



Did charisma “Trump” narcissism in 2016? Leader narcissism, attributed charisma, value congruence and voter choice

Ethlyn A. Williams^{a,*}, Rajnandini Pillai^b, Bryan J. Deptula^c, Kevin B. Lowe^d, Kate McCombs^a

^a Florida Atlantic University, Department of Management Programs, 777 Glades Road, Boca Raton, FL 33431, United States

^b California State University San Marcos, College of Business Administration, 333 S. Twin Oaks Valley Rd., San Marcos, CA 92096, United States

^c NOVA Southeastern University, HuiZenga College of Business, 3301 College Avenue, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33314, United States

^d The University of Sydney, Business School, Rm 4048, H70 - Abercrombie Building, NSW 2006 Australia



ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Narcissism

Leader

Attributed charisma

Voter choice

Value congruence

ABSTRACT

Grandiose narcissism has been associated with negative outcomes and research suggests its potential to predict positive and negative leadership behaviors. We examined perceived leader narcissism, attributed charisma, and voter choice in the context of the 2016 U.S. presidential election. Narcissism was found to be negatively related to attributions of charisma and voter choice, and had an indirect effect on voter choice through attributed charisma. Value congruence moderated the relationship between attributed charisma and voter choice. Our findings contribute to a better understanding of the mixed results in earlier research regarding the relationship between perceived leader narcissism and attributed charisma, and highlights attributed charisma as an intervening factor in understanding leader selection.

1. Introduction

Narcissism is common among U.S. presidents and is associated with negative outcomes such as facing impeachment (e.g., Nixon and Clinton) and engaging in unethical behaviors to achieve objectives (e.g., L. B. Johnson) (Watts et al., 2013). However, narcissistic qualities are also likely to attract voters because narcissistic leaders are capable of inspiring their followers with a call to action and grand visions for an attainable future. Because of the grand visions held by narcissists, they are often described as charismatic (Deluga, 1997).

1.1. Background

Narcissistic individuals display an inflated sense of self-importance, unjustifiably high self-esteem, unwillingness to accept critical feedback, dominance, aggression, and entitlement (Campbell, Bosson, Goheen, Lakey, & Kernis, 2007). Despite evidence that narcissism can be a destructive leadership trait (Judge, Piccolo, & Kosalka, 2009) that negatively affects group performance (Neveick, Ten Velden, De Hoogh, & Van Vianen, 2011), narcissists continue to emerge as leaders (Brunell et al., 2008). Thus, narcissism presents an interesting duality that has been described as the “bright side/dark side” phenomenon (Watts et al., 2013). Candidates in presidential elections are often described as

having charisma (Deluga, 1997), and these attributions refer to perceptions that the leader articulates goals, projects success and self-confidence, and arouses the emotion of followers (Bass, 1985). The relationship between narcissism and charisma has been a topic of interest in studies of presidential leadership (Deluga, 1997) and the implications for leader selection require future study. Examining the role of value congruence (perceptions that the leader and follower share the same values: Kalliath, Bluedorn, & Strube, 1999) in leader selection is also important to further understand the role of the follower. These concepts have international relevance because we see so many examples of narcissistic and charismatic leaders in both democratic and authoritarian countries around the world (e.g., India, France, China, and Venezuela). Interestingly, there has not been much research on narcissism or its relationship to leadership in cross-cultural contexts (Grijalva & Harms, 2014) and it is possible that it may be manifested differently in different cultures (Heine & Hamamura, 2007) based on cultural norms.

1.2. Purpose and contribution

Given mixed findings that grandiose narcissism produces negative as well as positive follower reactions, this research examines the roles of narcissism, attributed charisma, and value congruence in leader

* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: ewilliam@fau.edu (E.A. Williams), rpillai@csusm.edu (R. Pillai), bdeptula@nova.edu (B.J. Deptula), k.lowe@auckland.ac.nz, kevin.b.lowe@sydney.edu.au (K.B. Lowe), kmccombs2016@fau.edu (K. McCombs).

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2018.03.010>

Received 4 November 2017; Received in revised form 2 February 2018; Accepted 6 March 2018
0191-8869/ © 2018 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

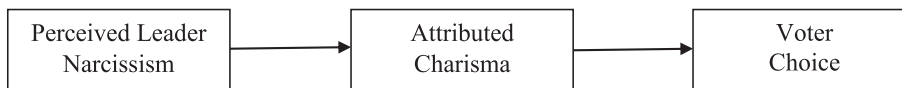


Fig. 1. Study model.

selection within the context of the 2016 U.S. presidential election. Spurred by the mixed results reported in earlier research (Deluga, 1997; Grijalva, Harms, Newman, Gaddis, & Fraley, 2015; Rosenthal & Pittinsky, 2006), we examine the relationship between leader narcissism and attributed charisma using real-time follower perceptions during the election cycle. Second, we address the call for more research on the process of leadership selection especially with respect to narcissism within the context of politics (Campbell, Hoffman, Campbell, & Marchisio, 2011). Third, by examining the moderating role of value congruence, we answer the call for more research on the role of the follower (Lord & Brown, 2004). Finally, we respond to the need to understand charisma in a mediating role (Antonakis, Bastardo, Jacquart, & Shamir, 2016). The model that guides this research examines the association between perceived leader narcissism, attributions of charisma, and voter choice (Fig. 1).

2. Hypothesis development

2.1. Narcissism

Presidential elections are an especially salient context to evaluate the relationship between narcissism and leader selection, given that voters have prolonged access to candidates that allows sufficient time for the “ugly side of narcissism to emerge” (Grijalva, Harms, Newman, Gaddis, and Fraley, 2015, p. 28). Over time, negative qualities emerge such as arrogance and self-centeredness that damage narcissists’ relationships (Back, Schmukle, & Egloff, 2010) suggesting that narcissism may have a negative association with leader selection.

Narcissists are assertive (Hart, Adams, Burton, & Tortoriello, 2017) and adept at positioning themselves for leadership roles by volunteering for challenging tasks (Rosenthal & Pittinsky, 2006), seeking activities that glorify themselves (Wallace & Baumeister, 2002), and exaggerating their leadership abilities (Judge, LePine, & Rich, 2006). Nevertheless, narcissistic leaders often inspire followers through visioning and making calls to action based on themes of selflessness and self-sacrifice (Campbell et al., 2007; Sedikides & Campbell, 2017). With respect to the 2 presidential candidates in the 2016 U.S. presidential elections, Clinton and Trump, Clinton was viewed as untrustworthy (Brooks, 2016) and Trump as untruthful (Levingston, 2016). Narcissism is associated with lower scores on some HEXACO personality (Honesty-Humility, Emotionality, Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Openness to Experience) elements such as Honesty-Humility, Emotionality, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness (Visser, Book, & Volk, 2017). Visser et al. (2017) reported that Clinton shared two HEXACO traits with darker personalities (low scores on Honesty-Humility and Emotionality) and Trump’s HEXACO profile was closer to matching a darker personality (scores low on Honesty-Humility and Emotionality and additionally low on Conscientiousness and Agreeableness). While research suggests that narcissistic leaders might be charismatically inspiring by passionately articulating a socialized “values-based, symbolic and emotion-laden” vision (Antonakis, et al., 2016, p. 3040), perceptions of dark traits are likely to negatively affect voters’ views of them. We, therefore, hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 1. Perceptions of leader narcissism will have a negative association with attributions of charisma.

Hypothesis 2. Perceptions of leader narcissism will have a negative association with voter choice.

2.2. Narcissism, attributed charisma, and voter choice

Leaders have attributed charisma when they appeal to themes of unity and shared values, use symbolism to emphasize a collective future, and communicate conviction in their ability to succeed when leading (Banks et al., 2017). Narcissism has been found to relate positively to charisma in organizational leaders (House & Howell, 1992), as well as charismatic leadership, performance, and creativity among U.S. Presidents (Deluga, 1997). Thus, dedication to the pursuit of a vision and striving for dynamic change appear to be among the prototypical leader characteristics that impel followers to attribute charisma (Epitropaki & Martin, 2004) and to vote for leaders with charisma (Rapoport, Metcalf, & Hartman, 1989).

Prior research highlights the need to examine the process through which the complex relationship between narcissism and leadership operates. For example, Sosik, Chun, and Zhu (2014) used a process model to show that the more destructive the narcissistic personality, the lower the positive effects that charisma had on follower psychological empowerment and moral identity. Alternatively, positive leader characteristics such as humility may mitigate the negative effects of narcissism on evaluations of leaders (Owens, Wallace, & Waldman, 2015). Research suggests a complex association between leader selection, narcissism, and charisma. A leader may be manipulative, and self-interested with low self-doubt (dark side narcissistic traits), even while faithful followers simultaneously view them as “supportive, sensitive, nurturing, and considerate” (House & Howell, 1992). Based on previous research, we examine whether the typically positive effects of attributed charisma mediate the potentially negative effects of perceived leader narcissism on leader selection. We hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 3. Perceptions of leader narcissism will have an indirect negative effect on voter choice through attributed charisma.

2.3. Attributed charisma, value-congruence, and voter choice

Charismatic leaders communicate values-based messages (Kong, 2013) that unite followers through value congruence. This, in turn, allows followers to identify closely with the leader and influences follower ratings of the leader (Brown & Treviño, 2009; Williams, Pillai, Deptula, & Lowe, 2012). Banks et al. (2017) posit that charismatic leaders may strive to communicate universal values that are intended to increase compatibility among followers and encourage harmonious relations. When followers perceive value congruence with leaders, they are acknowledging that they have shared values (Kalliath et al., 1999). When followers identify with the values of the leader, attributions of leader charisma likely has a stronger effect on voter choice. The role of value congruence is particularly relevant in the context of a Presidential election because voters select a leader who will have a major impact on their lives for the foreseeable future. Value congruence with a leader should make their selection more attractive and thus strengthen the relationship between charisma and voter choice.

Hypothesis 4. The relationship between attributed charisma and voter choice is moderated by value congruence such that the relationship is stronger when value congruence is high.

3. Methods

3.1. Participants

We administered a pre-election survey to a Qualtrics panel

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/7248631>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/7248631>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)