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Narcissistic Personality Features and Perceptions of Social Worth at Work: Implications for Job-Related Attitudes

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Abstract: We examined the role that perceptions of social worth played in the connections that narcissistic personality features had with job-related attitudes in a sample of Israeli community members ($N = 814$). Our results showed that the positive associations that the extraverted aspect of narcissism had with each of the job-related attitudes were mediated by status-based social worth. In contrast, the neurotic aspect of narcissism was *negatively* associated with job-related attitudes – with the exception of the perceived quality of alternative jobs – and these associations were mediated by status-based social worth. Antagonistic narcissism was negatively associated with job-related attitudes, but perceptions of social worth seemed to play little role in these associations. The discussion is focused on the role that perceptions of social worth may play in the connections between narcissism and job-related attitudes.

1. Introduction

A large body of literature is devoted to narcissism, but relatively few of these studies have considered how narcissism is connected with job-related attitudes. The studies that have considered the link between narcissism and outcomes in the workplace have shown that narcissistic individuals often report more negative attitudes at work than other people (e.g., Choi, 2019; Kopelman & Mullins, 1992; Mathieu, 2013). This suggests that narcissistic grandiosity and feelings of entitlement may lead individuals to adopt unfavorable views of their jobs (e.g., Maynard et al., 2015). However, studies that have considered particular narcissistic personality features have revealed more complex connections between narcissism and job-related attitudes. For example, antagonistic forms of narcissism have negative associations with job commitment (i.e., the psychological or emotional attachment that an individual has to their job or employer), whereas extraverted forms of narcissism tend to have *positive* associations with job commitment (e.g., Lehtman & Zeigler-Hill, 2020). The goal of this study was to clarify what role – if any – *perceptions of social worth* (i.e., the value that an individual believes is accorded to them in a particular situation; Rothers & Cohrs, 2023) may play in the job-related attitudes experienced by individuals with narcissistic personality features.

1.1 Narcissism and job-related attitudes

Our interest in the links that narcissism has with job-related attitudes stemmed from narcissistic individuals sometimes displaying relatively negative attitudes (e.g., low satisfaction) in other areas, including relationships in the romantic domain (e.g., Zeigler-Hill et al., 2020) as well as platonic friendships (Sauls & Zeigler-Hill, 2020). Although narcissism has often been considered to be a unidimensional construct, it may be best conceptualized as a multidimensional construct with three essential aspects (e.g., Crowe et al., 2019): *extraverted narcissism* (which involves assertive self-enhancement), *antagonistic narcissism* (which involves hostility and self-protection), and *neurotic narcissism* (which involves emotional distress). Studies addressing specific aspects of narcissism have often provided a clearer perspective than those that have employed a unidimensional approach to conceptualizing narcissism. For example, extraverted narcissism often has positive associations with attitudes (e.g., satisfaction) in contexts such as romantic relationships or friendships, whereas antagonistic narcissism tends to be negatively associated with attitudes in these same contexts (e.g., Sauls & Zeigler-Hill, 2020; Zeigler-Hill et al., 2020). Similar patterns have emerged in employment contexts such that extraverted narcissism has positive connections with many job-related attitudes, whereas antagonistic narcissism tends to be negatively associated with some of these same attitudes (Lehtman & Zeigler-Hill, 2020). This suggests that extraverted narcissism tends to be characterized by more positive attitudes in various domains – including employment contexts – than is the case for antagonistic narcissism.

We expected narcissistic personality features to have divergent associations with job-related attitudes. More specifically, we expected extraverted narcissism to be positively associated with job-related attitudes, whereas we expected antagonistic narcissism and neurotic narcissism to be negatively associated with job-related attitudes. Our prediction for extraverted narcissism was based on the idea that it would foster a view of the workplace that may contribute to more positive attitudes. This expected association aligns with previous results showing that narcissistic personality features that are closely related to extraverted narcissism are often positively associated with attitudes in employment contexts (Lehtman & Zeigler-Hill, 2020) as well as other life domains including romantic relationships (Zeigler-Hill et al., 2020) and friendships (Sauls & Zeigler-Hill, 2020). Our prediction that antagonistic narcissism would be negatively associated with job-related attitudes was based on the idea that this aspect of narcissism would foster a hostile view of the workplace that may lead to relatively negative attitudes. This expected association between antagonistic narcissism and job-related attitudes aligns with previous results showing that similar aspects of narcissism have negative associations with attitudes in the workplace (Lehtman & Zeigler-Hill, 2020) as well as other areas including intimate relationships (Zeigler-Hill et al., 2020) and friendships (Sauls & Zeigler-Hill, 2020). This suggests that antagonistic narcissism often involves negative attitudes (e.g., low satisfaction, lack of commitment) across various contexts, including the workplace. The basis for our prediction that neurotic narcissism would have negative associations with job-related attitudes was based on the idea that the negative affect and distress that characterize this aspect of narcissism would prevent the development of particularly positive attitudes toward the workplace. This prediction aligns with previous findings showing that neuroticism – a dimension of personality that has clear similarities with neurotic narcissism (Miller et al., 2018) – often has negative associations with job-related attitudes (e.g., Judge et al., 2002).

1.2 The importance of perceived social worth

There is still disagreement concerning how to conceptualize social worth, but one recent perspective argues that it should focus on how much an individual is valued by others in a particular context (Rothers & Cohrs, 2023). Perceptions of social worth are crucial to how individuals experience various aspects of their lives, including employment contexts, where individuals who feel more valued by their employers and co-workers often express more positive attitudes toward their jobs compared to those who feel less valued in their workplace (e.g., Chen et al., 2012; Ellingsen & Johannesson, 2007; Kurtessis et al., 2017; Ravlin & Thomas, 2005; Shore et al., 2004; Willer, 2009). Although the vast majority of people are believed to care about their social worth, these concerns may be especially pronounced for narcissistic individuals who seem to be particularly attuned to issues surrounding the extent to which others value them (e.g., Lehtman & Zeigler-Hill, 2020; Vrabel et al., 2021; Zeigler-Hill & Vonk, 2023). That is, individuals with narcissistic tendencies appear to have a strong desire for others to view them as having social worth. This narcissistic concern with social worth aligns with the perspective that the origins of narcissism may be found in psychological systems that have

evolved to assist with situations that involve status hierarchies (Zeigler-Hill et al., 2018, 2019).

There are different conceptualizations of social worth (see Rothers & Cohrs, 2023, for a review), but the approach that we employed distinguishes between two primary dimensions of social worth: *status-based social worth* (respect and admiration by others) and *inclusion-based social worth* (liking and acceptance by others; Huo & Binning, 2008; Huo et al., 2010). Although there are obvious differences between feeling *respected* by others and feeling *accepted* by others, the basic argument is that status and inclusion represent the same underlying phenomenon: the extent to which a person believes they are *valued* by others (Rothers & Cohrs, 2023). These two aspects of social worth align with the desire for *status* (Anderson et al., 2015) and *inclusion* (Baumeister & Leary, 1995) which are often considered to be fundamental social motives. Further, it has been argued that issues concerning perceptions of social worth may be crucial for understanding the job-related attitudes of employees (e.g., Rogers & Ashforth, 2017). The reason that issues surrounding social worth may be particularly important in employment contexts is that employment is an exchange-based arrangement where various rewards (e.g., salary, job title, benefits) are indicative of the value of particular employees and the contributions they make to their workplace (Shore et al., 2004). The nature of the workplace tends to make issues surrounding social worth particularly salient which may explain why employees are highly attuned to indicators of social worth from employers and co-workers (e.g., Ellingsen & Johannesson, 2007).

We believed that perceptions of social worth would play a vital role in the connections that narcissistic personality features had with job-related attitudes. More specifically, we expected perceptions of social worth to mediate these associations. That is, we expected narcissistic personality features to influence the extent to which individuals perceived themselves to be valued in their workplace. This aligns with the results of previous studies showing that narcissism has important implications for perceptions of social worth in various contexts. For example, extraverted narcissism is often positively associated with perceptions of social worth in the broader social environment (e.g., Mahadevan & Jordan, 2022; Zeigler-Hill et al., 2019), which led us to believe that elevated levels of extraverted narcissism may make it more likely that individuals would perceive themselves as being respected and admired in the workplace.

In contrast to extraverted narcissism, antagonistic narcissism has more complex connections with perceptions of social worth. More specifically, some studies have found antagonistic narcissism to be negatively associated with perceptions of social worth outside of the workplace (e.g., Zeigler-Hill & Vonk, 2023; Zeigler-Hill et al., 2019), whereas other studies have failed to find an association between this aspect of narcissism and perceptions of social worth (e.g., Mahadevan & Jordan, 2022). Further, narcissistic rivalry – which is similar to antagonistic narcissism – was not correlated with perceived respect in the workplace, even though a significant negative association emerged when analyses controlled for narcissistic admiration (Lehtman & Zeigler-Hill, 2020). Despite the inconsistent results of past studies, we expected antagonistic narcissism to be accompanied by perceptions of relatively low value in the workplace.

Our predictions for neurotic narcissism were similar to our predictions for antagonistic narcissism. That is, we expected neurotic narcissism to be negatively associated with perceptions of social worth in the workplace because we thought this aspect of narcissism would promote perceptions of being undervalued in the workplace. This prediction is supported by previous studies that have revealed this aspect of narcissism to have negative associations with general perceptions of status and inclusion (Mahadevan & Jordan, 2022).

In turn, we believed that perceptions of social value in the workplace would be connected with job-related attitudes. That is, we expected status-based social worth and inclusion-based social worth to be positively associated with job satisfaction, job investment, and job commitment, whereas we expected them to be negatively associated with the perceived quality of alternative jobs. This is consistent with the results of previous studies which have shown that perceptions of respect in the workplace are intimately linked with job-related attitudes (e.g., Lehtman & Zeigler-Hill, 2020).

1.3 *Overview and predictions*

Our aim for this particular study was to consider how narcissism was connected with job-related attitudes, as well as the possibility that these associations would be mediated by perceptions of social worth involving status and inclusion. The following hypotheses were developed for this study:

Hypothesis 1a: Extraverted narcissism will be positively associated with job-related attitudes.

Hypothesis 1b: Extraverted narcissism will have positive associations with job-related attitudes that will be mediated by status-based social worth. We did not have specific hypotheses concerning inclusion-based social worth,

but we examined its potential role in these associations for exploratory purposes.

Hypothesis 2a: Antagonistic narcissism will be negatively associated with job-related attitudes.

Hypothesis 2b: Antagonistic narcissism was expected to have associations with job-related attitudes that would be mediated by status-based social worth and inclusion-based social worth in the workplace.

Hypothesis 3a: Neurotic narcissism will have negative associations with job-related attitudes.

Hypothesis 3b: Similar to our predictions for antagonistic narcissism, we expected the associations that neurotic narcissism had with job-related attitudes to be mediated by status-based social worth and inclusion-based social worth in the workplace.

Hypothesis 4a: Status-based social worth will be positively associated with job satisfaction, job investment, and job commitment, whereas it will be negatively associated with the perceived quality of alternative jobs.

Hypothesis 4b: Inclusion-based social worth will be positively associated with job satisfaction, job investment, and job commitment, whereas it will be negatively associated with the perceived quality of alternative jobs.

2. Method

2.1 *Participants and procedure*

Participants in this study were 942 Israeli community members who responded to requests asking for volunteers to take part in an online study concerning "personality and workplace attitudes" via flyers that were placed in public locations and postings on various social media platforms. The only requirement for participating in this study was that individuals had to be adults who were currently employed outside of the home. Participation in this study was voluntary and participants provided informed consent before completing the questionnaires. This study was approved by the Institutional Review Board of Hadassah Academic College and was performed in accordance with the ethical standards articulated in the 1964 Declaration of Helsinki and its later amendments. All of the questionnaires used in the present study were administered in Hebrew after being translated from the original English versions using the back translation method.

We decided that the sample size for this study should be at least 250 based on a combination of the average effect size in social-personality psychology (Richard et al., 2003) and guidelines for reducing estimation error (Schönbrodt & Perugini, 2013). However, we deliberately oversampled in order to enhance the statistical power of the study. More specifically, we used a time-based stopping rule such that we collected data from as many participants as possible during the course of a single academic year. We excluded data from 128 participants due to reasons such as them being univariate outliers ($n = 25$) or multivariate outliers ($n = 9$), providing inconsistent responses ($n = 33$), or having invariant response patterns ($n = 61$). The final 814 participants (377 men and 437 women) had an average age of 29.93 years ($SD = 10.05$ [range = 19-70 years]). The mean number of years of education was 13.07 years ($SD = 2.05$) and the individuals who participated in the study were predominantly Jewish (96%) and heterosexual (91%). The employment areas of the participants were 17% sales and services, 12% education, 9% industrial laborer, 8% office worker, 8% technology, 6% health, 3% financial services, and 37% other. Participants reported that they had been in their current position for an average of 4.04 years ($SD = 5.94$ [range 10 months-45 years]).

2.2 *Measures*

Narcissism. The short form of the Five-Factor Narcissism Inventory (Sherman et al., 2015) was used to capture *extraverted narcissism* (16 items; e.g., "I love to entertain people" [$\alpha = 0.75$]), *antagonistic narcissism* (32 items; e.g., "It's fine to take advantage of persons to get ahead" [$\alpha = 0.88$]), and *neurotic narcissism* (12 items; e.g., "I feel foolish when I make a mistake in front of others" [$\alpha = 0.74$]). The response scale for this instrument ranged from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*).

Perceived social worth. A modified version of the Social Relations Scale that was originally developed by Huo et al. (2010) was used to capture perceived social worth. This instrument was subsequently expanded by Mahadevan et al. (2016) to include additional items. Our modifications to the Social Relations Scale involved rewording each item to focus on perceived social worth in the workplace rather than the form of decontextualized social worth captured by the

original instrument. For example, the item "Most of the time I feel that people accept me" was modified to "Most of the time I feel that people at my place of work accept me." The modified version of the Social Relations Scale captured *status-based social worth* (8 items; e.g., "Most of the time I feel that people at my place of work see me as an important person" [$\alpha = 0.84$]) and *inclusion-based social worth* (9 items; e.g., "Most of the time I feel that people at my place of work consider me to be a nice person to have around" [$\alpha = 0.91$]). The response scale for this instrument ranged from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*).

Job-related attitudes. We used the Investment Model Scale (Rusbult & Farrell, 1983) to capture *job satisfaction* (6 items; e.g., "All things considered, how satisfied are you with your current job?" [$\alpha = 0.90$]), *job investment* (3 items; e.g., "How does your investment in this job compare to what most people have invested in their jobs?" [$\alpha = 0.62$]), *quality of alternative jobs* (3 items; e.g., "All things considered, how good are your alternatives to this job?" [$\alpha = 0.82$]), and *job commitment* (4 items; e.g., "How likely is it that you will quit this job in the near future?" [$\alpha = 0.76$]). This instrument used a 9-point response scale with anchors that differed between the items (e.g., 1 [*not at all committed*] to 9 [*extremely committed*]).

2.3 *Data analysis*

We analyzed our data using parallel mediation analyses because we expected the aspects of narcissism to be associated with the mediators (i.e., status-based social worth and inclusion-based social worth), which, in turn, would be associated with job-related attitudes. We used model 4 of the PROCESS macro (Hayes, 2018) in conjunction with SPSS version 29 (IBM Corp., 2022) to conduct these parallel multiple mediation analyses.

3. Results

The correlations and descriptive statistics are presented in Table 1. The results of the parallel multiple mediation analyses are presented in Table 2 and the effect sizes are reported using Cohen's f^2 and interpreted according to the following standard conventions (e.g., Cohen, 1988): small effect size ($f^2 > .02$), medium effect size ($f^2 > .15$), and large effect size ($f^2 > .35$). These results showed that extraverted narcissism had a medium positive association with status-based social worth ($\beta = 0.40$, $t = 12.33$, $p < .001$, CI 95% [0.34, 0.47], $f^2 = .19$), whereas antagonistic narcissism was not associated with status-based social worth ($\beta = -0.05$, $t = -1.49$, $p = .136$, CI 95% [-0.11, 0.02], $f^2 = .00$) and neurotic narcissism had a small *negative* association with status-based social worth ($\beta = -0.16$, $t = -4.96$, $p < .001$, CI 95% [-0.22, -0.10], $f^2 = .03$). Extraverted narcissism had a medium positive association with inclusion-based social worth ($\beta = 0.44$, $t = 14.31$, $p < .001$, CI 95% [0.38, 0.50], $f^2 = .25$), whereas antagonistic narcissism had a medium *negative* association with inclusion-based social worth ($\beta = -0.40$, $t = -12.85$, $p < .001$, CI 95% [-0.46, -0.34], $f^2 = .20$) and neurotic narcissism had a small *negative* association with inclusion-based social worth ($\beta = -0.10$, $t = -3.31$, $p = .001$, CI 95% [-0.16, -0.04], $f^2 = .01$).

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Extraverted Narcissism	—								
2. Antagonistic Narcissism	.25***	—							
3. Neurotic Narcissism	-.02	.08*	—						
4. Status-Based Social Worth	.40***	.04	-.17***	—					
5. Inclusion-Based Social Worth	.34***	-.30***	-.14***	.49***	—				
6. Job Satisfaction	.18***	-.13***	-.15***	.41***	.28***	—			
7. Job Investment	.23***	-.11**	-.04	.31***	.30***	.54***	—		
8. Quality of Alternative Jobs	.05	.15***	-.08*	.09*	-.03	-.02	.10**	—	
9. Job Commitment	.07*	-.11**	-.07*	.25***	.19***	.70***	.49***	-.10**	—
Mean	3.42	2.49	3.03	3.56	4.22	6.10	6.17	4.67	5.70
Standard Deviation	0.54	0.55	0.61	0.72	0.69	1.77	1.47	1.64	1.96

*p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001

3.1 *Job satisfaction*

Extraverted narcissism had a positive association with job satisfaction that was mediated by status-based social worth (β = 0.15, z = 7.65, p < .001, CI 95% [0.11, 0.20]), but not inclusion-based social worth (β = 0.01, z = 0.45, p = .651, CI 95% [-0.03, 0.04]). The association that antagonistic narcissism had with job satisfaction was not mediated by status-based social worth (β = -0.02, z = -1.47, p = .142, CI 95% [-0.04, 0.01]) or inclusion-based social worth (β = -0.01, z = -0.45, p = .651, CI 95% [-0.04, 0.03]). Neurotic narcissism had an association with job satisfaction that was mediated by status-based social worth (β = -0.06, z = -4.41, p < .001, CI 95% [-0.09, -0.03]), but not inclusion-based social worth (β = 0.00, z = -0.43, p = .667, CI 95% [-0.01, 0.01]).

Table 2. Results of the parallel multiple mediation analyses

	Extraverted Narcissism	Antagonistic Narcissism	Neurotic Narcissism
Associations with mediators			
Status-Based Social Worth (SBSW)	.40***	-.05	-.16***
Inclusion-Based Social Worth (IBSW)	.44***	-.40***	-.10**
Associations with outcomes			
Job Satisfaction (Total)	.22***	-.17***	-.13***
Job Satisfaction (Direct)	.06	-.15***	-.07*
Narcissism → SBSW → Job Satisfaction	.15***	-.02	-.06***
Narcissism → IBSW → Job Satisfaction	.01	-.01	.00
Job Investment (Total)	.27***	-.18***	-.02
Job Investment (Direct)	.14***	-.12**	.02
Narcissism → SBSW → Job Investment	.08***	-.01	-.03***
Narcissism → IBSW → Job Investment	.05**	-.05**	-.01*
Quality of Alternative Jobs (Total)	.01	.15***	-.09**
Quality of Alternative Jobs (Direct)	.00	.14***	-.08**
Narcissism → SBSW → Quality of Alternative Jobs	.04*	.00	-.01
Narcissism → IBSW → Quality of Alternative Jobs	-.02	.02	.00
Job Commitment (Total)	.10**	-.14***	-.06
Job Commitment (Direct)	-.01	-.10**	-.02
Narcissism → SBSW → Job Commitment	.09***	-.01	-.04***
Narcissism → IBSW → Job Commitment	.02	-.02	-.01

*$p < .05$; **$p < .01$; ***$p < .001$

3.2 *Job investment*

Extraverted narcissism had a positive association with job investment that was mediated by status-based social worth ($\beta = 0.08$, $z = 4.72$, $p < .001$, *CI* 95% [0.05, 0.12]) and inclusion-based social worth ($\beta = 0.05$, $z = 2.77$, $p = .006$, *CI* 95% [0.01, 0.09]). The association that antagonistic narcissism had with job investment was not mediated by status-based social worth ($\beta = -0.01$, $z = -1.41$, $p = .159$, *CI* 95% [-0.03, 0.00]), but it was mediated by inclusion-based social worth ($\beta = -0.05$, $z = -2.75$, $p = .006$, *CI* 95% [-0.09, -0.01]). Neurotic narcissism had an association with job investment that was mediated by status-based social worth ($\beta = -0.03$, $z = -3.53$, $p < .001$, *CI* 95% [-0.06, -0.01]) and inclusion-based social worth ($\beta = -0.01$, $z = -2.09$, $p = .036$, *CI* 95% [-0.02, 0.00]).

3.3 *Quality of alternative jobs*

Extraverted narcissism had a positive association with the quality of alternative jobs that was mediated by status-based social worth ($\beta = 0.04$, $z = 2.13$, $p = .033$, *CI* 95% [0.00, 0.07]), but not inclusion-based social worth ($\beta = -0.02$, $z = -1.04$, $p = .298$, *CI* 95% [-0.06, 0.02]). The association that antagonistic narcissism had with the quality of alternative jobs was not mediated by status-based social worth ($\beta = 0.00$, $z = -1.15$, $p = .251$, *CI* 95% [-0.01, 0.00]) or inclusion-based social worth ($\beta = 0.02$, $z = 1.04$, $p = .298$, *CI* 95% [-0.02, 0.06]). The association that neurotic narcissism had with the quality of alternative jobs was not mediated by status-based social worth ($\beta = -0.01$, $z = -1.96$, $p = .051$, *CI* 95% [-0.03, 0.00]) or inclusion-based social worth ($\beta = 0.00$, $z = 0.96$, $p = .338$, *CI* 95% [0.00, 0.02]).

3.4 *Job commitment*

Extraverted narcissism had a positive association with job commitment that was mediated by status-based social

worth (β = 0.09, z = 5.05, p < .001, CI 95% [0.06, 0.13]), but not inclusion-based social worth (β = 0.02, z = 1.22, p = .222, CI 95% [-0.02, 0.06]). The association that antagonistic narcissism had with job commitment was not mediated by status-based social worth (β = -0.01, z = -1.42, p = .156, CI 95% [-0.03, 0.00]) or inclusion-based social worth (β = -0.02, z = -1.22, p = .222, CI 95% [-0.06, 0.01]). The association that neurotic narcissism had with job commitment was mediated by status-based social worth (β = -0.04, z = -3.67, p < .001, CI 95% [-0.06, -0.02]), but not inclusion-based social worth (β = -0.01, z = -1.11, p = .268, CI 95% [-0.02, 0.00]).

4. Discussion

The goal of this research was to examine the connections that narcissistic personality features had with job-related attitudes, as well as the possibility that these associations would be mediated by perceptions of social worth involving status and inclusion. Our results showed that narcissistic personality features diverged in their associations with job-related attitudes. For example, extraverted narcissism was positively associated with job satisfaction, investment, and commitment, whereas antagonistic narcissism was negatively associated with these same job-related attitudes. In addition, status-based social worth often mediated the associations that extraverted narcissism and neurotic narcissism had with these job-related attitudes, but status-based social worth did not mediate the associations that antagonistic narcissism had with these job-related attitudes.

Our predictions for extraverted narcissism were largely supported. For example, extraverted narcissism was positively associated with each of the job-related attitudes with the exception of the quality of alternative jobs (Hypothesis 1a). This suggests that extraverted narcissism is linked with the adoption of positive attitudes toward their jobs such that individuals with this personality trait tend to be satisfied with their current positions, invested in their jobs, and committed to maintaining their employment. In addition, the association that extraverted narcissism had with each job-related attitude was mediated by status-based social worth (Hypothesis 1b). This pattern suggests that perceptions of status are important for understanding the links that extraverted narcissism has with job-related attitudes. This aligns with the argument that issues concerning status may be fundamental for understanding narcissism (Zeigler-Hill et al., 2018, 2019).

Our predictions for antagonistic narcissism received less consistent support than our hypotheses concerning extraverted narcissism. Consistent with our expectations, antagonistic narcissism had negative associations with job-related attitudes (Hypothesis 2a). This suggests that people with high levels of this aspect of narcissism tend to have relatively negative attitudes toward their current jobs such that they consider their jobs to be unsatisfying, believe themselves to have invested relatively little in their jobs, perceive other jobs as being more desirable than their current jobs, and express little desire to continue working for their current employer. These results are in line with previous observations that narcissistic individuals may have negative attitudes about their work because they hold grandiose views of themselves, which may foster a sense of dissatisfaction with their current positions when coupled with overly optimistic views about how easy it would be for them to find another position that is more desirable than their current job. Although antagonistic narcissism had the expected negative associations with job-related attitudes, these associations were not mediated by status-based social worth. Further, perceptions of inclusion only mediated the link that antagonistic narcissism had with job investment which suggests that a lack of perceived inclusion-based social worth may play at least some role in explaining the low levels of job investment reported by those with high levels of antagonistic narcissism. This lack of job investment may reflect a self-protective response to their belief that they are not adequately valued by others in their workplace. However, the overall pattern that emerged from these analyses provided – at best – very limited support for Hypothesis 2b. This suggests that perceptions of social worth played much less of a role in the job-related attitudes that characterize antagonistic narcissism than we expected.

The results for neurotic narcissism also provided inconsistent support for our hypotheses. For example, we had expected neurotic narcissism to be negatively associated with job-related attitudes, but the expected pattern only emerged for job satisfaction and job commitment (Hypothesis 3a). Neurotic narcissism did not have a connection with job investment and the link that it had with the quality of alternative jobs was actually in the *opposite direction* of what we expected. This suggests that this aspect of narcissism is characterized by complex attitudes toward the workplace. That is, individuals with this personality trait seem to have a rather bleak perspective that as bad as things are at their

current job, it may be even worse if they went to work for another employer. As expected, perceived status at work often mediated the associations that neurotic narcissism had with job-related attitudes, except for the perceived quality of alternative jobs (Hypothesis 3b). This pattern suggests that the generally negative job-related attitudes reported by those with elevated levels of neurotic narcissism may be due, at least in part, to perceptions of disrespect at work. In contrast, perceptions of inclusion only mediated the association that neurotic narcissism had with investment. Taken together, this pattern suggests that a perceived lack of value in the workplace may help to explain the relatively negative job-related attitudes reported by those with high levels of neurotic narcissism.

Our hypotheses that perceptions of social value in the workplace would be connected with job-related attitudes received partial support. That is, status-based social worth and inclusion-based social worth were positively associated with job satisfaction, job investment, and job commitment (Hypotheses 4a and 4b). This is consistent with the results of previous studies showing that issues connected to perceptions of social worth in the workplace (e.g., respect) are intimately linked with job-related attitudes (e.g., Lehtman & Zeigler-Hill, 2020). However, it is important to note that status-based social worth and inclusion-based social worth did not have the expected negative associations with the perceived quality of alternative jobs. In fact, status-based social worth had a small *positive* association with the perceived quality of alternative jobs. The unexpected positive association between status-based social worth and the perceived quality of alternatives may suggest that individuals who believe they have earned status in their current positions may believe there would be desirable opportunities available to them with other employers. That possibility should be examined in future research.

The present results revealed that there were both similarities and differences in the connections that these three different aspects of narcissism had with job-related attitudes. Further, these results suggest that perceptions of social worth may be essential for understanding the similarities and differences in the connections that narcissistic personality features have with these attitudes. This suggests that feeling valued in the workplace may play a crucial role in determining how people in general – and those with narcissistic tendencies in particular – feel about their jobs. In addition, workplaces that can foster an environment where employees perceive that they are valuable to their employer and co-workers are likely to be the sorts of places where employees are happy to work. This may be particularly important for individuals with narcissistic tendencies who may be especially sensitive to issues surrounding their social worth.

One limitation of this research was that we used cross-sectional data to examine mediational hypotheses. Although the results supported perceptions of social worth mediating the associations that narcissistic personality features had with job-related attitudes, our reliance on cross-sectional data prevents us from drawing conclusions about the underlying causal processes. For example, chronic perceptions of value in the workplace may lead to the development of narcissism rather than narcissism influencing perceptions of social worth in the manner that we expected. As a result, a better understanding of the causal links between these variables should be the focus of future research in this area.

Another limitation was that we relied on participants from a single culture (i.e., Israel). As a result, we do not know whether the present results would generalize to other cultures. However, the present results are similar in some ways to those concerning related issues in other cultures (e.g., Lehtman & Zeigler-Hill, 2020), so it seems unlikely that these results would be limited to Israel.

Despite the limitations of this research, we believe it has expanded what is known about the job-related attitudes that accompany narcissism by considering the role of perceived social worth. For example, perceptions of status in the workplace mediated the positive associations that extraverted narcissism had with job-related attitudes. In contrast, neurotic narcissism had *negative* associations with job-related attitudes – with the exception of the quality of alternative jobs – that were mediated by status-based social worth. Antagonistic narcissism was negatively associated with job-related attitudes, but perceptions of social worth seemed to play little role in these associations. These results suggest that issues surrounding social worth may play a particularly important role in shaping the job-related attitudes of individuals with narcissistic personality traits.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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