Pass Me the ball

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Pass *Me* the Ball: Narcissism in Performance Settings

Abstract

The performance arena provides a multitude of opportunities for lionizing the self. Narcissistic individuals crave admiration and glory, and thus the performance domain constitutes an ideal medium for researchers to explore narcissistic behavior. However, despite its potential relevance and substantial research history within mainstream psychology, narcissism is only now starting to receive interest from researchers in the sport and performance domain. In this article, we aim to raise the relevance of narcissism (and more generally personality) within performance settings and provide a platform for future research in the area. We review research on the relation between narcissism and performance and conclude that narcissists' performance is contingent upon perceived opportunities for glory. We also offer suggestions for explanatory mechanisms. Further, we examine factors that may influence narcissistic behavior in environments that vary in their opportunity for glory. In addition, as leadership positions present opportunities for glory, we ask whether narcissists make effective leaders. We propose theoretical extensions of the narcissism literature to the performance domain, and we close with a call for greater consideration of the role of personality in performance contexts.

Keywords: narcissism, grandiosity, vulnerability, coaching, leadership

Pass *Me* the Ball: Narcissism in Performance Settings

The construct of narcissism has a long and fascinating research history. Indeed, a substantial body of work, from a dazzling array of literatures, has explored the role of narcissism in relation to human functioning. For example, psychodynamic theorizing (Ronningstam, 2011), social-personality psychology (Miller & Campbell, 2008), organizational psychology (Judge, LePine, & Rich, 2006), and management (Chatterjee & Hambrick, 2007) has given considerable attention to the relevance of narcissism in various domains of life. In contrast, researchers in the sport and performance arena have typically ignored the construct. More recently, however, interest from performance-focused researchers and editors has begun to grow (Geukes, Mesagno, Hanrahan, & Kellmann, 2012; Matosic et al., 2015; Roberts, Callow, Hardy, Woodman, & Thomas, 2010). Thus the time is ripe for a comprehensive review of the literature on narcissism in relation to performance in order to establish key parameters and help move the field forward. Such a review is particularly timely for performance-focused sport scholars, given the relative paucity of narcissism (and more generally personality) research within sport and the likely predictive utility of considering narcissism in relation to many sport and performance relevant issues.

The History of Narcissism

Inspired by Greek mythology, the Roman poet Ovid (43 BC - AD 17/18) told the story of *Narcissus,* a proud hunter known for his beauty. The Goddess *Nemesis* noticed that *Narcissus* rejected the romantic advances of the nymph *Echo*, and so enticed him to a pool of water. There, *Narcissus* fell in love with his own reflection. Unable to tear himself away from gazing at the image of his own beauty, *Narcissus* eventually perished by the waterside. The term *narcissism* has come to denote fascination with one's physical beauty and, more generally, to connote unmitigated self-love.

Although there has been a long-standing interest in the implications of the mythical Narcissus story (such as in Rousseau's 18th-century work *Confessions*), it was Sigmund Freud (1914/1957) who brought narcissism under psychological scrutiny. Freud, and other psychodynamically-oriented analysts inspired by him (e.g., Horney, Jung, Kohut, Kernberg, Reich), proposed that narcissistic displays of grandiosity are an ego-defense against deep-seated feelings of inadequacy. These theorists reckoned that narcissists portray to the social world a sanitized image of themselves in order to protect against their low self-worth. Any threats to the unveiling of this perfect image are met by the narcissist with subtle belittlement to outright rage or disproportionate aggression. Thus, narcissists' displays of grandiosity serve, at least in part, to protect their underlying vulnerability. The greater one's underlying vulnerability, the greater the need for the individual to engage in such displays.

Since this initial work, narcissism has been the subject of considerable scrutiny, especially in the clinical and social-personality psychology domains. According to the clinical perspective, narcissism is a personality disorder (narcissistic personality disorder or NPD) that is usually assessed in a diagnostic categorical manner (Miller & Campbell, 2010; Miller & Maples, 2011). Conversely, in the social-personality literature, narcissism is considered a less extreme form of the personality disorder and is conceptualized as a continuous variable (Miller & Campbell, 2008; Raskin & Hall, 1979). In both domains, researchers emphasize the grandiose and vulnerable components of the construct. As noted, psychodynamically oriented clinicians (Kernberg, 1975; Kohut, 1977) were the first to ponder narcissistic vulnerability alongside its grandiosity, and recent research relying on self-report measures has borne out this intuition (Campbell & Miller, 2011; Krizan & Herlache, 2016). However, the precise interplay between grandiosity and vulnerability (i.e., whether they are two separate components of narcissism or more intertwined) is a matter of some debate, which we discuss later in the article.

The Development of Narcissism

On the back of Freud's initial forays into narcissism, psychodynamic theorists also began to consider how narcissism might develop (for a review, see Sedikides, Campbell, Reeder, Elliott, & Gregg, 2002). One perspective, advocated by Kernberg (1975) and Kohut (1977), was that narcissism develops as a result of lack of parental warmth and love. Specifically, Kernberg suggested that the development of an inflated self-concept was a defense mechanism against emotional abandonment from the parent and against infantile rage following abandonment. Similarly, Kohut considered narcissism the result of unmet needs (such as love and care), where children might put themselves on a pedestal to try and obtain approval from others that was absent from parents. Both theorists thought that narcissists use relationships to feel good about themselves and to compensate for lack of parental warmth. Another perspective, advocated by Millon (1981), proposed that narcissism develops from an excess of parental love and admiration. In his view, chronic parental over attention habituates the narcissist to special treatment, and so any deviations from it will be met with hostility and aggression. These two perspectives, despite their differences, converge on the point that narcissism develops from dysfunctionality in the parent-child relationship. The results of cross-sectional studies (Barry, Frick, Adler, & Grafeman, 2007; Horton, Bleau, & Drwecki, 2006; Miller & Campbell, 2008; Otway & Vignoles, 2006) have been unable to differentiate between these perspectives (for a review, see: Horton, 2011). More recent longitudinal evidence however, has been supportive of Millon's position as opposed to that of Kohut and Kernberg: Narcissism develops because parents over-indulge their children, believing them to be more special and more entitled than others (Brummelman et al., 2015a,b).

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Scope, Definition, and Terminology

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In this article, we are concerned with the role of narcissism in performance contexts, which reward being the best and special. Performance environments, whether they are in

sport, business, medicine, or the military, offer a plethora of opportunities for the narcissistic individual to display grandiosity in pursuit of admiration. As we noted, with interest in narcissism growing from the world of sport and performance, a review of the state of the literature is timely and likely to serve as foundation for future work. We examine how narcissism is linked to performance in various settings and explore when narcissism is associated with better versus worse outcomes. Further, we address factors (e.g., coaching style) that may influence narcissists' behaviors. We also consider narcissism in relation to leadership asking whether narcissists make effective leaders. Finally, we discuss theoretical extensions of the narcissism construct that bear relevance to performance, and we close with suggestions about the utility of personality in performance research.

We limit our review to normal or everyday narcissism (as opposed to the aforementioned clinical conceptualization). That is, we conceptualize narcissism as a personality trait that is normally distributed in the adult population. We define narcissism as a self-centered, self-aggrandizing, entitled, dominant, and manipulative interpersonal orientation (Morf, Horvath, & Torchetti, 2011; Sedikides et al., 2002). Narcissists are also impulsive individuals who are focused on gaining immediate gratification (Vazire & Funder, 2006). In addition, we note that narcissism is different from self-esteem. Although narcissism has been described as an exaggerated form of self-esteem, the two constructs differ markedly in terms of their phenotype, consequences, development, and origins (Brummelman, Thomaes, & Sedikides, 2016). For example, whereas both constructs entail positive self-views, high self-esteem individuals do not necessarily think they are any better than others, whereas narcissists do. Further, high self-esteem individuals are often happy with themselves but narcissists are not, and high self-esteem individuals are interested in developing effective relationships but narcissists are not. Although high self-esteem individuals are concerned

with "getting along," narcissists are concerned with "getting ahead" (see Brummelmann et al., 2016).

Measurement

Clinical research typically uses interviews to diagnose a patient with NPD. Within social-personality psychology, a variety of self-report measures have been developed to assess the components of narcissism. The Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI; Raskin & Hall, 1979) and the Grandiose Narcissism Scale (Foster, McCain, Hibberts, Brunnell, & Johnson, 2015) measure grandiose narcissism. The Hypersensitive Narcissism Scale (Hendin & Cheek, 1997) and Pathological Narcissism Inventory (PNI; Pincus et al., 2009) measure narcissistic vulnerability, although the latter also measures grandiose narcissism (see Miller et al., 2011, for a discussion of problems associated with the PNI's factor structure). Other self-report scales measure narcissism alongside Machiavellianism and psychopathy, as part of the Dark Triad of personality; Paulhus & Williams, 2002). Supplementing self-reports, researchers have started including observational approaches to the study of narcissism, where trained observers rate individuals on various narcissism relevant descriptors (e.g., self-centered, overly confident) during videotaped interviews or social interactions (see Miller et al., 2011, for an example). Yet, the NPI remains by far the most widely-used measure of narcissism in the social-personality psychology literature. Although the NPI has its critics, not least because of its forced-choice format and its somewhat erratic factor structure (Brown, Budzek, & Tamborski, 2009), it does display sound evidence of construct validity (Miller, Price, & Campbell, 2012; Miller et al., 2014; Sleep, Sellbom, Campbell, & Miller, in press).

Within this article, we use the terms *narcissists* and *high narcissists* interchangeably to describe individuals scoring relatively highly on valid self-report measures of narcissism such as the NPI (Raskin & Hall, 1979). We use the terms *non-narcissists* and *low narcissist*

interchangeably to describe individuals with relatively low scores on such self-report measures.

The Context-Specific Nature of Narcissists' Performance

Despite narcissists' believing that they perform to a high standard, literature examining the relation between narcissism and performance has produced conflicting results. Despite evaluating their performances more positively, narcissists often perform no better than their non-narcissistic counterparts. This discrepancy has been demonstrated in tests of intelligence (Gabriel, Critelli, & Ee, 1994), group interaction tasks (John & Robins, 1994), oral presentations (Robins & John, 1997), tests of interpersonal sensitivity (Ames & Kammrath, 2004), and supervisor ratings of work performance (Judge et al., 2006, 2006). Narcissists' firm belief in their superiority of their skills would explain their emotive reactions to negative performance feedback that inevitably follows (Bushman & Baumeister, 1998). More specifically, Bushman and Baumesiter's (1998) work demonstrates that narcissists react very aggressively toward negative feedback, and direct their aggression specifically at the source of the feedback.

Although the aforementioned studies suggest that narcissists' performance is not generally laudable, another line of inquiry presents a more nuanced picture. In particular, Wallace and Baumeister (2002) showed that narcissists perform well in some situations, but poorly in others. These authors reasoned that the performance of narcissists would be dependent on the opportunity for personal glory afforded by the task. Given that they are strongly motivated by self-enhancement (Campbell, Rudich, & Sedikides, 2002; Morf, Weir, & Davidov, 2000; Sedikides & Gregg, 2001), narcissists should be acutely aware of the potential of situations for self-glorification. Across four laboratory experiments, Wallace and Baumeister demonstrated that narcissists (compared to non-narcissists) perform well in situations where the prospect for self-enhancement is high (e.g., pressure or difficult tasks,

presence of an audience or public recognition) and perform poorly when it is low (e.g., performing easy tasks or low pressure tasks, performing without any opportunity for public recognition).

The performance arena constitutes an ideal medium to explore narcissistic behavior, because of the self-enhancement opportunities on offer. For example, all things being equal, within sport one would expect narcissists (compared to non-narcissists) to excel in competitive environments, but underperform in training settings. Competition is laden with opportunity for glory, whereas training provides very little, if any, such opportunity. Similarly, performing well during a complex surgery or on a challenging military operation affords considerably more opportunity for self-exaltation than the equivalent level of performance during routine surgery or military operation. Recent work from the sporting domain supports the theoretical position that narcissists excel in pressurized competitive settings, but underperform when the pressure is off. Narcissistic handball players perform a throwing task to a higher level when under pressure (i.e., in the presence of 1000 spectators while also being videoed) than when in training (Geukes et al., 2012, 2013). Similarly, narcissism predicts improvements in performance from training to competition in a sample of high-level figure skaters engaging in competition routines in training and at a stressful national event (Roberts, Woodman, Hardy, Davis, & Wallace, 2013). Laboratory experiments involving a variety of tasks (e.g., cycling, dart throwing, golf putting) and manipulations (e.g., increasing pressure through monetary rewards, increasing the identifiability of individual performances) replicated this basic pattern (Roberts et al., 2010; Woodman, Roberts, Hardy, Callow, & Rogers, 2011).

In summary, this literature is consistent with the view that narcissists' performance is context specific. The overarching characteristic of that context is the opportunity for personal glory.

Underlying Mechanisms

Despite the consistency of these findings, a major criticism of the extant knowledge is that the underlying processes are poorly understood. Next, we consider mechanisms that may explain why narcissists shine in some situations and underperform in others.

Effort. Wallace and Baumeister (2002) posited that narcissists' thirst for self-enhancement would lead them to increase effort when they believe that there is an opportunity for glory and withdraw effort when they believe that there is no such opportunity. Moreover, according to these authors, such increases or decreases in effort would mediate performance changes. Despite the appeal of this theoretical proposition, only one study to date has implicated effort in the narcissism-performance relationship. In a team cycling task, Woodman et al. (2011) asked participants to cycle as far as possible for 10 minutes in two counterbalanced conditions, one where individual performance was identifiable and one where it was not. When identifiability was high, narcissists cycled over a kilometer farther compared to when it was low, and this performance increase was mirrored by increases in physical effort (i.e., heart rate and Ratings of Perceived Exertion). However, although these findings indicate parallel increases in effort and performance, they are limited as they offer no direct evidence that effort is the causal mechanism behind narcissistic performance increments under pressure. In addition, given that many tasks require the use of mental as well as physical effort, it is not clear how these two effort components influence (solely or interactively) narcissists' performance.

Trying smarter? The above account of the role of effort implies that narcissists perform better, because they try *harder*. However, it may also be the case that narcissists try *smarter*. Thanks to their keen awareness of opportunities for self-enhancement, narcissists may simply be more adept at exerting the right amount of effort at the right time or may be able to make a more efficient use of their effort. For example, anxiety-performance studies

have shown that low anxious performers are able to regulate effort for maintaining or

enhancing performance, whereas highly anxious performers are not (Hardy & Hutchinson,

2007; Smith, Bellamy, Collins, & Newell. 2001). Further, anxiety theorists (Eysenck, 1982)

have proposed that effort might only aid performance when one is confident of being

successful. In this regard, it is easy to see how narcissists' lower levels of reported anxiety

(Sedikides, Rudich, Gregg, Kumashiro, & Rusbult, 2004) or greater confidence (Campbell et

al., 2002) would strengthen their belief that increases in effort will improve performance, thus

resulting in concrete performance gains.

Regardless, a systematic investigation into the precise role of effort is needed to be

able to detect how effort might mediate the narcissism-performance relationship.

Multidisciplinary approaches that incorporate neuromuscular, psychophysiological, and

psychological markers of effort and performance (Cooke, Kavussanu, McIntyre, & Ring,

2011) or allow researchers to distinguish between the quantity and quality of a participant's

behavior (Bray, Martin Ginis, Hicks, & Woodgate, 2008) are likely to help elucidate the most

detailed understanding of effort's involvement in narcissists' performances. For example, in a

muscular endurance task, Bray et al. (2008) were able to differentiate between quality and

quantity of effort by showing that the level of muscle EMG required to produce the same

contractile force was much greater following self-regulatory depletion (resulting from

participation in a modified Stroop task) than otherwise. In this case, depletion led to a lower

quality (or more inefficient use) of effort, as depleted individuals needed greater levels of

muscle activation to maintain the same level of performance.

Beyond effort. Although effort does appear to be a key mechanism driving

narcissists' performances, it is unlikely that it has sole responsibility for performance

changes. For example, narcissists' desire for admiration leads them to display agentic

behaviors related to dominance and self-assurance as well as antagonistic behaviors related to

selfishness, aggressiveness, and arrogance (Leckelt, Küfner, Nestler, & Back, 2015). Such dominance or self-assurance behaviors might include talking, making expressive gestures and facial expressions, acting confidently, and displaying a strong presence. Arrogant, selfish or aggressive behaviors may comprise being cocky, boasting about achievements, reacting irritably to a performance outcome, and being annoyed (the interested reader is referred to Leckelt et al., 2015, for more information on the agentic and antagonistic behaviors that narcissists might employ and how these behaviors can be identified in a research setting). Either or both sets of these behaviors may be linked to higher narcissistic performance in competitive settings. This argument aligns with findings that super elite performers portray several of such behaviors (Hardy et al., 2016). That is, these agentic and antagonistic behaviors may be the catalysts that instigate changes in narcissistic effort. Alternatively, they may exert their effects on performance independently of effort. Distinguishing empirically between these possibilities would allow a fuller understanding of *why* narcissists perform as they do, as current knowledge is limited.

Getting the Best out of Narcissistic Performers

As we have discussed, narcissists' performance is dependent, at least in part, on self-enhancement opportunity. However, real-world environments vary in the glorification opportunities they afford. For example, training settings offer little chance for glory, yet are vital for performance (Gould, Greenleaf, Chung, & Guinan, 2002). As such, a vital issue is to uncover the factors via which narcissists might be drawn to perform as well in the training environment as they do in competitive settings (Roberts et al., 2013). Researchers have recently focused on two such factors: coach behaviors and narcissists' psychological skills.

Coach Behaviors

Two studies have been concerned with how different coaching behaviors impact on the effort of narcissists within training. Roberts, Woodman, Lofthouse, and Williams (2015)

examined how coach-fostered motivational climates influence narcissists' effort in training. The motivational climate literature has established that task-focused climates conduce more desirable outcomes than performance-focused climates (O'Rourke, Smith, Smoll, & Cumming, 2014), as the former focus on self-mastery whereas the latter underscore the importance of outperforming others. However, this literature has typically ignored the role of personality and, in particular, whether certain motivational climates are more effective for some individuals than others. From the perspective of narcissism, one might expect narcissists to benefit from performance climates, as the competitive nature of such climates presents an opportunity for glory. Conversely, the self-improvement flavor of mastery climates likely limits a narcissist's opportunity for glory, and narcissists would be less likely to benefit in these situations. These hypotheses were only partially supported by Roberts et al., who found that narcissists reported greater levels of effort, the more they perceived that coaches created either a performance *or* a mastery climate. In contrast, neither climate affected the reported effort of low narcissists. Narcissists' increased effort in performance climates was as hypothesized, but their increased effort in mastery climates was surprising. An explanation would be the narcissistic craving for attention and admiration (Morf & Rhodewalt, 2001; Sedikides et al., 2002). Narcissists may perceive that any motivational climate is worth investing effort into, if higher effort showers them with coach attention (cf. Bass, 1985). Thus, coaches who invest attention in their narcissistic athletes are likely to get the best from them.

In a related study, Arthur, Woodman, Ong, Hardy, and Ntoumanis (2011) explored how coach behaviors underpinned by Transformational Leadership Theory predicted narcissists' effort. Transformational leaders motivate their followers to perform beyond expectations by establishing effective relationships through personal, emotional, and inspirational exchanges (Bass, 1985). Specifically, transformational leaders do three things:

they motivate their followers by providing a *vision*, they *challenge* followers to achieve that vision, and they provide them with the necessary support in pursuit of that vision (Arthur, Hardy, & Woodman, 2012; Arthur & Tomsett, 2015; Hardy et al., 2010). Arthur et al. (2011) found that challenge behaviors, such as coaches having high expectations of followers, and some support behaviors, such as the coach's attempt to foster collective feelings of unity within a group, had little effect on high narcissists' effort levels, while being effective in motivating low narcissists. In contrast, other support behaviors that focused on treating each athlete as an individual were effective for motivating both high narcissists and low narcissists.

Given that transformational leadership predicts a myriad of positive outcomes (see Arthur & Tomsett, 2015 for a recent review), the beneficial effects of transformational behaviors on effort was as expected for low narcissists. However, for narcissists, the results were somewhat surprising. Indeed, one would expect narcissists to be unaffected by coach support behaviors, as narcissists devalue communion and value agency (Campbell et al., 2002; Sedikides et al., 2002). Conversely, it is not clear why narcissists were relatively unaffected by coach challenge behaviors, because these behaviors have the potential to offer the opportunity for personal glory. One possibility for this null finding, offered by Arthur et al. (2011), is that coach challenge behaviors (such as high performance expectations) normalize exceptional performances, and thus limit opportunities to perform beyond expectations. An alternative explanation, however, may be linked to impulsivity. As we noted earlier, narcissists are impulsive and seek immediate gratification (Vazire & Funder, 2006). Whereas a motivational climate has immediate implications for personal glory (Roberts et al., 2015), challenge behaviors from coaches have less immediate implications for personal glory, as they require delayed gratification and thus are close to resembling a training setting for a narcissist. The possible relevance of impulsivity for the relation between coach

behaviors and narcissists' effort is worthy of empirical attention in order to understand more fully why some behaviors are more effective than others in motivating narcissists. In addition, future work would benefit from use of longitudinal designs that incorporate multiple sources of data, thus surmounting some of the limitations of work that has relied solely on cross-sectional approaches. In summary, narcissists are motivated by gaining attention from their coaches and by coach behaviors that provide an immediate opportunity for glory.

Psychological Skills

The use of psychological skills (e.g., imagery, self-talk, relaxation, emotional control) is typically associated with higher levels of performance in competition (Hardy, Roberts, Thomas, & Murphy, 2010). However, since narcissists appear naturally to thrive in competitive settings, psychological skills may be of little use to them. In contrast, given low narcissists' propensity to choke under pressure (Wallace & Baumeister, 2002), such skills may be particularly useful for them. Interestingly, the evidence only partially supports this hypothesis. In fact, narcissists appear to benefit from psychological skill use. In two laboratory experiments, Roberts et al. (2010) demonstrated that narcissists improve their performance when using external visual imagery (i.e., imagining watching themselves perform the action from an observer's perspective), but not when using internal visual imagery (i.e., imagining looking out through one's own eyes while performing the action). These results are consistent with an opportunity for glory explanation: An external (but not an internal) visual perspective allows narcissists to watch themselves perform, that is, to become an audience to their own performance thus amplifying the opportunity for glory. Field studies with high level athletes in competitive situations (Roberts et al., 2013) have demonstrated that relaxation and self-talk also aid the performance of narcissists. Although not empirically tested, these strategies likely work because they further enhance narcissists' already favorable appraisals of competition. That is, narcissists view such strategies as contributing to an even

higher performance standard, which is likely to generate more admiration from others. This favorable appraisal coupled with a grandiose self-belief may give them the necessary confidence to implement effectively their psychological skills and to reap the benefits of doing so.

For low narcissists, psychological skills exert a more variable influence on performance. Roberts et al. (2013) reported that emotional control skills aid their performance in competition. In the same study, however, Roberts et al. reported no effect of relaxation on low narcissists' performance, and a negative effect of self-talk on performance (i.e., increases in self-talk were associated with poorer performance). These preliminary findings cast doubt over the efficacy of some psychological skills—particularly self-talk—for low narcissists, although more work is warranted to clarify how narcissism and psychological skills interact to predict performance. In summary, these studies indicate that "one size does not fit all": Narcissism differentially influences the effectiveness of psychological skills and coach behaviors on performance.

At the broadest level of human functioning, the idea that personality and environmental factors (e.g., coach behaviors, psychological skills) interact to predict behavior is, of course, not new (Lewin, 1935). From an applied perspective, the findings highlight the importance of a person-centered approach to consultancy that is built on developing effective relationships and recognizing that an athlete's personality likely moderates the effectiveness of any intervention (Fifer, Henschen, Gould, & Ravizza, 2008; Roberts & Woodman, 2015; 2016). In the broader theoretical context, the aforementioned studies highlight the relevance of considering interactionist approaches in sport or performance research. However, whereas interactionist approaches are commonplace in personality psychology (Pervin, 1968; Shoda, Mischel & Wright, 1994; Tett & Gutterman, 2003), such an approach has largely been ignored within the sport or performance psychology literature. Indeed, the sport and

performance psychology research literature has either neglected the influence of personality in performance contexts or considered personality in terms of main effects only (for exceptions, see Bell, Mawn, & Poynor, 2013; Geukes et al., 2012, 2013; Woodman, Hardy, Zourbanos, Beattie, & McQuillan, 2010). We argue that personality (as the case of narcissism illustrates) is worthy of greater consideration in performance contexts, especially if an interactionist approach is adopted, and we echo other calls (Allen, Greenlees, & Jones, 2013; Roberts & Woodman, 2016) by encouraging performance-focused researchers to incorporate personality in their theorizing and study designs. For example, research could examine the role of personality in interventions aimed at enhancing performance under stress or in interventions designed to increase group cohesion. Considering personality in this way will help to provide a greater understanding of its relevance for performance settings.

Narcissists as Leaders

As our review so far shows, there is a relative dearth of research on how coach behaviors influence narcissists. In contrast, there is a sizeable literature on narcissists in leadership positions and on whether narcissists make effective leaders (Grijalva, Harms, Newman, Gaddis, & Fraley, 2015; Schoel, Stahlberg, & Sedikides, 2015). It is worth noting that the sport literature has yet to fully consider narcissism in the context of leadership and coaching as, to the best of our knowledge, only two studies (Matosic et al., 2015; Matosic, Ntoumanis, Boardley, Stenling, & Sedikides, 2016) have explored narcissists as sport coaches. However, the extant literature on narcissism and leadership from other domains is of considerable relevance. Positions of leadership provide an opportunity for self-enhancement, and, as such, it is no surprise that narcissists are attracted to the idea of being a leader (Campbell & Campbell, 2009) and emerge as leaders in leaderless groups (Brunell et al., 2008). Indeed, narcissists possess several characteristics (e.g., charisma, confidence, social

skill, self-assuredness, need for power) that prompt followers to perceive them as leaders (Rosenthal & Pittinsky, 2006).

Evidence for a relationship between narcissism and effective leadership is weak, however (Khoo & Birch, 2008; Schoel et al., 2015). Instead, narcissists are often rated negatively by others on their leader effectiveness (Blair, Hoffman, & Helland, 2008; Judge et al., 2006), and narcissism has been described as a double-edged leadership sword (Watts et al., 2013). In fact, being led by a narcissist has been likened to eating chocolate cake (Campbell, 2005). The first bite is usually rich in flavor and texture, and highly gratifying. After a while, however, the richness of this flavor induces feelings of nausea. Being led by a narcissist could be a similar experience. Although narcissists' charisma, confidence, and extraverted disposition contribute to perceptions of leadership effectiveness on the part of followers, narcissists' preoccupation with the self at the expense of others, sense of entitlement, and proclivity to manipulativeness lead to a deterioration of their efficacy as leaders. In an attempt to account for this paradox, Ong, Roberts, Arthur, Woodman, and Akehurst (2016) proposed and validated a temporal model of narcissistic leader effectiveness. Consistent with the chocolate cake metaphor, narcissists are initially seen as effective leaders, but across time (and with increasing acquaintance) such positive effects diminish and eventually become negative. This decline in favor occurs largely because the more unappealing sides of narcissism (e.g., arrogance, hostility, entitlement, manipulativeness) come to the fore over time (Leckelt et al., 2015).

Underlying Mechanisms

Recently, researchers have turned their attention to the mechanisms that underlie narcissists' decline in leader effectiveness. In their studies on the trajectory of narcissistic leadership, Ong et al. (2016) demonstrated that changes in narcissists' perceived effectiveness were due, at least in part, to a change in their transformational leadership

behaviors. These authors asked groups of unacquainted (Study 1) and acquainted (Study 2) kinesiology students to work on weekly tasks for 12 weeks. The authors assessed leader effectiveness and transformational leadership via peer reports in a round robin design, using Brunell et al.'s (2008) Leadership scale and Barling, Loughlin, and Kelloway's (2002) adapted version of Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (Bass & Avolio, 2005), respectively. Narcissism initially had a positive indirect effect on leader effectiveness via transformational leadership, but this effect soon disappeared as followers saw narcissists as decreasingly transformational over time. As we noted earlier, transformational leadership comprises vision, challenge, and support components. Narcissism is associated with the visionary and charismatic aspects of transformational leadership (Galvin, Waldman, & Balthazard, 2010; Koo & Birch, 2008), thus it is likely that these "visionary" components are responsible for narcissists' initial effectiveness. However, narcissists' continual fascination with the self at the expense of others suggests that the challenge and support behaviors required to be seen as transformational over time fail to materialize, ultimately contributing to their downfall. Although the relevance of the different components (i.e., vision, challenge, support) of transformational leadership to narcissists' leader effectiveness makes intuitive sense, solid empirical support is lacking, as Ong et al. (2016) only used a global measure of transformational leadership. This would be a promising direction for future work.

Beyond transformational leadership, there are likely other mechanisms involved in the relationship between narcissism and leadership. For example, narcissistic coaches have a controlling interpersonal style (Matosic et al., 2015; Matosic et al., 2016), and controlling coach behaviors are associated with various dysfunctional outcomes (e.g., burnout, depression, elevated arousal; Bartholomew, Ntoumanis, Ryan, Bosch, & Thøgersen-Ntoumani, 2011), which could negatively impact leader effectiveness. Further, narcissists' hubris likely contributes to their decline in leader effectiveness. Relevant findings (Hoorens,

Pandelaer, Oldersma, & Sedikides, 2012; Van Damme, Hoorens, & Sedikides, 2016) suggest that an individual's self-superiority claims (e.g., "I am an exceptional leader") are disliked by observers, because observers perceive that the claimant holds a negative view of other people and thus of them. Although the "hubris hypothesis" (Hoorens et al., 2012; Van Damme et al., 2016) has yet to be tested in the context of narcissism and leadership, it is conceivable that the narcissistic leader could be viewed unfavorably over time by her or his followers, because followers believe that the narcissistic leader holds a negative view of them.

From an alternative perspective, a consideration of the narcissism-leadership relationship through the lens of evolutionary psychology points toward other mechanisms. Within evolutionary psychology, strategies such as prestige (recognition for skills, knowledge, and abilities) and dominance (intimidation and coercion) have been identified as viable approaches to gaining social status and leadership (Cheng, Tracy, Foulsham, Kingstone, & Henrich, 2013; Henrich & Gil-White, 2001). Interestingly, narcissism positively predicts prestige *and* dominance (Cheng, Tracy, & Henrich, 2010). Further, preliminary evidence (Ong, 2015) indicates that both of these strategies help to explain changes in narcissists' leadership over time. In particular, narcissism has a positive indirect effect on leadership via prestige and dominance in the early stages of leadership, but these effects disappear over time. To summarize, whereas these proposed mechanisms are plausible, the evidence base for them is weak. As such, further testing of these and other potential mechanisms is warranted for a fuller understanding of the relationship between narcissism and leadership, especially in the sporting domain.

Are Narcissistic Leaders Doomed to Fail?

The preceding section paints a rather gloomy picture for the narcissistic leader, particularly in the long term. However, there are signs of hope. A recent meta-analysis within the organizational psychology literature (Grijalva et al., 2015) indicated a curvilinear

relationship between narcissism and leader effectiveness, suggesting that moderate levels of narcissism may be optimal in the leadership domain. In addition, there are other variables that might attenuate the negative effects of narcissism in leadership contexts or even promote the positive effects. For example, narcissistic leaders who are able to temper their narcissism with humility are seen as more effective by their subordinates than those narcissistic leaders who lack humility (Owens, Wallace, & Waldman, 2015). Although narcissism and humility may seem a rather paradoxical combination, such traits can co-exist (Konrath, Bushman, & Grove, 2009; Sedikides, Gregg, & Hart, 2007). Moreover, the effective management and integration of seemingly paradoxical or incongruent constructs (such as narcissism and humility) can lead to positive outcomes (Smith & Lewis, 2011). Although narcissists may not be particularly modest, a recent study suggests that their modesty might be somewhat malleable (Leckelt et al., 2016), opening up the possibility that small changes in humility might have big impacts for the narcissistic leader.

Similarly, recent experimental work examining the relationship between narcissism and empathy (Hepper, Hart, Meek, Cisek, & Sedikides, 2014; Hepper, Hart, & Sedikides, 2014) demonstrates that, although narcissists may not have a surfeit of empathy, their levels of empathy can be increased following explicit manipulations instructing them to take an observer's perspective. Empathy is a reliable predictor of leader effectiveness (Kellett, Humphrey, & Sleeth, 2002), and so the combination of narcissism and empathy could well be a powerful cocktail for leadership, allowing narcissists to retain their visionary and charismatic demeanour while at the same time increasing their focus and concern for others. It is not difficult to imagine an individual with both of these traits being, and being rated as, an effective leader. Thus, trying to increase empathy levels in narcissistic leaders and coaches is a worthwhile endeavor. Such increases could be achieved via explicit perspective taking interventions, where the coach is required to consider a variety of situations from an athlete's

perspective and respond appropriately (Hepper et al., 2014 a,b). Additionally, the use of communal primes or slogans, such as "together we" or the famous "This is Anfield" sign at Liverpool Football Club, may help to promote interdependence and connectedness among narcissistic coaches (Giacomin & Jordan, 2015).

An important consideration within this area is whether such increases in empathy or humility on the part of the narcissist are genuine or strategic. From the perspective of the follower, such a position might be considered largely irrelevant; that is, if subordinates (e.g., athletes, employees, soldiers) believe that their (narcissistic) leader is being empathic toward them or is showing signs of modesty, then they are more likely to perceive them favorably. However, such displays of empathy and humility may simply reflect narcissists' self-enhancement tendencies. Narcissists are motivated to respond to certain situations, provided these situations are aligned with their personal goals (Morf et al., 2011; Morf & Rhodewalt, 2001). Therefore, if narcissists believe that they can gain self-enhancement (e.g., being seen as a good leader) from displaying empathy, then they are likely to engage in displays of empathy even if these displays are not entirely genuine. Exploring how moderating factors such as empathy and humility influence narcissists' leader behaviors, and whether such displays of empathic concern are strategic or perceived as genuine is worthy of empirical attention, as this issue has implications for researchers and applied practitioners seeking to understand what might make narcissistic leaders more effective. Given that almost all of this literature is from outside of sport, testing these hypotheses in the context of sport coaching and leadership is required for an understanding of how narcissism influences leadership in the sport domain.

Matching Narcissistic Leaders and Narcissistic Followers: Boom or Bust?

An interesting question that extends from the narcissism and leadership research is whether the degree to which a follower is narcissistic influences the effectiveness of a

narcissistic leader. To the best of our knowledge, research has yet to consider the "matching" of narcissistic leaders and followers in terms of leader effectiveness. However, theory and evidence relevant to this question exist in other spheres of the narcissism literature. As narcissists show disproportionately aggressive reactions to negative feedback (Bushman & Baumeister, 1998), have a disagreeable interpersonal style (Morf & Rhodewalt, 2001), and evaluate others negatively (Stoeber, Sherry, & Nealis, 2015), one might imagine that narcissistic followers would not rate their narcissistic leader particularly favorably. Moreover, given that narcissistic leaders and followers consider themselves special and are both fighting for the spotlight, the narcissistic follower may feel that there is only room for one "special" person (i.e., himself or herself) and so will rate the leader unfavorably.

Another body of evidence, however, is consistent with an alternative perspective. Individuals like others who are similar to them (Hart & Adams, 2014), not least because similar others behave in like-minded ways and pursue alike goals. Accordingly, narcissists are more tolerant of narcissistic others (Hart & Adams, 2014) and have similar personality profiles to their friends (i.e., someone who is friends with a narcissist is more likely to be narcissistic him/herself; Maaß, Lämmle Bensch, & Ziegler, 2016). Further, narcissists' relentless pursuit of self-enhancement may be more acceptable to other narcissists, because they share the same values (Maaß et al., 2016). Narcissists are also attracted to relationships with high-status others (Brunell & Campbell, 2011) and respond less negatively to ego threats from high-status others (Horton & Sedikides, 2009). Finally, evidence from education settings (Westerman, Whitaker, Bergman, Bergman, & Daly, 2016) indicates that greater congruence between student and faculty narcissism is associated with more positive student impressions of the faculty member and higher GPAs. In all, narcissists may rate their narcissistic leaders favorably and may see them as effective.

Given the possibility of positive or negative effects of "matching" in relation to leadership, work in this area is needed to test the validity or applicability of each of these postulates. Also, given that both positive and negative effects are theoretically plausible, investigating moderators within this relationship (e.g., sex of the leader or the follower; De Hoogh, Hartog, & Nevicka, 2015) are a priority research topic. This line of work has applied implications. Managers and performance directors often need to know how their coaches are rated by athletes. As such, they would need to have a deeper understanding not only of coaches' but also of athletes' personalities. Although it is probably not feasible (or ethically desirably) to match coach and athlete personality in team sports, greater empirical consideration of personality matching could pay dividends in individual settings, such as tennis and golf.

Conceptual Extensions

So far, we have discussed narcissism mainly as a one-dimensional personality construct (i.e., grandiose narcissism), typically assessed with the NPI (Raskin & Hall, 1979). However, more differentiated views of narcissism have been proposed in the literature. In the following section, we describe three such conceptual extensions and link them to performance settings.

The Two Faces of Narcissism: Grandiosity and Vulnerability

As we mentioned in the introductory paragraphs of this article, narcissistic grandiosity and vulnerability are two components of narcissism. Psychodynamic theory suggests that these two components of narcissism are two sides of the same coin, such that the self-aggrandizing and hostile nature of the narcissist stems from an underlying insecurity or fragility about the self (Kernberg, 1975; Kohut, 1977; Ronningstam, 2011). However, contemporary personality or self researchers (Miller & Campbell, 2011; Krizan & Herlache, in press) have argued that these two forms of narcissism are best conceptualized as two

different coins, each with its own aetiology. Much of the "two different coins" position is built on the premise that studies linking narcissistic grandiosity with indices of self-worth (such as implicit self-esteem) do not provide consistent support for the notion that grandiosity masks an underlying vulnerability (Bosson et al., 2008; but see Gregg & Sedikides, 2010). Our own psychodynamic leanings favor the "two sides of the same coin" approach, particularly as the absence of a relationship between measures of grandiosity and vulnerability does not necessarily imply that they are separate. Indeed, for self-protection purposes (Sedikides, 2012), individuals might be less likely or willing to report being vulnerable. Further, vulnerability may be deeply rooted or beyond awareness, and thus difficult to detect with the present measurement arsenal or methodological sophistication.

Regardless of these issues of theoretical complexity, most narcissism researchers would likely agree that a more complete understanding of narcissism can be obtained when both aspects of the construct are measured, as grandiosity and vulnerability predict divergent outcomes. For example, grandiosity is positively associated with approach motivation and negatively associated with avoidance motivations, whereas vulnerability is only (positively) associated with avoidance motivation (Foster & Trimm, 2008). Further, grandiosity is positively associated with explicit self-esteem and emotional stability, whereas vulnerability is negatively associated with these constructs (Ziegler-Hill, Clark, Pickard, 2008). In addition, narcissistic grandiosity and vulnerability have different effects on prosocial behavior: Grandiosity predicts the withholding of help under high, but not low, social pressure, whereas vulnerability predicts less helping under low, but not high, social pressure (Lannin, Guyll, Krizan, Madon, & Cornish, 2014).

Although these studies are informative, they have treated grandiosity and vulnerability separately, without recourse to their interactive effects. This may be problematic. For example, grandiosity may be positively associated with performance when

opportunities for self-enhancement are available (Roberts et al., 2010, 2013; Wallace & Baumeister, 2002; Woodman et al., 2011), but grandiosity on its own might be unlikely to culminate in the highest levels of performance. Specifically, performing well in situations that afford opportunities for glory (e.g., under pressure) provides narcissists with a way of buffering their fragile self. As such, the underlying narcissistic fragility might be the catalyst to enable the grandiose narcissist to achieve the highest performance levels. Stated otherwise, performance might be optimal when both narcissistic grandiosity and vulnerability are high. Research in this area is sparse, but forays (Manley, Roberts, Beattie, & Woodman, 2016) have revealed interactions between grandiosity and vulnerability on persistence that are consistent with this theorizing. We encourage researchers to consider the relevance of both grandiosity and vulnerability on performance, as well as the underlying mechanisms behind such performance effects, in order to allow a greater understanding of how different components of narcissism are implicated in performance outcomes.

Delving Deeper into Grandiosity: The Adaptive/Maladaptive Distinction

In its original development, the NPI consisted of seven factors: authority, superiority, exhibitionism, entitlement, vanity, exploitativeness, and self-sufficiency (Raskin & Hall, 1979). However, subsequent tests have often failed to validate this factor structure, and various alternative factor structures have been proposed (Corry, Merrit, Mrug, & Pamp, 2008). For example, recent work by Barry and colleagues (Barry et al., 2007; Barry & Malkin, 2010) has supported the distinction between so-called "adaptive" and "maladaptive" components. The adaptive components of the NPI reflect authority and self-sufficiency, whereas the maladaptive ones reflect entitlement, exhibitionism and exploitation. These constructs are so-called due to their effects on various socially desirable and non-desirable traits (Barry & Malkin, 2010).

Although the maladaptive components of grandiosity might conduce some undesirable outcomes, they may have relevance in the performance domain. Being confident and thinking highly of oneself (i.e., adaptive narcissism) is associated with good performance (Woodman & Hardy, 2003), but so may be feeling entitled or being exhibitionistic. For example, the desire for control over situations and for gaining the most beneficial outcome may well push the narcissist to exert greater effort in order to perform at her or his best. Such theorizing indicates that the component of narcissism that might be associated with problems in interpersonal contexts may contribute to higher performance, possibly via changes in effort or the other aforementioned mechanisms (see Roberts & Woodman, 2015, for similar arguments relating to traits that might promote interpersonal problems gleaning performance benefits). The adaptive/maladaptive distinction may also be relevant to leadership situations. For example, adaptive and maladaptive narcissism might differentially predict leader effectiveness over time, with adaptive narcissism predicting positive perceptions of leadership for longer than maladaptive narcissism, and maladaptive narcissism predicting negative perceptions of leadership early on. Similarly, maladaptive narcissism may be more interpersonally problematic than adaptive narcissism, such that it negatively predicts group outcomes (e.g., group cohesion, satisfaction). At the very least, researchers interested in how narcissistic grandiosity is linked with performance-related variables are likely to gain a more fine grained understanding by embracing this distinction.

Communal Narcissism

A broader conceptualization of (grandiose) narcissism that has relevance to performance, especially in relation to group dynamics, is the agency-communion model (Gebauer, Sedikides, Verplanken, & Maio, 2012). Thus far, the narcissist that we have portrayed is akin to an "action superhero" (Luo, Cai, Sedikides, & Song, 2014, p. 52). Action heroes think they are superior to others and satisfy their core self-motives (i.e., grandiosity,

power, esteem, entitlement) through agentic means such as demonstrating competence and uniqueness as opposed to through communal means such as demonstrating warmth and compassion (Campbell et al., 2002). However, recent work by Gebauer and colleagues (2012) has identified another type of narcissist, one who satisfies the same core motives (i.e., grandiosity, power, esteem, entitlement) but communally rather than individually: the communal narcissist. Communal narcissists are saint-type individuals (Gebauer et al., 2012; Giacomin & Jordan, 2015; Luo et al., 2014) who self-enhance in communal domains, and so believe they are the most caring, most helpful, and most trustworthy. However, despite believing that they are communally exceptional individuals, communal narcissists are actually rated as low in communion (in terms of their behaviors and traits) by others (Gebauer et al., Study 5).

The study of communal narcissism is in its infancy, and research has yet to explore the relevance of communal narcissism in performance settings. However, the implications are potentially substantial. Communal narcissists likely consider themselves good team players and believe that they contribute positively to effective team processes and outcomes, such as cohesion, teamwork, and "go the extra mile" to ensure their team's success (Li, Zhao, & Walter, 2015). However, whether teammates rate them so favorably remains to be seen. Similarly, communal narcissists might consider themselves effective leaders, because they believe they are caring and helpful. However, such attempts to self-enhance in the communal domain might backfire, because followers quickly see through hypocritical claims of communal excellence (Gebauer et al., 2012) and may infer that communal narcissists are ineffective leaders, perhaps even more so than agentic narcissists. The relevance of communal narcissism for performance environments is an exciting direction for research.

Conclusions

Narcissism has intrigued scholars and lay persons for millennia. Despite its long history, narcissism is only now starting to receive research attention in the performance domain. In this review, we examined how differences in the performance environment influence narcissists' desire to perform, factors that motivate narcissistic athletes, and the extent to which narcissists make effective leaders. The emerging literature in this area points to the influence of narcissism in various performance-focused settings, yet much is still to be uncovered, and we hope that this review provides a focus point for researchers interested in narcissism and performance to begin to consider key research questions in this area. Narcissism is often seen as a negative trait (such as one of the so-called dark triad of personality traits; Paulhus & Williams, 2002), but the evidence suggests a more nuanced picture. Narcissism is associated with positive outcomes in some circumstances (e.g., high performance in the presence of opportunity for glory), but with negative outcomes in others (e.g., lack of concern for others in the absence of opportunity for glory). Our view on narcissism is consistent with the position that no single trait is uniquely "bad" or "good" (Judge, Piccolo, & Kosalka, 2009) and that every personality trait has the potential to contribute positively and negatively in certain environments, particularly those associated with performance (see Judge et al., 2009 for a similar argument in the context of leadership). As we have raised specific research questions at various parts of this review, we close by offering two general thoughts about personality in relation to performance.

Personality has had something of a troubled history within performance psychology and has traditionally been a neglected topic (Roberts & Woodman, 2015; Vealey, 2002). However, the tide seems to be turning, as researchers once again begin to explore the influence of basic personality dimensions on performance (see Allen et al., 2013, for a recent review of the Big 5 personality traits in relation to sport). Athletes, soldiers, surgeons, and business executives are first and foremost individuals, and individuals differ remarkably from

each other. As such, a greater understanding of the psychological processes underlying performance can only be garnered by considering personality in context. Narcissism is an excellent candidate in this regard, but there are also other personality traits, such as alexithymia (Roberts & Woodman, 2015, 2016) and psychopathy (Lilienfeld, Watts, & Smith, 2015) that are worthy of theoretical and empirical consideration from performance-focused psychology researchers.

Our approach to narcissism and performance is based on the principle of interactions, either between personal and environmental factors (such as narcissism and coach behaviors) or between different aspects of personality (such as adaptive and maladaptive narcissism). Interactionist perspectives are not new (Lewin, 1935). However, interactionist perspectives are under-represented in the performance psychology literature, particularly in relation to the role of personality. Such perspectives have much to offer, as performance is typically determined by the joint influence of several factors rather than an isolated one (Hardy, 2015). Basic and applied research that mixes the role of personality in performance with interactionist perspectives can substantially advance knowledge in the discipline. We hope that the present review goes some way in sparking interest in this perspective, thus contributing to a fuller understanding of the person behind the performer.

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