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## The Grandiose Narcissism Scale: A Global and Facet-Level Measure of Grandiose Narcissism



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### ABSTRACT

The Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI) is the primary measure of grandiose narcissism (GN) despite possessing numerous limitations. Here we present a new 33-item measure of GN called the Grandiose Narcissism Scale (GNS) that exhibits a reproducible seven-factor structure that maps on to Raskin and Terry's (1988) seven factor model. GNS subscales exhibit high reliability, with several being substantially more reliable than their NPI counterparts. As a full-scale, the GNS correlates with other variables in a way that is consistent with the theoretical portrait of GN. Additionally, two of the GNS subscales (entitlement, exploitativeness) are shown to uniquely predict independent measures of entitlement and exploitativeness, suggesting good subscale validity. Cumulatively, the GNS represents a viable complement or alternative to the NPI.

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### 1. Introduction

Research on narcissistic personality relies almost exclusively on the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI; Raskin & Terry, 1988) as the primary or only measure of narcissism (Cain, Pincus, & Ansell, 2008). Although other measures of narcissism exist, most measure uniformly unhealthy forms of narcissism, such as pathological narcissism (Pincus et al., 2009). Few options outside of the NPI are available to researchers who study grandiose narcissism (GN) – a type of narcissism characterized by generally positive intrapersonal functioning (e.g., high self-esteem) and negative (especially long-term) interpersonal functioning (Campbell & Foster, 2007; Foster & Twenge, 2011).

The NPI functions well as a global measure of GN – it is highly reliable and provides good content coverage of the construct (Miller, Price, & Campbell, 2012) – but significant problems arise when researchers attempt more nuanced facet-level examinations of GN. Numerous factor-analytic studies of the NPI have been published over the past 30 years. One of the earliest and most influential of these studies (Raskin & Terry, 1988) revealed seven factors underlying GN (i.e., authority, self-sufficiency, vanity, superiority, exhibitionism, entitlement, exploitativeness). Most of these factors

reflect theoretically uncontroversial facets of GN (although, the inclusion of authority has been debated; Brown, Budzek, & Tamborski, 2009; Miller & Campbell, 2011) and together they paint a portrait that is consistent with classic and contemporary theoretical descriptions of GN (Campbell & Foster, 2007; Freud, 1914; Horney, 1939; Millon & Davis, 1996; Morf & Rhodewalt, 2001; Reich, 1972). It is also one of the most empirically defensible factor solutions in terms of model fit (Corry, Merritt, Mrug, & Pamp, 2008). Unfortunately, several of these factors' corresponding subscales exhibit consistently low reliability (e.g., Corry et al., 2008; del Rosario & White, 2005; Foster & Campbell, 2007).

Several attempts have been made to address issues of subscale reliability, but none have, in our opinions, been entirely successful. For example, Corry et al. (2008) proposed a two factor model (leadership/authority, exhibitionism/entitlement) that exhibits good subscale reliability, but lacks coverage of seemingly critical facets of GN, including superiority and exploitativeness. Other proposed models offer somewhat more expansive coverage of the construct, but continue to exhibit poor subscale reliability (e.g., Ackerman et al., 2011, three factor solution includes an entitlement/exploitativeness subscale with  $\alpha \sim .40$ ). In short, none of the published factor models of the NPI offer both comprehensive coverage of the construct and reliable facet-level measurement.

One way to solve the problem of unreliable facet-level measurement is to develop measures that are purpose-built to reliably measure specific GN facets (Brown et al., 2009). Indeed, several

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of these measures now exist (e.g., the Psychological Entitlement Scale; Campbell, Bonacci, Shelton, Exline, & Bushman, 2004). For researchers interested exclusively in the facets of GN, this approach may be most appropriate. However, for researchers who are also interested in the global construct of GN, this approach may prove to be inefficient and even impractical. Thus, we think there is a need for an instrument that efficiently, comprehensively, and reliably measures GN at both the global and facet levels. Although the NPI meets this first objective (efficiency), it does not meet the second and third (at least, not concurrently). We are skeptical that resorting NPI items into new subscales will solve these problems and thus we decided instead to develop an entirely new measure of GN.

Our measure, the Grandiose Narcissism Scale (GNS), was designed to reliably and validly measure GN at both the global and facet-levels. At the facet-level, the GNS was designed to replicate Raskin and Terry's (1988) seven NPI subscales, consisting of authority (preferring to be in charge), self-sufficiency (preferring to do things on one's own rather than in groups), superiority (belief that one is better than others), vanity (strong focus on physical appearance), exhibitionism (acting in ways that grab others' attention), entitlement (belief that one is deserving of special treatment), and exploitativeness (willingness to take advantage of others). As noted earlier, most of these subscales represent theoretically uncontroversial facets of GN. All of them (including authority) represent traits and proclivities that have long been components of the theoretical description of GN and its theoretical ancestors, such as phallic and elitist narcissism (Campbell & Foster, 2007; Freud, 1914; Horney, 1939; Millon & Davis, 1996; Morf & Rhodewalt, 2001; Reich, 1972). Given these facts, we concluded that the seven subscales derived by Raskin and Terry (1988) were both theoretically justifiable and provided comprehensive coverage of the construct of GN (Miller et al., 2012).

## 2. Study 1: Scale construction and examination of psychometric properties

We wrote a pool of 35 items that tapped into the seven hypothesized factors (5 items per factor). We examined the psychometric properties of these items and submitted them to an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) to test whether they loaded onto their respective factors. We also examined the reliability of the full-scale GNS and putative subscales and compared them to their NPI counterparts.

### 2.1. Methods

#### 2.1.1. Participants and materials

A sample of 1017 college students ( $M$  age = 20.27; 62% female) completed the GNS and NPI. The GNS consisted of 35 items (see Table 1) each responded to using a Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree, 6 = strongly agree). The NPI consisted of 40 pairs of statements that differed in terms of how narcissistic they sounded. Participants selected the statement that best described them and received one point each time they selected a narcissistic statement ( $M = 15.95$ ,  $SD = 6.88$ ).

### 2.2. Results and discussion

#### 2.2.1. Exploratory factor analysis

We submitted the 35 GNS items to an EFA (principal axis factoring, promax rotation). The resulting scree plot showed a distinctive pattern whereby there was a drop in eigenvalue between the seventh (1.02) and eight factors (.78) and an approximate straight-line path between factors eight through 35, suggesting the presence of

seven distinguishable factors. These seven factors cumulatively accounted for 61% of the variance. Examination of the pattern matrix revealed factor loadings largely consistent with the hypothesized factor structure (see Table 1). There were, however, two problematic items. SUP4 ("I'm a superior person") cross-loaded on the entitlement factor and ENT4 ("I expect people to bend the rules for me") cross-loaded on the exploitativeness factor. These 2 items were culled from the GNS, leaving 33 items.

#### 2.2.2. Item-total correlations

All of the remaining 33 items correlated positively and significantly with both the full-scale score ( $r_s > .26$ ;  $M = .45$ ) and their respective subscale scores ( $r_{\text{authority}} > .62$ ;  $r_{\text{self-sufficiency}} > .50$ ;  $r_{\text{superiority}} > .47$ ;  $r_{\text{vanity}} > .58$ ;  $r_{\text{exhibitionism}} > .58$ ;  $r_{\text{entitlement}} > .48$ ;  $r_{\text{exploitativeness}} > .55$ ). Based on these results, we decided to retain all 33 items.

#### 2.2.3. Reliability estimates and comparisons

The GNS and each of its subscales exhibited high levels of reliability (full-scale = .91, authority = .87, self-sufficiency = .76, superiority = .78, vanity = .86, exhibitionism = .86, entitlement = .76, and exploitativeness = .85). Notably, all GNS subscales outperformed their NPI counterparts, several by large margins (full-scale = .85, authority = .73, self-sufficiency = .36, superiority = .58, vanity = .68, exhibitionism = .65, entitlement = .52, exploitativeness = .56).

## 3. Study 2: Confirmatory test of hypothesized GNS factor structure

After identifying and culling two poor performing items, the 33-item GNS and seven subscales exhibited promising psychometric properties. In Study 1, we examined the GNS factor structure using EFA, which was appropriate considering it was an initial test and we intended to use the results to guide culling decisions. The purpose of the present study was to conduct a confirmatory test of the hypothesized seven factor structure.

### 3.1. Method

#### 3.1.1. Participants and materials

A sample of 980 college students ( $M$  age = 20.32; 61% female) completed the GNS ( $M = 114.66$ ,  $SD = 22.32$ ). The GNS again exhibited good reliability for both its full-scale ( $\alpha = .91$ ) and its seven subscales ( $\alpha_s > .76$ ).

### 3.2. Results and discussion

A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted using Mplus (version 7) software (Muthen & Muthen, 2011) and employed maximum likelihood estimation. The seven hypothesized latent factors were measured by their respective observed (manifest) GNS items (e.g., latent "authority" factor measured by observed items AUT1, AUT2, AUT3, AUT4, AUT5). No post hoc modifications were performed. Based on widely used guidelines (Hu & Bentler, 1998, 1999), our hypothesized seven factor model exhibited acceptable fit ( $\chi^2[474] = 1243.60$ ;  $CFI = .95$ ;  $TLI = .94$ ;  $SRMR = .04$ ;  $RMSEA = .04$ , 95% CI = .038, .043).<sup>1</sup> Given the results from Study 1's EFA and the present study's CFA, we deemed the hypothesized seven factor structure of the GNS empirically supported.

<sup>1</sup> We also tested a model that omitted the facet-level factors in favor of a single "GN" factor. This model exhibited very poor fit ( $CFI = .44$ ,  $TLI = .40$ ,  $RMSEA = .13$ ,  $SRMR = .13$ ) and was thus rejected.

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