



The University of Tehran Press

Narcissism and Addiction Potential: The Role of Shame Experiences and the Pattern of Attachment

Hossein Shekari¹ , Nima Ghorbani^{2*} , Reza Rostami³ , Jon Frederickson⁴ , Maryam Abbasi Sooreshjani⁵ 

1. Department of Psychology, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, University of Tehran, Tehran, Iran. Email: h.shekary.1986@gmail.com
2. Corresponding Author, Department of Psychology, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, University of Tehran, Tehran, Iran. Email: nghorbani@ut.ac.ir
3. Department of Psychology, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, University of Tehran, Tehran, Iran. Email: rostami@ut.ac.ir
4. Washington School of Psychiatry, Faculty of Psychology, Washington university, D.C. United States. Email: f1844@gmail.com
5. Department of Psychology, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, University of Tehran, Tehran, Iran. Email: maryam.abbasi@ut.ac.ir

Extended Abstract

Aim

Grandiose narcissism is characterized by inflated self-image, challenges in interpersonal relationships, and a desire for control over others (Aslinger et al, 2018). Conversely, a vulnerable narcissist is characterized by profound guilt and a diminished sense of grandiosity (Pincus & Lukowitsky, 2010). Limited research has been conducted on the correlation between vulnerable and grandiose narcissism and the propensity for addiction. Therefore, the primary objective of the present study was to examine this relationship through the mediating effects of shame and attachment pattern.

Methodology

The present study employed an applied practical approach, utilizing a descriptive-correlational methodology. The statistical population of the study comprised all Tehran University students from 2021 to 2022. From this population, 423 individuals were chosen as a sample through available sampling method. During the first stage, the students completed the following questionnaires: Rizvi Shame Inventory (RSI) (Rizvi, 2010), Pincus Narcissism Inventory (PNI) (Pincus et al, 2009), Zargar's potential for addiction, Hazen and Shiver's attachment Style (AAS) (Hazan and Shaver, 1987). 150 individuals whose vulnerable narcissism score exceeded the mean of 85 were chosen for the second phase, which occurred one month later. During this phase, the participants completed questionnaires measuring Cohen's Perceived Stress (PSS), Rizvi Shame Inventory (RSI), and Zargar's potential for addiction. The statistical software SPSS-16 and AMOS-22 were utilized to analyze the data.

Findings

The research findings indicated that the mediating role model of shame and attachment had a significant impact on the relationship between vulnerable narcissism and the potential for addiction. In addition, the research findings revealed the following: a significant negative correlation was observed between grandiose narcissism and secure attachment style ($r=-0.218$, $p<0.01$), a significant positive correlation was found between grandiose narcissism and ambivalent attachment style ($r=0.594$, $p<0.01$), a significant positive correlation with shame ($r=0.566$, $p<0.01$), and a significant positive correlation with addiction potential ($r=0.501$, $p<0.01$). There is a statistically significant and positive correlation between vulnerable narcissism and avoidant attachment style ($r=0.114$, $p<0.05$); similarly, there is a significant negative correlation with secure attachment style ($p<0.01$, $r=-0.276$), significant positive correlation with ambivalent attachment style ($r=0.476$, $p<0.01$), a significant positive

correlation with shame ($r=0.635$, $p<0.01$), and a significant positive correlation of 0.510 with addiction potential ($r=0.510$, $p<0.01$).

Conclusion

Narcissism may be regarded as an emotional disorder stemming from an overabundance of remorse and pride. Furthermore, an increased focus on humiliation may be interpreted as a prevalent reaction to the wound caused by narcissism. Conversely, issues with insecure attachment are associated with narcissism and the capacity to develop an addiction. It can be inferred that vulnerable narcissists have a greater propensity for addiction, given that individuals who experience greater humiliation are more susceptible to developing the disorder. The findings of the current investigation indicate that humiliation is a significant concern for researchers and therapists alike. In general, the findings of the current investigation indicate that comprehending the vulnerable and grandiose narcissistic pathway with addiction requires an awareness of the connection between shame and attachment style. Moreover, this relationship should be taken into account when developing clinical interventions for young adults who are at risk.

Keywords: Addiction, Attachment, Narcissism, Shame.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations in research, with ethics identification from the Faculty of Psychology at the University of Tehran, included ensuring individuals' privacy regarding information confidentiality and respecting individuals' privacy and confidentiality in maintaining this information. The right to withdraw from the research if unwilling to continue participation was preserved. Every effort was made to avoid any psychological or physical harm to the participants.

Financial Support

and Acknowledgments All expenses of the study were covered by the authors of the paper, and no financial support was received.

Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest in this article.

References

- Aslinger, E. N., Manuck, S. B., Pilkonis, P. A., Simms, L. J., & Wright, A. G. (2018). Narcissist or narcissistic? Evaluation of the latent structure of narcissistic personality disorder. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology, 127*(5), 496. <https://doi.org/10.1037/abn0000363>
- Hazan, C., & Shaver, P. (1987). Romantic love conceptualized as an attachment process. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 52*(3), 511-524. <https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/0022-3514.52.3.511>
- Pincus, A. L., & Lukowitsky, M. R. (2010). Pathological narcissism and narcissistic personality disorder. *Annual Review of Clinical Psychology, 6*, 421-446. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.clinpsy.121208.131215>
- Pincus, A. L., Ansell, E. B., Pimentel, C. A., Cain, N. M., Wright, A. G., & Levy, K. N. (2009). Initial construction and validation of the pathological narcissism inventory. *Psychological Assessment, 21*(3), 365-379. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0016530>
- Rizvi, S. L. (2010). Development and preliminary validation of a new measure to assess shame: The Shame Inventory. *Journal of Psychopathology and Behavioral Assessment, 32*(3), 438-447. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10862-009-9172-y>

Cite this article: Shekari, H., Ghorbani, N., Rostami, R., Frederickson, J., & Abbasi Soreshjani, M. (2024). Narcissism and Addiction Potential: The Role of Shame Experiences and the Pattern of Attachment. *Journal of Applied Psychological Research, 14*(4), 75-92. doi: 10.22059/japr.2022.350845.644439.

