Understanding Narcissism in the Workplace: The Dual Impact of Self-Efficacy and Political Skill on Attitudes and Performance

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This study examines cognitive and behavioral mechanisms that explain why narcissism leads to positive and negative workplace outcomes. By sampling 296 working adults in the United States at three time points, we tested the model using partial least squares structural equation modeling. Drawing from social cognitive theory, we explore how grandiose and vulnerable narcissism influence workplace attitudes and behaviors, including organizational commitment, citizenship behavior, and workplace deviance. Our findings reveal that these differences are mediated through the serial mechanisms of self-efficacy and political skill. By highlighting the role of self-concept and social effectiveness skills in shaping narcissistic employees' workplace behaviors, this study contributes to a deeper theoretical understanding of the factors motivating their engagement in positive workplace contributions versus unethical workplace behaviors.

Keywords: narcissism, self-efficacy, political skill, organizational citizenship behavior, organizational commitment, workplace deviance

INTRODUCTION

In response to a recent resurgence in the trait personality approach to understanding workplace behavior (Ellen et al., 2021), the current study examines the relationship between two types of subclinical narcissism and various types of workplace attitudes and behaviors. Narcissism is a dynamic personality construct of multiple dimensions, which has garnered considerable interest across the organizational literature for several decades (Grijalva et al., 2015). At the core, this trait is characterized by the perception of one's self-concept, shame, and deficient self-esteem regulation (Bushman & Baumeister, 1998). Narcissism was initially examined by its clinical relevance as a personality disorder (Raskin & Hall, 1979) and has more recently been discussed in the organizational sciences concerning its impact on unethical behavior and workplace performance (Bernerth et al., 2022; Ellen et al., 2021).

There is a dearth of research on the costs and benefits of narcissism in organizations (Braun, 2017; Liu et al., 2017). Judge et al. (2009) and Judge and Long (2012) argue that dark traits (e.g., narcissism) can result in both benefits and costs for leadership and organizational behavior. This notion has been supported empirically in recent studies (see Smith et al., 2018, for a recent review). However, organizational research remains in the early stages of understanding the complex nature of narcissism- workplace attitude and

behavior relationships, specifically regarding the cognitive and motivational mechanisms that mediate these relations. Given the relative prevalence of the narcissism trait among organizational leaders and top-performing employees, the impact of fully understanding how organizations can capitalize on the positive aspects of this trait and mitigate the negative aspects would be immense.

One of the great dilemmas in narcissism literature is the ability to understand and manage the adverse effects of narcissism in the organizational context so that the positive impact of this complex trait can be fully harnessed. For example, in the last decade, Americans witnessed the rise and fall of a multibillion-dollar healthcare technology company (i.e., Theranos). Elizabeth Holmes, CEO, has become a recent public entity that capitalized on the bright sides of narcissism (e.g., charisma, risk-taking behavior), but inevitably, the dark side of narcissism (e.g., deviance, fraud) eventually came to light. This high-profile case is a crucial example of why the vast differences between the dark and bright sides of narcissistic behavior within organizations necessitate further study.

Existing research on narcissism and workplace behavior is essentially mixed with positive, negative, or null effects across multiple outcomes, including leadership emergence and effectiveness, group task and contextual performance, firm performance, and workplace deviance (Bernerth et al., 2022; Cragun et al., 2020). Following a recent call to theoretically distinguish between grandiose and vulnerable presentations of narcissism (Miller et al., 2017), the current study resolves these tensions in the existing literature by examining when and how narcissism enhances or diminishes workplace performance outcomes depending on the type of narcissism being measured. Specifically, this simultaneous examination enhances our theoretical understanding of the relationships between narcissism and workplace cognitions and performance and provides valuable practical findings for application within organizations. Utilizing a social-cognitive approach to behavior, we propose that grandiose narcissism (GN) and vulnerable narcissism (VN)'s contrasting relationships with self-efficacy and political skill explain the variation in narcissistic attitudes and behavior in the workplace.

Utilizing social cognitive theory (SCT; Bandura, 1988, 1989, 2011, 2012), we examine the serial mediating processes of self-efficacy and political skill in the relationship between narcissism and workplace performance outcomes. With these efforts, this study provides two primary contributions. First, Brownell et al. (2021) call for further examination of the different forms of narcissism, which may lead to varying results regarding key employee-level outcomes. More specifically, we examined the differences between the facets of grandiosity and vulnerability (Miller et al., 2011; Pincus & Lukowitsky, 2010). Although the differences in the types have been well established in the psychology literature (Hart et al., 2017; Malesza & Kaczmarek, 2018), we extend this research within the organizational realm by examining environmental, behavioral, and individual factors, which have the potential to mitigate the negative effects and enhance the positive effects and better reconcile and explain the inconsistent findings in the current literature.

Recent studies call for researchers to explore additional mediating mechanisms through which narcissism leads to adverse outcomes (Ellen et al., 2019). Research in dark personality and organizational politics has also called future scholars to examine how dark personalities and politically skilled individuals operate within organizations (Ferris et al., 2019; Templer, 2018). This paper addresses these calls by including political skill in our mediation analyses. We argue that examining the distinct aspects of each type of narcissism will provide scholars and practitioners with a more in-depth understanding of *how* and *why* certain aspects of narcissism (i.e., grandiosity versus vulnerability) may result in positive and/or negative outcomes via the mediating serial mechanism of self-efficacy and political skill. Second, this study seeks to synthesize this research by examining the importance of GN versus VN for predicting and explaining workplace performance. In doing so, we utilize SCT, a common theoretical perspective used in narcissism and workplace performance research (Hirschi & Jaensch, 2015; Ng & Lucianetti, 2016), to substantiate arguments regarding the differences by considering the roles of self-efficacy, social support, and social effectiveness (see Figure 1).

FIGURE 1
HYPOTHESIZED MODEL
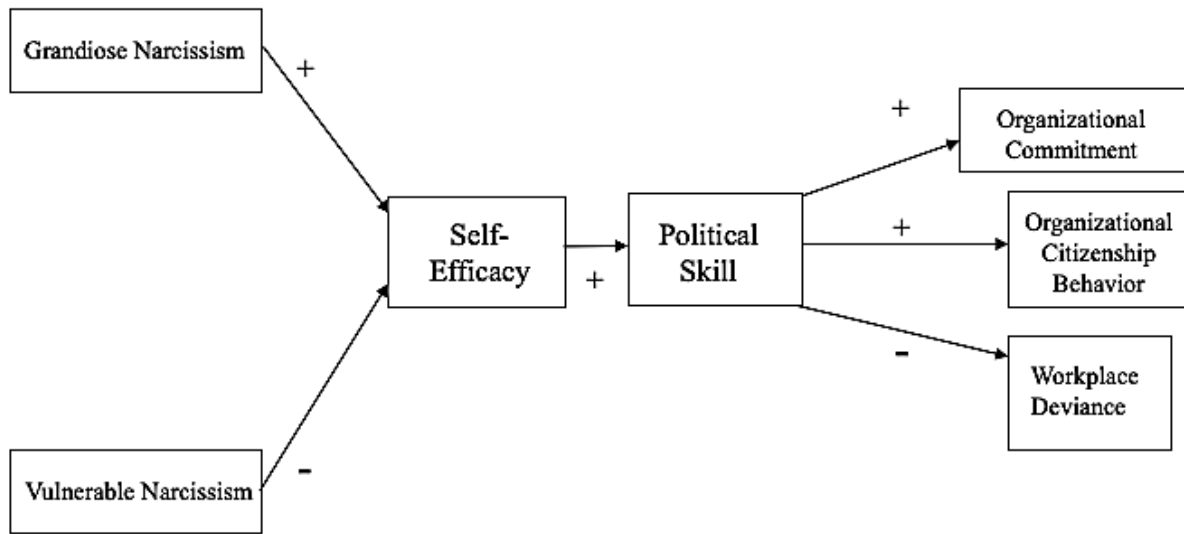
Narcissism

Narcissism is characterized by delusions of grandeur, a strong sense of self-importance, a need for admiration, a heightened sense of entitlement, a lack of empathy, a desire for social dominance, and sensitivity to ego threat (Raskin & Hall, 1979; Rosenthal & Pittinsky, 2006). Narcissists are generally described by their innate desire for self-presentation and self-enhancement and their lack of regard for the well-being of others in pursuing these goals (Campbell & Foster, 2007). A large segmentation of the narcissism literature is also focused on the self-regulatory methods narcissists utilize to achieve self-presentation and self-enhancement (Grijalva & Zhang, 2016), and these techniques are often of a social nature (e.g., overclaiming, blaming, etc.). Thus, we argue that the social components of narcissism (i.e., political skill) can be used to explain narcissism-workplace behavior relationships. Additionally, as with many personality traits, the organizational literature indicates that narcissism is related to positive and negative outcomes across multiple levels of analysis (Cragun et al., 2020; Petrenko et al., 2016).

From a positive standpoint, narcissism has proven to be especially beneficial in instances of socially responsible activity (Petrenko et al., 2016) and firm financial performance (Cragun et al., 2020). Recent literature also indicates that leaders high in narcissism can motivate change by increasing passion in organizational cultures that lack enthusiasm (Fox, 2016). Narcissists also have an uncanny ability to use language to inspire others and positively impact crowdfunding performance (Anglin et al., 2018). Extensive research on the bright side of narcissism also suggests that this trait may lower experiences of stress and depression by increasing mental toughness (Papageorgiou et al., 2019), which may be beneficial in settings characterized by constant change or chaos. From an ethical perspective, however, narcissism is also empirically linked to various forms of workplace deviance, such as bullying (Samnani & Singh, 2016) and abusive supervision (Braun et al., 2019; Waldman et al., 2018), likely due to its relations with interpersonal issues (Rhodewalt & Morf, 1995). The critical question is, what cognitive and motivational mechanisms explain narcissism's positive and negative effects in organizations? Regarding the team level of analysis, much of the research finds that only optimal levels of narcissism lead to positive outcomes. More specifically, one study finds that the number of narcissists on a team has an inverted u-shaped relationship with creative performance (Goncalo et al., 2010). On the other hand, beyond optimal levels, narcissism can become detrimental to team performance (Grijalva et al., 2020) due to higher instances of interpersonal conflict (Lamkin et al., 2017) and authoritarian practices (Sudha & Shahnawaz, 2020).

The literature further delineates narcissism into two distinct concepts (Wink, 1991), which may explain how narcissism can lead to varying interpersonal and organizational outcomes. Until recently, the

organizational literature has historically limited many studies to examine outcomes related to narcissistic grandiosity (e.g., Bernerth, 2020; Liu et al., 2020; Liu et al., 2021; Mao et al., 2019). For example, Jones and Paulhus' (2014) Short Dark Triad (SD3), Raskin and Hall's (1979) Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI), and Ames et al.'s (2006) Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI) are consistently utilized to measure narcissism in the workplace context; each of these measures are general measures of narcissistic grandiosity (Maples et al., 2014). In fact, narcissism (when measured with the SD3) is positively related to workplace prestige and limited workplace restrictions (Jonason et al., 2015). Empirically, measuring narcissistic grandiosity alone in leadership research may seem intuitive, given this dimension of narcissism's positive relationship with leader emergence (Grijalva, Harms, et al., 2015). However, when studying narcissism across all levels of employees, we argue that neglecting to measure multiple dimensions of narcissism, in some cases, ignores the empirical support for an explicit parsing of the narcissism construct (Miller et al., 2011), specifically within organizational contexts (Fatfouta, 2019). Thus, it is imperative to simultaneously capture the vulnerability dimension to develop a more nuanced view of the complex attitudinal and behavioral manifestations of trait narcissism in the workplace.

Further, the psychology literature has examined the positive relationship between narcissism and self-esteem (personal evaluation of one's value or worth; Miller et al., 2011) quite extensively, noting the subsequent outcomes of difficulty with interpersonal relationships (Richardson et al., 2021) and aggressive behavior (Hart et al., 2019). Arguably, due to the inconsistent findings on the directions of the relationships between narcissism and self-esteem (see Bosson et al., 2008, for a review), recent scholars have begun exploring narcissism's relationship with self-efficacy (Brookes, 2015), which is focused on individuals' beliefs about their ability to perform or accomplish tasks (Chen et al., 2001). For example, recent research establishes positive links between GN and self-esteem and self-efficacy and negative associations between VN and self-esteem and self-efficacy (Brookes, 2015). Similarly, research indicates substantial differences in GN and the general narcissism construct in relation to social cognitive traits, whereby GN shows a positive relationship with social cognitive traits (i.e., emotional intelligence, empathy, and perspective-taking), and general narcissism demonstrates a negative association with social cognition (Vonk et al., 2013). Therefore, we expect to find similar differences in GN and VN's relationships with self-efficacy and subsequent political skill in the current theoretical model.

Grandiose and Vulnerable Narcissism

GN is characterized by aggression, exhibitionism, extraversion, grandiosity, immodesty, self-assurance, and social dominance (Miller et al., 2011; Miller et al., 2012). Individuals high in this narcissistic subtype typically experience positive intrapersonal functioning (e.g., increased self-esteem) yet experience negative instances of interpersonal functioning (Campbell & Foster, 2007), especially over time (Foster et al., 2003; Leckelt et al., 2020). Given empirical evidence of strong correlations between self-esteem and self-efficacy (Brookes, 2015; Chen et al., 2004) and GN's positive associations with arrogance and a domineering nature (Miller et al., 2012), I expect a positive relationship between GN and self-efficacy.

VN is characterized by a desire for recognition, egocentricity, hostility, insecure grandiosity, interpersonal coldness, introversion, negative emotionality and affect, and psychological entitlement (Miller et al., 2011; Miller et al., 2012; Pincus & Lukowitsy, 2010). Further, VN has been conceptualized as the "inhibited, shame-ridden, and hypersensitive shy type, whose low tolerance for attention from others and hypervigilant readiness for criticism or failure makes him/her more socially passive" (Ronningstam, 2009, p. 113). Unlike GN's positive relations with self-esteem (Campbell & Foster, 2007), research indicates a consistent negative relationship between VN and self-esteem (Brookes, 2015; Miller et al., 2011; Rohmann et al., 2012). Thus, we expect to find a negative relationship between VN and self-efficacy.

In establishing the core differences between GN and VN, we elaborate on the relationship between personality and self-efficacy. Previous research indicates the influential role of self-efficacy in either fully or partially mediating the relationship between personality (i.e., Big 5 traits) and performance (Stajkovic et al., 2018). Additionally, Brookes (2015) found that overt narcissism significantly predicted higher self-efficacy and covert significantly predicted lower self-efficacy, therefore preliminarily supporting our argument that self-efficacy will mediate the relationship between narcissism and workplace performance

outcomes in the current hypothesized model. Thus, as previously stated, we expect to find a positive relationship between GN and self-efficacy and a negative relationship between VN and self-efficacy.

Hypothesis 1: Grandiose narcissism is positively related to self-efficacy.

Hypothesis 2: Vulnerable narcissism is negatively related to self-efficacy.

SOCIAL COGNITIVE THEORY

A fundamental premise of social cognitive theory (SCT; Bandura, 1988, 1989) is that individual learning and behavior occur via a reciprocal interaction between the individual/intrapersonal influences (including cognitive processes), the environment/social context (e.g., the leadership context), and behavioral mechanisms. In the agentic framework of SCT, self-efficacy operates in conjunction with one's goals, outcome expectations, and perceived environmental influences in either facilitating or impeding motivation and behavior (Bandura, 2006). In the current framework, narcissism and self-efficacy are conceptualized as intrapersonal influences, and political skill and workplace outcomes are behavioral influences. Narcissistic behavior has previously been explained through the lens of SCT in various models (Domino et al., 2015; Liu et al., 2021). SCT suggests self-efficacy (i.e., the belief in one's capacity to perform successfully in various tasks and/or achievement-related behaviors; Chen et al., 2001) is one of the key predictors of human behavior (Bandura, 1988, 2012). Extant literature indicates self-efficacy's consistent prediction of workplace attitudes and behavior, including job satisfaction, innovation, task performance, and organizational citizenship behaviors (OCB; Judge & Bono, 2001; Newman et al., 2018; Ozyilmaz et al., 2018). Additionally, the agentic perspective of SCT posits that individual "consciousness involves purposive assessing and deliberative processing of information for selecting, constructing, regulating, and evaluating courses of action" (Bandura, 2001, p. 3). Therefore, we suggest that when workers believe they can succeed in various workplace tasks, they will strategically engage in behavior that aligns with achieving personal and professional goals and objectives.

The Mediating Roles of Self-Efficacy and Political Skill

In the current research, individual self-efficacy and political skill are the underlying motivational dynamics and social effectiveness mechanisms that explain the relationship between narcissism and workplace outcomes. According to SCT (Bandura, 1988, 1989), personal factors, beliefs, and cognitive mechanisms influence the interaction between the individual and behavior. General self-efficacy, which is related to an individual's self-concept, is defined as "beliefs in one's capabilities to mobilize the motivation, cognitive resources, and courses of action needed to meet given situational demands (Wood & Bandura, 1989, p. 408). More specifically, self-efficacy is a dimension of one's self-concept. It is determined by an individual's judgment of their ability to perform successfully in various tasks or achievement-related behaviors (Bandura, 2012; Chen et al., 2001). Self-efficacy is a crucial mechanism within the social cognitive framework (Bandura, 1977, 1997), whereby the positive self-concept influences individual perception, motivation, and performance.

Self-efficacy is positively related to motivational traits such as the need for achievement and conscientiousness (Chen et al., 2001). Self-efficacy has also been used to explain a variety of performance outcomes, including task performance (Udayar et al., 2020), job performance (Downes et al., 2021), and CWB (Sharma & Sharma, 2015). Meta-analytic evidence indicates strong support for self-efficacy in contributing to work-related performance. This construct is arguably a more accurate and consistent predictor of workplace performance beyond the effects of traditional personality characteristics (Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998). One of the fundamental tenets of SCT involves an agentic perspective in which individuals play an active role in deciding to engage in a particular behavior (Bandura, 1986, 2001). Additionally, individuals exercise their decisions to engage in behaviors because of their corresponding self-efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 1997, 2000). Self-efficacy is a critical driver in human motivational and behavioral processes (Bandura, 1989). Thus, from a social cognitive perspective, self-efficacy is a

motivational component that leads to utilizing political skill as a social effectiveness strategy within the organizational context.

Political skill is conceptualized as "…the ability to understand social interactions at work and to use this understanding to influence others to act in ways that enhance one's personal or organizational goals" (Ferris et al., 2005, p. 127). When individuals are high in self-efficacy, it can be argued that they will have a greater likelihood of political skill development over time. More specifically, if one believes they can perform in a wide variety of situations, we expect to observe these individuals consciously strive to develop skills that enable them to accomplish goals associated with specific workplace tasks and goals. Lastly, the positive relationship between self-efficacy and political skill has been well established throughout the organizational literature (Ferris et al., 2007), including recent meta-analytic support (Munyon et al., 2015). Politically skilled individuals have a level of social competence that enables them to pursue personal and organizational objectives via their profound understanding of interpersonal behavior and influence over others. These individuals are strong communicators and can adapt to social and organizational contexts while appearing sincere and genuine (Ferris et al., 2005). Ferris et al. (2007) characterize political skill as a malleable interpersonal style contributing to individual social effectiveness within the workplace.

The political skill construct has demonstrated reliability, generalization, and construct and criterion validity across several meta-analyses over the last decade (Jacobson & Viswesvaran, 2017; Munyon et al., 2015). Political skill is captured by four unique dimensions: networking ability, interpersonal influence, social astuteness, and apparent sincerity. Social astuteness is the ability to understand social interactions and the behavior of others accurately; interpersonal influence is one's flexible and adaptive behavior used to maintain powerful influence over others; networking ability is the ability to build alliances and robust networks, and apparent sincerity and the appearance that one is authentic, genuine, and sincere (Ferris et al., 2007). Pfeffer (1981) and Mintzberg (1983, 1985) characterized organizations as political environments requiring an ability to engage in informal negotiation, bargaining, deal-making, and alliance-building to succeed. Thus, political skill is argued to be an essential characteristic of individual effectiveness within organizations and is known for its positive associations with work productivity, job satisfaction, task performance, organizational commitment, leadership effectiveness, and OCBs (Bing et al., 2011; Munyon et al., 2015; Semadar et al., 2006) and negative association with psychological strain (Munyon et al., 2015). Political skill's negative association with adverse psychological experiences is supported by consistent findings of its beneficial role in mitigating stress reactions (Munyon et al., 2015; Perrewé et al., 2000). A recent meta-analysis also indicates that political skill negatively affects job stressors and burnout (Summers et al., 2020).

At the core, political skill operates as a mechanism through which individuals pursue goal-directed behavior, which Ferris and colleagues argue occurs in reaction to interpersonal objectives and achievement of outcomes. Ferris et al. (2007) also argue for dispositional and personal ability antecedents to political skill and note that individuals with a high need for achievement and power (e.g., grandiose narcissists; Miller et al., 2010, 2011) are motivated to utilize political skill. From a social-cognitive perspective, it can be argued that certain individuals strategically use political skill as a strategy or behavioral mechanism to engage in positive workplace behavior and to maintain positive workplace attitudes (e.g., organizational commitment). On the other end of the spectrum, when political skill is low, individuals are more likely to engage in deviant workplace behavior and less likely to engage in positive workplace behavior, relationship-oriented behavior (e.g., OCB). Therefore, we hypothesize:

Hypothesis 3: Self-efficacy is positively related to political skill.

Hypothesis 4: Political skill is positively related to (a) organizational commitment and (b) organizational citizenship behavior and negatively related to (c) workplace deviance.

In today's organizational climate, employee performance is often assessed to include in-role (i.e., job performance) and extra-role behavior. More specifically, employee behavior beyond general expectations within the formal job description would be included as extra-role behavior. Workplace deviance and

contextual performance (i.e., OCB) are classified in the organizational sciences as extra-role behavior (Motowidlo & Van Scotter, 1994). Examining the impact of narcissism across multiple performance domains is crucial to understanding the positive and negative effects of narcissism in the workplace. Therefore, the current study tests a theoretical model to enhance our understanding of the attitudinal and behavioral outcomes of narcissistic employees. We begin by discussing three primary outcomes – organizational commitment, workplace deviance, and OCB.

BACKGROUND

Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment is arguably one of the most critical and researched attitudinal outcomes in the organizational behavior literature (Allen & Meyer, 1990). A literature review suggests limited examination of this construct's relations with narcissism until recently. This construct represents a type of psychological commitment represented by one's sense of belonging within the organization. Organizational commitment is often conceptualized by Allen and Meyer's (1990) three-dimensional model of the construct, including affective, continuance, and normative commitment. Affective commitment is conceptualized as "…an affective or emotional attachment to the organization such that the strongly committed individual identifies with, is involved in, and enjoys membership in the organization" (Allen & Meyer, 1990, p. 2). Meta-analytic evidence indicates that this key attitudinal construct is predicted by personal characteristics and work experiences (Meyer et al., 2002) and subsequently predicts important human resources outcomes, including turnover intention, job performance, and OCB. More specifically, affective commitment positively predicted performance and affective and normative commitment positively predicted engagement in OCB. A recent empirical review of the theoretical framework of organizational commitment proposes affective commitment, or the emotional attachment to one's organization, as the core feature of organizational commitment (Mercurio, 2015). Given these findings and the varying relations with emotional and affective experiences (depending on the specific dimension of narcissism), the current study examines affective commitment.

Empirical research consistently supports the positive relationship between organizational commitment and positive workplace performance behaviors, including decreased turnover intentions and increased extra-role behavior (Wombacher & Felfe, 2017). Given that modern organizations are rarely characterized by long-term employment, possibly due to the rise in technology and the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19, there is an increased concern about understanding organizational commitment in the modern world. Research on narcissism's impact on additional job attitudes, such as job satisfaction, has yielded inconsistent findings. For example, Mathieu (2013) found narcissism to be significantly negatively related to job satisfaction, while Jonason et al. (2015) found the two constructs to be unrelated, thus justifying the decision to examine the possibility that GN and VN's relations with self-efficacy explain this variation. Recent analyses reveal job satisfaction's role in mediating the positive relationship between narcissistic admiration and job commitment and the negative relationship between narcissistic rivalry and job commitment (Lehtman & Zeigler-Hill, 2020), preliminarily supporting our prediction that the two dimensions of narcissism in the current study will relate differently to the job attitude of organizational commitment via the relationships with self-efficacy and subsequent political skill.

Workplace Deviance

Workplace Deviance is conceptualized as "voluntary behavior that violates significant organizational norms and in doing so threatens the well-being of an organization, its members, or both" (Robinson & Bennet, 1995, p. 556). Workplace deviance is associated with substantial costs for organizations (Bennett et al., 2018) and individuals (e.g., Tepper et al., 2006). The narcissism-CWB relationship has been well supported in recent meta-analyses (Grijalva & Newman, 2015; Pletzer et al., 2019). More specifically, of the dark triad personality traits, O'Boyle et al. (2012) find narcissism the dominant predictor of CWB. Grijalva and Newman (2015) later reaffirmed these findings and emphasized that narcissism is the dominant predictor of CWB even after controlling for the Big 5 personality traits. The narcissism-deviance

relationship has been previously explained by various cognitive and emotional mechanisms, including anger (Penney & Spector, 2002) and hypersensitivity to perceived ego threats (Bushman & Baumeister, 1998).

Organizational Citizenship Behavior

OCB is defined as "individual behavior that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and that in the aggregate promotes the effective functioning of the organization" (Organ, 1988, p. 4). OCB is conceptualized as an extra-role, helping behavior; however, despite their voluntary nature, OCBs are also an essential element of employee performance ratings (Organ et al., 2005). Prominent examples of OCB include orienting new employees to the organization's culture and expectations and voluntarily offering to assist coworkers (LePine et al., 2002). In the realm of extra-role performance, Judge et al. (2006) found narcissism to be negatively related to supervisor ratings of OCBs and positively associated with self-ratings of OCBs, while Li et al. (2022) recently found narcissistic admiration (i.e., a dimension of GN) to be positively related to OCB towards customers. In scholarly research, inconsistent findings are often the result of either the presence of boundary conditions, rating source (Lee & Carpenter, 2018), or lack of understanding of potential key drivers or motivational mechanisms that drive the outcome behavior. As such, the current study examines the cognitive and motivational mechanisms through which the two dimensions of narcissism impact individual workplace behavior and the boundary conditions that potentially mitigate the negative side of narcissistic behavior.

Hypothesis 5: Grandiose narcissism has a positive indirect effect on (a) organizational commitment and (b) organizational citizenship behavior and a negative indirect effect on (c) workplace deviance via self-efficacy and political skill.

Hypothesis 6: Vulnerable narcissism has a negative indirect effect on (a) organizational commitment and (b) organizational citizenship behavior and a positive indirect effect on (c) workplace deviance via self-efficacy and political skill.

METHODOLOGY

Hypotheses were tested using data from a traditional online survey study. Data were collected from respondents through *Prolific* with participants from the United States. Data was collected using a time-separated survey over three points in time, each separated by one week. Data were matched across time points using participants' Prolific IDs. This design was applied to control intrapersonal measurement error, socially desirable responses, and common method variance (Podsakoff et al., 2003). To ensure an appropriate recruitment sample for the research questions, we set pre-screen questions to restrict the sample to participants in the United States who were age 18 or older, currently employed and had completed a minimum of 25 Prolific submissions. Using Qualtrics, participants were directed to the participant information and informed consent. A total of 400 participants completed the initial survey and were invited to participate in Time 2. Of the 400, 350 completed the second survey; thus, I had an attrition rate of 12.5%. These 350 participants were invited to participate in the final (Time 3) survey. We maintained an 85% response rate for this round with a final sample of 300 participants for the full 3-part survey study. Personality constructs and demographic variables were collected at Time 1. Self-efficacy and political skill were collected at Time 2, and the outcome variables in the current study were collected at Time 3. Constructs are operationalized with previously established and validated measures. For this study, we selected scales containing various response anchor formats, which minimize scale properties shared by the measures of the predictor and criterion variables. This technique has decreased the likelihood that participant responses will be influenced by systematic response tendencies (MacKenzie & Podsakoff, 2012). GN and VN were assessed on a Likert-type scale ranging from (0) *Strongly Disagree* to (10) *Strongly Agree*. This scale format was selected to ensure response variability (Hair et al., 2020). Consistent with

organizational research on narcissism and employee performance outcomes, we controlled age (measured in years), which has been empirically shown to relate to variables in the current study (e.g., Pletzer, 2021).

Grandiose Narcissism

GN was assessed using the 16-item Narcissistic Grandiosity Scale ($\alpha = 0.96$; Rosenthal et al., 2020). This scale was designed to measure respondents' sense of self-importance and superiority using a list of adjectives in which the respondents indicate the extent to which these items describe them. A sample item for this scale is "Brilliant."

Vulnerable Narcissism

VN was assessed using Hendin & Cheek's (1997) 10-item Hypersensitive Narcissism Scale ($\alpha = 0.93$). Respondents were asked to rate the extent to which each item is characteristic of their feelings and behavior. A sample item for this scale is "I dislike sharing the credit of an achievement with others."

Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy was assessed using the 8-item New General Self-Efficacy Scale ($\alpha = 0.96$; Chen et al., 2001). Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with each item on a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from (1) *Strongly Disagree* to (7) *Strongly Agree*, with a higher score indicating higher levels of generalized self-efficacy. A sample item for this measure is "I believe I can succeed at most any endeavor to which I set my mind."

Political Skill

Political skill was measured using Ferris et al.'s (2005) 18-item Political Skill Inventory ($\alpha = 0.95$). The dimensions for this scale include networking ability (six items), social astuteness (five items), interpersonal influence (four items), and apparent sincerity (three items). Responses were recorded using a 7-point Likert scale ranging from (1) *Strongly Disagree* to (7) *Strongly Agree*, with higher scores indicating higher levels of this political skill. A sample item is "I am able to communicate easily and effectively with others."

Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment was assessed using Allen and Meyer's (1990) 8-item measure of *affective commitment* ($\alpha = 0.92$). Respondents rated each item on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from (1) *Strongly Disagree* to (7) *Strongly Agree*. A sample item is "I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization."

Organizational Citizenship Behavior

OCB was measured using 16 items from Lee and Allen's (2002) scale. Respondents will be asked to rate their level of agreement for each statement on a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from (1) *Strongly Disagree* to (7) *Strongly Agree*. Following the recommendations of Judge et al. (2006) about the study of narcissism and contextual performance, we computed an overall measure of contextual performance by averaging the 16 items ($\alpha = 0.96$).

Workplace Deviance

Workplace deviance was measured using the 19-item scale ($\alpha = 0.91$) developed by Bennett and Robinson (2000). Seven items in this scale are related to interpersonal deviance ($\alpha = 0.90$), and the remaining twelve questions are related to organizational deviance ($\alpha = 0.86$). A sample item measuring interpersonal deviance includes "Acted rudely toward someone at work." A sample item for organizational deviance includes "Put little effort into your work." Respondents will be asked to indicate on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from (1) *Never* to (7) *Daily* the extent they have engaged in the listed behaviors over the past six months.

Preliminary Analysis

The analysis began by running bivariate correlations and establishing the descriptive statistics of the data in SPSS. To examine the mediation model, we utilized the Smart PLS Version 3 software to perform a Confirmatory Composite Analysis (CCA) to examine the measurement model to ensure that this model meets the required criteria before running and assessing the structural model (Hair et al., 2022). This information can be found in Supplemental Material A, which is available upon request.

RESULTS

Data were examined to assess normal distribution, although the partial least squares structural equation modeling method does not require normally distributed data (Hair et al., 2020). Respondents who failed attention checks or straight-lined responses were identified and removed from the sample before analysis. The sample in the current study comprised 296 participants, 60.5% (176) of whom identified as male, 72% Caucasian, and non-Hispanic, with an average age of 37.8 years ($SD = 11$). The means, standard deviations, and correlations among study variables are shown in Table 1. The Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranged from 0.91 to 0.96 (see Table 1); thus, all scales demonstrated good reliability in the initial analysis. The proposed control variable is also significantly correlated with two of the three dependent variables in the current study. The correlations between political skill and OCB ($r = 0.60$) and political skill and organizational commitment ($r = 0.46$) highlight the importance of this concept in relation to positive workplace performance outcomes. This finding is also consistent with previous findings in the political skill-workplace outcomes literature (Munyon et al., 2015) and indicates that political skill may be a meaningful concept to study further in relation to its explanatory role in the dark personality-workplace outcome relationship, specifically due to its malleability (Ferris et al., 2005). Another substantial correlation is between GN and PS ($r = 0.37$), which is unsurprising given the empirical support for the relationship between GN and leader emergence (Grijalva et al., 2015) and the political skill that is likely required as a prerequisite to leader emergence. It is also important to note that this study found no significant correlation between the GN and VN constructs, which supports our argument that the distinct dimensions of narcissism should be considered in the analyses of narcissism-workplace performance outcomes. Missing data were managed using pairwise deletion in SPSS. To test for common method bias, we performed a collinearity assessment using the Variance Inflation Factors to ensure that these values fall below the recommended cutoffs of 5 or below (Hair et al., 2022).

TABLE 1
MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATIONS, CORRELATIONS, AND RELIABILITY

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Grandiose Narcissism	4.15	2.04	(0.96)						
2. Vulnerable Narcissism	5.06	1.87	0.09	(0.93)					
3. Self-Efficacy	5.42	1.11	0.34**	-0.38**	(0.96)				
4. Political Skill	4.96	1.03	0.37**	-0.24**	0.52**	(0.95)			
5. Organizational Commitment	4.15	1.50	0.23**	-0.22**	0.31**	0.46**	(0.92)		
6. Organizational Citizenship Behavior	4.20	1.51	0.32**	-0.18**	0.36**	0.60**	0.52**	(0.96)	
7. Workplace Deviance	1.64	0.69	0.12*	0.33**	-0.20**	-0.09	-0.08	-0.05	(0.91)
8. Age	37.78	10.95	-0.08	-0.27**	0.05	-0.02	0.15*	0.04	-0.17

Notes: N=296. *p<.05. **p<.01.

Measurement Model Evaluation – PLS-SEM

In the first step, we followed the confirmatory composite analysis process to examine the reflective measurement model (Hair et al., 2020). Supplemental Material B is available upon request.

Structural Model Evaluation – PLS-SEM

We utilized the SmartPLS version 4 software to evaluate the structural model (Hair et al., 2020). The current study examined the variance inflation factor (VIF) ratios for all relevant constructs to test for multicollinearity. The VIF for each independent construct indicates no concern with multicollinearity, as each ratio was below the 5.0 cutoff (Hair et al., 2022).

Direct Relationships

The next step in evaluating the structural model includes evaluating the significance and relevance of the hypothesized model as indicated by the size and statistical significance of the path coefficients (Hair et al., 2022). The bootstrapping option was run using 10,000 subsamples to obtain the significance levels of the path coefficients. Hypothesis 1 predicted a positive relationship between GN and self-efficacy, and Hypothesis 2 predicted a negative relationship between VN and self-efficacy. Table 2 shows significant relationships between GN and self-efficacy ($\beta = 0.32$, $t = 6.62$, $p < 0.001$) as well as between VN and self-efficacy ($\beta = -0.30$, $t = 5.53$, $p < 0.001$), thus indicating support for Hypotheses 1 and 2. These results suggest that distinct types of narcissism influence the direction of individual self-efficacy. Hypothesis 3 predicted a positive relationship between self-efficacy and political skill. Table 2 shows a significant relationship between self-efficacy and political skill ($\beta = 0.51$, $t = 9.03$, $p < 0.001$), thus indicating support for Hypothesis 3. Hypotheses 4a and 4b predicted a positive relationship between political skill and organizational commitment, and OCB, respectively. As shown in Table 2, results indicate a positive relationship between political skill and organizational commitment ($\beta = 0.46$, $t = 9.63$, $p < 0.001$) and a positive relationship between political skill and OCB ($\beta = 0.61$, $t = 18.12$, $p < 0.001$), thus providing support for Hypothesis 4a and 4b. Hypothesis 4c predicted a negative relationship between political skill and workplace deviance. Table 2 shows a significant relationship between political skill and workplace deviance ($\beta = -0.20$, $t = 3.30$, $p < 0.001$), thus indicating support for Hypothesis 4c.

TABLE 2
DIRECT EFFECTS

Hypothesized Relationship	Path Coefficients	*T* Statistics	*P* Values	Significant (<.05)
Grandiose Narcissism → Self-Efficacy	0.32	6.62	0.000	Yes
Vulnerable Narcissism → Self-Efficacy	-0.30	5.53	0.000	Yes
Self-Efficacy → Political Skill	0.51	9.03	0.000	Yes
Political Skill → Organizational Commitment	0.46	9.63	0.000	Yes
Political Skill → Organizational Citizenship Behavior	0.61	18.12	0.000	Yes
Political Skill → Workplace Deviance	-0.20	3.30	0.000	Yes

Indirect Relationships – Mediation

Hypotheses 5a and 5b predicted that GN would positively affect organizational commitment and OCB via self-efficacy and political skill. Results of the structural model analysis indicate positive and significant relationships ($p < 0.001$) for H5a ($\beta = 0.08$, $t = 4.78$) and 5b ($\beta = 0.10$, $t = 4.99$); therefore, both hypotheses are accepted. Hypothesis 5c predicted that GN would have a negative indirect effect on workplace deviance via self-efficacy and PS. The results of this structural model analysis indicate a negative and significant relationship ($p < 0.05$) for H5c ($\beta = -0.03$, $t = 2.55$). Therefore, this hypothesis is also accepted. Results are shown in Table 3. Alternatively, hypotheses 6a and 6b predicted that VN would negatively affect organizational commitment and OCB via self-efficacy and PS. Results of the structural model analysis

indicate negative and significant relationships ($p < 0.001$) for H6a ($\beta = -0.07$, $t = 4.22$) and 6b ($\beta = -0.09$, $t = 4.21$); therefore, both hypotheses are accepted. Hypothesis 6c, then, predicted that VN would have a positive indirect effect on workplace deviance via self-efficacy and political skill. Results of this structural model analysis indicate a negative and significant relationship ($p < 0.01$) for H6c ($\beta = 0.03$, $t = 2.36$), thus indicating support for this hypothesis. Results are shown in Table 3.

In the next step, we examined the R^2 values of the endogenous latent variables, a measure of in-sample prediction, to examine how well the hypothesized model explains the variance in the endogenous constructs. R^2, or the coefficient of determination, is a statistical measure of the proportion of the variance in a dependent variable(s) explained by the independent variables in a multiple regression or structural equation model. In-sample prediction measures the strength of the relationships in the theoretical path model using a single dataset that simultaneously optimizes the relationships between the independent and dependent variables. More specifically, in-sample prediction differs from out-of-sample prediction in that in-sample prediction uses a single dataset to both explain the relationships between variables and predict the same sample data, whereas out-of-sample prediction optimizes the model parameters (e.g., beta coefficients) using an initial dataset (analysis sample) with the theoretical model and then determines how well the initial model parameters predict the dependent variable data in a different sample (holdout sample) of similar data (Hair & Sarstedt, 2021). The in-sample R^2 metric ranges from 0 to 1, with higher values indicating higher levels of explanatory power for the structural model (Hair et al., 2022). Results indicate the hypothesized model accounts for 29% of the variance in self-efficacy, 26% in political skill, 22% in organizational commitment, 38% in OCB, and 9% in workplace deviance. Additionally, effect sizes (f^2 values) for all structural model relationships were analyzed. In the current study, we utilized the effect size guidelines established by Cohen (1988), which indicate small, medium, and large effect sizes for greater than or equal to 0.02, greater than or equal to 0.15, and greater than or equal to 0.35, respectively. Results indicate that the values for the variables in the hypothesized model range from 0.12 to 0.60, demonstrating that these variables have a range of effects on the dependent variables. Of note is the medium effect of political skill on organizational commitment ($f^2 = 0.27$), the large effect of self-efficacy on political skill ($f^2 = 0.35$), and the large effect of political skill on OCB ($f^2 = 0.60$).

TABLE 3
INDIRECT EFFECTS

Hypothesized Relationship	Path Coefficients	T Statistics	P Values	Significant (<.05)
Grandiose Narcissism → Self-Efficacy → Political Skill → Organizational Commitment	0.08	4.78	0.000	Yes
Grandiose Narcissism → Self-Efficacy → Political Skill → Organizational Citizenship Behavior	0.10	4.99	0.000	Yes
Grandiose Narcissism → Self-Efficacy → Political Skill → Workplace Deviance	-0.03	2.55	0.011	Yes
Vulnerable Narcissism → Self-Efficacy → Political Skill → Organizational Commitment	-0.07	4.22	0.000	Yes
Vulnerable Narcissism → Self-Efficacy → Political Skill → Organizational Citizenship Behavior	-0.09	4.21	0.000	Yes
Vulnerable Narcissism → Self-Efficacy → Political Skill → Workplace Deviance	0.03	2.36	0.018	Yes

DISCUSSION

The goal of the current study was to highlight and analyze the bright and dark outcomes of narcissism in the workplace by including measures that capture both GN and VN. Additionally, we intended to explore mediating mechanisms which further explain these differences. Based on this objective, we conducted a time-separated survey study ($N = 296$) and analyzed results utilizing PLS-SEM by testing the hypothesized model.

Theoretical and Managerial Implications

Theoretically, this study makes several contributions to the literature on narcissism and organizational behavior. First, this study offers additional evidence of the importance of disentangling the effects of the two types of narcissism in organizational settings. An overabundance of popular press articles and even some fields of scholarly research highlight the dark sides of narcissism without ever fully considering the possibility of the benefits of this trait. Fortunately, because of a recent resurgence within the organizational literature in combination with more robust research designs and statistical methods, we are beginning to understand that traits are not good or bad, and traits alone do not necessarily cause someone to behave ethically or unethically. We now know that boundary conditions of traits abound, and cognitive, emotional, and motivational mechanisms further explain how and why traits result in certain types of behavior.

As humans, we want to believe that other humans are inherently good or evil or that the decisions people make are either right or wrong (Webster & Saucier, 2013), when in fact, both things can be true, and human behavior is inherently context-dependent (Bandura, 2012). As such, we must not continue to naïvely make overly simplistic claims that narcissists are "good" or "bad." Are individuals high in narcissism generally toxic in relationships? Often, yes (Bernerth, 2020; Liu et al., 2020). Are individuals high in narcissism generally effective and rational in situations of crisis or organizational financial performance? Also, yes (Cragun et al., 2020). As such, scholars must continue to divulge into the vast array of contexts under which narcissists engage in "bad" or "unethical" behavior. However, it is equally essential that scholars seek to understand contexts under which individuals high in narcissism operate efficiently and effectively in the workplace.

Using an SCT perspective, this study identifies self-efficacy and political skill as cognitive and behavioral mechanisms through which narcissism impacts employee performance outcomes. More specifically, the hypothesized model results support the social cognitive perspective, suggesting that human behavior results from the reciprocal interaction between personal, environmental, and behavioral factors. Interestingly, the social cognitive perspective of narcissism and self-efficacy also helps explain why this complex trait has an extensive history of inconsistent workplace performance outcomes. In the current model, we find that GN's positive relationships with OCB can be explained by higher degrees of self-efficacy and subsequent political skill. Those higher in GN are more likely to have stronger beliefs (i.e., cognition) that they can succeed at various tasks in the workplace. Further, this theory also explains that these beliefs result in GN impacting higher degrees of political skill (i.e., a behavioral mechanism). Therefore, the current study improves our understanding of which types of narcissists are likely to utilize political skill strategies to meaningfully contribute to organizational processes. As such, grandiose narcissists' social astuteness, interpersonal influence, apparent sincerity, and networking ability have a positive and direct relationship with positive workplace attitudes and behaviors, including organizational commitment and OCB. Theoretically, it is evident here that the interaction between personal factors (i.e., traits and cognition) and behavioral mechanisms (i.e., political skill) explains workplace behavior from a social cognitive perspective.

On the other end of the spectrum, vulnerable narcissists' lower self-efficacy (Bandura, 2012) and lack of political skill provide an explanation for VN's positive relationship with workplace deviance and negative relationships with organizational commitment and OCB. One of the key tenets of SCT (Bandura, 1986) is the idea of behavioral capability, which refers to an individual's actual ability to perform a behavior through essential knowledge and skills. When individuals are high in VN and thus have lower self-efficacy, their development of PS, a highly valued skill in the workplace (Ferris et al., 2005, 2007), may essentially

become stunted over time. With low PS, employees are possibly less likely to have higher degrees of positive workplace interactions with others, thus leading to lower organizational commitment and OCBs. Additionally, the lower political skill may make these individuals feel more socially isolated and potentially even inferior to others in the workplace, leading to the behavioral outcome of deviance. As such, our research also contributes to the existing literature on the role of self-regulatory and social effectiveness mechanisms in predicting workplace behavior by broadening the perspective to account for (explain) both positive and negative workplace behavior. To continue to expand this model through the lens of SCT, specifically in relation to the tenant of self-efficacy, it will be necessary for future researchers to continue to explore the environmental factors that enhance or diminish the narcissism-self-efficacy relationship. This may include leadership styles or workplace climate variables.

From a practical perspective, the current research offers several managerial insights. Given the variance in organizational commitment and OCB accounted for by narcissism via self-efficacy and PS, our findings suggest that narcissism, specifically GN, may be useful under certain conditions. Specifically, the results of the current study indicate that GN can be favorable regarding positive job attitudes and workplace behavior. GN's positive relationships with organizational commitment (via self-efficiency and PS) could potentially result in lower turnover and subsequent cost savings for the organization. However, an optimal level of GN may likely exist in this scenario; thus, managers and human resource professionals need to consider at which point the potential benefits of GN outweigh the costs. For example, recent research indicates significant positive effects of CEO narcissism on CSR (Petrenko et al., 2016). However, this study also found that CSR did not relate positively to firm performance in firms with narcissistic CEOs because the motivation to engage in CSR was primarily driven by a desire for self-enhancement and other selfish intentions. Thus, the findings of the current study crack the surface into our theoretical understanding of why GN often results in positive organizational outcomes across multiple levels of analysis, and future practitioners and managers must remain diligent about examining more underlying motivational and cognitive factors behind these relationships (e.g., moral licensing).

Limitations and Future Research

Although the current research offers additional practical and theoretical insights into the depths of complex knowledge related to personality and organizational behavior, it is important to acknowledge the study's limitations and future research opportunities. As such, we elaborate on issues related to data collection, measurement, and analytical procedures and identify constructs that may provide additional insights for future studies. First, the dependent variables in the current study are based on self-report responses. Given the inherent bias associated with self-report responses, we caution against generalizations of self-report findings related to narcissism, specifically GN, because previous research indicates that individuals high in this trait tend to minimize issues (De Page & Merckelbach, 2021). Additional research indicates positive relationships between GN and misreporting financial behavior (Ham et al., 2017). Thus, future scholars should consider utilizing performance measures based on supervisor reports.

Second, although narcissism is a distinct trait, it is moderately correlated with other dark traits, including psychopathy and Machiavellianism (Jones & Paulhus, 2014). Thus, future research might simultaneously examine these traits as additional boundary conditions and the interactive effects of these traits on impacting the relationships between GN and VN's relationships with workplace outcomes via self-efficacy and subsequent PS. Future studies should also consider controlling for the effects of these traits. Further, the current model only examines one attitudinal outcome and two behavioral workplace performance outcomes, thus limiting our ability to explain the narcissism-workplace performance relationships from a SCT perspective. Given narcissism's established relationship with additional subordinate performance variables (Bernerth et al., 2022; Du et al., 2022), future scholars should examine other potential outcomes, including job performance, job satisfaction, workplace incivility, workplace aggression, and bullying. Lastly, scholars continue to encourage more advanced analysis when applying PLS-SEM, given the continued developments within the software (Sarstedt et al., 2020). As such, we encourage future researchers to explore the possibility of nonlinear structural model effects in similar models.

CONCLUSION

Narcissism continues to be a complex topic as this concept historically relates to contradicting outcomes (i.e., outcomes related to self-regulatory and interpersonal processes as well as workplace performance). The current study provides empirical support for the notion that a partial explanation lies within dual pathways attributed to the different types of narcissism via self-efficacy and political skill. Results indicate that a distinction between GN and VN enhances our understanding of the effects of narcissism within organizations through the lens of SCT. It is our hope that disentangling the processes of the distinct types of narcissism will enhance future research and practice so that organizations may find more efficient and effective ways to manage this multifaceted trait.

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