Pompous Narcissism Predicts Ethical Behaviours at Workplace: The Moderating Role of Emotional Intelligence

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the outcome of narcissism on ethical behaviour and measure the association of narcissism and ethical behaviour. The other main objective of this study was to find the presence of emotional intelligence in a narcissistic personality and measure its moderating effects on the relationship of narcissism and ethical behaviour. A total of 310 participants working at middle management levels in public and private telecom sectors of Pakistan within the context of local culture completed self-rating scales for narcissism, emotional intelligence and ethical behaviour. Results of multiple regression analyses supported the hypotheses that narcissism and ethical behaviour are negatively associated. However, the moderating role of emotional intelligence in a narcissistic person was not significant. These findings suggest that narcissism with emotional intelligence further deteriorates the relationship with ethical behaviour and narcissistic personality displays unethical behaviour to achieve their personal accomplishments.

Keywords: Narcissism, Ethical Behaviour, Emotional Intelligence

INTRODUCTION

Application of emotional intelligence to deal with the difficult personalities like narcissists is a prudent approach. Concurrence of narcissism, emotional intelligence and ethical behaviour in a personality construct might alleviate the negativity and augment positivity of a personality.

Narcissism has been studied in social, personality and clinical psychology as one of important personality constructs (R. P. Brown & Zeigler-Hill, 2004; Cain, Pincus, & Ansell, 2008; Holtzman & Strube, 2010). Bright and dark sides of narcissism tagged it as a diverse benediction (Paulhus, 1998) since it processes versatile and maladaptive approaches (Paulhus, 1998). Narcissism is a distinctive attribute of various influential personalities (Rosenthal & Pittinsky, 2006). Narcissism is a Personality disposition encircled by pomposity, egotism, self-retention, privilege, feeble confidence and threatening vibe (Ghislieri & Gatti, 2012). Individuals who are influenced by narcissism are

however vital type of personality characteristics that includes a pretentious, yet delicate feeling of self, power, obsessed with progress, and strong desire for admiration (Ames, Rose, & Anderson, 2006). Preoccupied with their importance narcissistic people are generally arrogant (Barlett & Anderson, 2012). They devalue others, lack empathy for others and have little conscience. They exploit people without remorse (MacLaren & Best, 2013) and any concern of ethics. They are also very sensitive to anything that threatened their self-esteem (Furnham, Hughes, & Marshall, 2013).

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portrayed by a feeling of loftiness and transcendence, together with a yearning for reverence and renown, and are well on the way to ascend to the places of leaders. Narcissists display questionable EI and ethical behaviour. Narcissists perform in more extraverted and less agreeable ways, exceedingly exploitative, and use more unethical language (Holtzman, Vazire, & Mehl, 2010).

Researchers have found an emotional quotient present in emotional intelligence which is both, the art and science of perceiving, understanding; managing, controlling and using own as well as others emotions. Emotional intelligence is demonstrated through self-cognizance, self-administration, social responsiveness and relationship building characteristics (Goleman, 1998). Emotional intelligence plays a significant role in making ones successful career, emotions and styles of leaders displaying their emotions affect the performance and output of the people either negatively or positively. Leaders can augment the productivity and creativity of the employees with the help of their positive emotional behaviour (Isen & Baron, 1991). It has also been found by the researchers that the emotionally intelligent leaders possess special influence on team performance and its outcomes (Rego, Sousa, Pina e Cunha, Correia, & Saur-Amaral, 2007). Emotionally intelligent people can understand and perceive their own emotion and of others efficiently. Regulate and consume these emotions productively for purposeful individual and organizational accomplishments (Law, Wong, & Song, 2004). Emotional Intelligence is recognized to be prescient of triumphant accomplishment across service, scholastic, and even in standard life problems (Van Rooy & Viswesvaran, 2004). Individuals highly emotionally intelligent are more proficient at cognitive through the (emotional) precursors of their own and others’ conduct and utilizing this data to make effective decision making and activity (J. D. Mayer & Salovey, 1993).

It thus remains an open question whether or not narcissism is associated with emotional intelligence. Another unresolved issue is whether an interaction of emotional intelligence and narcissism might leads to exhibit positive ethical behaviour. Does emotional intelligence compensate for the negative effects of narcissism on peers? This research investigates the relationship between the narcissistic personality and ethical behaviour with the moderating impact of emotional intelligence. Studies could be found explaining the effects of narcissism on the ethical context recommending further research of the topic. Moderating role of emotional intelligence, a missing link provoked to take on this angle in this study.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

Narcissism is an attribute portrayed by expanded self-interest, an example of self-directive that upgrades the self to the detriment of others (Morf & Rhodewalt, 2001). Campbell, Hoffman, Campbell, and Marchisio (2011) stated that narcissistic individuals are over confident, extraverted, high in self-esteem, dominant, attention seeking, interpersonally skilled and charming, but also unwilling to take criticism, aggressive, high in psychological entitlement, lacking in true empathy, interpersonally exploitative and grandiose or even haughty. Narcissists are over cautious about their prestige, authority, and alluring. For instance, narcissists trust themselves to be superior to others in qualities, for example, insight and extraversion (Campbell, Rudich, & Sedikides, 2002; Gabriel, Critelli, & Ee, 1994; Keith Campbell, Bosson, Goheen, Lakey, & Kernis, 2007) amplify their capacities and accomplishments (Farwell & Wohlwend-Lloyd, 1998; John & Robins, 1994). This leads them to be pompous regardless of authenticity to reflect actual prominent genuine achievement (Campbell, Goodie, & Foster, 2004).

There is a significant emphasis on the literature that highlights the drawbacks of narcissistic personality. For example, as a result of their desire for acknowledgment, narcissists are more self-centered and egotistic (Hogan, Raskin, & Fazzini, 1990) and to utilize their abilities in dishonesty, control, and terrorizing with a specific end goal to secure leadership positions, even for those positions which they do not meet the criteria (Hogan et al., 1990).

Narcissists are infamously poor, over complex and belligerent managers (Duchon & Drake, 2009) and reflects neuroticism and absence of pleasantness. Narcissists rest on their judgments (Samier & Atkins, 2010). However on account of their egocentric nature, narcissists rely on their imprudent decisions and make decisions with over confidence. Narcissists maintain an unstable and confused self-concept and self-knowledge (Fukushima & Hosoe, 2011) because their ambitions have no bound. Narcissistic individuals think very highly of themselves, therefore are not likely to be plagued by feelings of guilt (Clark, Lelchook, & Taylor, 2010) while damaging others for their benefits. Hotchkiss (2003) enlightened seven dangerous sins of narcissism that incorporate hard-heartedness, mystical thoughtfulness, presumption, begrudge, power, abuse, and unethical surrounding.
To entirely comprehend and value the negative outcomes of narcissism, it is helpful to consider the psychological segments that underlie narcissists' behaviour. An investigative gradient of the exceedingly interrelated psychological foundations of narcissistic person may incorporate haughtiness, sentiments of predominance, a ravenous requirement for acknowledgment and feeling of dictate, impatience and outrage, absence of compassion, irreverence, rigidity, and suspicion (Ouimet, 2010).

In support of past studies on narcissism in the organization writing (Blair, Hoffman, & Helland, 2008; Judge, LePine, & Rich, 2006) we will concentrate specific personality trait i.e. narcissism. Attribute narcissism and narcissistic personality disorder are two distinct features; we do not focus on obsessive condition of narcissism. More particularly, people who are on extreme level of attribute narcissism do not really have the distorted state of narcissistic personality disorder. Though investigation on characteristic narcissism has essential ramifications for apprehension of neurotic end of the narcissism range (Miller, Gaughan, Pryor, Kamen, & Campbell, 2009).

**Emotional Intelligence (EI)**

Emotional intelligence is defined as the subdivision of shared knowledge that includes the capacity to screen one's own and others' sentiments and feelings, to segregate among them and to utilize this data to direct one's reasoning and activities (J. D. Mayer, Salovey, Gomberg-Kaufman, & Blaine, 1991). There is a drastically growing interest in the emotional intelligence construct. Investigation demonstrates that IQ alone just demonstrates 4-10 percent of achievement at work (Sternberg, 1996). Emotional intelligence is twofold as essential as specialized aptitudes and scholarly insight for occupations at all levels; scholarly insight exclusively contributes around 20 percent of the variables that affirm life achievement that leaves 80% to various strengths (Goleman, 1996). Smart and experienced individuals and leaders are not generally winners in managing organizational surroundings and with life as a rule (Rosete & Ciarrochi, 2005) (Rosete & Ciarrochi, 2005). Rosete and Ciarrochi (2005) investigated the association between emotional intelligence, personality, intellectual insight and leadership. Their outcomes uncovered that higher emotional intelligence was related with higher leadership effectiveness, and that emotional intelligence elucidated the difference not elucidated by either individual trait or IQ.

**Ethical Behaviour**

As discussed above, past research has uncovered conflicting associations amongst narcissism and individuals outcomes. Though there is a need to further explore the requirement for more noteworthy standard specificity, likelihood of some essential conditional features direct the impact of narcissism on individuals. We assume that ethical setting, organizational structures augment ethical behaviours and practices among workers (Treviño, Butterfield, & McCabe, 1998). Previous research studies have mostly concentrated on conceptualizations of ethical atmosphere or ethical values (Trevino, 1990; Victor & Cullen, 1988) mutually these dimensions extensively refer to principled atmosphere that have ethical aspects and incorporate those aspects of work atmosphere that figure out what establishes ethical behaviour at work (Victor & Cullen, 1988). Research studies have confirmed significant effect of ethical behaviour on diverse organizations and its outcomes. For instance, ethical behaviour has been identified to have positive effect on individuals job outcomes (Cullen, Parboteeah, & Victor, 2003), supervisors ethical and rational governing (Flannery & May, 2000), and a negative effect on supervisors deliberate falsify situations (Ross & Robertson, 2000).

Recent studies confirms the pessimistic impacts of narcissism on different job outcomes (Finkel, Campbell, Buffardi, Kumashiro, & Rusbult, 2009; D. M. Mayer, Kuenzi, & Greenbaum, 2010). Therefore it is conceivable that ethical behaviours are missing due to malpractices of narcissistic people. Emotional intelligence has been appeared to buffer the negative practices ordinarily connected with narcissism. Narcissists are mostly have capabilities to alter and take undue advantage of other individuals, which advocates that their emotional skills are more likely to be high than low (Nagler, Reiter, Furtner, & Rauthmann, 2014). The findings of past research are blended. At times narcissism was not associated or negatively identified with emotion acknowledgment aptitudes (Ames & Kammrath, 2004; Jauk,
However, in an investigation by Konrath, Corneille, Bushman, and Luminet (2014), exploitativeness, the feature of narcissism most firmly identified with alteration, was positively connected to emotion aptitudes. It hence remains an unresolved whether emotional intelligence is related to narcissism or not.

This research study will stretch out investigations on narcissist personality, with the end goal that whether narcissist people who are emotionally intelligent can practice ethical behaviours and achieves the organizational goals which will in turn reduce unproductive and unethical behaviours.

Hypothesis

- H1: Narcissism is significantly and negatively related to ethical behaviour
- H2: Emotional intelligence of narcissistic people is likely to moderate relationship between narcissism and ethical behaviour such that it weakens the negative relationship between narcissism and ethical behaviour.

METHODOLOGY

Participants
Volunteer participants (n=310) were chosen both from public and private sectors as a result of convenience sampling technique through exploitation of personal contacts. Mostly participants were middle level managers in public (67%, n = 210) and private 32% (n = 100) sectors. 58% (n = 180) were male and 41% (n = 130) were female. 69% (n = 215) were married, 30% (n = 94) were unmarried and one was divorced. Sample was a sound balance of different age groups as 7% (n = 20) were 20 years old, 20% (n = 60) were between the age of 21-30 years, 25% (n = 80) were between the age of 31-40 years, 36% (n = 110) were between the age of 41-50 years, and 12% (n = 40) were between the age of 51-60 years. Our sample included participants with above average qualifications being the middle management holders as 17% (n = 50) were holding MS or PhD degrees, 51% (n = 160) were holding MA or MSc degrees, 22% (n = 70) were holding BA or BSc degrees and only 10% (n = 30) were FA, FSc or Matriculate. Because we followed convenience sampling technique we had the majority of our participant from the province of Punjab (65%, n = 200) followed by Khyber Pakhtun Khwa (16%, n = 50), Sindh (3%, n = 10) and Baluchistan (16%, n = 50).

Procedure
This research study was based on self-assessed and self–administered questionnaires of narcissism, emotional intelligence and ethical behaviour. Questionnaires were self-administered for every respondent. Every respondent was informed about the purpose of the research and elucidated the surveys in detail for the need of correct responses. It was because of the paucity of the time and dearth of resources that we were forced to adopt convenience sampling technique and approached the participants through personal contacts in the public and private sectors. We distributed 400 questionnaires and managed to recover 310 which is a pretty good percentage (78%). Few late recoveries were discarded for safety of already compiled results.

Measures of the study
Following measures were adopted and used in this research.

Narcissism
In this paper we used NPI-16, a shorter measure, which was developed by Ames, Rose, and Anderson in 2006.(Ames et al., 2006) built and validated the measure by conducting five studies using the NPI-16. Few sample statements for are “I like to be the center of attention” and “I think I am a special person”. The scale ranges from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree).

Emotional intelligence
Emotional intelligence was measured in four of its domains. Emotional intelligence scale used was a 30-item scale which has been developed by (Schutte et al., 1998)upon the basis of the(Salovey & Mayer, 1990) and (J. Mayer & Salovey, 1997) model of emotional intelligence. The scale ranges from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree). Few sample statements of the scale are; (1) Do you allow trusted others to see your tears? (2) Can you express anger freely and nondestructively, and then let it go?

Ethical behaviour
The ethical behaviour was measured using 20-item (Victor & Cullen, 1988) Ethical Climate Questionnaire (ECQ). Sample statements are; (1) One should never psychologically or physically harm another person. (2) One should not perform an action which might in any way threaten the dignity and welfare of another individual. The scale ranges from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree).
RESULTS

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics and alpha reliability coefficients for study variables (N=310)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study Variables</th>
<th>Alpha Coefficient</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Skewness</th>
<th>Kurtosis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NAR</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>2.84</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>-0.25</td>
<td>0.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EB</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>4.28</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>-0.27</td>
<td>0.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EI</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>2.23</td>
<td>4.07</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>-0.19</td>
<td>0.24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 reports descriptive statistics and alpha reliabilities of all study variables. The skewness and Kurtosis for all study variables are within the acceptable range of ±2 which confirm the symmetry of the sample distribution (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

Correlation Matrix

Table 2 presents correlation among narcissism, ethical behaviour and emotional intelligence. In this sample narcissism has shown a negative relationship with ethical behaviour, emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence has shown positive and significant relationship with ethical behaviour.

Table 2: Pearson correlation for the study variables (N=310)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NAR</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EB</td>
<td>-0.9**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EI</td>
<td>0.19**</td>
<td>14*</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results given in the table 2 showed that Correlation between narcissism and ethical behaviour was found out to be (-0.9**) whereas with emotional intelligence it was (.19**). Moreover, Emotional intelligence of an individual is significantly and positively related to ethical behaviour (.14*).

Table 3 displays the results of regression model. The relationship between narcissism and ethical behaviour which explained a significant variance of $R^2$ ($\Delta R^2 = .04$, $p=-0.001$) with beta values ($\beta = .20$, $p=.001$) which show that narcissism was significantly negatively related to ethical behaviour.

Table 3: Regression analysis showing the impact of Narcissism in the prediction of Ethical Behaviour after controlling demographic variables. These findings support hypothesis H1, in which it was proposed that Narcissism is inversely proportional to ethical behaviour so narcissistic people mostly display unethical behaviour.

Hierarchical Moderated Regression Analysis of Variables

Table 4 presents the hierarchical moderated regression analysis of narcissism, emotional intelligence and ethical behaviour. In first step all the demographic variables were controlled. Then in the second step independent variable and moderator variable were regressed on dependent variable and in the third step an interaction term was created by multiplying Predictor and Moderator to measure the effects of moderation. The examination of the effects of interaction of emotional intelligence on the relationship of narcissism and ethical behaviour are given in the table below.

Table 4: Impact of Emotional Intelligence on the relationship between Narcissism and Ethical Behaviour

A hierarchical moderated regression analysis was conducted to test the $H_2$ that emotional intelligence significantly moderates the relationship between narcissism and ethical behaviour. The results reflected the interaction between narcissism and ethical behaviour, emotional intelligence and
revealed a non-significant variance of $R^2 (\Delta R^2 = .00, p = 0.56)$ reflecting beta value ($\beta = -.28, p = .56$). The inclusion of interaction term did not bring significant change, thus results did not support the hypothesis 2.

**Discussion**

Narcissism, also called the negative attribute of the leadership has attracted the interest of the researchers in fairly recent years (Carpenter, 2012). This interest was accentuated by the news of unethical leadership in the recent past that triggered the researchers’ attention toward the destructive potentials of the leadership (Judge, Piccolo, & Kosalka, 2009). So far the researchers and theorist have mainly been focusing on the constructive leadership behaviours following trait and behavioural approaches for a long time and the negative side of the leadership remained unobserved (Bono & Judge, 2004; Derue, Nahrgang, Wellman, & Humphrey, 2011) needs to be investigated.

The present study noticeably identifies that narcissist personality is a key element of ethical behaviour of an individual and it’s very important individual trait in creating and determining organizational values and responsive environment. The findings of our hypotheses that narcissism is inversely proportional to ethical behaviour are consistent with the findings of (Anand, Ashforth, & Joshi, 2004; Duchon & Drake, 2009) recognized highly narcissistic associations can’t carry on ethically in light of the fact that they don’t have an ethical character, i.e., a self-idea well-ordered good characteristics. Once unethical behaviour is institutionalized, people in the association will, incongruously, consider themselves as ethical and proceed with their unethical behaviour without strings of soul (Anand et al., 2004) for external these practices are visibly wrong, yet insiders can’t see anything awful.

In this study we found that narcissistic personality has a negative relationship with ethical behaviour. Consequently, we found that narcissists possess unethical behaviours because of these people influenced and labelled by a feeling of magnificence and transcendence, together with a yearning for appreciation and esteem, and are well on the way to ascend to the places of authority as a result of their over displayed qualities (Jørstad, 1996). Therefore it can be determined that for narcissists it is difficult to understand the principles of ethical atmosphere and behaviour which shows factual honesty, empathy, trustworthiness, ethical and moral values which are crucial portion to make a domain in which making the best choice is esteemed (M. E. Brown, Treviño, & Harrison, 2005). The ethical behaviour integrates employee’s thoughtfulness to ethical concerns in order to maintain right ethical principles, and no compromise on setting moral benchmarks to enhance the organizations primary concern. Nevertheless when employees who are narcissist operate in ethical work environment tries to affect not only his own position and also led the organization and other individuals to be more inclined to participate in unfortunate behaviour.

The other hypotheses of the current study investigated that emotional intelligence of narcissistic people is likely to moderate and reduce their unethical behaviour. Surprisingly the results of our second hypothesis did not support our hypotheses because the empirical evidence has shown considerable increase in the unethical behaviour of narcissistic people with the application of emotional intelligence. That shows the negative use of their emotional intelligence by narcissistic people. They use their emotional intelligence to exploit the emotions of others to their advantage. This finding is also hundred percent in sync with the negative attributes of narcissistic people.

**Strengths and Limitations**

This research has certain strengths. We find support of the relationship between narcissism and ethical behaviour. We also empirically investigated the buffering impact of emotional intelligence on narcissism and ethical behaviour. Our hypotheses regarding the buffering impact of emotional intelligence was not supported and led us to reveal that narcissistic personality with emotional intelligence further displays unethical behaviour rather than ethical.

The limitations of the present study are as follows

All the data collected are cross- sectional therefore, causal inferences cannot be drawn. Moreover did not represent all the provinces proportionately and mainly it was the representation of only province of Punjab although gender distribution was well managed. This study also kept its scope very broad including both public and private telecom sector whereas it should have been narrowed down to only one sector for a deep insight and thorough investigation.

**Future Directions**

In future longitudinal data can help to deeply explore the relationship among variables. Moreover additional moderators like leader member exchange
and other job outcomes like job satisfaction, turnover intentions and organizational commitment can also be studied by further exploring the relationship of narcissism on exhibiting ethical behaviours. As the interest of people in ethical practices in business is gaining more importance there is a need for the researchers to explore the fields of negative leadership behaviours like narcissism. Emotional intelligence also needs more explanation from the researchers as part of the construct.

CONCLUSION
The aims of this empirical study was to find association between narcissism, a potentially negative and destructive leadership trait and the ethical behaviour and then see the moderating effect of emotional intelligence on this association. Two hypotheses were tested using empirical data gathered for the study. One hypotheses was accepted but the other was rejected due to empirical evidence. The present study concluded that there is a negative association between narcissism and ethical behaviour. It was also concluded that presence of emotional intelligence with narcissistic characteristics can further deteriorate the ethical behaviour of an individual.

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