

## **OTHER THAN ME?: THE ROLE OF NARCISSISM IN DISCUSSING DIVERSITY**

Vance Johnson Lewis, University of Central Arkansas

Malcolm North, University of Central Arkansas

Steven Schlachter, University of Central Arkansas

### **ABSTRACT**

Much discussion has recently been placed not only on the role of diversity but also narcissism in both organizations and society as a whole. The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between narcissism and an individual's thoughts, opinions, and attitudes on diversity. Given that narcissism, by definition, causes an inward focus, the study sought to understand how this inward facing trait affects the outward facing issue of diversity. Framed within self-verification theory, we used a mixed methods approach to investigate individual expressions of diversity and their relationship to levels of narcissism. Seventy-two participants completed the Narcissistic Personality Inventory and an essay expressing their views on diversity. Linguistic analysis was conducted to determine if expressions of diversity were predominantly prosocial or proself. Results indicated that narcissism is related to expressions of diversity. Prosocial expressions correlated positively with positive expressions of diversity and correlated negatively with proself expressions. Implications and suggestions for future research are discussed.

*Keywords:* Diversity, Narcissism, Identity, Personality, Mixed-methods

### **INTRODUCTION**

There are two kinds of people in the world, those who believe there are two kinds of people in the world and those who don't. (Robert Benchley)

Workplace trends indicate that workplace diversity has been steadily increasing for quite some time (Cox, Lobel, & McLeod, 1991; Williams & O'Reilly, 1998). Given this shift, scholars have attempted to uncover how diversity affects organizational outcomes (McKay & Avery, 2015) along with what factors affect how diversity is defined within the organization (e.g. Katz & Miller, 2016). Just as emphasis on diversity has increased, so too has the focus on the "dark side" of society, particularly in conjunction with narcissism. While a myriad of studies have been offered investigating narcissism's impact on today's organizations, narcissism's role in defining diversity has not been explored. This paper aims to fill this gap by investigating the associations, if any, between narcissism and an individual's thoughts, opinions, and attitudes on diversity in organizations.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### Narcissism

While the historic foundation of narcissism stems from the Greek mythological character Narcissus, one so in love with himself that he died transfixed by his own image in a pool of water (Brunell et al., 2008), the modern definition of narcissism describes someone who is charming, with high self-esteem and interpersonal skills, confident (perhaps overly), dominant, and extroverted yet is also aggressive, entitled, unempathetic, exploitive, and unable to take criticism (Campbell, Hoffman, Campbell, & Marchiso, 2011). First introduced in the psychological realm in the early 1970s (Arthur, Woodman, Ong, Hardy, & Ntoumanis, 2011), on the clinical level, narcissism is defined as a personality disorder in which one shows a continued pattern of need for admiration and a lack of empathy for others (APA, 2013). Scholars estimate between 1% and 2.2% of the U.S. population exhibits narcissistic characteristics (Sosik, Chun, & Zhu, 2014; Brunell et al., 2008). On the subclinical level, narcissists are described as being excessively confident with a desire for authoritative roles while demonstrating a disregard for others (Campbell & Foster, 2007). While clinical narcissism is defined through psychological diagnosis, subclinical narcissism is seen as a universal trait appearing in most individuals on a continuum as everyone registers some levels of narcissism (Coutu, 2004; Foster & Campbell, 2007; Miller & Campbell, 2010; Wales, Patel, & Lumpkin, 2013), ranging from mild to severe (Foster & Campbell, 2007; de Vries & Miller, 1985).

The study of narcissism has been primarily related to leadership functions (e.g. Brown & Trevino, 2006; de Luque, Washburn, Waldman, & House, 2008), mostly negative (Judge, LePine, & Rich, 2006; de Vries & Miller, 1985), as those in leadership positions are usually found to have at least moderate to high levels of narcissism (McCoby, 2000; Rosenthal, 2006; Vogel, 2006). While there has been a strong presence of narcissism in works of mythology and fiction (e.g., Lauwers, 2009; Wright, 1980), along with the aforementioned area of leadership, few studies to the researchers' knowledge have investigated the relationship between narcissism and emotional expressions and fewer still have addressed the relationship between narcissism and expressions of diversity. As research has shown that one's use of words can provide an invaluable means of assessing behavioral, emotional, and cognitive processes (Pennebaker, Mehl, & Niederhoffer, 2003), this study provides understanding of how narcissists express their thoughts and opinions on diversity, with particular significance in relation to the word choices and syntax used to discuss diversity. Specifically, this study performs linguistic analysis on terminology, syntax and phraseology to see if the use of prosocial language (positive social reflections of diversity regarding difference and acceptance in others) or proself language (ego-centered language) dominates in those with higher levels of narcissism.

### Diversity

Historically, there has been evidence of traits predicting attitudes towards diversity. Previous investigations of traits included Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, and Sanford (1950) who through the authoritarian personality (TAP) argued that prejudices and hatred towards out-groups (such as religious and ethnic groups) was driven by internal stimuli (Stone, Lederer, & Christie, 2012). Research has related the authoritarian personality to prejudice (Luterman & Middleton,

1970; Roberts & Rokeach, 1956), right-wing extremism, and negative attitudes about women and immigrants (Oesterreich, 2005).

Inspired and founded by the roots of TAP, Altemeyer (1981, 1988) refined a new construct, the Right-Wing Authoritarianism (RWA), a belief held by people that causes them to fear out-groups due to the threat they pose to the values the individual holds, which they often believe to be more moral and absolute. They tend to socialize with individuals that have highly similar belief systems and recite rhetoric that tends to be ethnocentric (Altemeyer, 1988). Years later came the development of Social Dominance Orientation (SDO), or the “extent to which one desires that one’s in-group dominate and be superior to out-groups” (Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, & Malle, 1994, p. 742).

With the rise of the Five Factor Model of personality (e.g., Big Five) (Costa & McCrae, 1992; McCrae & Costa, 1987), a new option for diversity analysis was available. Initial findings suggested a connection between the prosocial constructs of openness to experience and the agreeableness dimensions with prejudice (Ekehammar & Akrami, 2003) – a finding that was repeated in a meta-analysis conducted by Sibley and Duckitt (2008). More precisely, as suggested by Duckitt (2001), the meta-analytic results indicated that Social Dominance Orientation (SDO) and Right-Wing Authoritarianism (RWA) mediated these relationships, consistent with previous large-scale investigations of all three phenomenon (Ekehammar, Akrami, Gylje, & Zakrisson, 2004). While we are not specifically focused on the Big Five, SDO, TAP, or RWA, an overall conclusion of this research is that there is evidence that personality can affect one’s views on social and organizational diversity. Given that narcissism is a trait of personality with few prosocial attributes, we questioned whether it may have a relationship to an individual’s views on diversity.

How an individual mentally defines diversity may also affect their perception of its value and there is evidence that individual and contextual factors can affect this conclusion. In their comprehensive definition, Bassett-Jones (2005) defined diversity as encompassing a range of differences in ethnicity/nationality, gender, function, ability, language, religion, lifestyle or tenure. Additionally, diversity in the workplace includes more than the demographic elements of the employees; rather, it encompasses differences in culture and intellectual capability. Research has suggested that different forms of diversity may differentially affect organizational outcomes as a function of their job-relatedness (Pelled, 1996).

At its broadest, “a group is diverse if it is composed of individuals who differ on a characteristic on which they base their own social identity” (O’Reilly, Williams, & Barsade, 1998, p. 186). To some, diversity may bring forth images of phenotype identity groups, which are individuals that have physical markers that distinguish them from other groups (e.g., gender, ethnicity), and includes terms such as demographic diversity (Cox, 1994; McGrath, Berdahl, & Arrow, 1995) and ethnic diversity (King et al., 2011). Others may consider culture identity groups which relate to sociocultural differences, such as individuals who share norms and values (Cox, 1994). Some scholars have expressly explored cross-functional diversity, which is the inclusion of team members from different functional areas in an attempt to increase the type of perspectives used in design and reduce issues not foreseen by a group that is siloed from others (Keller, 2001).

Other characteristics, including personality and functional background, have even appeared in the diversity literature (Roberson, 2006). Organizational programs, such as affinity groups or employee resource groups, have expanded to include veterans and single parents (England, 2016). A conclusion might be that one's actual definition of diversity may relate to the literature or context it is used in. Practitioner research, for example, was particularly broad in its definition so as to "limit potential resistance from dominant groups" and included both "classical diversity axes such as race, gender, and disability" with "others such as age, corporate background, education, and personality" (Zanoni & Janssens, 2004, p. 56). Diversity defined in handbooks of organizational behavior, on the other hand, are particularly narrow in their definition and tend to focus more specifically on demographic characteristics only. Research has even suggested that different forms of diversity may differentially affect organizational outcomes as a function of their job-relatedness (Pelled, 1996). Finally, individuals may consider diversity as a synonym or euphemism for other language. Ahmed (2007), in a discussion with practitioners, found that diversity had emerged as a replacement term used in universities since words such as equality and equity had become overused or lost their influence.

Outside the academic and practitioner literature, qualitative investigations have asked individuals to define diversity in their own words. Bell and Hartmann (2007) broached conversations by asking individuals "what does diversity mean to you?" and discovered that respondents fell into two general camps. The first group defined diversity by offering definitions and often engaged in list-making where they dictated what social differences constitute diversity (e.g., racial background, political differences, theological differences, gender, religion, parenting style, etc.). The other group saw diversity as equivalent to a moral imperative – a call to accept everyone regardless of their differences. Regardless of the type of answer provided, the researchers observed that generally everyone was particularly "upbeat" or positive about the term diversity. However, when pressed to provide concrete examples or expand on their views, individuals had difficulty finding the right language to communicate. In addition, even before being prompted, they were often quick to caveat their positivity by talking about the concerns or threats that diversity offered.

In uncovering this language, it was clear that some individuals viewed diversity as a real threat to national unity and a catalyst to misunderstandings, especially if there was "excessive diversity." While this conversation about how diversity is defined may seem tangent to the research question at hand, what it does demonstrate is that taken together, the variation in the definitions of diversity suggests that diversity is not a uniform construct but rather partially defined by one's own belief systems and their context; thus, different personality traits may affect perceptions of diversity and its place in organizations. Finally, how individuals view diversity in organizations may also be influenced by their beliefs about what roles organizations should play in the process. Some scholars have argued that organizations have a moral obligation to ensure that individuals are treated equitably at work (Doherty & Chelladurai, 1999). Other research has attempted to stress the business case for successfully managing diversity in affecting organizational outcomes such as cost and profitability (e.g., Cox & Blake, 1991). In these situations, it is not just about increasing the quantity of diversity in an organization, but rather leveraging the experiences of being a diverse organization to complete organizational work (e.g., Thomas & Ely, 1996). At times, individuals use both arguments (Ahmed, 2007) and are seen as complementary (Leonard, 2018). Strong moral convictions about the societal importance of diversity in organizations may alleviate any concerns

that accompany research that links greater heterogeneity in organizations with group cohesiveness (Keller, 2001) or social divisions (Mannix & Neale, 2005).

When viewed as a collective knowledge, the views on diversity can be summarized into two basic premises. First, diversity is something that is open to interpretation based on the individual characteristics and circumstances of the perceiver. Second, because diversity is a function of individual thought, traits of the individual can affect the perceptions and articulation of diversity. An interesting question arises from the intersection of considering narcissism as an individual trait and diversity as a social construct. Based on this foundation, the following research question was asked:

*RQ: What is the relationship between narcissism and individual thoughts, opinions, and attitudes towards diversity?*

### **DEFINITION OF TERMS**

Along with the previous discussions of narcissism and diversity, two other terms in this study warrant clarification. Within this study, prosocial behaviors are those which work to protect or promote other individuals, groups, and organizations (Brief & Motowidlo, 1986). Proself behaviors inversely are behaviors in which the individual's well-being is placed above the well-being of others (Joireman & Duell, 2005), which naturally includes the trait of narcissism and acts of egocentrism.

### **THEORY AND HYPOTHESIS**

Though limited, previous research has investigated some aspects of the language of narcissists. Generally regarded as the first research on the topic, Raskin & Shaw (1988), investigated the use of personal pronouns in connection with narcissistic levels. In the experiment, participants were asked to speak for five minutes on any topic they selected, with transcriptions then being analyzed for first person pronoun use, introduced as "I-Talk". The results of the study showed a relationship between narcissism and first-person pronoun use but not between second or third-person voice nor with the personality traits of locus of control, extroversion, and neuroticism. When present, I-Talk is more associated with males than females (Fast & Funder, 2008). While Amernic & Craig (2007) assert that narcissistic language features excessive use of "I" and "My", other researchers have not found this to be true. In their large scale language analysis consisting of 15 different sampling populations, Carey et al. (2015, p. e9) found "a near-zero effect" between narcissism and I-Talk. While investigating the everyday behaviors of narcissists, Holtzman, Vazire, and Mehl (2010) found little evidence to connect narcissism and I-Talk.

The use of language by narcissists has been observed in a few other settings, again with some conflicting results. While studying the relationship between Twitter posts and the Dark Triad of personality (narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy), Sumner, Byers, Boochever, and Parks (2012) found no significant relationship between narcissism and the use of swear words nor anger language; however, Golbeck (2016), again analyzing Twitter posts, found that those with high narcissism scores were significantly more likely to use swear words and anger language. This same study found an inverse relationship between narcissism and the use of positive emotions

when discussing human interactions. Narcissists have also been shown to use higher levels of sexual language (Holtzman, et al., 2010).

Narcissism is an aspect of personality which is inexorably tied to one's concern for the manner in which others view them. As posited by Swann, Self-Verification Theory "proposes that people prefer others to see them as they see themselves, even if their self-views happen to be negative" (2011, p. 23). Remembering that at their core, narcissists view themselves as superior to others (APA, 2013; Campbell & Foster, 2007), despite perhaps having a fragile sense of self (Kernis, Cornell, Sun, Berry, & Harlow, 1993), narcissists are likely to define others in a manner consistent with maintaining their superior self-view. Because individuals seek to stabilize their opinion of themselves, once the self-viewpoint has been formed, they are likely to seek and embrace situations in which their self-view is reinforced and avoid situations which challenge them (Wiesenfeld, Swann, Brockner, & Bartel, 2007). As narcissists view themselves as superior to others, their views on diversity, which requires the embracement of others, is likely to be expressed in a negative manner.

When considering this self-verification, it is important to remember that narcissists are extremely critical of others and create enemies where there are none (Glad, 2002; Harwood, 2003; Morf & Rhodewalt, 2001; Wink, 1991), expecting perfection from others (Stoeber, Sherry, & Nealis, 2015), and a willingness to exploit others for their own betterment (Lubit, 2002). They view themselves as more intelligent than others (e.g. Campbell, Bosson, Goheen, Lakey, & Kernis, 2007; Campbell, Rudich and Sedikides, 2002; Gabriel, Critelli, & Ee, 1994) and are willing to speak poorly of others to maintain their self-image (Campbell, Reeder, Sedikides, & Elliot, 2000). Despite the narcissists continual need for social status (Benson, Jordan, & Christie, 2016) and admiration from others (Kohut, 1971), their views might best be shaped by the viewpoint that life is a competition in which there can only be one winner (Raskin, Novacek, & Hogan, 1991). The ego-centric nature of narcissism contrasts with the social concerns of diversity, prompting the following hypotheses:

*H1: There will be positive associations between narcissism scores and the use of ego-centric language when discussing diversity.*

*H2: There will be negative associations between narcissism scores and the use of pro-social language when discussing diversity.*

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Participants**

Participants in this exploratory study were 72 students of business communications at a mid-sized university in the southern United States. Participants received course credit for their participation in the exercise. Participants ranged in age from 17 to 42, with a mean age of 22. The gender was split equally (male = 36; female = 36) with 26.4% being African American (females = 12; males = 7), 64.3% being white (female = 22, male = 25) and 8.4% as Hispanic, Latino, Asian or other (female = 2, male = 4).

## **Data Collection**

Participants completed two surveys at two differing points in time. Utilizing Qualtrics, participants were first asked to complete the 40 item Narcissistic Personality Inventory (Raskin & Terry, 1988) along with some basic demographic questions (age, race, gender, college major). Because we wanted to provide context for the diversity related questions that followed, one week later participants were given an original case study authored by the research team which discussed the issue of diversity after which they were asked to respond to two questions related to diversity (see appendix). Participants submitted their essays electronically at which time they responded to the question “Do you think you are a narcissist?”. Responses were analyzed using IBM SPSS and LIWC software.

## **Narcissistic Personality Inventory**

Participants were administered an electronic version of The Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI; Raskin & Terry, 1988) which presents 40 pairs of statements to which participants indicate to which statement they more agree. Each pair of statements contains one item which corresponds to one of seven sub-scales: three lower-order factors (authority, self-sufficiency, superiority) and four high-order factors (exploitiveness, exhibitionism, entitlement, and vanity). In each pair, the statement representing the narcissistic statement is assigned the number 1 and the other the number 0. A total score, which can range from 0 to 40, is created from totaling the responses. An example of a pairing would be, “I can read people like a book”, and, “People are sometimes hard to understand”. Scores from the NPI totals and subscales produced continuous data. These were then transformed to produce a categorical variable with three identifying levels: normal level (1-16), low-level (17-23) and high-level narcissism (24-40) to test for associations. The reliability of the NPI was measured with Cronbach’s alpha,  $\alpha = .858$  (Table 1).

## **Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count Software**

The most recent edition of the Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC) (Pennebaker, Boyd, Jordan, & Blackburn, 2015) was used to analyze the essay responses. The standard LIWC 2015 dictionary set was used to examine the essay responses from 72 participants regarding their thoughts, opinions and attitudes towards diversity. The standard dictionary contains more than 100 categories of words and syntax to analyze motives, expressions, and emotions in an objective measure (Tausczik & Pennebaker, 2010). While the full dictionary set was used, of particular interest were expressions that conceptually associated with ego-centric use (“I”, “me”, and “my” personal pronoun use) and terms that may associate with narcissism (e.g., achievement, power, risk) and expressions of prosocial language (affect, affiliation, social).

## **RESULTS**

To study if associations existed among the demographic variables, narcissism and expressions of diversity, the researchers ran several Pearson product moment correlations. Initial Pearson correlations between the 40-item NPI questionnaire and the texts analyzed with the full dictionary set of the LIWC revealed two broad associative trends. Language that could be associated with the prosocial construct of diversity had negative correlations with narcissism, while language

consistent with proself characteristics were positively correlated (Table 1). These small to medium correlations indicated that a general trend consistent with our hypothesis existed; however, more analysis was needed to understand the nature, difference and effect of the associations in the sample. Correlations for the seven factors of narcissism and total scores of the NPI indicated that the sample showed dominate levels of entitlement ( $r = .741$ ), authority ( $r = .714$ ), and exhibitionism ( $r = .693$ ) over the higher-order narcissistic qualities of exploitation ( $r = .593$ ), and vanity ( $r = .575$ ) (Table 2). While this supports previous research that found high correlations between entitlement and college samples (i.e. Ciani, Summers, & Easter, 2008), few significant correlations were found among the categorical variables, narcissism and expressions of diversity. To explore these correlations, we analyzed the data with chi-square and eta-square tests of association.

Table 1. Exploratory correlations between the NPI-40 questionnaire and texts analyzed with the full dictionary set of the LIWC

	NPI items
<b>Prosocial Variables</b>	
Affect	-.444*
Affiliation	-.282*
Social	-.235*
<b>Individual Proself Variables</b>	
Power	.293*
Achievement	.266*
Drive	.278*
Risk	.315*

Note.  $N=72$  NPI =Narcissistic Personality Inventory 40-questionnaire items. \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .001$

Table 2. Mean, standard deviations, and correlations for narcissism subscales and total scores.

Subscale of NPI-40	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>r</i> NPI-40
Authority	5.13	2.20	.714**
Self-Sufficiency	2.72	1.57	.587**
Exhibitionism	1.90	1.69	.693**
Superiority	2.23	1.40	.621**
Exploitive	2.05	1.46	.593**
Vanity	1.25	1.03	.575**
Entitlement	2.04	1.63	.741**
Self-Appraisal	1.81	.398	-.250*
Cronbach's Alpha NPI			.858

Note.  $N=72$ , \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .001$

We first analyzed the presence of associations among levels of narcissism and participants' self-appraisal of narcissism. While 18% self-reported as narcissists, performance on the NPI indicated a different story with over 38% of respondents showing levels a narcissism above normal levels with 26.4% indicating low-level narcissism and 12.5% indicating high-level narcissism.

Consistent with the current literature on narcissism (e.g. Bushman & Baumeister, 1999; Young & Pinsky, 2006), males showed greater proportion than females in the high-level narcissism group (males = 7; females = 2); however, this trend was slightly reversed in the low-level group (males = 8, females = 11) and normal level group of narcissism (males = 21, females = 23). While this is interesting, a chi-squared test of independence showed this was not a statistically significant difference between gender and narcissism levels ( $\chi^2 = 3.342, p = .188$ ). To measure association between categorical and the continuous measures, we tested the strength of associations and size effect using eta-squared. Eta associations ( $\eta$ ) and eta-squared ( $\eta^2$ ) effect sizes between narcissism and prosocial expressions indicate that affect ( $\eta = .290, \eta^2 = .08$ ), social ( $\eta = .230, \eta^2 = .05$ ), and affiliation ( $\eta = .185, \eta^2 = .03$ ) revealed small to medium effects explaining less than 10% of the variance in these variables. Eta associations ( $\eta$ ) and eta-squared ( $\eta^2$ ) effect sizes between narcissism and proself or ego-centric expressions of power ( $\eta = .201, \eta^2 = .04$ ), risk ( $\eta = .337, \eta^2 = .11$ ), and achievement ( $\eta = .265, \eta^2 = .07$ ) had small associations explaining up to 11% of the variance. Eta associations ( $\eta$ ) and eta-squared ( $\eta^2$ ) effect sizes between gender and the individual dimensions of narcissism were authority ( $\eta = .404, \eta^2 = .16$ ), and exhibitionism ( $\eta = .398, \eta^2 = .15$ ) for medium effect, self-sufficiency ( $\eta = .217, \eta^2 = .047$ ), entitlement ( $\eta = .267, \eta^2 = .07$ ), exploitation ( $\eta = .266, \eta^2 = .07$ ), superiority ( $\eta = .304, \eta^2 = .09$ ), and vanity ( $\eta = .242, \eta^2 = .058$ ) for small effect (Table 3).

Table 3. Associations and Effect sizes for Categorical variables

	$\eta$	$\eta^2$
<b>Narcissism subscales &amp; Gender</b>		
Authority	.404	.16
Self-Sufficiency	.217	.04
Exhibitionism	.398	.15
Superiority	.304	.09
Exploitive	.266	.07
Vanity	.242	.05
Entitlement	.267	.07
<b>Narcissism levels &amp; LIWC</b>		
Prosocial		
Affect	.290	.08
Social	.230	.05
Affiliation	.185	.03
Proself		
Power	.201	.04
Achievement	.201	.04
Risk	.265	.07

Eta Squared tests of association  $\eta$  and effect size  $\eta^2$

In comparing gender differences in narcissism by a simple  $t$  test, males consistently presented with higher levels across all factors except for vanity (males  $1.11 \pm .99$ ; females  $1.39 \pm 1.0$ ) with a mean difference of .27,  $t(70) = 1.145, p = .256$ . We conducted an independent-samples  $t$  test to compare self-appraisal of oneself as a narcissist was significant among the seven factors of narcissism.

Males self-reported higher levels of exhibitionism ( $2.61 \pm 1.70$ ) compared to females ( $1.53 \pm 1.44$ ) which was statistically significant  $t(65) = .951, p = .023, d = .48$  for a medium effect size. These findings generally support our hypothesis that associations between narcissism and expressions of diversity exist. As expected, language used to describe diversity positively correlated with prosocial expressions and negatively with proself. The largest correlations occurred with low-order narcissism traits where the nature, effect and size of associations revealed that males present with narcissistic traits more than females with exhibitionism explaining a sizeable 48% of the narcissistic trait in males.

## **DISCUSSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH**

The purpose of this descriptive and exploratory study was to first establish if a relationship between narcissism and individual thoughts, opinions, and attitudes towards diversity existed. Though limited, previous research led the researchers to believe that some type of relationship would exist and thus the ego-centric nature of narcissism would affect any such relationships. Results indicated that indeed a relationship did exist with further analysis confirming a positive relationship between narcissism and the use of proself language and a negative relationship between narcissism and the use of prosocial language.

The positive associations with narcissism levels and proself variables within the diversity discussions warrants further investigation. While the areas of “power” and “achievement” may not be particularly unexpected, the emergence of “risk” within the diversity articulation is not only surprising but perhaps an alarming manifestation of self-verification (Table 1). Remembering the connections between narcissism and leadership (McCoby, 2000; Rosenthal, 2006; Vogel, 2006), the emergence of significant patterns of prosocial variables in relation to diversity could be indicative of an incompatibility of narcissism with the embracement of diversity. While the role of diversity within the organization has been positively linked directly or indirectly to group performance (Pitts, 2009), organizational commitment (Findler, Wind, & Barak, 2007), technical quality (Keller, 2001), and job satisfaction (Findler et al., 2007; Pitts, 2009), there could be a potential link between narcissism and negative effects of diversity such as decreased cohesiveness (Keller, 2001), higher team turnover (Jackson et al., 1991), and lower levels of psychological attachment to the organization (Tsui, Egan, & O’Reilly, 1992). Future research should most certainly use narcissistic views toward diversity as a tool in better understanding organizational diversity as a whole and how best to encourage embracing diversity within an organization.

As previous research has been conflicted on the role of narcissism in the use of I-Talk, little expectation was held in relation to narcissistic level and use of personal pronouns in the current study. Still, even without the use of I-Talk, a positive correlation with proself language and narcissism was found. This finding is indicative perhaps of a more covert manifestation of narcissism and the self-verification process. Remembering that once narcissists form their self-image, they embrace situations in which they can reinforce those self-concepts (Wiesenfeld et al, 2007), it is more advantageous to discuss other individuals in a manner which is derogatory thus creating the self-image rather than making continual self-references to define the diversity situation. Alternately said: *this is not about me...I am fine; it is about you.*

Though not particularly central to the current study, the disparity between one's self-declaration of narcissism and the outcomes of their NPI assessment is most interesting. First, given the relatively low number who felt they are narcissistic, although it was asked in a yes/no manner, is indicative that the clinical definition of narcissism is more commonly used on a daily basis than the subclinical continuum. Second, one of the commonly held beliefs is that for psychometric testing to be valid, the participant must not be informed of the testing measure lest they attempt to employ impression management techniques. An interesting follow-up to the findings of this study might be: 1) administer the NPI, 2) ask participants to declare if they feel they are narcissistic, and 3) re-administer the NPI informing the participants that their narcissism level is being tested. Though this serves as just one example, further investigation into one's self-perception of narcissism and their psychometrically proven narcissism is warranted.

Finally, given the college student population used for this study, it was not particularly surprising that exhibitionism was found to have a high level of self-reported narcissism, more so in males but still present in females. This finding is very much in keeping with investigations into traditional college students regarding narcissism (i.e. Ryan & Xenos, 2011). Of much surprise, however, was the high level of authority which was exhibited. With regard to college age students, it would be of interest to learn more about the basis on which authoritative viewpoints are formed.

The results of this study supported both the research question and hypotheses; however, the study itself may have been limited by the population and setting. Using college students, the variability of age and life experience may have been limited. Also limiting might have been the manner in which the data itself was collected. Though the questions asked did afford the participants some latitude in their discussion approach, it is possible that the case study itself might have overly directed the participants toward a certain type of answer. A replication of this study would be well served to use a random sampling method as well as a more open-ended method, not unlike the method used by Raskin and Shaw (1988) which simply asks "How do you define diversity?".

Using the findings of this study, the research team plans to conduct a second study which takes the word patterns found through the qualitative aspects of this study to conduct a quantitative study. Again, using random sampling, participants will be administered the NPI short form (Ames, Rose, & Anderson, 2006) and asked to rank order the dictionary word found in this study to define diversity. Through this method, more direct correlations between narcissism and diversity words can be drawn and the potential for external variability can be controlled.

## CONCLUSION

Today's society continues to experience both higher attention to and embracement of diversity as well as continues to find higher and higher levels of narcissism from those who are expected to embrace diversity. Our study found that narcissism plays a significant role in the manner in which individuals define diversity. Given the findings of this study, further research into how diversity is defined not just by narcissism but a myriad of other personality traits is warranted within diversity studies and organizational behavior.

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## APPENDIX

### Case study

Please consider the following case study which explores some recent events involving diversity. Consider how you would react if you worked for one or all of the companies mentioned. Ask yourself if you agree or disagree and think about how your own experiences and education have shaped your worldview. Following the case study are three questions to which you are asked to respond. For questions #1 and #2, please offer discussions of 150 to 200 words each which explores your thoughts prompted by the question. THERE ARE NO RIGHT OR WRONG ANSWERS so please feel the freedom to answer the statements as YOU feel appropriate.

### Google, Diversity, and You

The idea of diversity within organizations is certainly not a new concept; however, how the idea of diversity is manifested within organizations still proves to be complicated and controversial. In August of 2017, James Damore, an engineer with Google, offered a 10-page internal memo in which he argued that certain biological differences play a role in the shortage of women in both leadership positions as well as technologically based positions and that Google's efforts for diversity are "highly politicized." Other prominent companies such as Uber and Facebook have also recently faced criticism for how they address diversity within their organization. Google (with Damore specifically), Uber, and Facebook have all terminated employees, both in leadership and supporting roles, for not "embracing" diversity.

According to the article "Corporate Diversity Programs in 2017: What's Working and What's Not" published by global consulting firm Aperian Global, most companies have some type of diversity statement, produce researched diversity reports, and offer some type of incentives for diversity and equal opportunity in hiring practices. With this debate about the approaches to the issue of equal opportunity has thus evolved a question: "is research and definition of the problem a strong first step, or should organizations be more focused on taking direct action?"

One company that seems to have addressed the issue of diversity successfully is global health care product manufacturer Johnson & Johnson. After a perfect rating from *Diversity, Inc.*, Johnson & Johnson developed their online Diversity University which provides diversity-related resources, cultural awareness training tools, and classes that introduce the concepts, personal benefits, and business advantages of diversity. As offered by Dr. Martin Fitchet, Global Head of Research and Development, "Diversity is an essential part of the answer to the challenge of innovation. We have to be open to different ways of thinking about what qualities we want to be diverse: diversity of identity, diversity of age, diversity of outlook." To date, 43% of management positions at Johnson & Johnson are held by females.

Not all companies have been as success full as Johnson and Johnson in addressing diversity and some still feel the efforts are unnecessary. As offered by Aperian Global, using material from the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, the number of workers who represent specific groups is indicative of the company's actual commitment to and understanding of diversity. While many companies implement diversity training programs, research has shown that doing so can actually cause feelings of alienation from groups who are not the focus of the training. "Many companies focus on specific diversity initiatives, such as expanding racial diversity in the workplace or bringing women into leadership and tech positions. However, true inclusivity must

also address the needs of LGBT workers, the effects of ageism, and other relevant issues” such as the perspectives of global employees and younger generation workers.

**Questions:**

Q1: Based on your thoughts, what role do you think diversity should play within an organization?

Q2: From an organizational standpoint, what effect do you think having a mandatory diversity program truly has on the individuals within the organization?

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# QRBD

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