

Abstract

The presented project aimed to use the Circumplex Model of Narcissism (CMN) to analyze the relationship between narcissism and functioning in romantic relationships. Narcissism is a personality trait related to worse functioning in long-term romantic relationships – lower satisfaction with the bond, difficulties in emotional regulation, and conflicting sense of self importance. However, most of the research was focused only on one domain – of agency – in which the grandiose self might be maintained. Moreover previous studies rarely recognized two distinct self-protection strategies: avoidant and antagonistic. The CMN provides a theoretical framework to combine those issues. It assumes that manifestations of narcissism vary in terms of agency and communion, including self-enhancement and self-protection strategies for both, resembling understanding narcissism as a spectrum. Such a fine-grained approach allows to infer more generally about the relationship between narcissism and functioning in romantic relationships. The project consisted of seven studies, examining three basic research problems. The results show that (1) narcissism forms are differently related to romantic relationship quality, (2) those relationships could be explained by different mechanisms associated with the domain in which self is maintained, and (3) those relationships could be explained by differences in emotional functioning across narcissism forms. These results validate the Circumplex Model of Narcissism, showing that communion and agency have additive rather than interchangeable effects; thus, differentiating narcissism manifestations only by one of those dimensions could bring imprecise inferences about this trait. Keywords: spectrum, agentic narcissism, communal narcissism, antagonistic narcissism, empathy, self-esteem, relationship quality, emotions