = .462, p = .001$). When specifically categorised into a narcissist and a non-narcissist group, there was a significant effect of narcissism ($F(1, 61) = 12.45, p < .05$). The significant main effect of narcissism suggests that non-narcissists had significantly lower self-enhancement ratings ($M=12.43, SD=0.20$) than narcissists ($M=14.18, SD=0.45$) across the three time periods. To investigate which items contributed to this effect, a factorial ANOVA was carried out.

Overall, those reported by their managers as having narcissistic tendencies rated themselves significantly higher on seven of the 10 self-rating items when compared to non-narcissists . Table 8 summarizes the items on which narcissists significantly rated themselves higher than the non-narcissist group.

Table 8

Summary of Narcissists' (N) and Non-Narcissists' (NN) Self-Ratings on each Self-Enhancement (SE) Item.

SE item	(N) Mean	SD	(NN) Mean	SD	F	df	P
Stress	13.7	.43	12.3	.24	3.27	1, 61	ns
Flexibility	13.3	.54	11.9	.25	5.46	1, 61	.023
Self-reliance	14.5	.60	12.9	.28	5.92	1, 61	.05
Integrity	15.6	.63	14.8	.29	1.13	1, 61	ns
Mature-assertiveness	13.3	.65	11.7	.30	4.94	1, 61	.05
Problem-solving	14.6	.71	12.1	.33	9.93	1, 61	.01
Self-confidence	14.3	.80	11.4	.37	10.82	1, 61	.01
Self-awareness	14.4	.65	12.9	.30	4.59	1, 61	.05
Openness to ideas	13.1	.25	12.0	.27	3.80	1, 61	ns
Interpersonal-skills	14.8	.81	11.9	.37	10.74	1, 61	.01

Note: ns = non significant at the alpha 0.05 level of significance.

Changes in Self-Perception

A mixed ANOVA, with time as the within subjects factor and narcissism as the between subjects factor revealed that participants' self-ratings appeared to change over the 20 month time period, though in different ways between the narcissist and non-narcissists groups. There was a significant main effect for

time on self-rating ($F(2, 61) = 4.42, p < .05$). When measurements were taken at each time point it was found that participants' self-ratings varied. The overall trend is presented in Figure 9.

There is a significant interaction effect of time and narcissism ($F(2, 61) = 5.43, p < .05$). The self-ratings given by participants across time differed depending on whether the participant was identified as being narcissistic.

Overall, participants' (narcissists and non narcissist) self-ratings were significantly higher at T1 ($M=13.74, SD=0.33$) than T2 ($M=12.985, SD=0.28$) ($F(1, 61) = 9.82, p < .05$). The differences in self-ratings between T1 and T3 and T2 and T3 were not significant due to the upward drift in T3 for the narcissist sub-group.

The interaction effect comparing T1 and T3 for narcissists and non-narcissists was significant ($F(1, 61) = 4.40, p < .05$). This result suggests that between T1 and T3 there is a decline in the self-ratings of non-narcissists, while the self-ratings of narcissists remain similar at T3 to those at T1.

The interaction effect comparing T2 and T3 for narcissists and non-narcissists is also significant ($F(1, 61) = 9.12, p < .05$), reflecting the increase in narcissists' self-ratings from T2 to T3, while non-narcissists' self-ratings decreased.

The interaction effect comparing T1 and T2 for narcissists and non-narcissists was not significant ($F(1, 61) = 0.27, p > 0.05$). This lack of interactional effect indicates that the pattern of change in self-rating scores from T1 to T2 did not differ significantly between narcissists and non-narcissists.

Interpretations and implications of these results are focused on in the discussion. It is clear that had this project included just two time points (T1 and T2) the upward shift noted in T3 for narcissists would have been missed.

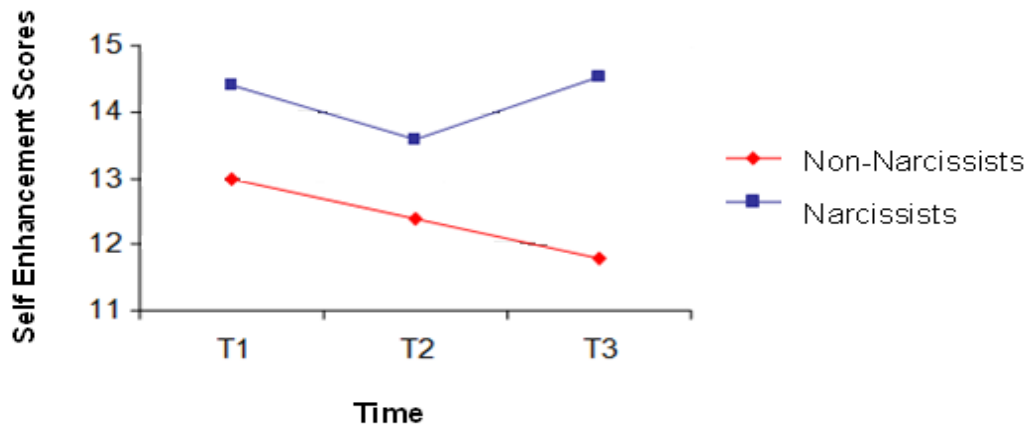


Figure 9. Graph shows the interaction between self-enhancement self-ratings and time for the narcissist group and the non-narcissist group.

Relationship between Assessment Points and each Self-Enhancement Scale

To further investigate the relationship of self-enhancement over the three time periods, mixed ANOVAS were conducted for each SE item and post hoc independent samples t-tests were conducted at each assessment point for each of the ten items in order to investigate where the significant differences between narcissists and non-narcissists lay over time. The Bonferroni correction was used in order to control for Type I error. As there were three independent samples t-tests conducted for each item, the alpha level of .05 was divided by three, resulting in a significance level being set at $\alpha=.0167$ for the t-tests.

Figures 10 - 19 illustrate each self-enhancement item and the differences between the narcissist sub-group and non-narcissists' self-perception across time. The confidence bars within each graph indicate the 95% confidence interval.

Stress

The Mixed-ANOVA revealed there was no significant main effect of time ($F(2,61)=1.29, p=.28$) indicating that the overall means for SE on *stress* did not change significantly over time, nor was there a main effect of narcissism ($F(1,61)=3.27, p>0.05$). There was also no significant interaction effect of time and narcissism ($F(2,61)=1.56, p=.21$), indicating that differences between SE *stress* scores of narcissists and non-narcissists did not differ significantly over time. See Figure 10 for a graphical representation of narcissists and non-narcissists changes in SE scores over time.

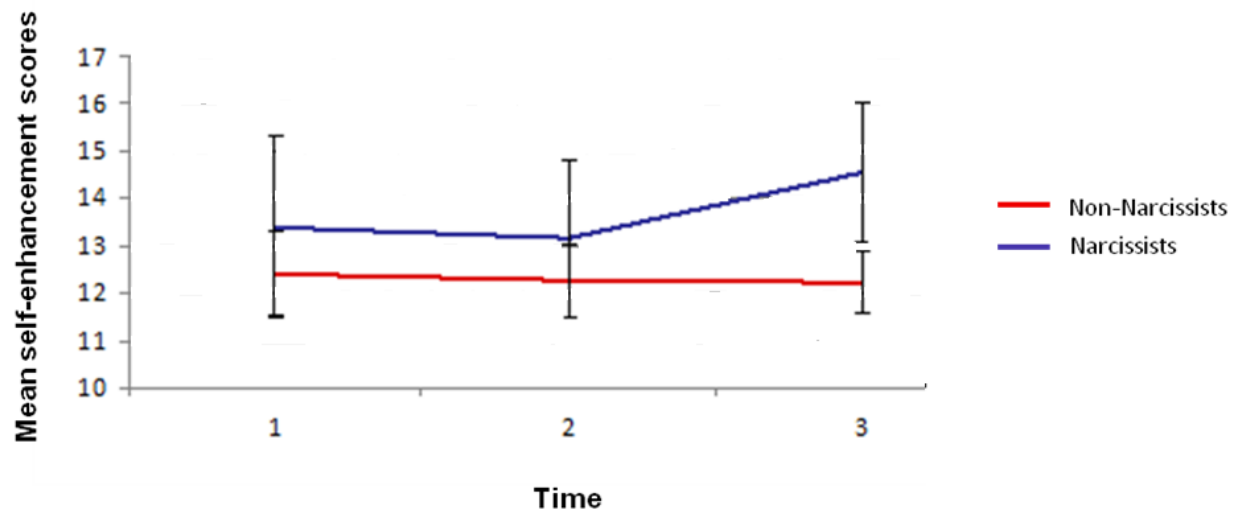


Figure 10. This graph presents a comparison of the narcissist and non-narcissist group on self-perception of *stress management* at T1, T2 and T3.

Figure 10 shows that narcissists rated their stress management ability as more highly developed than their non-narcissist peers at each time. However the differences in scores were not statistically significant at T1 or T2 ($p > .0167$). At T3, narcissists had significantly higher scores ($M = 14.55, SD = 1.77$) than non-narcissists ($M = 12.24, SD = 2.40$) ($t(61) = -2.87, p = .006$).

Flexibility

The Mixed-ANOVA revealed there was no significant main effect of time ($F(2,61)=2.67, p=.074$) indicating that the overall means for SE on *flexibility* did not change significantly over time. There was however a main effect for narcissism ($F(1,61)=5.46, p=0.023$). There was no significant interaction effect of time and narcissism ($F(2,61)=1.61, p=.217$), indicating that differences between SE *flexibility* scores of narcissists and non-narcissists did not differ significantly over time. See Figure 11 for a graphical representation of narcissists and non-narcissists changes in SE scores over time.

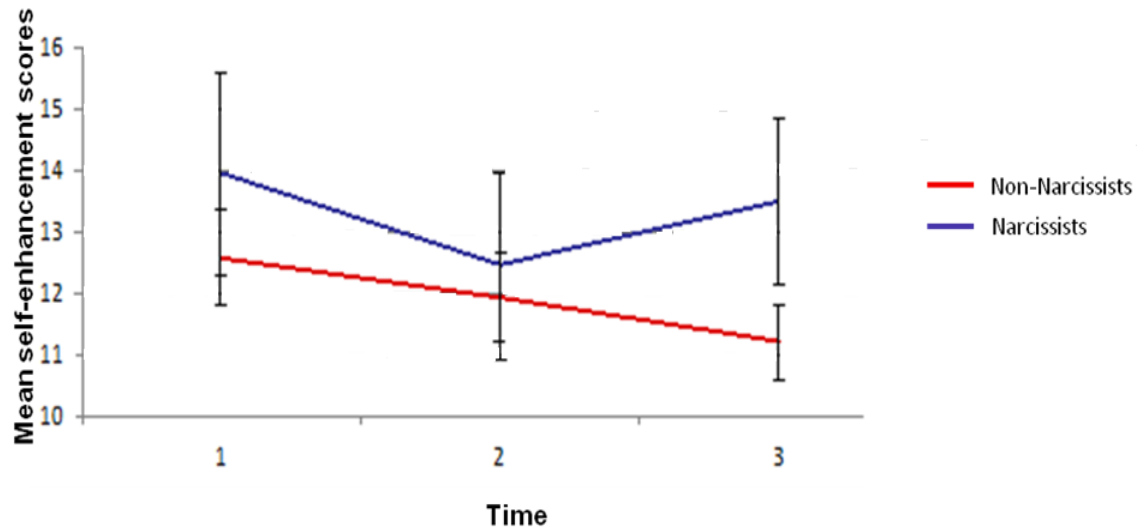


Figure 11. This graph presents a comparison of the narcissist and non-narcissist group on self-perception of *flexibility* at T1, T2 and T3.

Figure 11 shows that across each time period narcissists rated their flexibility as more highly developed than the non-narcissist group. However, there were no significant differences ($p > .0167$) in the scores between narcissists and non-narcissists at T1 or T2. At T3, narcissists had significantly higher scores ($M = 13.50, SD = 2.32$) than non-narcissists ($M = 11.20, SD = 2.12$) ($t(61) -3.06, p = .003$).

Self-Reliance

The Mixed-ANOVA revealed there was no significant main effect of time ($F(2,61)=1.76, p=.312$) indicating that the overall means for SE on *self reliance* did not change significantly over time. There was also no significant effect of narcissism on *self reliance scores* ($F(1,61)=5.92, p=0.05$). There was also no significant interaction effect of time and narcissism ($F(2,61)=1.56, p=.216$), indicating that differences between SE *self reliance* scores of narcissists and non-narcissists did not differ significantly over time. See Figure 12 for a graphical representation of narcissists and non-narcissists changes in SE scores over time.

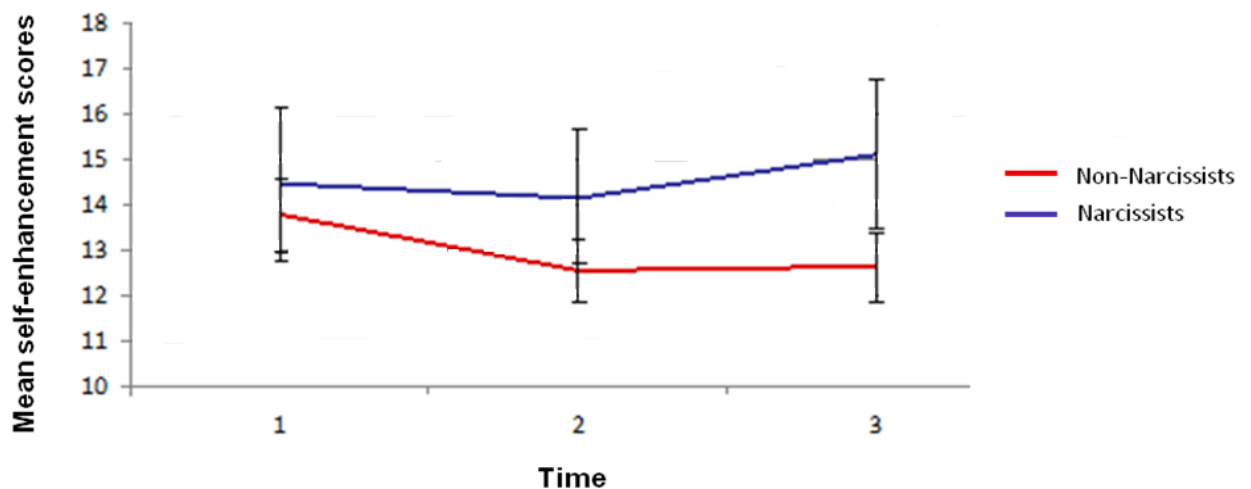


Figure 12. This graph presents a comparison of the narcissist and non-narcissist group on self-perception of *self reliance* at T1, T2 and T3.

Figure 12 shows that narcissists indicated a higher self-rating of self-reliance across each time. However at T1 and T2 there were no significant differences ($p > .0167$) in scores between narcissists and non-narcissists. At T3, narcissists had significantly higher scores ($M = 15.10, SD = 2.18$) than non-narcissists ($M = 12.62, SD = 2.63$) ($t(61) = -2.78, p = .007$).

Integrity

The Mixed-ANOVA revealed there was no significant main effect of time ($F(2,61)=1.66, p=.194$) indicating that the overall means for SE on *integrity* did not change significantly over time, nor was there a significant main effect of narcissism on integrity scores ($F(1,61)=1.13, p>0.0f$). There was also no significant interaction effect of time and narcissism ($F(2,61)=0.69, p=.21$), indicating that differences between SE *integrity* scores of narcissists and non-narcissists did not differ significantly over time. See Figure 13 for a graphical representation of narcissists and non-narcissists changes in SE scores over time.

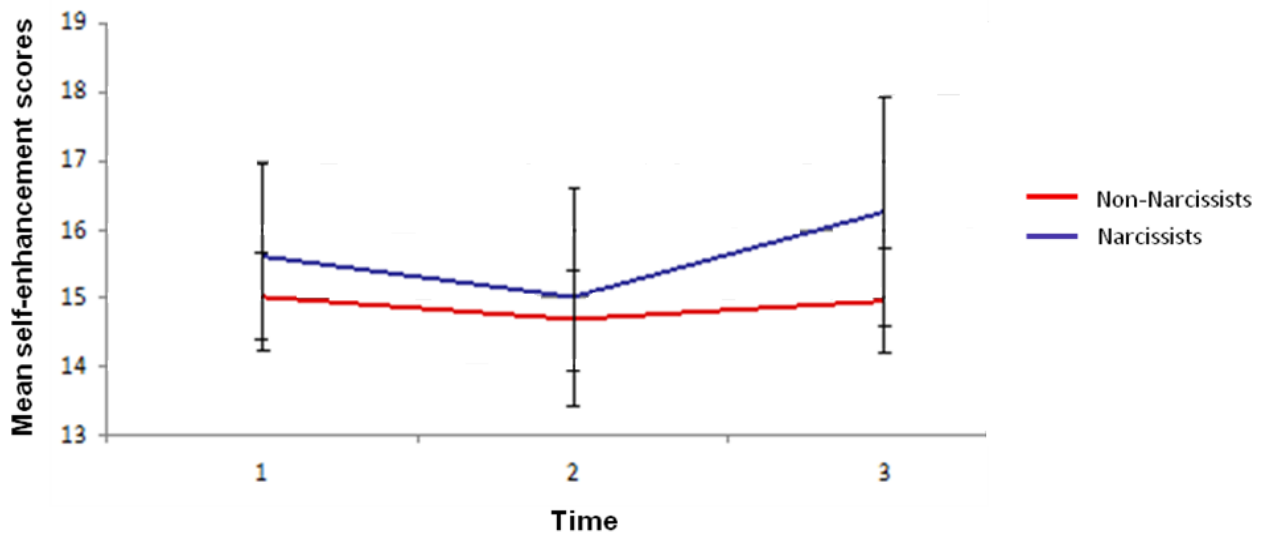


Figure 13. This graph presents a comparison of the narcissist and non-narcissist group on self-perception of *integrity* at T1, T2 and T3.

Figure 13 indicates that narcissists again rated themselves higher than non-narcissists did across each time. However, there were no significant differences ($p > .0167$) in these scores between narcissists and non-narcissists at T1, T2 or T3.

Mature Assertiveness

The Mixed-ANOVA revealed there was a significant main effect of time ($F(2,61)=3.92, p=.023$) indicating that the overall means for SE on *mature assertiveness* were significantly different over time. There was, however no main effect of narcissism on *mature assertiveness* scores ($F(1,61)=4.94, p=0.05$). There was also no significant interaction effect of time and narcissism ($F(2,61)=0.733, p=.464$), indicating that differences between SE *mature assertiveness* scores of narcissists and non-narcissists did not differ significantly over time. See Figure 14 for a graphical representation of narcissists and non-narcissists changes in SE scores over time.

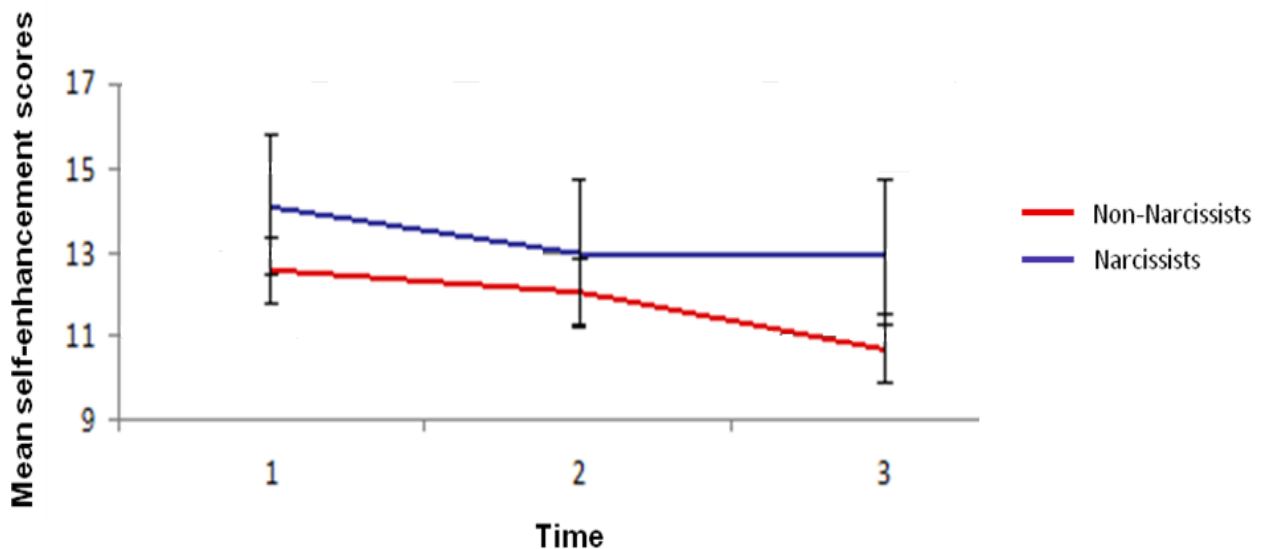


Figure 14. This graph presents a comparison of the narcissist and non-narcissist group on self-perception of *mature assertiveness* at T1, T2 and T3.

Figure 14 shows that narcissists rated themselves as being more developed than did the non-narcissists in terms of mature assertiveness across each time. At T1 and T2 there were no significant differences ($p > .0167$) in the scores between narcissists and non-narcissists. However, at T3 narcissists were trending towards having higher self-rated *maturity* scores ($M = 13.00, SD = 2.43$) than non-narcissists ($M = 10.71, SD = 2.78, (t(61),)=-2.41, p = .019$).

Problem Solving

The Mixed-ANOVA revealed there was a significant main effect of time ($F(2,61)=4.38, p=.015$) indicating that the overall means for SE on *problem solving* were significantly different over time. There was also a main effect of narcissism on problem solving scores ($F(1,61)=9.93, p=0.01$). A significant interaction effect of time and narcissism was also found ($F(2,61)=5.24, p=.007$), indicating that changes in SE *problem solving* scores depended on the narcissist or non-narcissists group and the time. See Figure 15 for a graphical representation of narcissists and non-narcissists changes in SE scores over time.

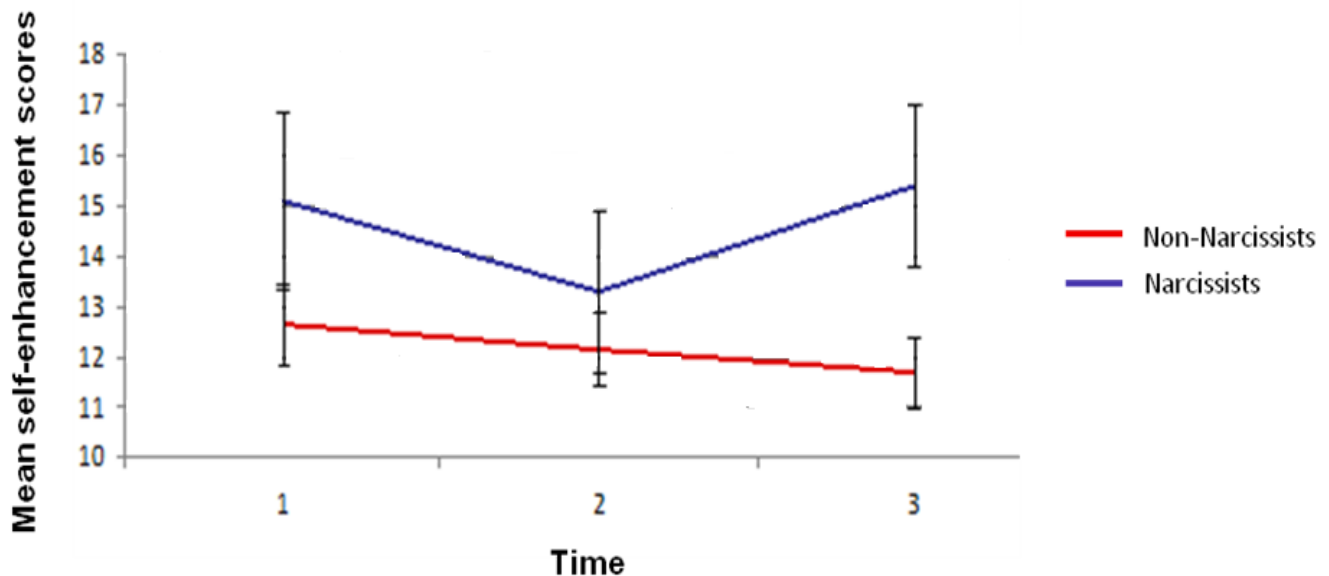


Figure 15. This graph presents a comparison of the narcissist and non-narcissist group on self-perception of *problem solving* at T1, T2 and T3.

Figure 15 shows a marked contrast between the narcissists and non-narcissists over the three assessment times. At T2 there was no significant difference ($p > .0167$) in the scores between narcissists and non-narcissists. However, at T1 narcissists had significantly higher SE scores ($M = 15.10, SD = 2.47$) than non-narcissists ($M = 12.63, SD = 2.78, (t(61), -2.60, p = .012)$). This was also the case for T3, narcissists self enhanced significantly in regards to problem solving ($M = 15.40, SD = 2.72$) than did non narcissists ($M = 11.68, SD = 2.44$) ($t(61), -4.30, p < 0.001$).

Self-Confidence

The Mixed-ANOVA revealed there was no significant main effect of time ($F(2,61)=.467, p=.628$) indicating that the overall means for SE on *self confidence* did not change significantly over time. There was, however a significant main effect of narcissism ($F(1,61)=10.82, p=0.01$) indicating that narcissists had greater self confidence scores and a significant interaction effect of time and narcissism ($F(2,61)=3.66, p=.029$), indicating that significant changes in SE *self confidence* scores depended on the narcissist or non-narcissist group and the time. See Figure 16 for a graphical representation of narcissists and non-narcissists changes in SE scores over time.

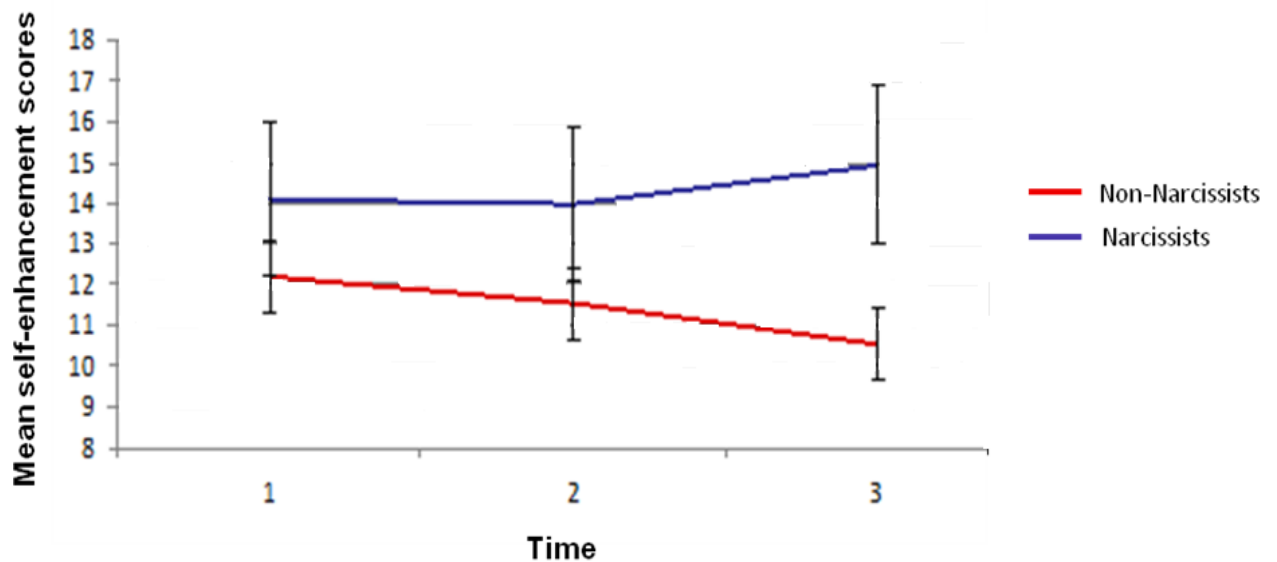


Figure 16. This graph presents a comparison of the narcissist and non-narcissist group on self-perception of *self-confidence* at T1, T2 and T3.

Figure 16 highlights a general trend where overall, narcissists self-rated higher than non-narcissists did and at T3, narcissists had increased in their sense of self-confidence whereas the non-narcissists appear to have decreased. The result of this was that by T3, narcissists had significantly higher scores ($M = 14.95, SD = 2.18$) than non-narcissists ($M = 10.56, SD = 3.18$) ($t(61), -4.14, p < 0.001$). At T1 and T2, no significant difference ($p > .0167$) in the scores between narcissists and non-narcissists were found.

Self-Awareness

The Mixed-ANOVA revealed there was a significant main effect of time ($F(2,61)=5.24, p=.007$) indicating that the overall means for SE on *self-awareness* were significantly different over time. There was also a significant main effect of narcissism ($F(1,61)=4.59, p=0.01$) indicating greater self awareness scores in narcissists. There was however no significant interaction effect of time and narcissism ($F(2,61)=.45, p=.642$), indicating that SE *self-awareness* scores did not change depending on the narcissists and non-narcissist group. See Figure 17 for a graphical representation of narcissists and non-narcissists changes in SE scores over time.

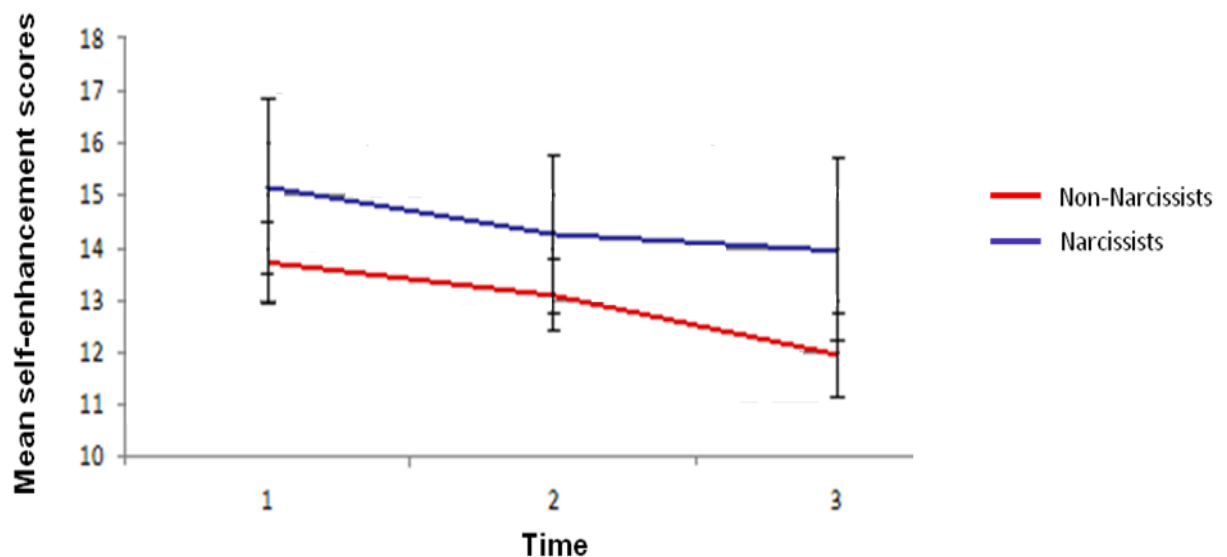


Figure 17. This graph presents a comparison of the narcissist and non-narcissist group on self-perception of *self-awareness* at T1, T2 and T3.

Figure 17 highlights a consistent difference between the narcissist and non-narcissist group at each time. However, there were no significant differences ($p > .0167$) in scores between narcissists and non-narcissists at T1, T2, or T3.

Openness to Ideas

The Mixed-ANOVA revealed there was no significant main effect of time ($F(2,61)=2.14, p=.122$) indicating that the overall means for SE on *openness* did not change significantly over time, nor was there a significant main effect of narcissism ($F(1,61)=3.80, p>0.05$). There was no significant interaction effect of time and narcissism ($F(2,61)=1.58, p=.210$), indicating that differences between SE *openness* scores of narcissists and non-narcissists did not change significantly over time. See Figure 18 for a graphical representation of narcissists and non-narcissists changes in SE scores over time.

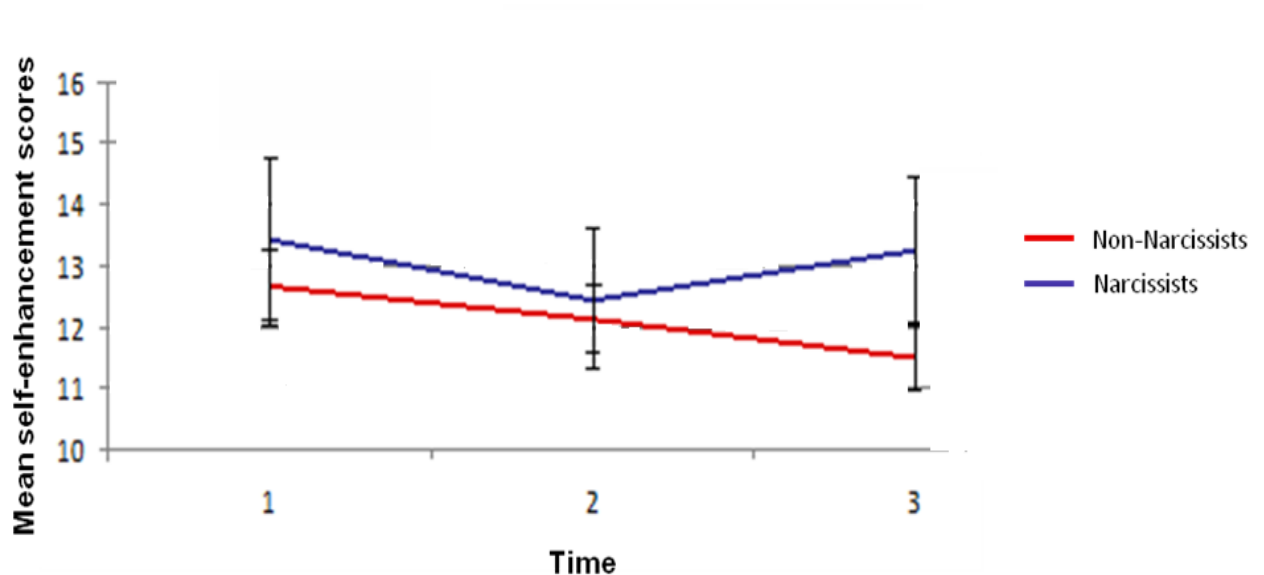


Figure 18. This graph presents a comparison of the narcissist and non-narcissist group on self-perception on *openness to ideas* at T1, T2 and T3.

Figure 18 highlights a steady decrease on non-narcissists' self-perception of their openness to experiences while the narcissists appear to vary according to time. At T1 and T2, there were no significant differences ($p>.0167$) in the scores between narcissists and non-narcissists. At T3 however, narcissists had significantly rated themselves higher ($M = 13.25, SD = 2.63$) than non-narcissists ($M = 11.51, SD = 1.77, (t(61), -2.58 p = .013)$).

Interpersonal Skills

The Mixed-ANOVA revealed there was no significant main effect of time ($F(2,61)=1.96, p=.141$) indicating that the overall means for SE on *interpersonal skills* were significantly different over time. A significant main effect of narcissism was found ($F(1,61)=10.74, p=0.01$) indicating greater self enhancement scores in narcissists for this item. There was however no significant interaction effect of time and narcissism ($F(2,61)=2.76, p=.067$), indicating that differences between SE *interpersonal skills* scores of narcissists and non-narcissists did not differ significantly over time. See Figure 19 for a graphical representation of narcissists and non-narcissists changes in SE scores over time.

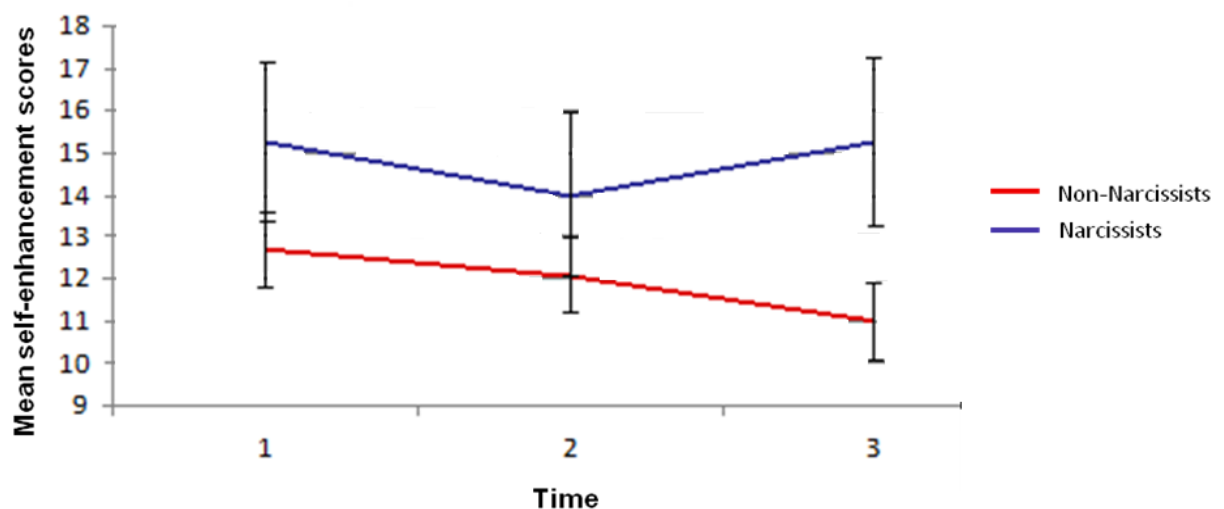


Figure 19. This graph presents a comparison of the narcissist and non-narcissist group on self-perception of *interpersonal skills* at T1, T2 and T3.

Figure 19 highlights a difference between the narcissist and non-narcissists groups in terms of the perceived interpersonal skills. At T1 and T2, there were no significant differences ($p > .0167$) in the scores between narcissists and non-narcissists (though there is a trend towards significance at time one). At T3, narcissists had significantly higher scores ($M = 15.25, SD = 2.68$) than non-narcissists ($M = 10.99, SD = 3.24, t(61), -3.87, p < .001$). Between T2

and T3 the significant difference comes from the large increase in the 'interpersonal skills' scores of narcissists and the decrease in the 'interpersonal skills' scores of non-narcissists.

Critical Self-Insight (CSI)

The second aspect of self-concept investigated was critical self-insight (CSI). Whereas on the first self-concept measure (self-enhancement) participants rated how closely they saw themselves to their ideal-self, the CSI measure now required them to look at themselves very differently and identify negative aspects of themselves.

A correlation analysis was carried out to investigate the relationship between CSI of self-view and CSI of how a person felt others viewed them. Similar to the self-enhancement responses, there was a strong overall relationship between the two perspectives. At T1 on average, participants identified $M=9.34$ ($SD=1.22$) items they felt others saw in them and $M=8.74$ ($SD=1.76$) critical self items that they perceived true of how they critically saw themselves, these results correlated strongly, positively and significantly ($r(61)=.75$, $p<0.001$). At T2, participants on average identified $M=8.62$ ($SD=0.92$) items they believed others saw in them and $M=8.41$ ($SD=0.88$) items they critically saw in themselves. These reports correlated moderately, positively and significantly ($r(61)=.51$, $p<0.001$). At T3, participants averaged $M=8.33$ ($SD=1.33$) items they believed others saw of them and $M=7.8$ ($SD=0.72$) items they felt true of themselves. At T3, recruits' critical self-view strongly correlated with others' critical view ($r(61)=.83$, $p<0.001$). Therefore, the mean scores presented in each subsequent CSI graph are the combination of each perspective – “how others see me” and “how I see myself”.

Critical Self-Insight, Narcissists and Non-Narcissists

To investigate the relationship between narcissism and critical self-insight a series of ANOVAs were run, focusing on the self-reported critical insights over the three assessment periods and between the narcissist and the non-narcissist groups.

A 3x2 ANOVA was run investigating the differences between narcissists and non-narcissists over the three assessment time points. Overall mean CSI scores were used.

There was not a significant main effect of time ($F(2, 61) = 1.841, p > 0.05$) indicating the CSI scores over the three different time points (T1, T2 and T3) were not significantly different from one another.

There was also no significant interaction effect between time and narcissism ($F(2, 61) = 1.488, p = ns$) indicating that narcissists and non-narcissists demonstrated a similar pattern of CSI responding (over all factors) over time.

The main effect of narcissism was also non-significant ($F(1, 61) = 1.30, p > 0.05$). This indicates that overall, the mean CSI scores at each time point did not differ significantly between narcissists and non-narcissists.

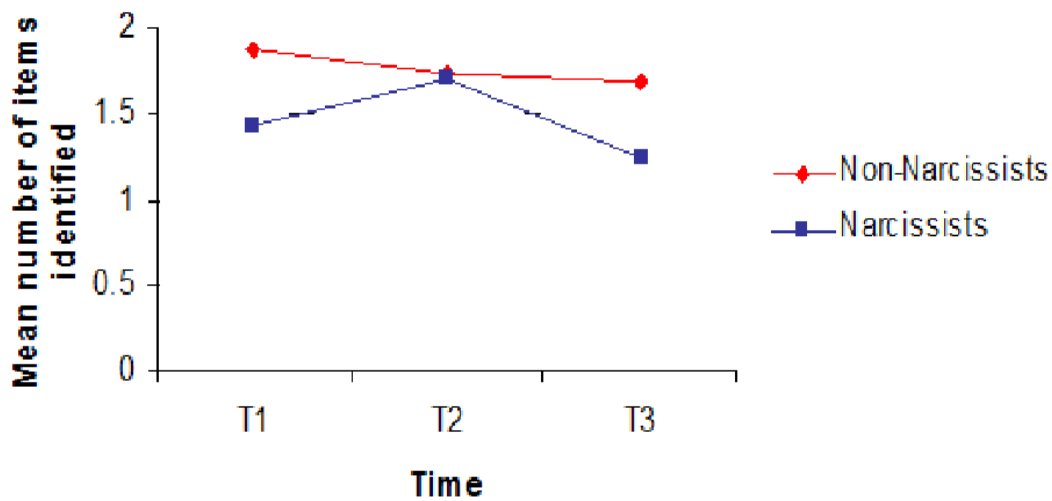


Figure 20. Comparison of narcissist and non-narcissist mean scores across all CSI clusters.

As Figure 20 shows, there was a general overall tendency for narcissists to self-critique less than non-narcissists, though not significantly so, across all factors. When broken down across all the CSI factors, the general trend suggests that the non-narcissists held more constant and stable CSI self-views than did those rated as being narcissistic.

Further analyses were conducted on each individual CSI factor to examine CSI ratings due to time and narcissism. Table 9 provides a summary of the main effects of narcissism for each cluster. The analyses are then explained individually for each cluster with a graphical representation of the results. The confidence bars on each CSI Figure indicate the 95% confidence interval.

Table 9

Summary Table of Narcissism Main Effects on the Five CSI Clusters

Cluster	MEN	F	df	P
Cluster One – Dominance	No	0.11	1, 61	>0.05
Cluster Two- Disengaged	No	0.76	1, 61	>0.05
Cluster Three – Narrow-Rigid	No	0.66	1, 61	>0.05
Cluster Four- Avoidant	No	1.11	1, 61	>0.05
Cluster Five- Under Controlled	Yes	5.67	1, 61	<0.05

Note: MEN = Main effect of Narcissism.

Cluster One: Dominance

Overall there was not a significant main effect of narcissism ($F(1, 61) = 0.11$, $p > 0.05$). This indicates that the narcissist sub-group and non-narcissists overall gave similar CSI ratings.

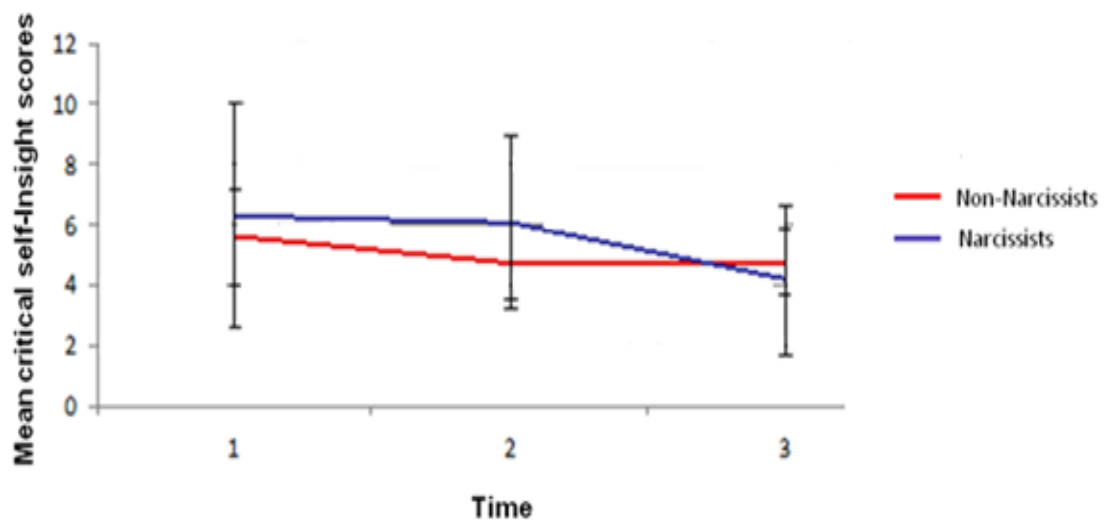


Figure 21. Comparison of narcissists and non-narcissists on CSI cluster one - Dominance.

The main effect of time was not significant ($F(2, 61) = 2.39, p > 0.05$). This indicates the CSI ratings for cluster one did not differ significantly over the three time periods.

Whilst there was no significant difference overall between the narcissists and non-narcissist groups, the narcissists did on average indicate more CSI items on cluster one (Mean 2.76) ($M=3.76, SD=0.22$) than did the non-narcissists ($M=2.51, SD=0.62$).

Cluster Two: Unmotivated - Disengaged

There were no significant effects found for cluster two. The main effect of narcissism was not significant ($F(1, 61) = 0.76, p > 0.05$), indicating that cluster two CSI responses of narcissists and non-narcissists did not differ significantly.

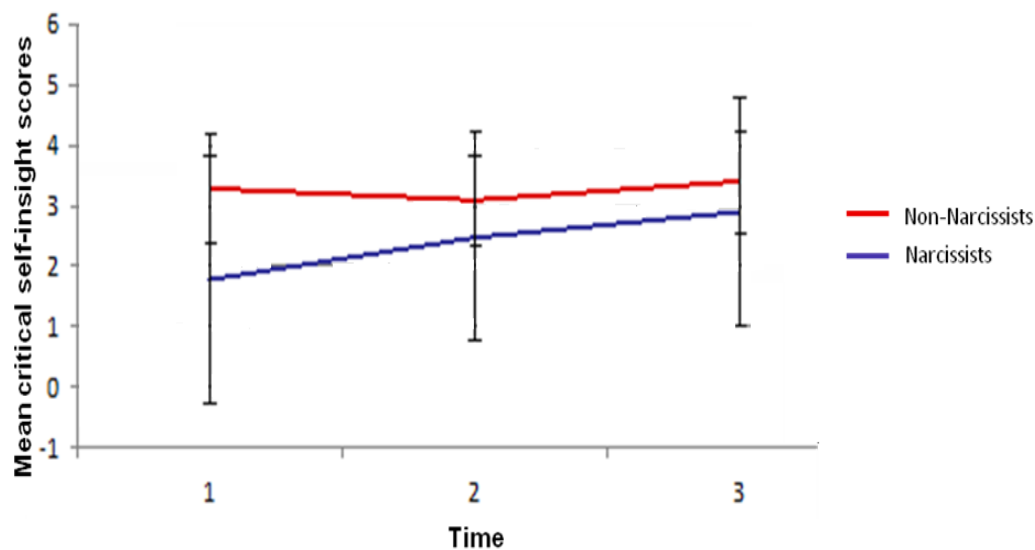


Figure 22. Comparison of narcissists and non-narcissists on CSI cluster two – Unmotivated - Disengaged.

Although not reaching significance, Figure 22 shows the general trend that the narcissistic group reports a growing sense of becoming more unmotivated over time, whereas the non-narcissistic group maintains a more constant self-perception.

Cluster Three: Narrow - Rigid

There was no significant main effect of narcissism ($F(1, 61) = 0.66, p > 0.05$). This indicates that the CSI cluster three ratings of narcissists and non-narcissists were not significantly different from one another.

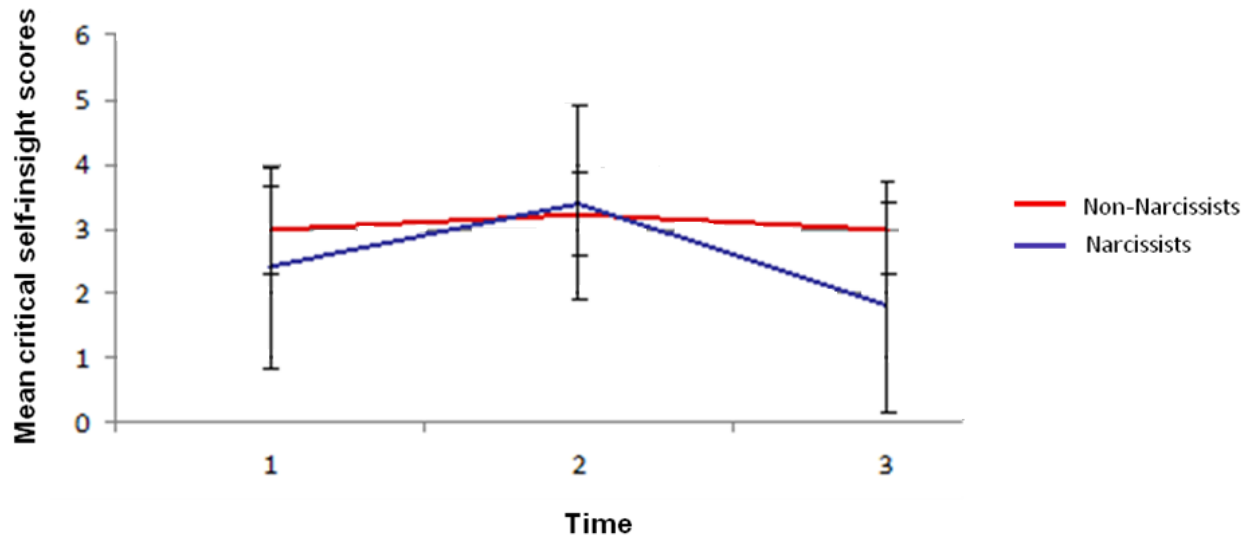


Figure 23. Comparison of narcissist and non-narcissist groups CSI on cluster three – Narrow – Rigid..

Figure 23 shows the narcissistic sub-group reports a transient increase in their self-perception of narrowness between T1 and T2 and a drop again at T3. As with the previous CSI clusters, the non-narcissistic group remained notably more consistent in their self-perceptions over the recorded period.

Cluster Four: Avoidant

The main effect of narcissism was not significant ($F(1, 61) = 1.11, p > 0.05$), indicating that CSI cluster four ratings given by narcissists and non-narcissists were not significantly different from one another.

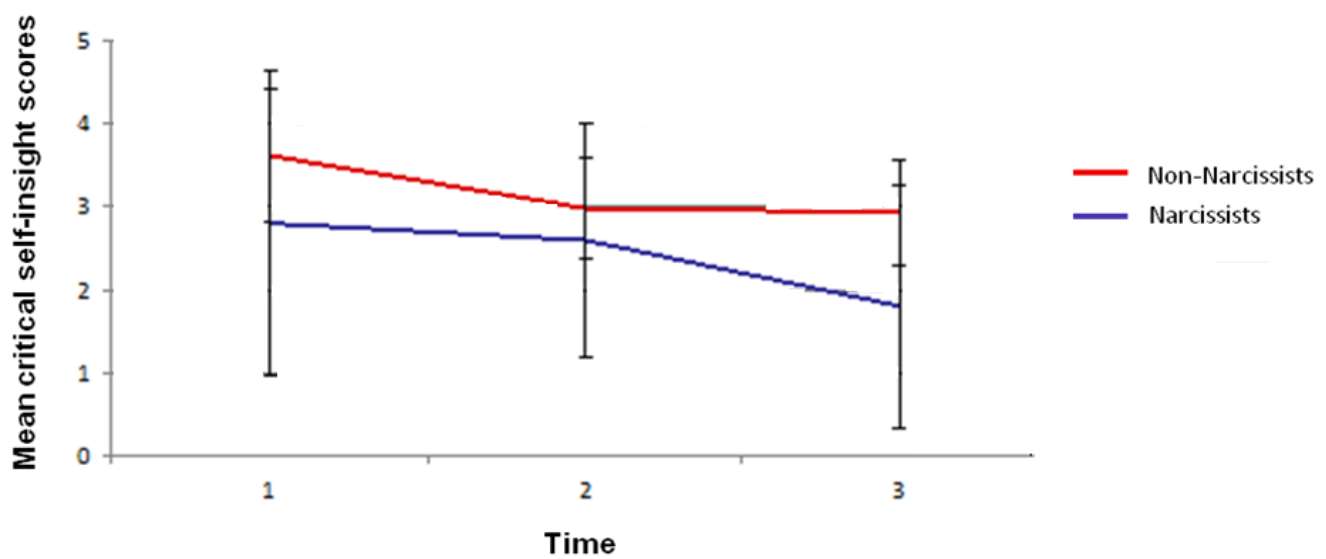


Figure 24. Comparison of narcissists' and non-narcissists' CSI on cluster four – Avoidant.

The overall trend highlighted in Figure 24 however suggests that the narcissistic group declined slightly in terms of how avoidant they felt they were or were seen by others.

Cluster Five: Under Controlled (Emotive - Sensitive)

There was a significant main effect of narcissism found for cluster five CSI data ($F(1, 61) = 5.67, p < .05$). Non-narcissists endorsed a significantly greater number of CSI items within factor five ($M = 1.71, SD = 0.14$) than did narcissists ($M = 0.88, SD = 0.32$). Narcissists did not believe that they were either seen by others as being overly emotive or sensitive and nor did they believe that they themselves were particularly emotive or sensitive.

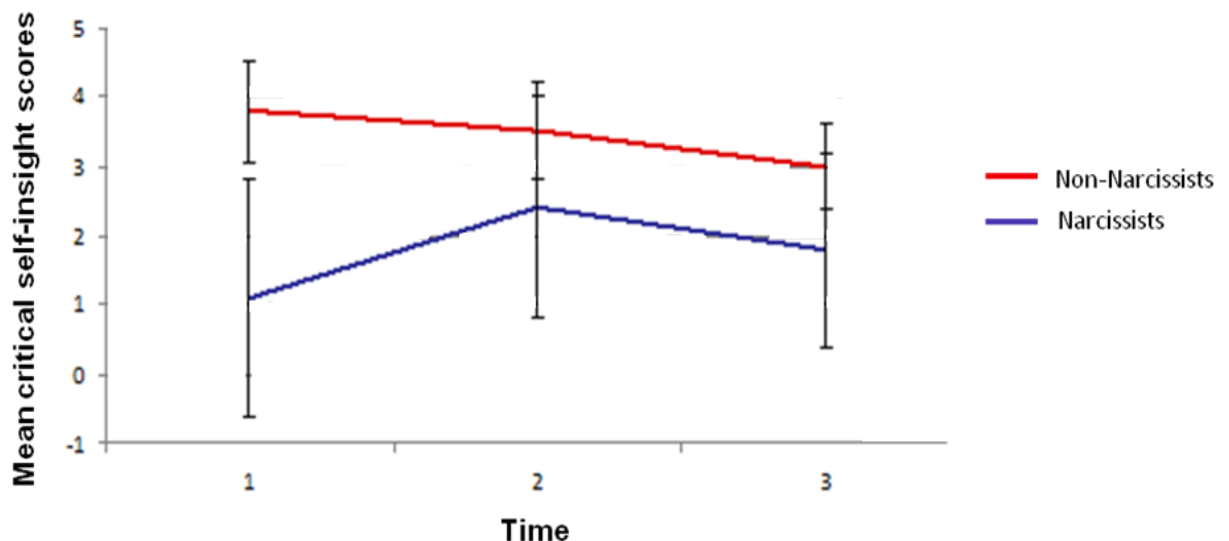


Figure 25. Comparison of narcissists and non-narcissists CSI cluster five – Under controlled – Over emotive.

Figure 25 shows a similar pattern to the other CSI cluster in that overall, the narcissistic sub-group show more variance in their CSI perceptions than the non-narcissists.

Cluster five was the only factor in the ANOVA analyses to find a significant main effect of narcissism. A subsequent t-test was carried out (at a significance level of $\alpha = .0167$ after the Bonferroni correction was made) to further explore this result. At T1 there was a significant difference between the CSI ratings of narcissists ($M = 1.10, SD = 0.88$) and non-narcissists ($M = 3.93, SD = 3.08, (t(61)=1.21, p < .001)$). The differences between narcissists

and non-narcissists at T2 and T3 were not significant. Thus it appears that the significant main effect of narcissism found in earlier CSI ANOVA analyses on cluster five (under controlled – over emotive) is due to a significant difference between CSI ratings of narcissists and non-narcissists at T1.

Narcissism and Performance

To investigate the relationship between narcissism and performance, a 2x2 factorial ANOVA was used to explore the effect of time (T2 - 9 months from their start date, T3 – 20 months from start date) and narcissism on the graduates' performance as rated independently by two managers who had extensive contact with them on a daily basis. To check the consistency of manager performance ratings, a Pearson's correlation was conducted for both performance data collections (T2 and T3). At T2 there was a positive moderate significant correlation between manager performance rating ($r(61) = .61, p < .001$) and at T3 there was also a significant, positive, moderate correlation between manager performance rating ($r(61) = .52, p < .001$).

Note, the number of participants rated in the performance data collection is slightly higher than the overall collection of personal self-rating (SE and CSI). This is due to some participants not completing their self-rating questionnaires but they were still in the organisation and their performance was able to be rated by their managers.

Overall, there was a significant main effect for narcissism ($F(1, 68) = 13.173, p = 0.001$). The mean performance rating of non-narcissists ($M = 5.23, SD = 0.09$) was significantly higher than the mean performance rating of narcissists ($M = 4.40, SE = 0.21$). It would appear that those identified as having significant narcissistic tendencies, while self-enhancing significantly more than non-narcissists and generally having lower critical self-insight, actually performed at a lower level than the group in general.

There appears to be no significant main effect of the times at which the performance was rated ($F(1, 68) = 0.14, p < 0.05$). The ratings of participants' performance did not differ significantly between T2 and T3, despite the rating

items being different at T3 to reflect the higher expectations of the organisation for their graduates in the second year of employment.

Specific to the narcissistic sub-group, there is no significant interaction effect between time and narcissism ($F(1, 68) = 0.003, p > 0.05$), indicating that the pattern of findings did not differ significantly over the two time periods between narcissists and non-narcissists. For those seen as narcissistic, their performance did not significantly change between month 9 (T2) and month 20 (T3). It remained significantly lower than that of the rest of the group. This is despite the findings that between T2 and T3, the narcissists' tendency to self-enhance significantly grew, though interestingly this didn't reflect in terms of their actual manager-reported performance.

Top Performers' Self-Perception

Overall, the narcissist sub-group significantly overrated themselves in terms of self-enhancement even though they performed on average more poorly than the group in general. It was of interest then to see how those who did perform notably well rated themselves in terms of proximity to their ideal-self and actual-self and their abilities in comparison to the group in general. Top performers were people in 2007 (T3), with an average performance score that was greater than or equal to 6 on the performance measure (the performance scale range was from, 0 - *lowest performance rating* to 7 - *highest rating*). This resulted in 13 participants being identified as top performers. None of the narcissistic group scored high enough to be in this top performing group.

A 2x2 mixed factorial ANOVA was conducted to investigate the relationship between performance (top performers versus others, at T3) and the rest of the participants' self-ratings on the self-enhancement scales.

The results show there was no significant main effect of being in the group of top performers on self-ratings ($F(1, 82) = 0.40, p < 0.05$). The self-ratings of top performers ($M = 12.96, SE = 0.40$) were not significantly different from the

self-rating scores of participants who were not in the group of top performers ($M = 12.68$, $SE = 0.17$).

In summary, narcissists tended to over self-rate and significantly underperform, while those who were rated as top performers did not self-enhance more than the rest of the participant group. Figure 26 below provides an illustration of the differing self-perceptions between the narcissistic sub-group and the top performing sub-group.

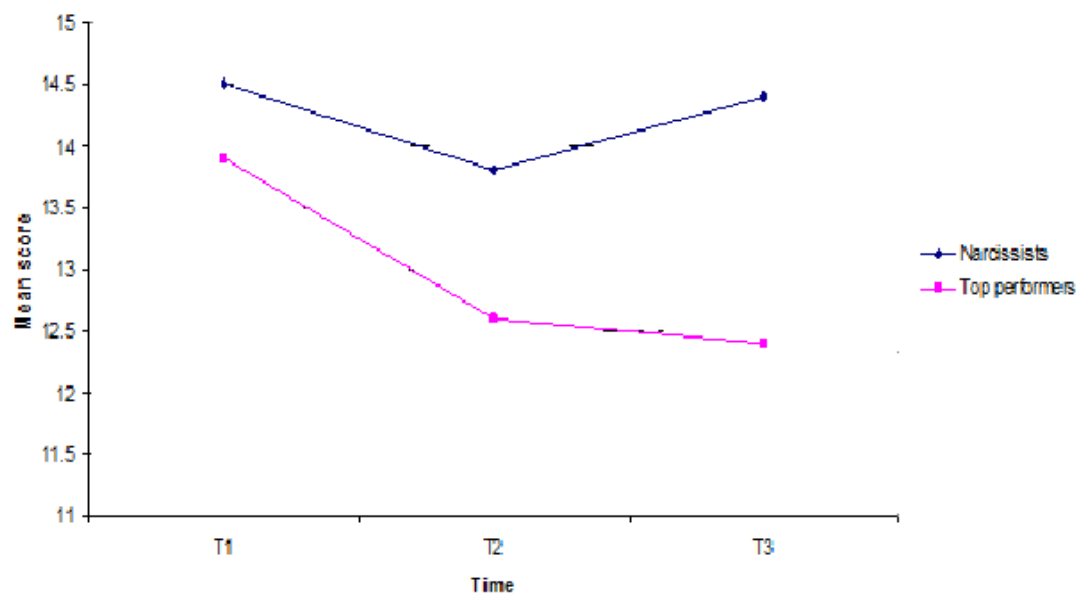


Figure 26. Graph of self-enhancement rating comparing narcissists and top performers across T1, T2 and T3.

Impression at Interview

A question arises “how can those people who are described as having narcissistic tendencies pass through the interview process and be offered a position?” The impression each graduate makes at the initial interview tends to have a lot of weighting on the decision of whether a job offer will be made. Therefore, most comments made about those offered jobs will be positive.

Forty-five of the applicants were commented on in writing by the interviewers, with six of these later being identified as part of the narcissistic sub-group. The following quotations provide additional insights into the initial impression those subsequently rated as having significant narcissistic tendencies left on the interviewers.

Candidate 1 (C1)

“A very strong candidate; would hire on the spot if able”

C2

“Very much the type of person we need here at____ , recommend we fast track before snapped up by other firms”

C3

“Mature, confident, professional, lots of potential; we must offer him a job”

C4

“Vague manner at times, we have some question marks”

C5

“Friendly, confident, very talkative”

C6

“Confident, self assured, natural leader”

Five of the six interviewees from this group obviously presented very positively at interview, conveying confidence, being articulate with some leadership potential. Three of this group were urgently recommended by the interviewers to be either offered a job immediately or fast tracked. Of all the other graduate applicants, these three were the only individuals recorded in the interview notes where there was some sense of urgency about hiring them. Presenting as confident and articulate appears to have been a key element to the positive impressions created. These were also two prominent areas of high self-rating on the self-enhancement scales by narcissists,

namely: self-confidence and communication, where narcissists most significantly rated themselves higher than the group in general. Caution however should be exercised about reading too much into these recorded observations as they are not rigorous. Nevertheless, they do provide some insights to the first impressions created by the narcissistic sub-group.

By comparison, below are direct quotes from the interviewers on the impressions of those identified as being top performers from year 2 (none of which were from the narcissistic sub-group). Like the narcissist group, not all top performers were commented on.

Top Performer 1

“Nervous, not confident – hard worker

TP 2

“Possibly a bit shy, perfectionist”

TP 3

“Shy at first, will cope well with heavy workloads”

TP 4

“Strong candidate, articulate and balanced”

TP 5

“Impressive, high IQ, but not a geek, quietly confident”

TP 6

“Nice friendly guy, get on well with the team, steady worker, mature and sensible”

The general impression that the top performers gave at interview was that of being nice people and more on the low-key side in terms of personality impact. It is of interest to investigate differences in how the narcissist sub-group’s personalities were viewed in contrast to the top performing group at

T2, which is when the personality indicator was completed by their managing supervisors. Figure 27 presents the mean allocated scores of both groups on the narcissism items within the personality indicator. As discussed in Chapter six, the listed narcissism items are based on characteristic descriptions associated with the narcissist construct. The top performing group were not rated by their supervisors as having any of the narcissistic characteristics.

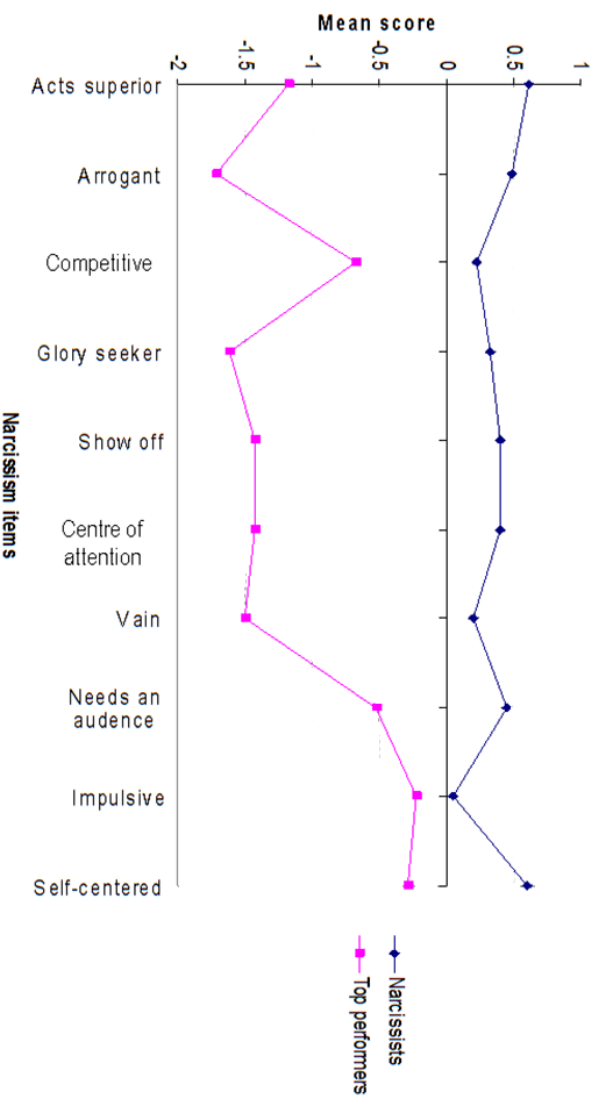


Figure 27. Contrast on narcissism personality items comparing narcissists and top performers.

It was of further interest to contrast the supervisors' perceptions between the narcissist sub-group and the top performers on adaptive / pro-social personality items of the personality measure. Figure 28 below indicates a noticeable difference on how these groups differed; top performers were consistently rated positively on these items whereas the narcissists' sub-group were often rated negatively.

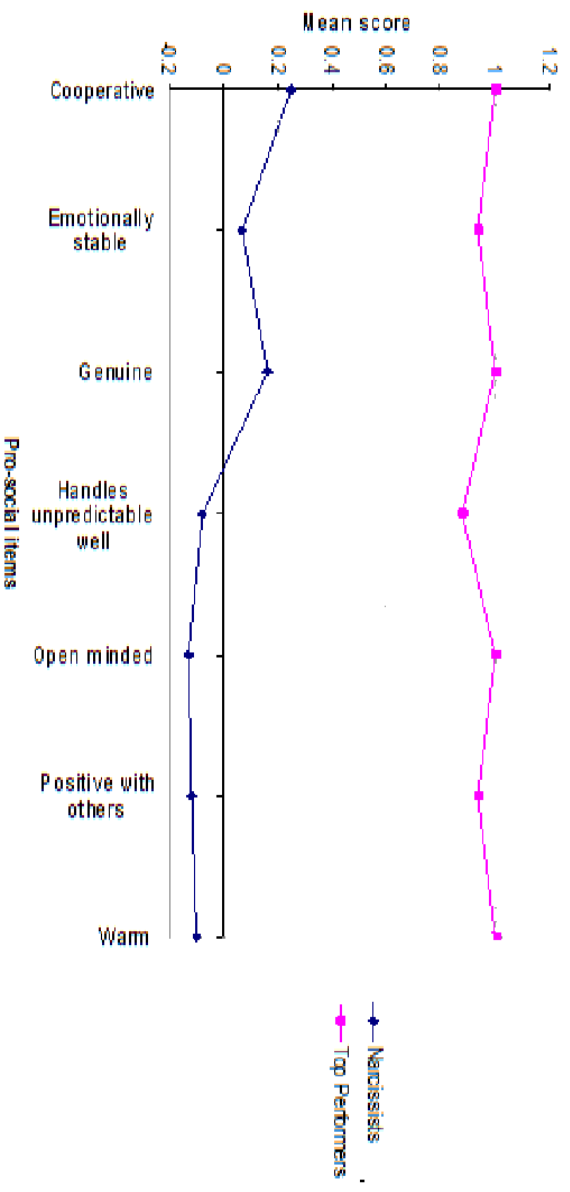


Figure 28. Contrast on pro-social personality items, comparing narcissists and top performers. Scores below the solid line indicate a mean score of below zero.

The implications of these results are discussed in depth in Chapter 8.

Comments on Procedural Validity and Reliability

Newly created procedures were applied to this exploratory study. They are not a definitive treatise on the exact differences between narcissists and non-narcissists but the results are consistent with findings from existing reviewed narcissism research in terms of both indication of narcissism and self-perception of narcissists.

To ensure the content validity of the narcissism measure, narcissism items were selected on the basis of commonly reported descriptions of narcissism published in empirical research (presented on p 109). The results indicate that between 14% - 15% of recruits (11 of the original 76 recruits = 14%, 10 of the 63 = 15%, who participated throughout the full research period) were considered to have significant narcissistic tendencies as identified through their managers' completion of the narcissism indicator. This rate would seem reasonable. Kay (2008) reports the prevalence of narcissism is estimated from 0% to 15% but also acknowledges this variance depends greatly on the methodology applied to its diagnoses and the specific group being studied.

Johnson (1995) reports a rate of 20% of military personnel with narcissistic personality disorder (NPD) and Maffei (1995) found that 17% of medical students reached criteria for NPD. There is a large variability of reported narcissism prevalence. Twenge, Konrath, Foster, Campbell, and Bushman (2008) reported finding that two-thirds of American university students in 2006 scored above the average on the NPI compared with the norm in 1982, however, the validity of these findings has been subsequently challenged by Trzesniewski, Donnellan, and Robins, 2008. Within the general population Twenge and Campbell (2009) report that one in ten Americans aged in their twenties suffers from NPD. In contrast, the DSM IV-TR reports that between 0.5-1% of the general population is narcissistic and between 2% - 16% of the population in clinical settings is diagnosed with NPD. Even within clinical settings there is inconsistency in diagnosis. In one study Gunderson, Ronnington and Smith (1991) reported well under half diagnosed as having NPD met the actual threshold for the DSM diagnosis. The reported rate of narcissism from this research would appear to be typical to non-clinical sub-groups.

The results in this study are also consistent with DSM IV-TR's which reports that narcissism is slightly more common among men. Six of 10 narcissists were male (of the original 75 graduate recruits, seven of the eleven narcissists were male).

The results from the self-reporting ideal-self and critical self-insight indicators carried out over the three data collection periods showed that narcissist recruits had a less stable self-concept than non-narcissists. This is illustrated in Figure 9 (p 84) and Figure 20 (p 97). This finding is consistent with previous research by Baumeister and Vohs (2001) Kernis, Grannemann and Barclay (1989), Rhodewalt, Madrian and Cheney (1998) who reported a significant feature of the narcissistic personality is an unstable sense of self.

The relationship between self-enhancement and narcissism is empirically strong in narcissism research and replicated in this study when graduates were specifically categorised into narcissist and non-narcissist groups

(findings reported on p.81). Narcissists significantly rated themselves closer to their ideal-self than non-narcissists. When the self-enhancement – narcissism relationship was measured across the entire graduate group there was some evidence of convergent construct validity between the self-enhancement and narcissism measures. That is, the self-enhancement measure positively correlated with the narcissism measure at each data collection though significantly only at T3. This indicates that the tendency for a graduate to rate themselves close to their ideal-self, while typical of the narcissist, is not exclusive to only narcissists.

Figures 27 and 28 indicate evidence of discriminate validity of the narcissism measure. Narcissism is not associated with aspects of a pro-social, adaptive or stable personality. It would be expected that the narcissist group would score negatively on theoretically dissimilar items typical of narcissism. To further investigate this, a 2X2 ANOVA was carried out to assess the manager ratings of narcissists and top performers on narcissistic and pro-social items. There was a significant main effect of item type indicating that there is a significant difference between mean ratings for items assessing narcissism ($M = -.32$, $SD = .82$) and items assessing pro-social traits ($M = .49$, $SD = .51$) ($F(1, 30) = 51.58$, $t(61)$, $p < .001$). The ANOVA results show a significant interaction effect between group types (narcissists vs. top performers) and item type (narcissistic vs. pro-social) ($F(1, 30) = 109.30$, $p < .001$). This indicates that there are significant differences between narcissists and top performers on the different item types. Narcissists are rated as being higher in the narcissistic traits ($M = .38$, $SD = .18$) than top performers ($M = -1.02$, $SD = .55$), and narcissists are rated as being significantly lower in pro-social traits ($M = .01$, $SD = .15$) than top performers ($M = .97$, $SD = .05$).

Inter-rater reliability by managers on both the performance measure (p 103) and the narcissism measure (p 75) found significant positive correlations indicating consistency among managers' ratings of graduates.

A Cronbach's alpha was calculated as a measure of internal consistency of the items used to assess for narcissistic tendencies, (refer to Table 5 for a list

of the items). A Cronbach's alpha of $\alpha=0.86$ was obtained, indicating that the items used to assess for narcissistic traits measured the construct narcissism suitably and all the items related well to the other items on the scale.

It is also worth noting that discriminant validity between the different SE items and CSI items were not examined due to this study being an exploratory research. Further examination may show that some of the items are redundant and can be collapsed. This would require additional data and future research in this field should investigate the discriminant validity between these items further.

Summary

The results suggest that those seen as having narcissistic tendencies do rate themselves closer to their ideal-self and as more developed to that ideal in comparison to their peers, than do the rest of the participant group who were not viewed as having such tendencies. This indicates that the perception between actual-self and ideal-self relates positively with measures of observer-rated narcissism. Overall, those who were seen as narcissistic tended to self-critique less than the group in general. This lack of critical self-insight did not apply across all CSI factors, however there were noticeable trends. In cluster one, 'dominance' the narcissist sub-group were actually more self-critical than the non-narcissistic group though this did not reach statistical significance. In terms of performance, the narcissistic group was reported by managers as being significantly lower than the participant group in general, despite the narcissist group self-rating their own ability significantly higher than did the non-narcissists. These comments are elaborated in the discussion following.

CHAPTER EIGHT

DISCUSSION

The aim of this study was to investigate the self-perceptions and performance of new graduates in a corporate context, tracking them over the first 20 months of employment. In longitudinal terms, 20 months is a short period, but in terms of life-events, this period is rich in career and life milestones. This group of young adults have focused their academic studies to a specific professional career and found their first employment within a large and prestigious firm. It is a period of much transition, adjustment and if open to it, growth, both technically and socially.

The reviewed literature suggested narcissists perform best when they are in the limelight (e.g. Wallace & Baumeister, 2002) and when at higher levels of an organisation and allowed to take a dynamic, free-range approach (e.g. Chatterjee & Hambrick 2006). Previous research suggests narcissists' failures have generally been due to overconfidence coupled with high risk-taking (Campbell, Goodie & Foster, 2004). Of key focus in this research was the performance of those seen as having significant narcissistic tendencies as rated by their managers. The results show the narcissistic sub- group does not perform as well as their peers in the first 20 months of their employment. In this study, there has also been no evidence from the results to suggest the narcissists' actual performance is at the same high level as they self- rate their performances to be.

Performance results are of particular interest because participant graduates are a cohort group. To be short-listed for this graduate programme, academic grades have to be well above average. From the onset, the organisation prides itself in attracting the highest possible calibre of graduate applicant and then screens out those who may not be up to this standard. It is a relatively even playing field for applicants, though designed for the high achievers.

From this exploratory research, findings indicate that over a 20-month period, the self-concept of those having narcissistic tendencies differed from non-narcissists. That is, they perceived themselves to be closer to their ideal-self than the remainder of their peer group. This is consistent with previously reviewed research. The narcissistic sub-group was in general less self-critical than non-narcissists. Moreover, despite their higher self-ratings, this narcissistic sub-group performed significantly worse in terms of their work performance than did their peers, when rated by their managers.

The ensuing discussion will explore these findings further and focus on the following areas: First, the narcissists' expression of their self-concept at the early phase of their career, second, the fluctuating nature of that self-concept, and third the limitations of their progress due to a less adaptive personality style. Environmental influences and the future of the narcissists' career will also be discussed.

The Task of Early Career and Challenges for the Narcissist

Narcissists, by their overtly confident presentation, can create a very positive first impression. However, this impression tends to wane over time and appears to shift from a perception of confidence to one of arrogance. Though the screening methods used were limited, the narcissists' sub-group created favourable impressions at their initial interview. Had their presented confidence been initially interpreted as self-centred arrogance, (which they apparently subsequently displayed) it is doubtful they would have been offered a position.

Graduates new to the organisation are seen by hiring managers as capable, but still "raw material". In terms of organisational hierarchy they are at the bottom of the ladder or as Levinson (1978) describes, as a junior member of the adult world. The key task they face is to integrate positively into a specific workplace environment and learn how to do their job well. The graduate is hired with little real knowledge of the role or the occupational world and its requirements. The corporate graduate programme is the apprenticeship

period of their trade. To successfully navigate this early career period, they must be open to learning and ultimately be able to work well with others whilst learning. Results from this study indicate that over the first twenty month period of their employment, those with narcissistic tendencies appear to have failed on both counts; they neither integrate successfully nor do they actually perform at a high standard.

Their high self-rated self-confidence, for example, has been viewed as arrogance by their managers. Their high drive to be noticed in the group has been reported as self-centred, attention seeking and needing to have an audience. In essence, the ways in which they have been projecting themselves are not this organisation's behavioural ideals or expectations of its new graduates. However, to the narcissist, this is a corporate setting that projects success within a highly competitive environment and thus is extremely attractive. To a narcissist's way of thinking, to be successful is to be seen. In light of the organisation's somewhat grandiose presentation of itself, it is perhaps understandable that potentially mixed messages are presented as to what is expected or even desirable of its new graduates.

Career development theory consistently highlights the tasks of individuals in early career. For example, Dalton, Thompson and Price (1977) termed this phase as the "apprenticeship stage", whereas Nicholson (1987) referred to this as the "adjustment stage", transitioning from an educational environment to a workplace one. Similarly Hall and Morgan (1983) saw this period as being where the focus is to start developing competence within a certain area. Berry and Houston (1993) termed this the "establishment period" into one's first work role.

It is however a "life stage" generally beyond that of just a career. Levinson (1977) termed it "the novice adult". Erikson (1968) saw the task of young adulthood in terms of relatedness versus self-absorption, an apt description when applied to this study. This is the stage characterising this graduate group. Narcissists' need for ego-gratification and self-absorption appears to override what is required of them both developmentally and environmentally.

It is as if they are displaying capabilities out of tune with the early stages of career, projecting false confidence and knowledge they have yet to obtain. In terms of performance and impression management, this appears to be alienating them and has proven costly for them in the eyes of those they need to actually impress – their managers. Their drive for superiority and need for respect and dominance does not fit with the requirements of the graduate stage, and they have been seen as behaving and performing inappropriately as a result. For all their posturing, they are not backing it up in terms of actual performance. They appear to be consistently disenchanting themselves from their line managers with displays of over-confidence, quite inconsistent with the requirements of them as first and second year recruits. The industry they have chosen for a career requires great accuracy and acquired technical knowledge in their work and the risk narcissists run is in terms of over-confidence combined with a lack of experience, which can potentially mean mistakes being made. They are projecting an overtly grandiose persona at a time where learning and accommodation is required. In essence, narcissism and early career development are at odds with one another. One can possibly afford to be highly self-confident to the point of arrogance when one has become more expert in the field, but that is inappropriate for graduate recruits.

The Narcissists' Self-Concept, Actual-Self and Ideal-Self

A significant finding was the relationship between narcissism and high self-concept. Of additional interest was the narcissists' self-concept over time. The results indicate a difference, not only in terms of discrepancy between the ideal-self and actual-self of narcissists and non-narcissists, but also how that discrepancy changes over time. Non-narcissists as well as top-performers show a stable decline between their ideal-self and actual-self, whereas the narcissist sub-group is significantly more variable. For the non-narcissists, this could signify a realization that "The longer I am in this role, the more I realize how much I have yet to learn."

Developmental researchers (such as Bybee & Zigler, 1991; Glick & Zigler, 2005), have suggested that the disparity between actual-self and ideal-self is an indicator of higher development and cognitive complexity. This has an important implication because career success can be greatly influenced by the capacity the individual has to cope with a variety of situations. The perspective of disparity between ideal-self and actual-self being an indicator of higher cognitive functioning differs significantly from that of Rogers and Dymond (1954), pioneers of humanistic psychology, and Higgins (1987). They propose that the magnitude of disparity between actual-and ideal-self is an indicator of maladjustment. However, from the perspective of Zigler and his colleagues, with maturity comes the ability to distinguish actual-self from ideal-self and individuals who function at higher levels tend to display a greater actual-self and ideal-self disparity. This is possibly due to a growing cognitive differentiation with development as well as growing self-demands and also a realisation of an inability to realistically fulfil those demands (Harter, 1996). For example, Bybee and Zigler (1991) found that those in late adolescence and early adulthood, with high academic ability had self-disparity scores over three times as great as those with lower intellectual ability. Additionally, Glick and Zigler (2005) reported that individuals functioning at higher levels of development display greater actual-self and ideal-self disparity, reflecting high personal aspirations and therefore providing themselves with the motivation to develop further. In essence, to Zigler the ability to cope with the dissatisfaction between their actual-self and ideal-self serves to facilitate motivation, direction and most importantly, adaption. The degree of actual-self and ideal-self discrepancy is not only potentially an indicator of this study's graduates' cognitive complexity, but also one of personality maturity.

The results from this research are consistent with Zigler's view of actual-self and ideal-self disparity. Over the 20-month period, non-narcissists highlighted this trend of extending a disparity between actual-self and ideal-self, whereas, particularly at T1 and T3 the narcissistic sub-group continued to rate themselves closer to their ideal-self, indicating a lack of adaptive growth. At T1, in the first few days of their induction to the organisation, the graduates

have little evidence with which to compare themselves with their new peer group. Even without this time to make bench-mark comparisons, the narcissist sub-group viewed themselves more positively in terms of their actual-self and ideal-self than did the non-narcissists. By T2, ideal-self and actual-self disparity has increased for both the narcissist sub-group and non-narcissists. Even for those who had been performing very well, this disparity grew rather than reduced. By T2, all participants have had the opportunity to not only gauge themselves against their peers but also have been exposed to situations where they have had little or no previous experience and therefore had their developmental gaps exposed. In addition, they will also have had experience working with colleagues with significantly more expertise and experience than themselves and will have likely come to the realisation that with their aspirations, much work and application is required. In other words, they should have also learned what it is they do not know, as well as what they do. Just before the data collection at T2, each participant would also have received a formal job performance review. As shown in the performance results, the narcissist sub-group performed significantly lower in general compared to their peer group, so the level of their performance would have been relayed to them. Therefore, at T2, each participant had a lot of formal and informal feedback to integrate. This performance feedback with nine months of observing and working alongside their peers could account for the general actual-self / ideal-self disparity increase between T1 and T2 (i.e. the higher self-enhancement ratings of the narcissist sub-group dropped at T2 so that they become indistinguishable from the non-narcissists).

However, while the increase in disparity may well be a reflection of growth opportunity as argued by Zigler and his colleagues, it is doubtful that the same issues have been experienced in the same way for the narcissistic sub-group. It is not in the nature of the narcissist to experience a humbling set of events in a way of personal growth. The self-enhancement drop found at T2 with the narcissistic sub-group may indicate more a temporary break down in their own worldview, a temporary impression-formation humbling, as opposed to growth.

Adopting a developmental perspective (Swan & Benack, 2002) suggest growth and maturity enables a person to feel more empathy and appreciation of others. To become more humble is also to become less sure of ourselves, while at the same time more inclusive of others. Swan and Benack argue the transition to relativism involves some narcissistic loss, as most growth does. They have proposed that this stage of ideological transition from “me” to “not me”, from “who I am” to “something I have”, is particularly difficult for the narcissists moving into adulthood. This developmental step, where one’s ideological truths become similar to others, in that they can be flawed and incomplete is not so challenging to the stable individual with a robust self-representation. The developmental transition from self-focus to other-focus however, is far more threatening for narcissists and may be too big a step to take. The return to a high degree of self-enhancement of the narcissistic group by T3 could indicate a difficulty in this transition. Some evidence of this can be seen in performance results at T3. The narcissistic sub-group has still been rated as underperforming in the pro-social aspects of their role, these being: teamwork, relationship development, and proactive communication. This lack of performance appears to be due to a lack of adaptive interpersonal growth. They still appear to be perceived as “in it for themselves”. At T2 the actual-self and ideal-self drop did not result in a meaningful change in terms of how they were seen by their managers. While their perception of themselves has altered, how they are perceived by their managing supervisors has not.

From the self-regulation perspective, Rhodewalt’s (2005) model of narcissistic interpersonal self-esteem proposes narcissists’ self-esteem is closely related to how their interactions with others affect their feelings about themselves. In their intensive diary study investigating links between narcissists’ feelings of self worth and quality of social interactions, Rhodewalt, Madrian, and Cheney (1998) found narcissistic individuals displayed a significantly greater degree of self-esteem instability and greater number of interpersonal hassles. Essentially, they experienced more negative interactions with others, which in turn affected their self-worth. The actual-self/ ideal-self responses by the

narcissistic group in this study show a similar pattern of instability to that of Rhodewalt et al. (1998).

In researching what promoted self-worth within narcissists Rhodewalt, Tragakis and Finley (2002) found that compared to non-narcissists, those with narcissistic tendencies felt most socially included when they felt admired, had their self-esteem supported and felt influential. In short, their esteem is highest when they feel they are in a position of dominance, and dominance is a key characteristic of narcissism (Brown & Zeigler-Hill, 2004). Evidence from this study suggests that the source of narcissists' instability, in terms of self-esteem, could therefore be due to what they are possibly *not* receiving in their first year of employment. Campbell and Green (2008) proposed that the narcissist is energised by admiration, association, competition, and direct status elevation. If admiration and a feeling of being admired provide much sought self-esteem rewarding uplifts for narcissists, the life of a narcissistic graduate recruit will be very unrewarding.

The narcissistic supply for the graduate group runs very low in terms of verification. The graduates in this organisation are at the lowest rank; they have very little influence and have not yet acquired the skills for promotion or a rise in status. They are not in positions of "project" leadership and they are not responsible for competing for or winning work or obtaining the accolades from related successes. Therefore, the increase in ideal-self and actual-self disparity for narcissists at T2 may be due to the lack of opportunity to obtain status and influence, rather than a realisation of their developmental gaps and opportunity for growth. Millon (1996) has reported those with high self-confidence run the highest risk of depression and feelings of emptiness in times of failure and when those people's psychological defences fail. By T2, the narcissistic sub-group will have been provided feedback on their performance and seen how their skills and knowledge compare with the wider group around them.

Other researchers have also identified this pattern. Baumeister and Vohs (2001) propose a process model of what they termed the narcissist's unstable

self-estimation, suggesting narcissists go through a predictable cycle of positive and negative self-estimation. The self-estimation of the narcissist is likely to drop when it has been preceded by a period of unrealistically high self-view. In terms of this research, this is at T1 where the narcissists' sub-group has just begun their employment. The decrease in self-enhancement at T2 of the narcissist sub-group is potentially due to not having been provided with the necessary positive feedback, narcissistic supply, to maintain their inflated self-view between T1 and T2. Without their constant need for admiration being serviced, a downward spiral in self-esteem is likely.

Baumeister and Vohs (2001) hypothesise that the humbled narcissist may go through a period where their self-view is not noticeably different from non-narcissists, which is what appears to have occurred in this study at T2. However, it would seem this was a temporary state, as the narcissists' craving for admiration and positive feedback re-activate and the trend is reversed, evident by the narcissist sub-group's self-perception at T3. By T3, the narcissist sub-group's self-concept returned to the high level seen at T1, thus once again decreasing disparity between actual-self and ideal-self. For non-narcissists including top performing graduates, this disparity increased. In exploration of what may have promoted narcissists to return to their original high self-concept, there are several speculative possibilities. The narcissist at T3 has been in the organisation for approximately 20 months. At around month 12, a new intake of 70-80 graduate recruits commenced. The narcissists who started in 2006 are therefore no longer the new recruits and now have people below them on the ladder. They can be sources of technical information to this group and as second year employees have elevated their status within the organisation. In addition, in year one, they received more formal and regular performance feedback, whereas at the time of the third data collection point they had not yet received their formal performance reviews as they had at T2. In addition, the degree of formal and informal supervised feedback tends to be less than in their first year, allowing their own self-concept biases some recovery from their performance review of year one.

The observed self-esteem upward rebound found between T2 and T3 could also reflect some degree of memory distortion that narcissists appear to be vulnerable to (e.g. Rhodewalt & Eddings, 2002; Djikic, Peterson & Zelazo, 2004). The narcissistic group may well initially take to heart their negative performance review at T2, but may have distorted or even dismissed that memory soon after, especially when in year two their performance feedback is less regular. Narcissists can be active manipulators of feedback with selective recall. Egoistic functioning requires distortion of one's experience (Hodgins, 2008). Campbell and Green (2008) confirm this observation indicating narcissists see admiration even where none actually exists.

Other influences may have also contributed to the change in self-perception. Methodological and environmental circumstances may have had some influence on the self-concept rebound effect from T2 to T3. The general competencies in this study mirrored those of the formal performance measures used by the company. However, unlike the formal performance reviews carried out where graduates are directly presented with their managers' ratings and given explanations, the performance data in this research was not presented to the graduates. This provided an opportunity to obtain performance indications directly from the managers, without the managers having to justify their ratings face-to-face with the graduates. Therefore, performance results gained in this research may be a truer indication of the narcissists' performance than the feedback the narcissists actually received particularly in their second year where performance feedback is not as regular. Providing face-to-face negative performance feedback is often a difficult task even for experienced managers and is often watered down or avoided as a result. The challenge to provide such feedback to a narcissist is even more difficult, especially considering their tendency to react very negatively to feedback that does not back up their grandiose sense of self.

It is possible that another contributing factor to the narcissists' rebound of self-esteem may have been due to a drop in direct informal performance feedback by T3 or a potential avoidance over time by managers to provide it.

Therefore, the feedback they do receive may not be truly indicative of their managers' sense of them. The narcissists' sense of self-esteem at this point may be due to what is actually left out, rather than what is openly conveyed to them in terms of feedback. This has been termed the "mum effect", (Bond & Anderson, 1987), in an attempt to avoid the discomfort of providing direct negative feedback. Fisher (1979) found that managers will often delay and distort feedback to lower performing or "difficult" staff, primarily because they anticipate a very negative reaction. Recent research by Yariv (2006), found that half of managers initially avoid feedback on poor performance. When moved to provide feedback directly, 88% softened or watered down their messages. Therefore, the noticeable lift in actual-self and ideal-self could in part be due to the narcissist sub-group not receiving regular and accurate performance feedback.

The managerial approach to the narcissists' poorer performance may be reflected more in terms of what opportunities they do not provide to them, rather than what they directly feed back, such as providing fewer opportunities for career development than their higher performing peers may be receiving (e.g. teaming up with senior consultants on important high profile projects). As an example, 6 of the original 75 research participants were provided with overseas secondments in their second year. Each of these recipients was a well-above average performer. None were chosen from the narcissistic sub-group.

When threatened with failure, narcissists will tend to maintain their grandiose sense of self (Raskin, Novacek & Hogan, 1991). The self-concept findings of this study back this up, but have found the repeating pattern model proposed by Baumeister and Vohs (2001) to be more accurate in that the narcissists' self-concept is variable. That high self-concept is vulnerable to failure and shows in terms of actual-self and ideal-self discrepancy at T2. What appears to be important in this study is the time in which the narcissists' self-concept is taken. The self-enhancing tendency of those seen as narcissistic at T2 does not significantly differ from non-narcissists, so if this study had taken SE data only at T2 it would not have been able to differentiate the two groups in terms

of self-concept as suggested can happen by Baumeister and Vohs (2001). What is of interest is that while between T1 and T2 the narcissists' self-concept became more modestly in line with the rest of the group, they were still seen as having narcissistic tendencies by those who managed them on a day to day basis. Their more modest sense of self did not alter how their behaviours were viewed externally. Managers' views of their personalities were taken only at T2, the same time where they had their lowest SE tendencies.

We cannot be sure then that any change in self-concept the narcissists may experience, also brings a change in their overt behaviour. In addition, we cannot be sure as to how long it takes to change the perspective a manager has of the narcissist once an impression has been formed. As discussed, by T3 the narcissists' self-concept had returned to a high level similar to that at T1. While the personality data was not collected again at this time, the performance measure reflected a strong theme of pro-social behavioural requirements, which again the narcissist sub-group scored significantly lower on than non-narcissists indicating that how they were viewed by their managers had not changed from their first year either in terms of performance or personality. We also cannot say exactly when between T1 and T2 the narcissists' self-enhancing self-concept changed to that similar to their peers. However, what can be seen is that internal change by the narcissist sub-group though temporary, did not appear to alter the perception their managers held of them in either year one or year two.

In summary, in terms of self-enhancement, the results from this research provide some additional evidence on the differing perspectives of the disparity between actual-self and ideal-self (i.e. Higgin's 1987 perspective of the greater the discrepancy the poorer one's mental health, as opposed to Block & Thomas', 1955, and Glick & Zigler's 1985 perspectives of viewing the large disparity as indications of maturity). These results would indicate that not only occupational success but also the absence of narcissism is related to a steady increase in actual-self and ideal-self disparity. The narcissist sub-group's self-concept in terms of ideal-self and actual-self is less stable than

non-narcissists though generally narcissists hold a higher opinion of themselves. This may be due to a number of contributing factors including, selective memory, feedback distortion and managerial feedback avoidance, not receiving the accolades they strongly desire and their growing sense of rank within the organisation due to the influx of new graduates in their second year of employment.

Critical Self-Insight

The second area of self-concept investigation in this research focused on critical self-insight (CSI), looking at ways narcissists critically evaluate themselves compared to the non-narcissistic group. As noted, Kernberg (1975, 2004) proposed that narcissists, through splitting off, were largely unaware of the negative aspects of themselves. Kiesler (1996) believed that the narcissist is incapable of self-criticism while Campbell, Foster and Brunell (2004) suggested that narcissists do not typically evaluate negative self-opinions explicitly, implicitly, unconsciously or anywhere else.

The results in this study did find the narcissist sub-group to be less self-critical, though only one of the five CSI clusters showed a significant difference from the non-narcissists. This was cluster five, sensitive-emotive which the narcissists identified with less frequently than non-narcissists. The items from cluster five reflected a theme of potential vulnerability (overly reactive, overly emotional, prone to stress, indecisive, too timid). Based on the narcissistic need for superiority, it was not surprising that they identified significantly lower on this factor than the non-narcissists. This was interesting considering the self-enhancement results, where their positive self-concept was significantly more variable to peaks and troughs over time than that of the non-narcissists.

Kernberg (1975), Brown (1997), and Levinson (1994), among others, highlight the strong relationship between narcissism and the prevalent use of denial, but have not articulated what it is exactly that narcissists tend to deny. These

results provide some indication that narcissists are most prone to the denial of being emotionally vulnerable. To be emotionally vulnerable would be seen as a weakness and completely incongruent with their dominant self-perception and therefore likely to be dismissed by them as being irrelevant.

The other CSI factors are easier to rationalise away from the narcissist. For example, being seen as unmotivated (factor two) could be rationalised as 'why bother if my talents aren't going to be recognised?' (the trend did show a drop in motivation over time with the narcissistic group, which also coincides with their poor performance), or being inflexible (factor three), which can be justified as sticking to your guns and not compromising when you know that you are right, or being avoidant or disengaged (factor four) potentially justified as being objective and clinical.

On factor one - dominance, where the narcissistic sub-group did score higher on CSI than the non-narcissist group, the results did not quite reach significance but the trend was clear at both T1 and T2. The narcissistic group did not deny they had or could be seen as having, overt dominant tendencies. It was obviously seen by this group as being a far more positive trait with which to be associated than emotional vulnerability. Of all the CSI factors, F1 (dominance) was the most commonly identified across all participants, both narcissistic and non-narcissistic, however the narcissistic group also overrated themselves, as found in the self-enhancement results. This indicates that while they identified more with being seen as overtly dominant (from a critical perspective), they also saw themselves overall in a very positive light suggesting that their dominant projection was actually a positive self-aspect. The drive for dominant, agentic qualities – prominence and status over communal and the need to be liked, is well documented in narcissism research (e.g. Paulhus, John, 1998; Bradlee & Emmons, 1992; Campbell & Rudich, 2002). These findings are congruent with the findings of this research. There is much external validation of where the seemingly strong and dominant not only survive but also get ahead. To the narcissist, being dominant and not emotionally vulnerable is a highly acceptable identity.

The dominant, non-vulnerable image would also be projected from the organisation itself. The organisation could be seen as sending conflicting messages to the graduate group particularly at the time of recruitment. This organisation is large, well known, successful and affluent, with a clear hierarchal structure whereby you do not reach partner level by being a shrinking violet or discussing the vulnerability of one's feelings. However, one probably does not get to the top of the organisation's ladder by alienating people either, particularly when positioned at the lower levels of influence, as is the graduate. Progression is a matter of adaption, absorption, being technically efficient, forming positive interpersonal alliances and then being able to persuade rather than alienate.

Issues of Adaptability and Blind Spots

The unsuccessful narcissists in this study presented initially with drive, ambition and a huge degree of self-confidence and still failed to live up to expectations in terms of performance. There are a number of perspectives available providing some insight as to why this has occurred. The following will focus on the narcissists' lack of social as well as cognitive adaptability and inappropriate need to be dominant.

Individual and Adlerian models of personality provide a useful framework for understanding where the narcissists' shortcomings may be affecting their poor performance found in this research period. Adler's concept of the superiority complex, or the person who needs to be superior, relates very closely to the concept of narcissism (Sperry & Ansbacher, 1993). The Adlerian approach suggests that all people have both superior and inferior tendencies, and the drive to be superior is common and required for development and achievement. However, the critical variable is that while most people strive to succeed, they also have flexibility and social interest within that drive. As Maniaci (2007) puts it, "They find superiority with others, as opposed to against others. While they prefer to be superior, they do not have to be so" (p.138). Maniaci perceives narcissism as a problem of rigidity or inflexibility. The narcissist's ideal-self is that of a sense of being superior at all times,

which defies logic, as there are far too many situations, such as the start of one's career, where this is not possible or even desirable. Their dispositional inability to adapt to the requirements of their role is very possibly what has led to the unsuccessful first 20 months of the narcissists' career. While they are just as qualified as their peers, their drive for dominance and to be influential is simply not possible within their current environment and they have shown an inability to adjust to a more cooperative style and learning mode that is required of them at this point in time. To illustrate this, Morf, Ansara, and Davidov (2007) found that narcissists (particularly male narcissists), will engage in grandiose self-presentations even when the situation requires modesty, whereas non-narcissists tend to engage in situation-appropriate self-presentations.

Maniacchi goes on to suggest that the over-activated superiority drive of the narcissist promotes a vertical view of life, where others are seen as either below or above, which naturally goes against the competency requirements of the graduates' role of working *with* others, not against them. The key competency required of the graduate within the organisation is to essentially be a team player. The vertical view typified by the narcissist is not compatible with ideal requirements of the role. With every activated superiority complex lies a concealed inferiority complex (Brett, 1997). The essential difference between normal and narcissistic self-confidence lies in the degree of flexibility. The natural drive is balanced by a sense of reality. In the Adlerian view, normal people do not have a superiority complex or even a sense of superiority, but more an ambition to be successful.

In applying a similar theme of narcissistic inflexibility, Block and Block's (1980) model of ego-resiliency can be applied to understand the performance failure of the narcissist group. Ego-resiliency refers to individual differences in adaptability, or adaptive flexibility and resourcefulness to the demands, particularly the unpractised demands, of various situations. More specifically, ego-resiliency refers to the ability of an individual to modify their more typical responses to better adaptively accommodate an unfamiliar challenge (Klohn, 1996).

To Block and Block (1980), “ Ego-resiliency, when dimensioned, is defined at one extreme by resourceful adaptation to changing circumstances and environmental contingencies, analysis of the goodness of fit between situational demands and behavioural possibility, and flexible invocation of the available repertoire of problem solving strategies....The opposite end of the ego-resiliency continuum (ego brittleness) implies little adaptive flexibility, an inability to respond to the dynamic requirements of a situation..” (p.48)

The narcissists' self-perceptions in relation to their lack of performance are a demonstration of a lack of ego-resiliency, the inability of the self-system to incorporate and adapt to differing environmental demands as required of them as graduates into their new role. As the narcissists' focus is highly preoccupied with self, it therefore reduces their capacity to see and adapt to the wider requirements of their world and in this case the requirements of the graduate, to learn through others and to be socially inclusive.

In this study, the narcissists' failure to perform is not due to intellectual inability. Whereas Kruger and Dunning (1999) have highlighted on ability tests people who self-enhance most (those who believe their scores will be significantly higher than others) tend to score lowest, this cannot be applied in this study as there appears to be no significant difference in intellectual scores between the narcissistic group and their peers. In addition their university marks will have needed to be sufficiently high before they would have even been considered for an interview. Block (2002), argues that while intellectual ability and ego resiliency are somewhat correlated, it is more predominantly ego-resiliency that associates with adaptive engagement with the world, whereas intellect is effective in more narrow and rigid ways. To Block, high ego-resiliency is more adaptively beneficial in the fuzzy, ambiguous environments that most situations tend to be. In addition, Colvin, Block and Funder's (1995) longitudinal research showed that ego-resiliency negatively correlated with self-enhancement. Overly positive self-perceptions indicate an absence of ego-resiliency.

If the graduates' poor performance cannot be based on a lack of intellectual ability but more on an inability to adapt to the joining, cooperating and learning requirements of the role, there will be issues that are preventing this adaptation. Campbell and Green (2008) have suggested that a key element of the self-regulation pattern of the narcissists is based around the agency model of competition and winning. "Agency" refers to the motive of power and influence (Paulhus & John, 1998). At the opposite end of the spectrum is the communion motive, which is motivated by agreeableness, or as Hogan (1983), termed, getting along vs. getting ahead. At least for the first two years of the graduate's career the dominant agency motive is not required of the graduate, whereas communion is. The narcissists' most dominant motive has prevented them from adapting to the environmental requirements of them. It is essentially a case of not only misreading the situation but also of not having the maturity and psychological agility to suppress and realign their basic drivers.

The narcissists appear to be caught up in a distorted view of what some evolutionary psychologists have termed 'social attention holding power' or SAHP (Gilbert, 2004). A person's SAHP is a measure of their ability to hold the attention of the group and attract the investment of others. Individuals of high SAHP are provided higher levels of prestige and given access to greater resources, which is exactly what narcissists seek. Effective and realistic monitoring and tracking of an individual's SAHP ensures that a person conforms to the given standards and values of others. As Gilbert (2004) points out, it requires the ability to see oneself from another's point of view and have insight to the thoughts and feelings of others and adapt accordingly. It is a form of ranking behaviour motivated by the seeking of status, and from the evolutionary perspective, status striving is a universal human motive (Buss, 2004).

However, the manner in which this status is gained differs in terms of what is required within the environment. Essentially, from the SAHP perspective one can build one's social status either through working with others and joining with them or through dominating others. It is the former approach that the

senior managers and partners of this organisation would appear to be promoting in terms of their graduates. Stevens (1996), in a similar tone to Paulhus and John (1998) employed two distinct modes of functioning – agonic and hedonic, typified by both the individual and the group. The agonic is characterised by status, hierarchy and the warding off of threats to one's status, thus creating an environment of tension and watching one's back. The hedonic mode is typified by affiliation and egalitarian social structures where agonic tensions are absent. Within an environment typified by the hedonic mode, to achieve status, it would be best to employ affiliative and joining types of behaviours, whereas in the agonic environment such an approach would find difficulty in survival. Similarly, within the agonic mode, competition rules, thus a disposition lending itself that way would obviously be most beneficial. Both are probably evident in the corporate environment, but the narcissists in this study are naturally more drawn to the agonic mode, typified by their overt behaviour, even though it is clear the hedonic mode is what the organisation requires of the graduate. Stevens, (1996) has proposed that the narcissists' extraordinary need for praise and approval (their SAHP drive), is seldom ever met, resulting in their reversion to an agonic mode to establish their position through trying to dominate and control others. In short, their ability to adapt to the environmental demands is inhibited by an absolute drive for rank at a time where they are in no position of rank.

From a similar evolutionary perspective, Sagan and Druyan (1993), probably best summarise the plight of the graduate narcissist, though with a specific reference to gender, "It's rare that any male starts out as an alpha. Generally, you have to work your way up the ranks. But in the intervals between your challenges it would be a mistake to be too disruptive. Even for the very ambitious, a talent for subordination and submission is needed....An inclination for both dominance and submission must beat within the same breast" (p 211).

A key theme in relation to the findings in this research is that the failure of the narcissistic sub-group to excel in the first 20 months can be based around a lack of social adaptiveness due to an inappropriate need for dominance.

The Environmental Push

Campbell and Foster (2007) and Lasch (1979) proposed that given the right circumstances almost anyone was vulnerable to narcissism and that it could be environmentally elicited through success and adulation. Analytically orientated researchers Zweig and Abrams (1991) have argued along similar lines proposing that within the business world, along with career success there will be ego-inflation, whereas with failure comes shame. The findings of this research, within its parameters, would not back this up. Those graduates who had been most successful actually increased in their ideal-self and actual-self-discrepancy overall, as did the non-narcissist group in general. The narcissists' self-concept varied regardless of their performance. The top performers had received feedback indicating their success, yet this had not resulted in a corresponding increase of their self-rating. Success brought with it a potential realisation of what still had to be learned, not an increase in positive self-concept.

Whilst the organisation in which this study was carried out would appear to be an archetype of corporate competitiveness, and therefore the ideal place for the narcissists' ambitions to be promoted, this was not the case, at least not within this time period. It therefore could not be argued that the graduates in general become narcissistic because of this environment. In fact the opposite appears to have occurred over the long term. Those with narcissistic tendencies are viewed negatively in terms of character and performance while successful graduates and those viewed more positively appear to become more modest over time.

Implications for the Narcissist / Challenge for the Organisation

The findings of this research indicate that at an early phase of career, those seen as having prominent narcissistic tendencies are not viewed positively. This, however, does not mean their futures are doomed. First, as found with

previous research, narcissists tend to make a very good first impression. In this case, they made that impression with no actual work experience. The impressions made were solely based on their university qualifications and a confident, articulate interpersonal style at the interviews. Whether or not they have a progressive future with their current employer is yet to be seen, though the negative perspective in which they appear to be held may affect their career progression, at least for the short term. As their roles progress over time, it will require them to be more competitive and revenue driven, so their narcissistic nature may actually be of greater benefit. Researchers such as Ronningstam and Gunderson (1996) have suggested that narcissism is more fluid than many have thought and with acceptance and career success, narcissistic tendencies can decrease. Ronningstam and Gunderson's perspective however is rare in narcissism research.

Regardless of whether the narcissists in this study develop and mature into more pro-social and less self-absorbed people, they will nevertheless take with them to their next job application a new set of industry skills that they did not have at the start of their employment. They will have a powerful and recognized firm on their CV, and abundant confidence to presumably communicate their self-perceived abilities. They won their current role on having no experience, whereas in their next job application they have work history.

The challenge for the recruiting organisation in the first instance is to not hire them, or to be very mindful of risks involved if they do so. The hiring organisation is vulnerable to missing the narcissist's true self. "Grandiosity as confidence" (p.150), as put forward by Brown (2006) can only be picked up over time, which was evident in this research. However, highly trained observers (professors and doctoral students of industrial psychology) also appear to be vulnerable to an inability to differentiate narcissism from confidence. A study by Brunell, Gentry, Campbell, Hoffman, Kuhnert, and DeMarree (2008) showed that MBA students rated most highly in narcissism were also identified as being emerging leaders.

The early identification of narcissism (at the interview screening stage) is potentially hampered by organisations' use of competency-based interviewing. The basis of the competency interview is for the interviewee to provide examples of where they have successfully demonstrated a particular ability. One of the major strengths of narcissists is in terms of projecting confidence and ability to speak articulately about themselves. Their self-esteem is based on a sense of admiration from other people; they are at their most energised when provided the opportunity to shine, especially if that opportunity involves selling their abilities. The competency-based interview is therefore the ideal stage for the narcissist to shine. Criticisms of the competency-based interview have been made in research by Moy (2006) where recruiters' perceptions of the ideal qualities for effective performance were measured against what the competency interview was actually assessing. Moy's results suggested that the ideal qualities the recruiters sought were around conscientiousness, but the interview was actually assessing for extroversion. This has direct implications to narcissism due to the overt narcissist's tendency to be extroverted by nature.

The same issue applies to another common recruitment method of doing a presentation or role-plays. These approaches provide the almost perfect opportunity for the narcissist to stand out. They have made it an essential life skill to attract attention and admiration, and are therefore better practiced at it than most, and such recruitment methodologies are tailor-made for the narcissist. As highlighted by McFarlin and Sweeney (2000) the organisation is most susceptible to hiring narcissists if the organisation is in a highly changeable and vulnerable position and is thus open to the confident articulations of the narcissist.

These recruitment methodologies will not serve the organisation in filtering out the narcissist and neither will standard five factor models of personality, also predominantly used in recruitment. As discussed in Chapter two, they have been shown to be largely ineffective in identifying the narcissistic candidate. Due to such recruitment strategies, the narcissist's overly confident tendencies are not critically viewed as a potential risk. Those who perform

most effectively within the workplace are those who know and accept their limits (Lasch, 1979, Sinetar, 1991). Most recruitment models are simply not designed to gauge this aspect of personality maturity, despite its obvious importance.

The current research has shown that identifying how close a person feels they are to their ideal-self is an effective start for recognizing potential narcissism. But, like the sleeping dragon, narcissism needs to be, elicited, and even provoked from its cave before it can be appraised as either confidence or grandiose arrogance. This is indeed a challenge on at least two accounts. First, an organisation does not have months to wait and see how the confidence of the applicant will manifest. This graduate group spent less than 35 minutes in total in a face-to-face meeting with the key decision-makers of their prospective employment. The rest of their day was spent attending presentations about the company and their potential careers within this organisation. More time was taken in employment marketing than candidate assessment. Second, according to Millon and Davis (1996), in contemporary corporate culture, success and self-confidence are very often rewarded and admired. The important question of how rigidly the self-confidence is implemented may well be in the eye of the beholder and the relationship between people. The natural sycophant in need of a person to defer to and admire would find the narcissist to be a natural leader. For the screening interviewers in this study, with their own high workloads and limited time, a confidently-presenting graduate would provide more reassurance than less confident ones, especially where in the long term overt confidence is important for dealing within the competitive corporate world. Humility is a virtue, but it may not be initially eye-catching, especially, when the observer is pressured by time and the need to fill a vacancy.

For narcissists, their future successes need not be based on active development of their emotional maturity, as there are many environmental reinforcers that promote self-centred and agonic modes of operation which, in the short term, are often highly effective in achieving rank. However, the challenge is as much an organisational one in terms of what values are seen

as important and what values they may actually be projecting in both the short and long term. It is the glittering lights that attract narcissists and within a large corporate organisation, its success and market dominance is obviously promoted. What is far less obvious is the organisation's emphasis on building cooperative team players. Perhaps, to the narcissist sub-group, this second emphasis is too subtle.

Assisting the Narcissist Developmentally

The training and development of any new staff member is an expensive process. The performance of the narcissistic sub-group would indicate that they require some help to get them to the actual level in which they already perceive themselves to be, as well as where the organisation would like them to be. This would require some sensitive yet realistic mentoring. They need to know the actual value put on collective and cooperative effort by the organisation. There needs to be reward for pro-social behaviour. It is doubtful this message is conveyed during the initial interview stage, as much as the physical appearance of the offices portrays success and status. Narcissists are keen observers of successful people as they strive to be successful themselves. It is important that while the organisation appears to value competence and modesty, its senior staff, who have been very successful need to openly model and live this value.

The narcissists need to be provided a realistic view of how they project themselves to others. As previously discussed, their confidence is viewed as arrogance; they are seen as attention-seeking show-offs who need an audience. In short, they need to learn how to be more likable without feeling they have to compromise themselves to be likable. They require assistance to bridge their confidence without feeling stifled or belittled. A key area to focus on would be in terms of developing their listening skills. A person who shows no consideration for what another is saying or feeling (especially as a graduate) will project arrogance, not confidence. However, it is difficult to perceive another person as arrogant, or maintain that view if that other person shows an understanding of your perspective before conveying their own. The

art of paraphrasing well should be the first developmental competency in a career plan for the narcissist. In this context, key questions narcissists need to ask themselves are, (a) “Do I understand that person’s perspective?” and (b), “Have I conveyed I’ve understood it?” This is an area they will need assistance and feedback with and a good focus for mentoring for quietening the ego. Vygotsky (1978) strongly argued that the key to moving beyond egocentrism is by the active encouragement of incorporating other people’s perspectives into one’s own view. This is a role for a prospective mentor.

Limitations and Future Research

One of the goals of this research was to focus on a previously unexplored area of narcissism. In particular, graduate narcissists in a corporate workplace setting. Another was to focus on narcissism within the working environment, which has been an under-researched area. Whilst this exploratory research uncovered some thought provoking trends, some limitations need to be acknowledged.

First, the overall participant sample was reasonably small, and decreased between T1 and T3. Second, the research was limited by having only one collection of data relating directly to the identification of narcissism. Whilst self-perception data was collected on three occasions from the participant group, consideration was given to the time requirements needed from very busy managers to complete an additional narcissism measure in addition to performance data. It was thought to be asking too much of them and their goodwill for this study. We therefore cannot directly know if those who were seen as having significant narcissistic tendencies after nine months (T2) were also seen that way after 20 months (T3). However, the second performance collection at T3 directly measured each individual’s pro-social, interactional style, and the narcissistic group scored significantly lower than the rest of the group, so it could be assumed that they were still seen in a negative light.

Further research could focus on the way in which narcissists self-critique and the meaning they make from such self-criticisms. This research showed that

narcissists did self-critique, but at the same time still saw themselves as close to their ideal and remained better than others even though performance-wise, this was not the case. It would be of interest to see what value they put on others' negative perception of them, how they actually felt about that criticism and if this was in any way influenced by the perceived status of the person from whom such criticism was received. To carry out such research would require the development and testing of sophisticated tools.

The gauge used for self-enhancement measurement related well to narcissism ratings, however, the CSI indicator was less predictive. This was surprising due to the strong views other theorists and research had (i.e. Kernberg 1975, 2004; Kiesler, 1996; Campbell, Foster, & Brunell, 2004) about the narcissists' lack of critical self-insight. It is possible that, as a pilot gauge of CSI, it was not sensitive enough to pick up extensive disparity of self-criticism between narcissists and non-narcissists. Future research should explore further ways of tapping into the self-critique of narcissists, as it is potentially as important a diagnostic area as self-enhancement for understanding the narcissistic self-concept.

From these research findings it can be assumed that narcissism is a negative trait for a graduate to project in the first twenty months of their employment. It would be of interest to understand how these narcissistic traits are viewed beyond this initial phase of employment. Previous research has shown that narcissists do make it to high managerial positions. It is unclear whether they always had narcissistic tendencies or if these developed with their success. McFarlin and Sweeney (2000) for example propose that the narcissist is an opportunist, and the narcissistic trait is always there projecting its most favourable light to the organisation which is vulnerable and critically unaware. Others have suggested that with success comes the risk of ego-inflation and resulting narcissistic tendencies. This is a complex question that would require extensive longitudinal studies covering a range of career developmental stages, but would yield very rich data.

Another related area for further research is where those narcissists, as identified in this research do have the opportunity to excel. We could hypothesise that this narcissistic group may well find their niche at the next stage of their career where they are expected to reach financial targets and in doing so be competing with other organisations targeting the same clients for consulting work. Promotion within such corporate consultancies is largely based on revenue generation, within a competitive market. If the narcissistic group stay within the organisation, their natural competitiveness may well find an outlet and correspondingly an avenue for status.

One of the main challenges facing longitudinal narcissism research, particularly in real world settings with graduate groups, is that this is a highly mobile cohort in terms of location and employer change. Studies going beyond two to three years would possibly suffer from a large reduction in participants. Similarly, obtaining performance and personality data from line managers would also be challenging over an extended period. The managers who gave performance and personality feedback for this research were very busy people in a demanding job. There are limitations in terms of their time and what they are willing to provide on top of their managerial obligations. Whilst in this study they were generous with their time over the data collection period, realistically it is doubtful that they would have been as accommodating if the study had run a further year.

Conclusion

A high degree of narcissistic self-involvement appears to inhibit the kind of learning agility and adaptability required of a successful corporate graduate recruit. In essence, the findings of this study suggest the failure of the graduate narcissists is due to an inability to adapt psychologically to the requirements of their career stage and the organisation's requirements of them. The failure to live up to their own expectations and the potential to excel hoped for by their employer is not due to any lack of qualifications or intellectual ability. In one of his brief references to the narcissist at work, Kernberg (1975) wrote of the "...superficiality and flightiness in their work, a lack of depth which eventually reveals the emptiness behind the glitter. Quite

frequently, these are the promising geniuses who surprise other people by the banality of their development” (p. 229).

Possibly the key theme emerging from this research is the narcissists’ inability to adapt and their unstable sense of self being a reflection and indicator of psychological immaturity. The developmental tasks for gaining such maturity can be summarized within Loevinger’s model of ego development (Hy & Loevinger, 1996). The main areas being: a drive to improve oneself, thinking beyond own concerns to those of the wider society, the ability to build deeper relationships with others, building deeper respect for others, developing a tolerance for ambiguity and the unsolvable, and probably most importantly in regard to narcissism, a freeing from excessive striving.

The narcissist group self-enhanced across most areas measured in terms of positive self-concept, though significantly higher than their peers in their perceived ability to communicate, problem solve and in their degree of self-confidence. In reality, they had deceived themselves, as it was in these same three areas they were found to be most lacking.

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Appendixes

Appendix A

Introduction letter to graduates

Graduate Research Project

2006

Dear Graduate

Firstly, congratulations on being selected as part of graduate recruitment programme. I hope this opportunity provides you with a good start to your professional career.

Starting 2006, I am running a research initiative to follow the progress of new graduates over their first 20 months of employment at , including the impression they made at their initial recruitment day interview. Specifically, the project will focus on how each graduate believes his/her level of competency develops over a 20-month period and how this relates to his/her actual performance. I am also interested in understanding individuals' critical self-insights and how these evolve over time.

I am a former consultant and had worked in this organisations psychology practice for three years. I am currently involved with overseeing the cognitive testing of all graduate applicants at . This research is part of my PhD at Massey University, College of Education under the supervision of Associate Professor Dr John Kirkland. This research has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk and consequently not been reviewed by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees.

The results from this project are aimed to assist our understanding of early career development as well as providing with useful insights into its graduate recruitment programme and developmental processes in the future. Because of this, the partners and the Human Resources department have given their backing to this project.

Over the 20-month period, you will be asked to complete a small set of questionnaires. This will occur on 3 occasions, the first at the induction camp in February 06, the second in August - September 06 and the third in August 07. The questionnaires only take 10-15 minutes to complete.

It is important to note the following.

1. Your participation is voluntary
2. Your responses and identity are confidential does not have access to any information you submit
3. You are able to withdraw from the study at any time
4. You are welcome to request a summary of your responses at the completion of the project

The HR Director and I will provide a more detailed description of the process at the camp. If you have any questions concerning this project, feel free to contact me directly at jeff@ethosgroup.co.nz or 04 4965633.

I look forward to meeting you in February.

Regards

Jeff Simpson

Appendix B

Self-Concept questionnaire

Name:
Office location

Graduate Project

Project leader: Jeff Simpson
Project supervisor: Dr John Kirkland

March 2007

Questionnaires 1 & 2

Research statement

This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently, it has not been reviewed by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. The researcher(s) named above are responsible for the ethical conduct of this research.

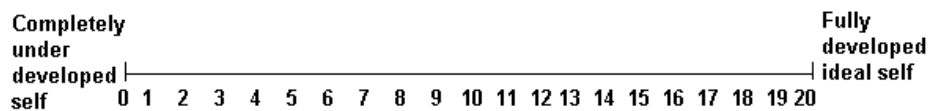
If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you wish to raise with someone other than the researcher, please contact Professor Sylvia Rumball, Assistant to the Vice-Chancellor (Ethics & Equity), telephone 06 3505249, email humanethicspn@massey.ac.nz

Self rating scales instructions

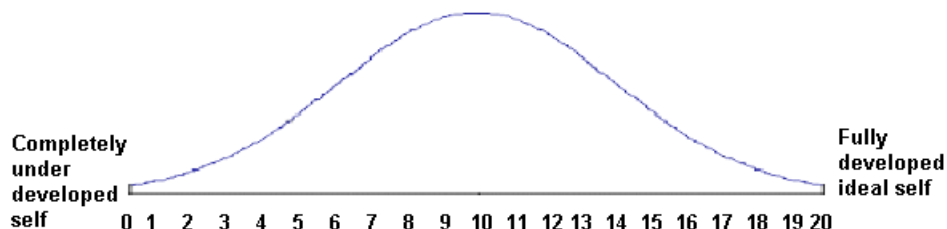
In the following set of scales you are required to rate yourself on a variety of aspects relating to personality and competency. There are no right or wrong responses. Each aspect of competency / personality has two scales that run from 0 to 20. A definition of each scale is provided.

It is important to note that the scales are developmentally focused. A self rating of 20, for example, on any competency / personality topic refers to *your fully developed self*, the person you would *ultimately like to evolve to become*. A rating of 20 would be saying you are completely developed to your highest potential and that level of development is highly evident across *all* situations to which it applies. Whereas a rating of 7, for example would indicate that you felt this was an underdeveloped area of yourself as yet.

Each factor has two separate scales for you to rate yourself on. On the first scale you are to rate yourself in terms of where you currently see yourself developmentally (i.e. how close you feel you are to your fully developed self which would be at 20).



On the second scale you are to rate yourself developmentally compared to your *peer group*; in this case you are rating yourself against the other graduates of 2007. To guide you, a distribution scale is provided which shows an historic indicator of where most people tend to rate themselves compared to their peers.



This indicates that when comparing themselves to their peers, around 60% of people rate themselves between 8 – 12 on the scale, around 20% rate

themselves between 13 – 20 and the remaining 20% rate themselves between 0 – 7.

For example, rating yourself at 15 on a factor would be saying that you felt you were more developed than the majority of your peers, though you felt there would still be some who were more developed than you.

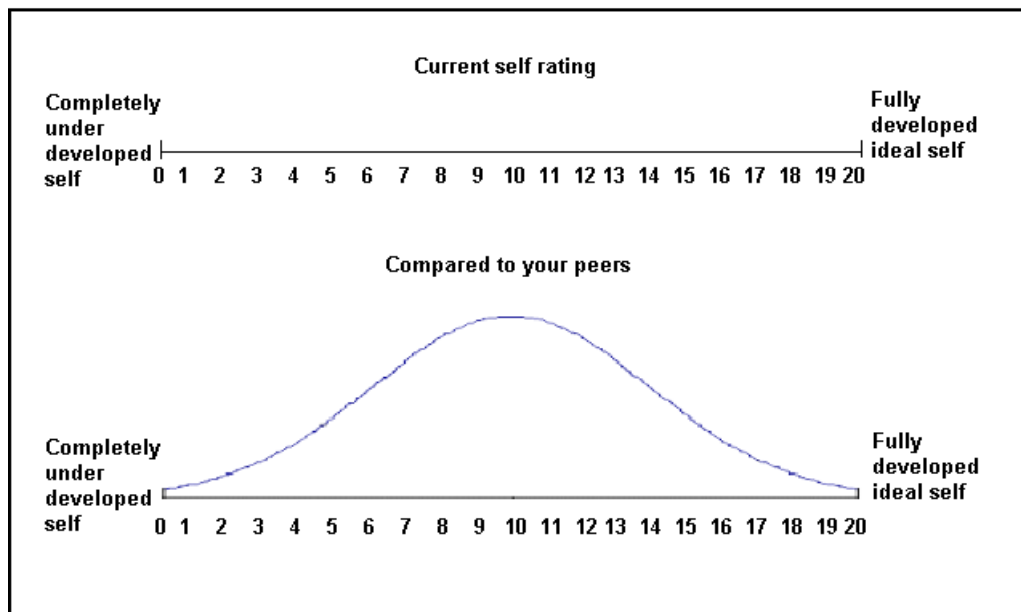
Think carefully about your responses, be honest, but don't ponder for too long. Circle on the scale with a pen where you feel you are currently at. Indicate just one number, not a range.

Feel free to refer back to these guidelines when responding to the scales.

Self Rating Items

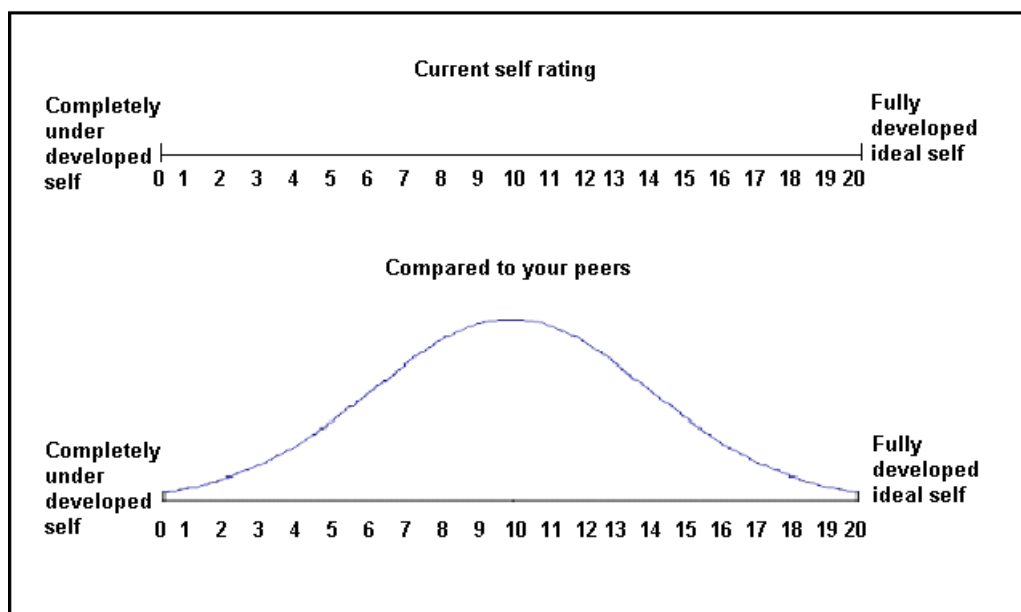
1. Stress tolerance / management

Your ability to maintain a calm, controlled and positive manner when under pressure and remain focused on the task.



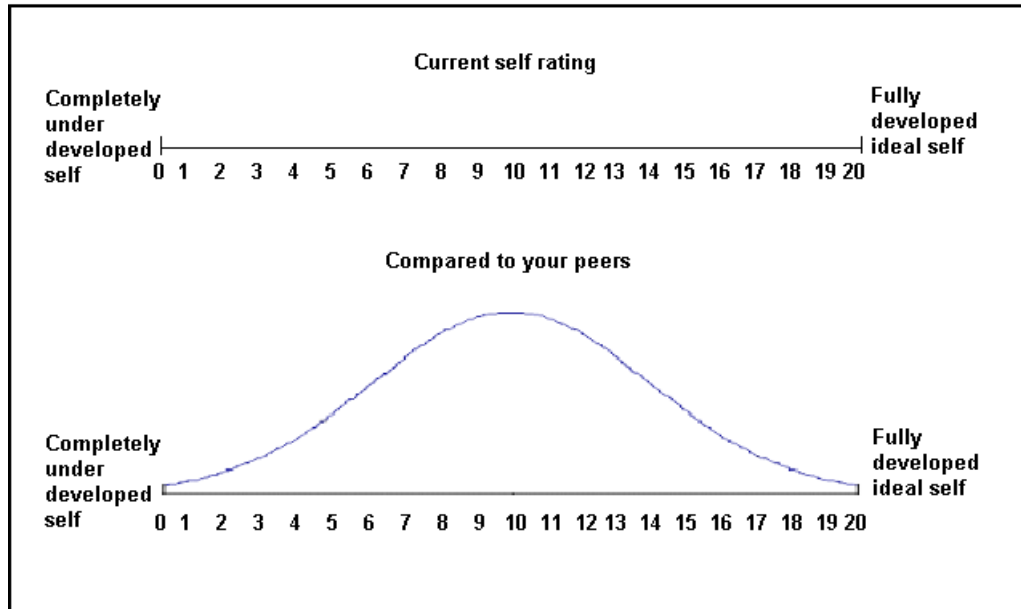
2. Flexibility / adaptability

Your ability to adapt to new situations and new ways of working. Your receptiveness to changes and your willingness to adapt to them effectively.



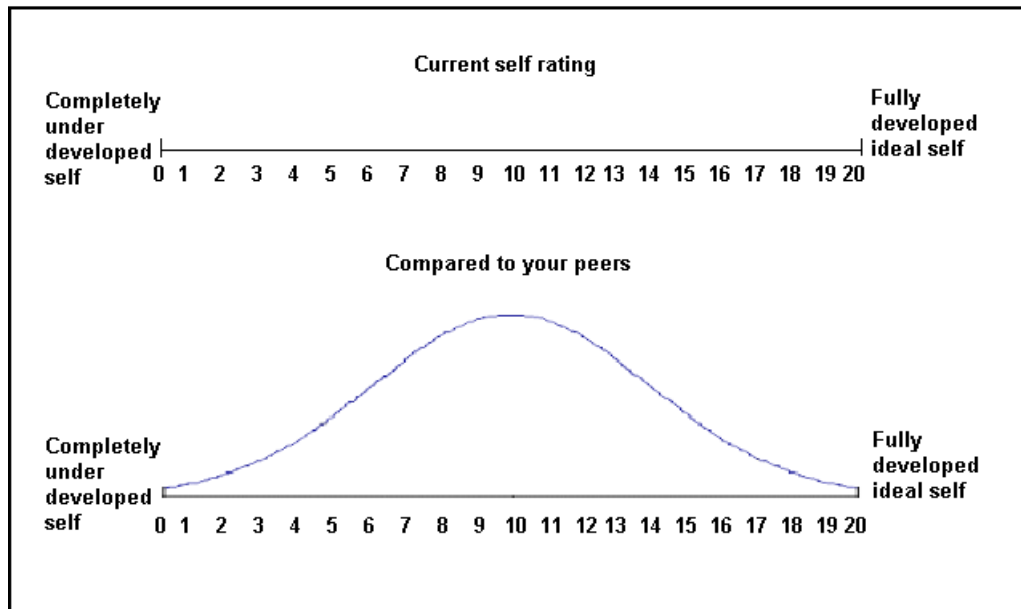
3. Self reliance

Your ability to independently carry out tasks and consult with others when necessary for effective completion of a project.



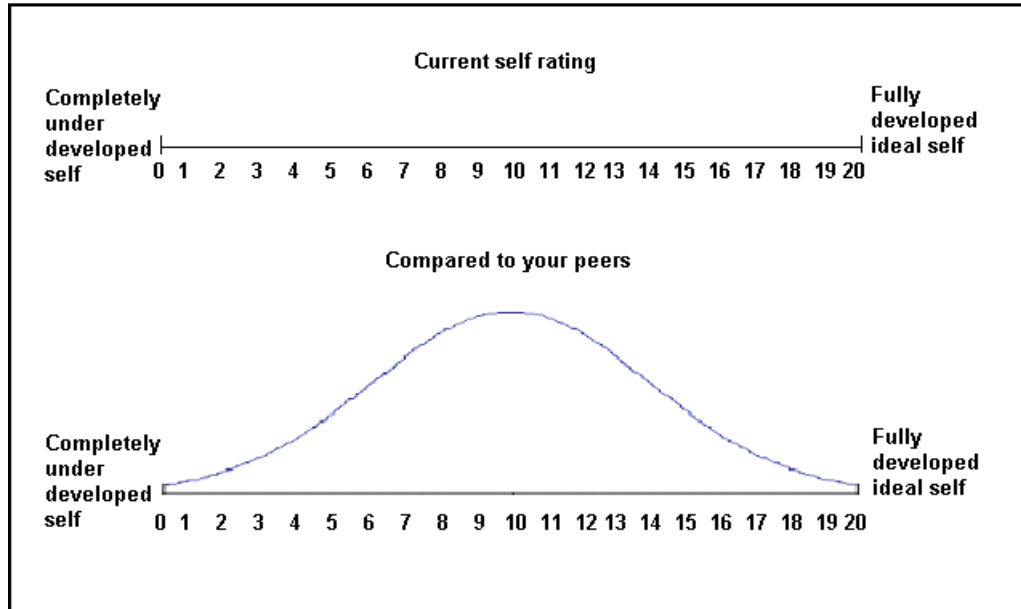
4. Integrity

Your maintenance of high standards of honesty and trustworthiness



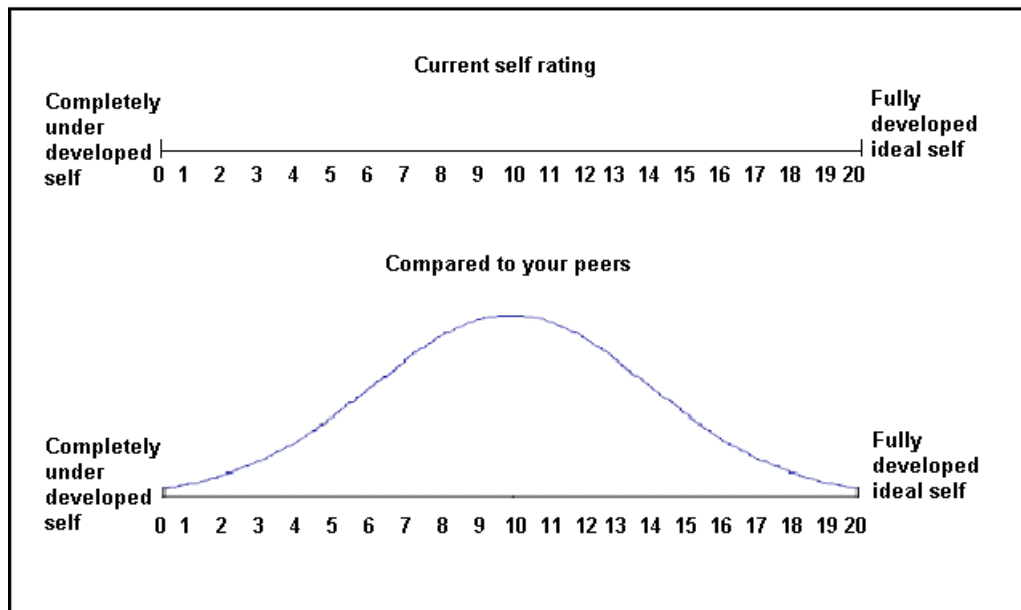
5. Mature assertiveness

Your ability to assert yourself firmly and maintain composure across all situations, without the expression of any negative emotion (e.g. aggression).



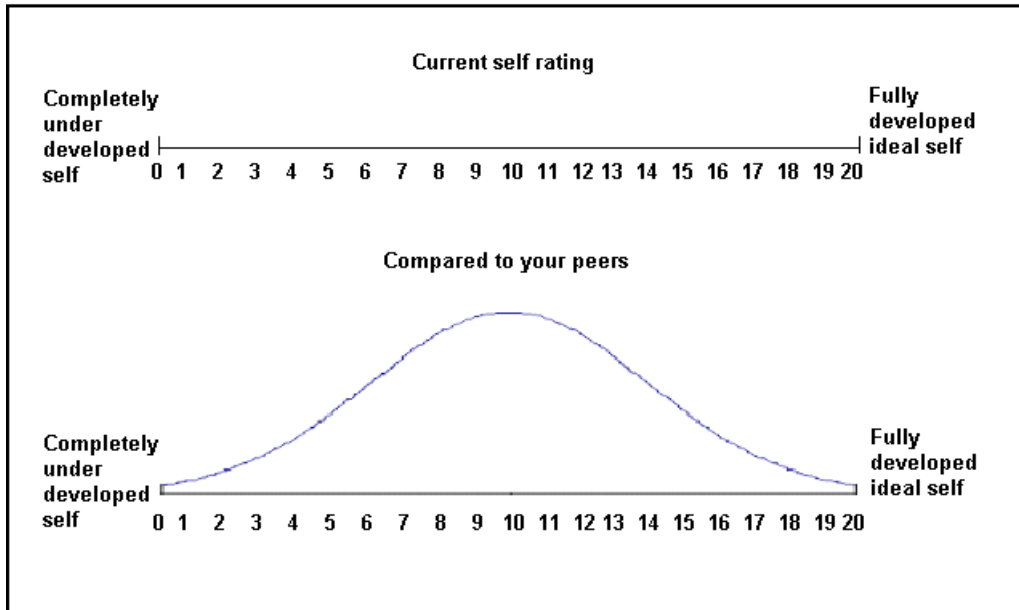
6. Problem solving

Your ability to break down and analyse information effectively, e.g. identify the causes of problems and propose practical solutions to address these difficult issues.



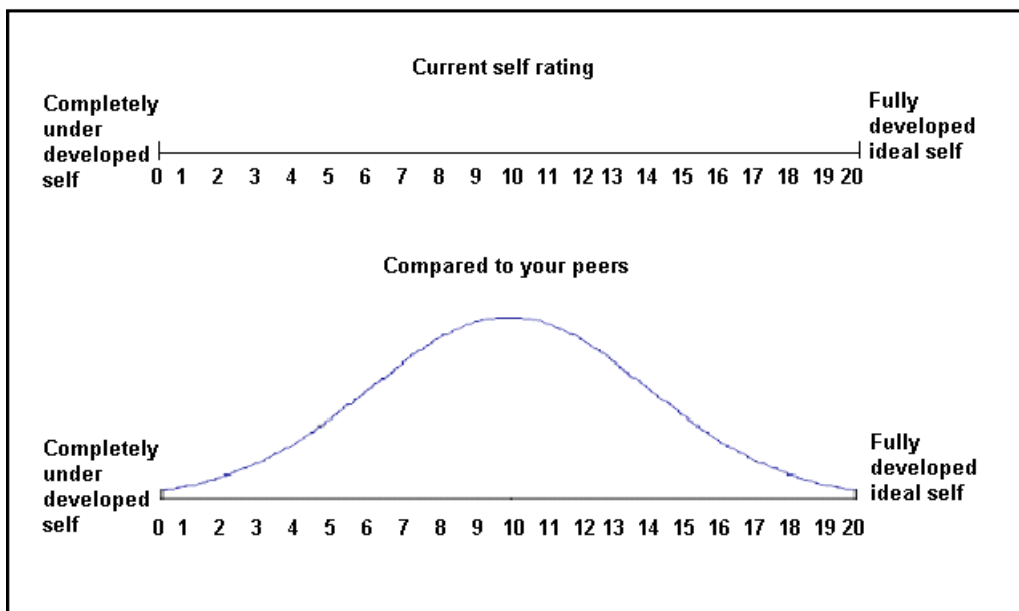
7. Self confidence

Your belief in your own self worth and ability, even when placed in uncertain or new situations.



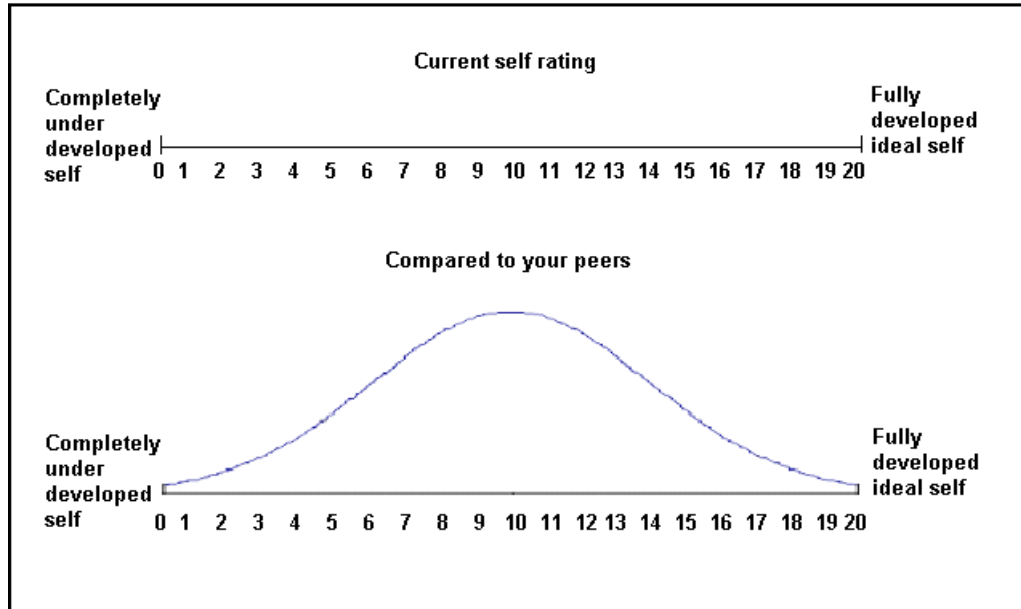
8. Self awareness

Your understanding of your own emotions and how they affect your actions.



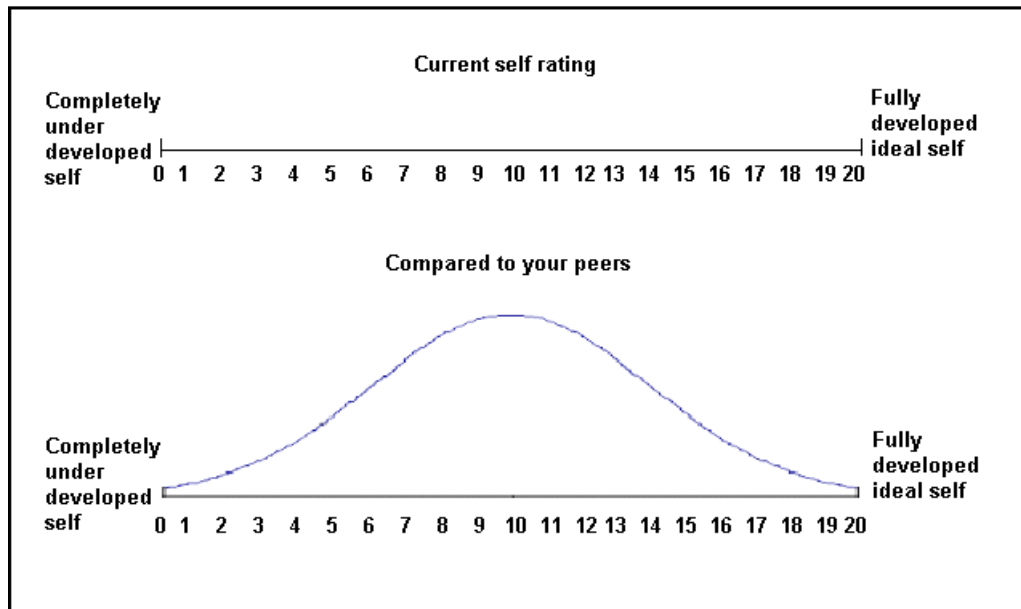
9. Openness to ideas

Your receptiveness to new ideas and approaches. Building on these ideas and actively incorporating them into your own way of thinking.



10. Interpersonal skills / communication

Your ability to communicate very clearly in any situation. Your ability to adapt your interpersonal style according to the situation and audience while maintaining the same high standard of communication.



Critical self reflect statement list.

Overview

People generally like to hold positive self-views and we are much more likely to describe ourselves using positive self-descriptions than negative. However, almost everyone has some negative sides to their personality. Some of these aspects we are aware of within ourselves, some we project to other people with little awareness and there are some aspects, which other people may comment or give us feedback on.

The following alphabetically ordered list was assembled from previous research (interviews of around 500 people) where individuals were asked how they described their less desirable behaviours/traits and how others could have described them. This is a compilation of the most common descriptors.

Instructions

Go through the following list of 51 descriptions.

1. Tick the '**O**' column items you feel that **people who may find you difficult to work with** could use to describe you.
2. Go through the list again and indicate in the '**M**' column any items you feel could truthfully describe you, as you believe, **from your own perspective of yourself**.

Be as honest as you can in your responses. There may be some descriptions you indicate both '**O**' and '**M**'.

Items: Critical self insight

People who find me difficult to work with could describe me as someone who is...(tick relevant items in the O, for "Other" column)

Aspects I believe are true of me to some degree...(tick relevant items with M, for "Me" column)

A single topic may be endorsed by both O and by M.

	Statement	O (Others' View)	M (Self View)
1	a do-gooder		
2	a follower / non independent thinker		
3	a procrastinator		
4	arrogant / self righteous		
5	attention seeking		
6	bossy		
7	closed minded		
8	disorganised		
9	displaying a negative attitude		
10	falsely nice to people I don't like		
11	hard to get to know / aloof		
12	impatient		
13	impulsive		
14	indecisive		
15	insincere		
16	lacking in independence		
17	lazy		
18	likely to ignore issues that I don't want to face		
19	manipulative		
20	moody		
21	not overly interested in others' problems		
22	only able to see things from my perspective		
23	overly concerned with status		
24	overly controlling		
25	overly critical		
26	overly deferential to those in higher places		
27	overly emotive		
28	overly opinionated		
29	overly reactive		

30	overly worried about what others think of me		
31	pedantic		
32	pretending to know more than I actually do		
33	prone to stress		
34	rude / abrupt		
35	seeking to be the centre of attention		
36	self centred		
37	sometimes immature		
38	stubborn		
39	taking a moral high ground		
40	taking an intellectual high ground		
41	too black and white in my thinking		
42	too easily distracted		
43	too forceful		
44	too laid back – slow to react		
45	too rigid / inflexible		
46	too structured / rule bound		
47	too timid		
48	unapproachable		
49	unlikely to admit to my mistakes		
50	unlikely to share what I actually / truly think		
51	unsociable		

Appendix C

Performance indicator T2

Performance Indicator

September 2007

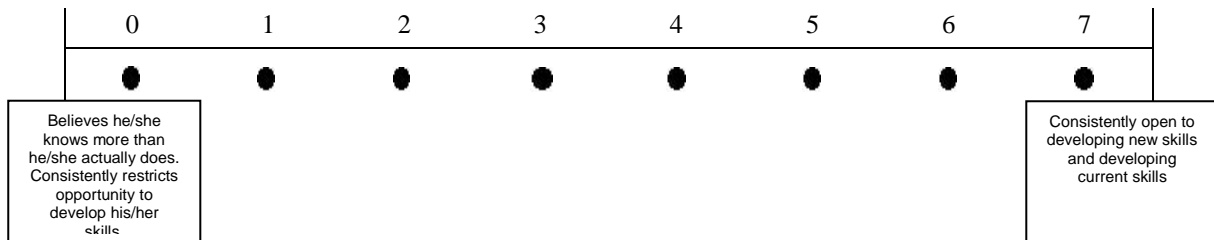
1. Openness to learning:

Degree to which new graduate has proactively developed his/her understanding of [redacted] business processes.

i.e. Openness to learning and ability to change perspective/Knows own limitations of understanding

vs.

Inaccurate over assumption of own knowledge being fully developed: Closed off to learning and adapting.



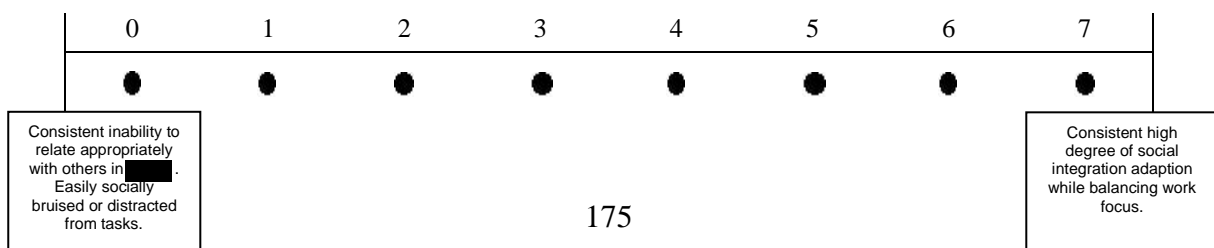
2. Social integration:

Degree to which new graduate has adapted in the social make up of [redacted]. The ability shown to successfully deal with a variety of people, whilst still remaining focused on role requirements.

Social ease and adaption

vs.

Misreading social situations: putting others offside



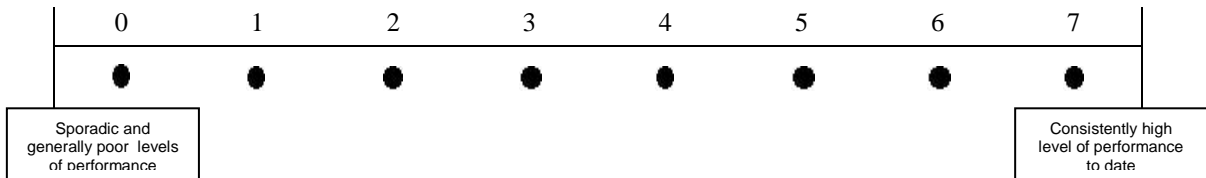
3. Quality of work output:

Degree to which new graduate has produced work of a high standard and efficiency thus far.

Consistent high performance and efficiency

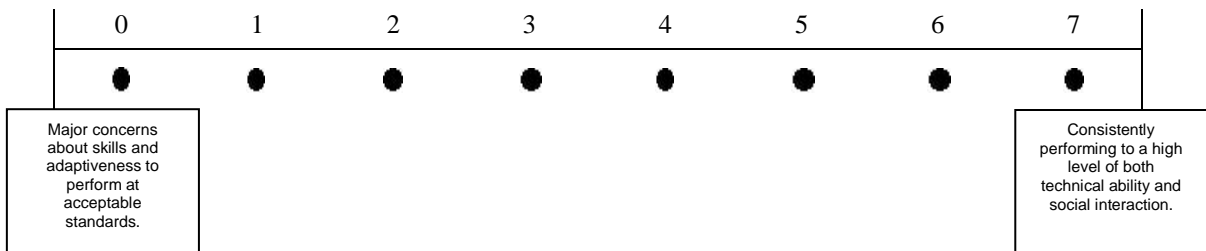
vs.

High error rate/inefficient use of time and resources.



4. Prediction of performance over next 15 months:

Degree of potential new graduate has shown in first few months of [redacted] career.
Over the next 15 months I would predict that this will be the new graduate's level of performance.



Appendix D

Performance indicator T3

Performance Indicator: August 2008

1. Teamwork

The degree to which this person takes a co-operative approach within the team, promoting harmony, sharing knowledge and information and contributing to team processes.

0____1____2____3____4____5____6____7____

0 = does not contribute positively to the group, places little value promoting a collegial environment, collaborates for personal or power motives.

7 = consistently displays genuine pro-social behaviors, promoting a positive and friendly team environment.

2. Technical and professional knowledge development and application

The degree to which this person has actively developed professional skills and as a result delivered high quality of work.

0____1____2____3____4____5____6____7____

0 = has made little effort to increase skills and knowledge

7 = has consistently sought opportunities to further develop abilities

3. Relationship development

The degree to which this person has developed and maintained positive working relationships both internally and externally.

0_____1_____2_____3_____4_____5_____6_____7_____

0 = has placed little emphasis on relationship development and thus has little understanding of others.

7 = has consistently developed rapport, trust and effective positive professional relationships

4. Professionalism

The degree to which this person has consistently demonstrated high standards of ethics, maturity, integrity, and responsibility

0_____1_____2_____3_____4_____5_____6_____7_____

0 = a consistent lack in the positive demonstration of most or all of these areas

7 = consistently demonstrates these behaviors across all professional situations

5. Proactive communication

The demonstration of active listening, taking others' views into consideration, knowing when to talk and when to listen.

0_____1_____2_____3_____4_____5_____6_____7_____

0 = consistently doesn't listen or take others' perspectives into consideration

7 = consistently promotes two way dialogue, communicates openly but appropriately

6. Balancing complex work demands

The ability to balance differing work demands in a variety of situations, i.e. responding to client, manager and multiple project requirements at any one time.

0_____1_____2_____3_____4_____5_____6_____7_____

0 = consistent inability to handle and cope with multiple demands – at best one thing at a time

7 = comfortably manages a wide range of demands at any one time.

Appendix E

Narcissism Traits Indicator

Personality Trilemmas

Relies on own self to get things done
Jealous, envious
Needs plenty of excitement

Pretends everything is OK
Gives “smart” replies (smart alec)
Uncertain

Self centered
Spends a lot of time talking
Secretive

Friendly
Needs an audience
Tense, wound up

Seldom satisfied
Completes assignments without arguing
Competitive

Acts superior
Flighty
Conscientious

Thinks things through
Has a chip on their shoulder
Acts on the spur of the moment

Handles unpredictable situations well
Arrogant
Plans everything

Positive when dealing with others
Strong views
Pre-occupied

Easily hurt
Vain
Warm

Takes responsibility for own actions
Reactive, defensive, prickly
Talks louder, keeps talking over others

Open minded
Panics under stress
Strives to be centre of attention

Restless
Gets upset by others deliberate actions
Often asks for advice

Quick to do things without thinking them over
Ideas mostly workout well
Defends own ground, doesn't give in even if wrong

Dramatizes
When in need, doesn't ask for help
Easy going

Stubborn
Intelligent
Concerned about own image

Impulsive
Makes excuses
Independent

Reliable
Charming
Blames others for own mistakes

Fuzzy minded
Cooperative
Moody

Enjoys lots of company
Glory seeker
Agreeable

Hardworking
Unsettles others
Disorganised

Annoyed by small trivial things
Emotionally stable
Has little substance to back up image

Prefers things to be neat and tidy
Sucks up to the boss
Vague

Up front and direct
Gets the point of jokes quickly
Submissive

Doesn't get on with things – procrastinates
Risk taker
Offers creative solutions

Confident – high self-esteem
Manipulative
Shows off – know it all

Has a negative attitude
Genuine
Fast paced / always on the move

Assertive
Bends truth to save own face
Sense of humour

Follows through – persistent
Serious
Understands what's going on

Appendix F

CSI Factor Analysis

Item	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5
V34	.623	.075	.019	.052	.041
V28	.606	-.184	-.002	-.031	.111
V6	.583	-.279	-.176	.188	.119
V4	.556	.012	.006	-.231	-.081
V5	.515	-.096	-.028	.289	.071
V12	.499	.114	.034	.036	.107
V43	.474	.051	-.048	-.082	-.145
V22	.438	-.108	.231	.025	.201
V48	.434	.102	.247	-.094	.025
V20	.434	.015	-.032	.101	.100
V9	.433	.026	.217	.039	-.042
V36	.430	.056	-.139	.249	-.041
V35	.412	.187	-.206	.404	.232
V24	.408	-.181	.038	.060	-.048
V23	.332	.115	.224	.151	-.212
V25	.310	.095	.022	.002	-.003
V49	.296	-.164	-.108	.291	.260
V19	.296	-.112	-.136	.129	.104
V8	.212	.673	-.071	-.137	.069
V17	.123	.669	.079	.139	-.029
V42	-.084	.635	.038	.301	-.028
V44	-.149	.633	.191	.055	-.058
V3	-.050	.569	-.153	.161	-.051
V32	.064	.379	.239	.373	.075
V11	-.101	.354	.342	.117	.185
V13	-.004	.167	.015	-.009	.166
V45	.048	-.053	.553	.099	-.215
V51	-.072	.202	.552	.154	-.004
V16	.158	.257	.464	-.202	.332
V40	.196	-.002	.441	.141	.069
V2	-.220	.100	.438	.099	.213
V41	.217	-.223	.438	.056	.062
V1	-.118	.137	.434	-.193	.077
V7	.348	-.051	.401	.207	.188
V38	.158	-.011	-.193	.182	.068
V50	-.077	.081	-.060	.585	.014
V10	.074	-.006	.052	.581	.005
V31	.097	.122	.166	.470	.018
V46	.011	-.138	.428	.460	-.103
V18	.029	.108	.000	.417	.412
V15	.086	.214	.240	.383	-.117
V21	.265	.232	.151	.371	.041
V30	.075	.230	.178	.330	.113
V29	.153	-.144	-.004	-.088	.649
V27	.138	-.096	.103	.065	.591
V33	-.072	.033	.110	.077	.514
V14	.094	.288	-.096	.005	.468
V39	.130	.009	.393	.026	.446
V47	-.230	.400	.275	-.110	.416
V26	.182	-.050	-.254	.234	.276
V37	-.104	-.001	-.081	.232	.258

C1 = Cluster 1, C2 = Cluster 2, C3= Cluster 3, C4 = Cluster 4, C5 = Cluster 5

Items per cluster

Cluster 1. Dominance

- 34. rude/abrupt
- 28. overly opinionated
- 6. bossy
- 4. arrogant/self righteous
- 5. attention seeking
- 12. impatient
- 43. too forceful
- 22. only able to see things from my perspective
- 48. unapproachable
- 20. moody
- 9. displaying a negative attitude
- 36. self centred
- 35. seeking to be the centre of attention
- 24. overly controlling
- 23. overly concerned with status
- 25. overly critical
- 49. unlikely to admit to my mistakes
- 19. manipulative

Cluster 2. Unmotivated/disengaged

- 8. disorganised
- 17. lazy
- 42. too easily distracted
- 44. too laid back – slow to react
- 3. a procrastinator
- 32. pretending to know more than I actually do
- 11. hard to get to know/alooof
- 13. impulsive

Cluster 3. Narrow/rigid

- 45. too rigid / inflexible
- 51. unsociable
- 16. lacking in dependence
- 40. taking an intellectual high ground
- 2. a follower / non independent thinker
- 41. too black and white in my thinking
- 1. a do-gooder
- 7. closed minded
- 38. stubborn

Cluster 4. Avoidant

- 50. unlikely to share what I actually / truly think
- 10. falsely nice to people I don't like
- 31. pedantic
- 46. too structured / rule bound
- 18. likely to ignore issues that I don't want to face
- 15. insincere
- 21. not overly interested in others' problems
- 30. overly worried about what others think of me

Cluster 5. Under controlled, emotive, sensitive

- 29. overly reactive
- 27. overly emotive
- 33. prone to stress
- 14. indecisive
- 39. taking a moral high ground
- 47. too timid
- 26. overly deferential to those in higher places
- 37. sometimes immature