

Academic Achievement Differences in Grandiose and Vulnerable Narcissists and the Mediating Effects of Self-Esteem and Self-Efficacy

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Abstract : Narcissism is a personality trait characterized by selfishness, entitlement, and superiority. Narcissism is split into two subtypes, grandiose narcissism (GN) and vulnerable narcissism (VN). Grandiose narcissists are extraverted and arrogant, while vulnerable narcissists are introverted and insecure. This study investigates the psychological mechanisms that lead to differences in academic achievement (AA) between grandiose and vulnerable narcissists, specifically the mediating effects of self-esteem and self-efficacy. While narcissism is considered to be a negative trait, one of the Dark Triads, GN, has been found to have some benefits; therefore, this study considers if better AA is one of them. Moreover, further research into VN is essential to fully compare and contrast it with GN. We hypothesize that grandiose narcissists achieve higher marks due to having high self-esteem and self-efficacy. In comparison, we hypothesize that vulnerable narcissists underperform and achieve lower marks due to having low self-esteem and self-efficacy. Two online surveys were distributed to undergraduate university students. The first was a collection of scales measuring the mentioned dimensions and semester one AA, and the second investigated end of year AA. Sequential mediation analyses were conducted using the gathered data. Our analysis shows that neither self-esteem nor self-efficacy mediates the relationship between GN and AA. GN positively predicts self-esteem but has no relationship with self-efficacy. Self-esteem does not mediate the relationship between VN and AA. VN has a negative indirect effect on AA via self-efficacy, and VN negatively predicts self-esteem. Self-efficacy positively predicts AA. GN does not affect AA through the mediation of self-esteem and then self-efficacy, and neither does VN in this way. Overall, having grandiose or vulnerable narcissistic traits does not affect students' AA. However, being highly efficacious does lead to academic success; therefore, universities should employ methods to improve the self-efficacy of their students.

Keywords : academic achievement, grandiose narcissism, self-efficacy, self-esteem, vulnerable narcissism

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