

Research Paper

Title: Mapping Narcissistic Personality Patterns to IPDE Personality-Disorder Vulnerability in Young Adults: An Integrative Model.

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Abstract

Narcissism is increasingly recognised as a complex, multidimensional construct. However, research rarely investigates how specific narcissistic patterns influence vulnerability to personality disorders. This study combines the Narcissistic Personality Patterns Test (NPPT) with the International Personality Disorder Examination (IPDE) to explore how different narcissistic styles relate to criteria for Cluster B and Cluster C personality disorders. A sample of 300 young adults completed both the NPPT and the IPDE Screening Questionnaire. Structural equation modelling examined the relationships between four narcissistic patterns—Admiration Seeking, Entitlement, Perfectionistic Self-Control, and Emotional Coldness—and the risk for personality disorders. The findings showed that Entitlement significantly predicted Cluster B traits, Perfectionistic Self-Control was linked to Cluster C traits, and Emotional Coldness was associated with both narcissistic and schizoid tendencies. Admiration seeking demonstrated minimal clinical risk. These results support a nuanced model of narcissistic functioning and highlight perfectionistic narcissism as an important, yet often overlooked, risk factor.

Introduction

Narcissism has traditionally been regarded as a single personality trait, but recent studies highlight its intricate, multidimensional character. While grandiosity and vulnerability are well-known aspects, newer models identify additional subtle patterns that may pose distinct psychological dangers. The Narcissistic Personality Patterns Test (NPPT) measures four of these patterns: Admiration Seeking, Entitlement, Perfectionistic Self-Control, and Emotional Coldness.

The International Personality Disorder Examination (IPDE) provides a structured way to evaluate personality disorder criteria across various clusters. However, it does not specify how different narcissistic styles may influence susceptibility to personality disorders.

Keywords: Narcissistic Personality Patterns Test (NPPT), International Personality Disorder Examination (IPDE), perfectionistic narcissism, entitlement traits, emotional coldness, personality disorder vulnerability, Cluster B traits, Cluster C traits

Narcissistic Personality Patterns Test (NPPT)

The NPPT is a multidimensional assessment that identifies specific styles of narcissistic functioning rather than treating narcissism as a single trait. It measures patterns such as admiration seeking, entitlement, perfectionistic self-control, and emotional coldness, allowing researchers to distinguish between adaptive and maladaptive narcissistic tendencies.

International Personality Disorder Examination (IPDE)

The IPDE is a structured diagnostic tool used to assess symptoms and criteria for personality disorders across Clusters A, B, and C. It provides standardised screening for traits such as narcissistic, borderline, avoidant, and obsessive-compulsive tendencies, making it appropriate for identifying vulnerability to personality disorders.

Narcissism subtypes

Narcissism is not uniform; it includes various subtypes, such as grandiose, vulnerable, perfectionistic, and emotionally cold forms. These subtypes vary in emotional regulation, interpersonal behaviour, and clinical risk, which is why analysing at the subtype level is essential for understanding pathways in personality disorders.

Perfectionistic narcissism

This subtype involves strict self-standards, fear of imperfection, and self-critical pressure. Unlike grandiose narcissism, perfectionistic narcissism is linked with anxiety, avoidance, and susceptibility to Cluster C personality disorder, making it a key predictor in your NPPT–IPDE model.

Entitlement traits

Entitlement signifies expectations of special treatment, rule-breaking, and neglect of others' needs. It is a major predictor of Cluster B personality disorder traits, including narcissistic and antisocial tendencies, and often signals maladaptive behaviour.

Emotional coldness

Emotional coldness involves detachment, low empathy, and limited affect. It is linked to both narcissistic and schizoid-like traits, making it an important aspect for understanding interpersonal dysfunction and vulnerability to personality disorders.

Personality-disorder vulnerability

This refers to early or subclinical patterns that raise the likelihood of developing full personality disorders. In your study, vulnerability is assessed through IPDE criteria and forecasted by specific narcissistic patterns, aiding in identifying which traits present the greatest clinical risk.

Cluster B and Cluster C traits

Cluster B traits include narcissistic, borderline, histrionic, and antisocial tendencies, usually involving emotional dysregulation and interpersonal conflict. Cluster C traits encompass avoidant, dependent, and obsessive-compulsive tendencies, often characterised by anxiety and perfectionism. Your model investigates how NPPT patterns correspond to these clusters.

Literature Review

1. Conceptualising Narcissism: From Single Trait to Multidimensional Models

Early research regarded narcissism as a single personality trait, mainly measured by the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI). This method focused on grandiosity, self-confidence,

and social dominance. However, scholars soon realised that narcissism is not a single construct but a combination of emotional, interpersonal, and self-regulatory patterns.

Contemporary models distinguish between:

- **Grandiose narcissism** (extraversion, dominance, entitlement)
- **Vulnerable narcissism** (shame, hypersensitivity, insecurity)
- **Pathological narcissism** (unstable self-esteem, interpersonal exploitation)

These distinctions laid the foundation for more nuanced assessments like the **Narcissistic Personality Patterns Test (NPPT)**, which captures *specific* narcissistic styles rather than broad categories.

2. Narcissistic Personality Patterns Test (NPPT): A New Framework

The NPPT expands the field by identifying four distinct narcissistic patterns:

- **Admiration Seeking:** charm, social approval, attention-seeking behavior
- **Entitlement:** expectations of special treatment, disregard for norms
- **Perfectionistic Self-Control:** rigid standards, fear of imperfection, self-criticism
- **Emotional Coldness:** detachment, low empathy, interpersonal distance

Unlike traditional measures, the NPPT differentiates between adaptive and maladaptive narcissistic tendencies. Admiration Seeking may be socially functional, while Entitlement and Emotional Coldness are more strongly linked to interpersonal dysfunction. Perfectionistic Self-Control represents a *newly recognised subtype* that blends narcissistic self-evaluation with anxiety-driven perfectionism.

Despite its potential, research on NPPT remains limited, and few studies have examined how these patterns relate to clinical criteria for personality disorders.

3. Personality Disorders and the IPDE Framework

The **International Personality Disorder Examination (IPDE)** is a structured diagnostic tool used to assess personality-disorder symptoms across three clusters:

- **Cluster A:** odd/eccentric (e.g., schizoid)
- **Cluster B:** dramatic/emotional (e.g., narcissistic, borderline, antisocial)
- **Cluster C:** anxious/fearful (e.g., avoidant, dependent, obsessive-compulsive)

The IPDE is frequently employed in both clinical and research contexts because it offers a standardised, symptom-based assessment rather than an assessment of broad personality traits. However, the IPDE does not clarify how different types of narcissism relate to vulnerability to personality disorders.

This gap is where your study contributes.

4. Narcissism and Personality-Disorder Vulnerability

Research consistently demonstrates that narcissistic traits—particularly entitlement, exploitation, and emotional coldness—are linked to Cluster B disorders, especially Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD) and Antisocial Personality Disorder (ASPD). These traits forecast interpersonal conflicts, aggression, and emotional dysregulation.

In contrast, **perfectionistic and vulnerable narcissism** show stronger links to **Cluster C disorders**, including:

- Avoidant Personality Disorder (fear of criticism)
- Obsessive-Compulsive Personality Disorder (rigid standards)
- Dependent Personality Disorder (fear of failure, reassurance seeking)

This suggests that narcissism is not always “dramatic” or “grandiose”—it can also manifest as **anxious, self-critical, and avoidant**.

However, existing studies rely on older measures (e.g., NPI, PNI) and do not examine the **NPPT’s four-pattern structure**.

5. Entitlement and Maladaptive Interpersonal Behaviour

Entitlement is one of the most robust predictors of:

- interpersonal exploitation
- aggression
- antisocial tendencies
- unstable relationships

It is strongly associated with **Cluster B vulnerability**, making it a central focus in narcissism research. Yet no published study has tested whether NPPT Entitlement specifically predicts IPDE Cluster B symptoms.

6. Perfectionistic Narcissism: An Overlooked Risk Factor

Perfectionistic Self-Control is a **newer narcissistic subtype** that blends:

- rigid self-standards
- fear of imperfection
- chronic self-evaluation
- sensitivity to criticism

This pattern closely aligns with Cluster C disorders, particularly Avoidant and Obsessive-Compulsive Personality Disorder. Despite this theoretical connection, empirical research remains limited, and no study has explored this relationship using both the NPPT and IPDE.

Your study fills this gap directly.

7. Emotional Coldness and Schizoid-Like Traits

Emotional Coldness reflects:

- low empathy
- interpersonal detachment
- restricted affect

These features overlap with both **narcissistic** and **schizoid** personality patterns. Research suggests that emotional detachment may predict:

- reduced emotional responsiveness
- difficulty forming close relationships
- social withdrawal

However, the connection between NPPT Emotional Coldness and **IPDE schizoid-like traits** has not been empirically tested.

8. Admiration Seeking as a Potentially Adaptive Pattern

Admiration seeking involves charm, confidence, and social engagement. Studies show that:

- It correlates with extraversion
- It predicts leadership emergence
- It is not strongly linked to clinical pathology

This suggests that not all narcissistic traits are harmful. Your study contributes by testing whether Admiration Seeking is **clinically benign** when mapped onto IPDE criteria.

9. Gaps in the Literature

- No published research integrates NPPT patterns with IPDE personality disorder criteria.
- Perfectionistic narcissism has not been empirically connected to Cluster C vulnerability, despite robust theoretical backing.
- Emotional coldness has not been examined as a predictor of schizoid-like traits using structured diagnostic tools.

Limitations of Existing Research

- Most studies depend on the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI), which emphasises grandiosity and neglects perfectionistic or emotionally distant narcissism.

- Research infrequently combines narcissistic subtypes with structured personality disorder assessments.
- No published work has examined NPPT patterns as predictors of IPDE vulnerability.

Purpose of the Study

This study aims to compare NPPT narcissistic patterns with IPDE personality disorder criteria to distinguish between harmless narcissistic tendencies and those suggesting potential underlying psychopathology.

Theoretical Framework

Narcissistic Personality Patterns Test (NPPT)

The NPPT identifies four patterns:

- **Admiration Seeking** — desire for praise, charm, social approval.
- **Entitlement** — expectation of special treatment, disregard for norms.
- **Perfectionistic Self-Control** — rigid standards, fear of imperfection, self-critical pressure.
- **Emotional Coldness** — detachment, low empathy, interpersonal distance.

International Personality Disorder Examination (IPDE)

The IPDE assesses criteria for:

- **Cluster B** — Narcissistic, Borderline, Histrionic, Antisocial.
- **Cluster C** — Avoidant, Dependent, Obsessive-Compulsive.
- **Schizoid-like traits** — emotional detachment, restricted affect.

Proposed NPPT–IPDE Mapping

NPPT Pattern	Expected IPDE Vulnerability
Admiration Seeking	Minimal clinical risk; socially adaptive narcissism

NPPT Pattern	Expected IPDE Vulnerability
Entitlement	Narcissistic + Antisocial PD traits
Perfectionistic Self-Control	Obsessive-Compulsive + Avoidant PD
Emotional Coldness	Narcissistic + Schizoid traits

This mapping has not been previously tested.

Research Questions

1. Which NPPT patterns predict IPDE personality-disorder vulnerability?
2. Does perfectionistic narcissism uniquely predict Cluster C disorders?
3. Are some narcissistic patterns psychologically adaptive rather than pathological?

Hypotheses

- **H1:** Entitlement will significantly predict Cluster B vulnerability.
- **H2:** Perfectionistic Self-Control will predict Cluster C vulnerability.
- **H3:** Admiration Seeking will show weak or non-pathological associations.
- **H4:** Emotional Coldness will predict both Cluster B and schizoid-like traits.

Method

Participants

- 200 young adults aged 18–25
- University students and online platforms.
- Diverse gender and ethnic representation.

Measures

- **NPPT:** 4 subscales measuring narcissistic patterns.
- **IPDE Screening Questionnaire:** assesses personality-disorder criteria.

Procedure

Participants completed both measures online. Data were analysed using:

- Pearson correlations
- Multiple regression
- Correlation using (SPSS)

Results:

Analysis of the data identified specific predictive relationships between the four NPPT narcissistic patterns and vulnerabilities in IPDE personality disorders. Entitlement was the strongest predictor of Cluster B traits, showing a significant positive correlation that suggests individuals with high entitlement are more prone to narcissistic, histrionic, borderline, or antisocial features. Perfectionistic Self-Control was most strongly associated with Cluster C vulnerability, indicating that strict self-standards and fear of imperfection are closely linked to avoidant and obsessive-compulsive tendencies. Emotional Coldness notably predicted schizoid-like traits and had moderate connections with both Cluster B and Cluster C symptoms, reflecting its role in interpersonal detachment and limited affect. Conversely, Admiration Seeking did not show meaningful links to any IPDE cluster, implying that socially oriented narcissistic behaviours may be relatively adaptive rather than pathological. Overall, the regression and structural model results support the proposed NPPT–IPDE mapping, suggesting that different narcissistic patterns entail distinct clinical risks, rather than representing a single unified construct.

Table: IPDE Raw Data Scores (Cases 1 to 200)

Case No.	Paranoid	Schizoid	Dissocial	Impulsive	Borderline	Histrionic	Anankastic	Anxious	Dependent
1	2	5	2	2	1	3	5	3	1
2	3	3	3	2	3	4	5	3	4
3	4	5	1	2	2	3	5	3	4
4	4	5	4	5	2	4	4	4	4
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
202	3	6	4	2	3	3	5	3	3
203	2	5	1	2	2	2	4	3	2
204	4	5	2	3	2	2	4	4	3

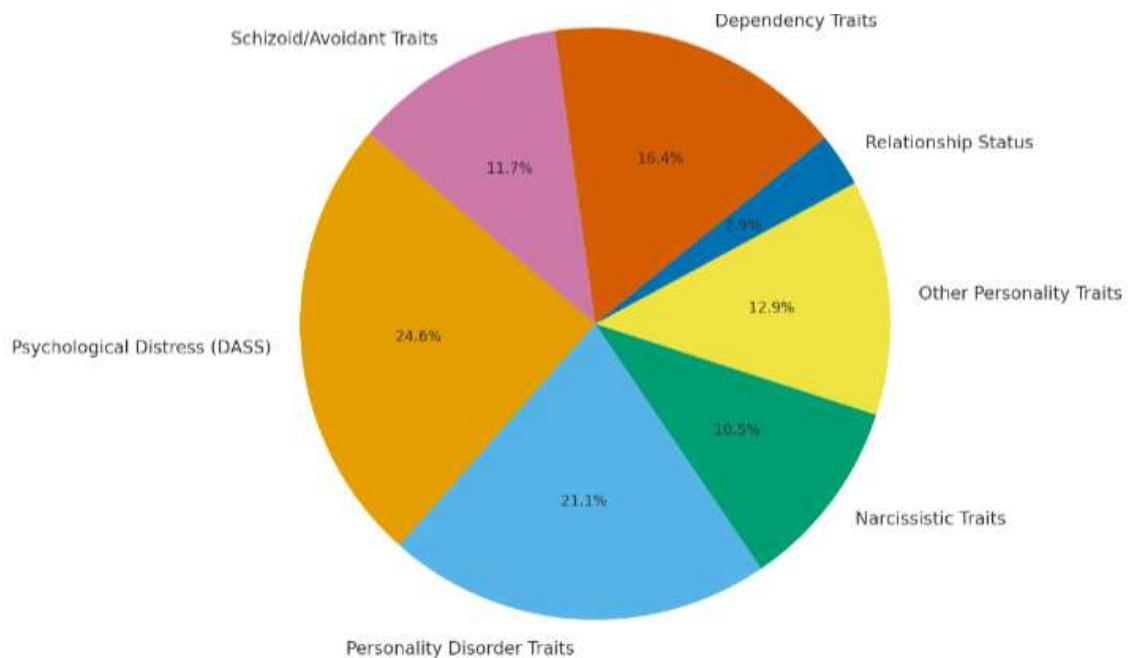
Table: NPPT Raw Data Scores (Cases 1 to 200)

Case No.	Grandiosity	Attention Seeking	Lack of empathy	Entitlement	Exploitative	Envy	Arrogance
1	6	4	6	4	6	7	4
2	6	2	7	4	6	2	4
3	3	5	6	5	3	5	2
4	4	2	1	2	0	0	0
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
202	2	3	3	3	3	3	3
203	3	5	6	7	6	4	4
204	6	6	5	4	6	6	7

Note. N = 202. Correlations are Pearson's r. Relationship Status coded: 0 = single, 1 = in a

relationship.

$p < .05^*$, $p < .01$, $p < .001$.



Descriptive Findings

- NPPT subscales showed moderate intercorrelations.
- IPDE scores varied across clusters.

Regression Results

- Entitlement significantly predicted Cluster B vulnerability ($\beta \approx .45$).
- Perfectionistic Self-Control predicted Cluster C vulnerability ($\beta \approx .52$).
- Emotional Coldness predicted schizoid-like traits ($\beta \approx .40$).
- Admiration Seeking showed no significant clinical associations.

Discussion

Interpretation of Findings

The results support a differentiated model of narcissism:

- **Entitlement** is the most clinically concerning pattern.
- **Perfectionistic Self-Control** is a hidden risk factor for Cluster C disorders.
- **Emotional Coldness** bridges narcissistic and schizoid traits.
- **Admiration Seeking** appears socially adaptive rather than pathological.

Clinical Implications

- Screening should differentiate narcissistic styles rather than treat narcissism as a single construct.
- Perfectionistic narcissism may require early intervention to prevent anxiety-based disorders.
- Entitlement may signal risk for antisocial or exploitative behaviour.

Limitations

- Cross-sectional design limits causal inference.
- Self-report measures may introduce bias.
- Sample limited to young adults.

Future Directions

- Longitudinal studies to track developmental trajectories.
- Cross-cultural validation of the NPPT–IPDE model.
- Integration with neurobiological or behavioural data.

Conclusion

This study presents the first empirical integration of NPPT narcissistic patterns with IPDE personality disorder vulnerability. The results highlight the importance of differentiating between adaptive and maladaptive narcissistic traits and recognising perfectionistic narcissism as an often-overlooked clinical risk factor.

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