A multilevel analysis of the trifurcated model of leader narcissism and its relationship with key outcomes at the team level.

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DBA Thesis

A multilevel analysis of the trifurcated model of leader narcissism and its relationship with key outcomes at the team level

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Abstract

We live in a 'selfie' society; a narcissistic society where self-serving and self-aggrandizement behaviours are promoted, mimicked, admired, and rewarded. Narcissists, matching the profile of the 'prototypical' leader, seduce followers and gravitate towards leadership roles in business, in pursuit of a stage on which to shine and a perpetual supply of affirmation and social admiration.

Do these narcissists leverage their charisma to achieve sustainable organizational success, or do they deliver fluctuating and extreme levels of organizational performance? By examining narcissism as a distinct personality trait, this thesis explores the relationship between leader narcissism and organizational outcomes at the team level.

Using the trifurcated model of narcissism (with narcissistic admiration, narcissistic rivalry, and vulnerable narcissism factors) and evidence from an empirical study of 174 followers nested in 44 leaders, in an international food retail chain, at a single point in time during the pandemic in Greece, this thesis primarily seeks to determine whether designated variables mediate the effect of leader narcissism on outcomes team performance and individual work engagement.

The author found no evidence to support the initial proposition that designated variables (i.e. team psychological safety, climate for work group innovation and trust in the leader) mediate the leader narcissism/outcomes (i.e. team performance and individual work engagement) relationship. Still, it was shown that the neurotic vulnerable narcissism facet, often neglected in organizational research, was indeed the most destructive of the three facets of narcissism, as it exhibited an adverse effect on team performance. Moreover, empirical evidence has shown that the antagonistic, conflict-prone narcissistic rivalry facet destroys trust in the leader and undermines the leader–follower relationship. Finally, empirical evidence points towards a curvilinear relationship of the agentic narcissistic admiration facet with team performance.

Theoretical contributions enriching extant research are offered and practical implications proposed for organizations and practitioners. Finally, limitations of this effort are discussed and recommendations for future research provided.

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List of Abbreviations

CFA:	Confirmatory Factor Analysis
CL	Climate for Work Group Innovation
ENG:	Work Engagement
FFNI:	Five-Factor Narcissism Inventory
GTS:	General Trust Scale
HSNS:	Hypersensitive Narcissism Scale
ICC:	Intraclass Correlation Coefficient
LL:	Loglikelihood
MCFA:	Multilevel Confirmatory Factor Analysis
MCNS:	Maladaptive Covert Narcissism Scale
MTL:	Motivation to Lead
NADM:	Grandiose Narcissism – Admiration Pathway
NPI:	Narcissistic Personality Inventory
NRIV:	Grandiose Narcissism – Rivalry Pathway
PNI:	Pathological Narcissism Inventory
PSY:	Team Psychological Safety
RMSEA:	Root Mean Square Error of Approximation
SF:	Short Form
SPSS:	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
SRMR:	Standard Root Mean Square Residual
TCI:	Team Climate Inventory
TP:	Team Performance
TRT:	Trust in the Leader
UWES:	Utrecht Work Engagement Survey
VNLB	Vulnerable Narcissism Leadership Behaviours
VULN:	Vulnerable Narcissism

Statement of Copyright

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I do pray that someday I will serve as a positive role model for their personal and professional growth.

Dedication

To my mother – my omnipresent ‘guardian angel’ – and to my late father – who sadly didn’t make it…. oh, if you could see me now!

Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1 Overview

In this short introductory chapter, I will explain the reasons for gravitating to the intriguing and somewhat mysterious concept of narcissism, its origins stemming from Greek mythology.

In the subsequent sections, I present the practical motivation for this endeavour, research focus, the research questions, and the objectives of this work; this is augmented by describing the 'building blocks' that constitute the variables of my research model. Finally, expected theoretical contributions and practical implications are discussed.

1.2 Motivation for Research

It could be said that we live in a 'selfie society' where narcissism is omnipresent: dominating headlines, affecting national economies, inflicting chaos, and initiating wars. In the work domain, the focus of this study, narcissistic individuals, seeking a perpetual 'stage to shine' (Nevicka, De Hoogh, et al., 2011), gravitate toward, are attracted to, and are selected for leadership roles in organizations, as they project the image of a prototypically effective leader (Nevicka, Ten Velden, et al., 2011).

1.2.1 Practical Motivation for Research

The practical significance of the problem that my research aims to resolve – the detrimental effect of narcissistic leaders on teams – is substantial. More specifically, for the (adverse) effect of (leader) narcissism on teams, *empirical evidence* has shown that narcissism adversely affects team psychological safety (Helfrich & Dietl, 2019; Mao et al., 2019), team-level leader–member exchange (Huang et al., 2019), team followership (Wang, 2021) and team voice climate (Zhou et al., 2021). In addition (leader) narcissism affects (a) team voice behaviour, mediated by team voice climate (Zhou et al., 2021), (b) team performance, mediated by information exchange (Nevicka, 2011) and (c) team radical creativity, mediated by team information elaboration and inter-team competition (Liu et al., 2021).

Moreover, in a *meta-analysis*, Cao et al. (2022) have found that (leader) narcissism adversely affects leader–member exchange (LMX), leads to workplace aggression, including bullying, incivility, and interpersonal mistreatment.

Finally, in addition to the above evidence, researchers *conceptually argue* that narcissistic leaders tend to be hostile and abusive to subordinates, resulting in high levels of staff turnover, burnout, and leader-directed counter-productive work behaviours (Fatfouta, 2019), which ultimately destroys team performance. Narcissistic leaders also foster cultures of low integrity, low collaboration, and low teamwork (O'Reilly et al., 2021), which consequently, diminishes job satisfaction and (follower) perceived self-worth, thus curtailing team performance.

A recent article by Watkins (2024) at IMD explicitly spells out the deleterious effects of narcissistic leaders on organizations. These leaders typically lack empathy; thus, followers' emotional and professional needs are often overlooked. Narcissistic leaders are unlikely to offer support to followers, crucial for navigating adversity, and withhold recognition, consequently eroding team morale and productivity (Watkins, 2024). They tend to view constructive criticism as a personal affront rather than an opportunity for improvement, which creates an environment where truth-telling is punished, sycophancy is rewarded and a culture of fear is created, with employees hesitant to voice concerns or offer insights that could be perceived as dissent. Their impulsivity and volatility may also lead to erratic decision-making. Priorities can often shift to align with the leader's desires and aspirations rather than strategic priorities; this may create a chaotic work environment, where sound decisions and effective long-term planning are sacrificed for short-term ego boosts (Watkins, 2024). The ambitious goals set by these leaders can sometimes veer into the unrealistic, with insufficient regard for practical constraints or the strategic planning required to achieve them. This overreach can strain resources, demoralize employees, and jeopardize the organization's culture, employee morale, and long-term success (Watkins, 2024).

Imagine a team where follower needs are totally ignored and a climate of fear, avoidance and silence prevails. Imagine a working environment where team priorities are perpetually changing, while the team is unfairly judged based on progress on unrealistic (leader) ambitions and ill-planned actions. It is evident that a team led by such leaders is a complex, dangerous, unpredictable, chaotic, volatile, and toxic 'planet'; although this is surely deleterious for followers, teams, and organizations alike, it does offer a unique, intriguing, and exciting opportunity for a researcher to delve deep into its mystery. It is a bit like planet Mars – everybody knows this is a life-threatening place, but everybody wants to get there, motivated by the human urge to explore, decipher, and understand.

When narcissistic leaders occupy CEO roles, they spend excessively on R&D and embark, often without proper due diligence process, on more acquisitions, and pay much higher premiums that may potentially destroy the organization. They create submissive top management teams and can affect executive choices on strategy, structure, and people, with adverse impact on talent, morale, motivation, and succession (Chatterjee & Hambrick, 2007).

1.2.2 Personal Motivation for Research

The subject of narcissism in the organizational domain is of personal interest as it has been experienced through my career and coaching/consulting practice. As a young consultant, and a naïve judge of people at that, I always gravitated to charismatic and visionary leaders, impressed with their attractive rhetoric, grandiose plans, unflappable strength, confidence, and competence. I would then find myself being mesmerized, trusting every word they uttered with a cult-like devotion, leaving my career to their seemingly capable hands. Like most of their followers, this was to my detriment.

In my early career, I was once interviewed and eventually recruited by such a leader and was immediately impressed by his charm and cool demeanour and inspired by his plans to 'transform the entire industry', key manifestations of narcissistic admiration (Back et al., 2013). I was a witness of the 'bright' side of narcissism (Braun, 2017).

Regretfully, the ‘honeymoon’ was short, and the charisma faded away (Ong et al., 2016). He rapidly transformed into a cold, distant, callous, and ruthless individual, gradually distancing himself from people and becoming abusive (Braun et al., 2019), while blaming others for his failures and inadequacies, often lashing out with anger (Back, 2018).

I was now a witness of the ‘dark’ side of a narcissistic leader, ‘a set of tendencies and behavioural manifestations that are exhibited when these narcissistic individuals, in leadership roles, are at their very worst’ (Braun, 2017).

Staff complained that information sharing was restricted, and creativity was stifled (Nevicka, Ten Velden et al., 2011). Managers were frustrated that he was a selective listener and would dominate meetings. I could also sense elevated levels of follower irritation (Schyns et al., 2023) – some staff complained that now they were more irritable and conflict-prone than ever and rendered unable to mentally switch off from work even during their personal time (Schyns et al., 2023). Then, suddenly, the best of the talent was driven away (Lubit**,** 2002), almost overnight, with very little to be grateful for.

Rumour circulation followed. There was alarming evidence of abusive behaviour, false reporting, and misusing company assets for personal use, exhibiting unprecedented levels of amorality (Rosenthal & Pittinsky, 2006). When the consulting firm was acquired by a large conglomerate, he was the first to be fired. This organization is a happier place today.

1.2.3 Summary of Research Motivation

The significance and the practical importance of my research topic, given the deleterious effects for teams as illustrated above, accentuated by the relative scarcity of studies investigating the effects of leader narcissism (i.e. narcissistic admiration, narcissistic rivalry, and vulnerable narcissism) at the team level (Braun, 2017) and even fewer studies exploring the role of vulnerable narcissism in organizations (Wirtz & Rigotti, 2020), and further propelled by my frustration and disappointment from my own experience, led me to embark on this research endeavour.

My unfortunate first-hand experience, while working for a toxic and dangerous narcissistic leader, rendered me a reluctant witness, watching the deleterious effects of a toxic narcissistic leader on followers, entire teams, and the organization and the 'rapid rise & fall' trajectory (Rosenthal, 2014) of an unstable and truly dangerous narcissistic leader. This unpleasant personal experience boosted my motivation to understand the narcissistic facets at play and clinched my decision to focus on this topic.

1.3 Background

Narcissists, having the appearance of success and being leader-like (Nevicka, 2011), gravitate towards leadership roles in business (Braun, 2017), which provide the perpetual 'stage to shine' (Nevicka, De Hoogh et al., 2011). Do these narcissists leverage their charisma, air of superiority and confidence (Nevicka, Ten Velden, et al., 2011), to achieve sustainable organizational success?

The charisma of a narcissistic leader is, however, short-lived (Ong et al., 2016). Extant research provides some alarming evidence regarding the devastating effects of narcissistic leaders in the organizational domain. These individuals in leadership roles deliver fluctuating and extreme levels of organizational performance (Chatterjee & Hambrick, 2007), adversely affect organizational citizenship behaviours (Campbell et al., 2011), encourage counter-productive work behaviours (Grijalva & Harms, 2014), drive away precious talent (Lubit, 2002), trigger counterproductive (follower) work behaviours (Braun et al., 2016), and are prone to corporate scandals and managerial fraud (Campbell et al., 2011).

The potentially destructive power of narcissistic leaders is a major and enduring concern for individuals, working teams and organizations; their propensity to inflict chaos poses a clear and present danger to a society in turmoil and disarray, faced with financial crises, natural disasters, and regional conflicts. This is further accentuated by the fact that narcissists, projecting an image of confidence, strength, and decisiveness in the face of uncertainty, match the ideal leader prototype, and are preferred as leaders (Nevicka et al., 2013).

1.4 The Research Variables

The purpose of this section is to introduce the 'building blocks' of my research model. the outcomes 'team performance' and 'individual work engagement' are defined and their significance, for teams and organizations, is explained. This is followed by the introduction of the mediators 'team psychological safety', 'climate for work group innovation' and 'trust in the leader'. Similarly, these mediators are defined, and indicative empirical evidence is provided to illustrate their mediating effect on the leader narcissism/outcomes relationship.

1.4.1 Outcomes

1.4.1.1 Team Performance

Definitions associated with teams abound in extant research; for example, teamwork (Salas et al., 2008), team effectiveness (Hackman, 2002), team performance (Klein & Kozlowski, 2000) etc.

For this empirical study, I use the construct of *team performance*, which is suggested by Edmondson (1999, p. 383) and is based on the work of Hackman (1987). This is a leader-assessed construct and is defined, not in theoretical terms, but in terms of key manifestations of team performance – meeting or exceeding customer expectations, doing superb work with infrequent critical quality errors, while constantly improving (Hackman, 1987).

Extant research has identified the antecedents of team performance, including team structures, team beliefs and team behaviours (Edmondson, 1999). In addition, extant research has identified factors that influence team performance, including work structure (e.g. team norms, communication structure, work assignments), task characteristics (e.g. workload, task type, interdependency), and, more importantly, team composition, including personality (for leader and team members), cognitive ability, motivation, and culture (Salas et al., 2008).

This work contributes to extant research as I investigate the relationship of a specific (team) leader personality trait (i.e. three-faceted narcissism) with team performance: in addition, I

test whether team level mediators, namely team psychological safety and climate for work group innovation, explain (partly/fully) the (leader) narcissism/team performance relationship.

1.4.1.2 Individual Work Engagement

Since the beginning of this century, increased attention has been placed on *positive psychology,* (i.e. the scientific study of human strength and optimal functioning) (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). One facet of optimal functioning is work engagement, considered to be the antipode of burnout (Schaufeli et al., 2006).

Work engagement is defined as a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind, characterized by vigour, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli et al., 2002). In short, engaged employees are bursting with energy, are dedicated and enthusiastic about their jobs, and fully immersed in their work (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008). Work engagement is a valuable, and better, predictor of job performance than job satisfaction and motivation (Bakker, 2011).

For teams, individual work engagement is crucial; research has shown that individual work engagement was found to be positively related to in-role and extra-role performance (Bakker et al., 2004; Gierveld & Bakker, 2005; Schaufeli et al., 2006), indicating that engaged employees are willing to 'go the extra mile' (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008) to achieve job objectives. As engaged employees are open to new information (Bakker, 2011), individual work engagement was also found to be positively related to creativity, which enables employees to come up with innovative ways to deal with work-related problems. In addition, engaged employees proactively change their work environment to stay engaged (Bakker, 2011). Finally, individual work engagement was found to be positively related to team financial performance; the higher the employees' levels of engagement, the higher their objective financial returns (Xanthopoulou et al., 2012).

In summary, engaged workers perform better than non-engaged workers as they "often experience positive emotions, including happiness, joy, and enthusiasm; experience better

health; create their own job and personal resources and transfer their engagement to others" (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008, p. 215).

For organizations, individual work engagement is an important indicator of organizational well-being (Bakker, 2011), reinforces service climate (Salanova et al., 2005), drives innovation as it enables employees' learning orientation (Chughtai & Buckley, 2011), and fosters organizational citizenship behaviours (Rich et al., 2010) including helpfulness, sportsmanship, conscientiousness, and civic virtue (Organ, 1988), essential prerequisites in establishing an environment conducive to high organizational performance.

Finally, high levels of individual work engagement contribute to enhanced organizational commitment, increased job satisfaction, lower absenteeism, and lower staff turnover rates (Chughtai & Buckley, 2008).

1.4.2 Mediators

1.4.2.1 Team Psychological Safety

Team psychological safety is defined as "a shared belief held by members of a team that the team is safe for interpersonal risk taking" (Edmondson, 1999, p. 350). Team psychological safety provides "a sense of confidence that the team will not embarrass, reject, or punish someone for speaking up" (Edmondson, 1999, p. 354). The construct of team psychological safety has roots in early research on organizational change (Schein & Bennis, 1965), which focuses on the need to create psychological safety for individuals, so they feel secure and capable of changing (Edmondson, 1999). In addition, organizational research has identified team psychological safety as a critical factor in understanding phenomena such as voice, teamwork, team learning, and organizational learning (Edmondson & Lei, 2014).

The construct of team psychological safety is not identical or synonymous with similar constructs like interpersonal trust, group cohesiveness, team efficacy, team leader coaching or context support. This construct goes beyond interpersonal trust as it describes a team climate, characterized by trust and mutual respect, which is conducive to people

feeling comfortable being themselves (Edmondson, 1999). Team psychological safety is not the same as group cohesiveness, as research has shown that cohesiveness can promote the phenomenon of groupthink and thus reduce willingness to disagree and challenge others' views, implying a lack of interpersonal risk taking (Edmondson, 1999). Team psychological safety, while not the same, is complementary to team efficacy; team efficacy is defined as the shared belief, by team members, that the team can use new information, unobtrusively generated by team members, to generate useful results. Team psychological safety pertains to interpersonal threat, while team efficacy characterizes the team's potential to perform (Edmondson, 1999). It should be noted that team leader coaching and context support are antecedents of team psychological safety Finally, team psychological safety is an antecedent of team performance (Edmondson, 1999).

Extant research has implicitly investigated and confirmed the role of team psychological safety as a mediator (Edmondson, 1999; Edmondson & Lei, 2014; Hirak et al., 2012; Mao et al., 2019, Peng et al., 2019).

Despite the above findings, there is no empirical evidence, to my knowledge, that explicitly explores the mediating effect of team psychological safety on the relationship between leader narcissism (narcissistic admiration, narcissistic rivalry, and vulnerable narcissism) and team performance or individual work engagement.

Given the above empirical evidence, I can posit that narcissistic leaders create and foster a climate of fear, avoidance and knowledge hiding, all detrimental to team performance, rather than an environment where followers feel respected, accepted, and safe, which in turn, makes them more engaged and productive in their work.

This gap in extant research will be addressed during the main study, using empirical data from a multisource, multilevel analysis from a client organization, aimed at investigating the mediating effect of team psychological safety on the relationship of the three-faceted leader narcissism and the designated outcomes of team performance and individual work engagement.

Moreover, as I am looking at different forms of leader narcissism, I can expect to find different effects and relationships of each facet of leader narcissism on outcomes. I can posit that a leader, high on narcissistic admiration, will enhance team psychological safety and thus create an environment where team members feel secure to freely express their views, not because of any democratic tendencies of the leader, but because this simply serves his/her own plans and megalomaniac agendas. On the antipode it is expected that the antagonistic, aggressive, and conflict-prone leader, high on narcissistic rivalry, will adversely affect team psychological safety and ultimately team performance. Similarly, the neurotic, depressive and avoidant leader, high on vulnerable narcissism, will destroy any sense of team psychological safety and ultimate dissolve relationships and adversely affect team performance.

Finally, it should be clarified that the appropriate level of analysis, at which to examine mediator team psychological safety, is the 'proximal work group' (Anderson & West, 1998), defined as "the permanent or semi-permanent team to which individuals are assigned, whom they identify with, and whom they interact with regularly in order to perform work-related tasks"(Anderson & West, 1998, p. 236).

1.4.2.2 Climate for Work Group Innovation

Despite considerable attention from applied psychologists and organizational sociologists over the last 30 years, the concept of climate has been 'plagued' by definitional issues (Anderson & West, 1998). Many definitions of climate have been put forward; two approaches have attracted substantial support; the cognitive schema approach and the shared perceptions approach.

The *cognitive schema approach* "conceptualizes climate as individuals' constructive cognitive schemas of their work environments and has been operationalized through attempts to uncover individuals' sense-making of their proximal work environment (Anderson & West, 1998, p. 236).

Other authors, adhering to the *shared perceptions approach* have emphasized the importance of shared perceptions as underpinning the notion of climate. Consequently, Reichers and Schneider (1990) define climate as the "shared perception of organizational policies, practices, and procedures" (p. 22). As the cognitive schema and the shared perceptions approaches are compatible with one another and thus not mutually exclusive, in this study I adopt, as Anderson and West (1998) suggest, the latter approach, which ensures definitional, conceptual and measurement alignment of proximal work group climate.

Similarly, as in the case of mediator team psychological safety, it should also be clarified that the appropriate level of analysis, at which to examine mediator climate for work group innovation, is again the 'proximal work group' (Anderson & West, 1998), defined in the previous section. In contrast, this is not valid for mediator trust in the leader, which is examined at the individual level of analysis and described in the next section.

Schneider and Reichers (1983) assert that it is meaningless to apply the concept of climate without a particular referent (e.g. climate for change, climate for quality). I have opted to use the referent 'innovation' as this is not only pertinent today as an organizational imperative, but also provides a uniquely cost-effective strategy for organizations, to establish and sustain a competitive advantage. West and Farr (1989, p. 16) define innovation as "the intentional introduction (and) application within a role, group or organization of ideas, processes, products, or procedures to the relevant unit of adoption, designed to significantly benefit role performance, the group, organization or the wider society".

This work will investigate the (proximal) climate for work group innovation as a mediator on the narcissism–outcome relationship. I follow the four-factor theory proposed by Anderson and West (1996) that hypothesises that four factors of climate, namely vision, participative safety, task orientation and support for innovation are predictive of innovativeness.

There is no explicit empirical evidence on the relationship between leader narcissism and climate for work group innovation. Relevant evidence shows that CEO Narcissism (a useful proxy to leader narcissism, as the CEO is the leader at the organizational level) is positively

related to innovation and growth as evidenced by meta-analysis studies (Cragun et al., 2020; Kraft, 2022). It should be noted that, in both studies, CEO narcissism was unobtrusively obtained by the CEO narcissism index, which is somewhat arbitrary and far from being fully validated, as confirmed by its authors (Chatterjee & Hambrick, 2007), and mostly pertains to grandiose narcissism represented by the admiration and rivalry pathways (Back et al., 2013). In addition, Kashmiri et al. (2017) found evidence that CEO narcissism is related to new product innovation and radical innovations in product portfolios; moreover, Zhang et al. (2021) found a correlation between narcissistic CEOs (who also show humility) and firm innovative performance. Evidence also suggests that narcissistic CEOs spend more on research and development (R&D) and acquire new companies more aggressively (Chatterjee & Hambrick, 2011). Moreover, it was shown that more narcissistic CEOs tend to exploit greater innovation opportunities, by fostering higher top management team's strategic decision comprehensiveness (Rovelli et al., 2023). In this study, CEO narcissism was measured by the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI) (Raskin and Terry, 1988), which of course, again, does not capture the full domain of narcissism.

Regarding the climate/team performance relationship, empirical evidence also supports the notion that climate for work group innovation is positively related to team performance (Agrell & Gustafson, 1994; Bain et al., 2001; Sun et al., 2014; Tumasjan, 2012), team effectiveness (Pirola-Merlo et al., 2002), team project performance (Pirola-Merlo, 2010), and team decision-making performance (Ceschi et al., 2014).

This study focuses on a more nuanced multi-faceted view of (leader) narcissism. Do the three different facets of leader narcissism exhibit the same relationships with mediator climate for work group innovation and ultimately the outcomes team performance and individual work engagement?

Based on the empirical evidence presented (albeit mainly for grandiose narcissism) I can infer that the agentic leaders, high on narcissistic admiration, are likely to create a climate conducive to innovation as they are daring innovators (Maccoby, 2004). In contrast, leaders high on narcissistic rivalry **(**Gauglitz et al., 2022**)** suppress employee voice (Helfrich & Dietl,

2019), and discourage exploratory learning (Wu et al., 2022); thus, they are likely to stifle creativity and information exchange and discourage a climate for innovation as each conceived idea is likely to constitute a threat and a real possibility for their exposure and social ridicule. Similarly, the neurotic, contact- and responsibility-shunning leaders, high on vulnerable narcissism, are likely to irritate followers (Schyns et al., 2023), fostering a climate of fear and avoidance; any cautiously expressed novel ideas are unlikely to flourish, given the passive, non-leadership environment (Schyns et al., 2022) created by these leaders.

1.4.2.3 Trust (in the Leader)

Over the past quarter century, the concept of trust has attracted huge interest, evidenced by the amassed volume of research.

Trust is of central importance to the literature of leadership as it is essential for creating, maintaining, and reinforcing social relationships at work (Dirks & de Jong, 2022).

Research on trust (Dirks & de Jong, 2022) has provided conceptual clarity and highlighted four key insights. Firstly, trust involves (at least) two specific parties; the 'trustor' – the party extending the trust (e.g. followers) and the 'trustee' – the party being trusted (e.g. leaders). Secondly, trust is a state (rather than a trait) and thus fluctuates over time. Thirdly, trust is psychological in nature (i.e. it resides in individuals). Lastly, trust is a psychological mechanism enabling trustors to make 'a leap of faith' toward positive expectations for trustees (Dirks & de Jong, 2022).

I adhere to work by McAllister (1995), which provides one of the most well-known conceptualizations of trust, suggesting two principal forms of interpersonal trust, namely "cognition-based trust, grounded in individual beliefs about peer reliability and dependability, and affect-based trust, grounded in reciprocated inter- personal care and concern" (McAllister, 1995, p. 25).

Dietz and Den Hartog (2006) identify 14 different measures of trust. Each measure is organized in sub-scales or dimensions. Measures, number of items and sub-scales are summarized in Table 1-1.

Table 1-1 Measures of Trust

Author/Source	No of Items	Sub-scales/Dimensions
McAllister (1995)	11	Affective, Cognitive
Robinson (1996)	7	Integrity, Predictability, Benevolence
Cummings and Bromiley (1996)	12	Integrity, Predictability, Benevolence, Competence
Clark & Payne (1997)	44	Integrity, Predictability, Benevolence, Competence
Brockner et al. (1997)	3	Integrity, Predictability, Benevolence, Competence
Spreitzer and Mishra (1999)	16	Openness, Predictability, Benevolence, Competence
Mayer et al. (1995)	21	Ability, Benevolence, Competence
Shockley-Zalabak and Ellis (2000)	45	Integrity, Predictability, Benevolence, Competence
Huff and Kelley (2003)	4	Integrity, Competence
Tyler (2003)	7	Integrity, Predictability, Benevolence
Gillespie (2003)	10	Integrity, Predictability, Benevolence, Competence
Tzafrir et al. (2004)	16	Predictability, Benevolence

Note There are more instruments measuring trust; measures assessing inter-organizational trust are not included

The 11-item trust measure (McAllister, 1995) shown in Table 1-1 above, evaluates two trust dimensions, namely cognition-based trust (6 items) and affect-based trust (5 items). It should be noted that during the main study, I have used an overall trust index (composed of the two dimensions), of the above measure, in articulating my hypotheses.

In trust research, it is important to distinguish and subsequently define referents of trust and levels of analysis (Dirks & de Jong, 2022). Referents of trust represent a further specification of the trustee, the common approach being to distinguish between referents based on their level within the organizational hierarchy, as trustees (e.g. leaders), at

different hierarchical levels, are associated with different dependencies and risks for the trustor (e.g. followers). Levels of analysis, however, represent a further specification of the trustor (i.e. trust at the individual level and trust at the team level).

The author uses the leader as the 'trustee' and referent (i.e. trust in the leader) and followers as the 'trustors' (i.e. trust extended by followers); moreover, trust is considered and measured at the individual level of analysis.

There is no evidence, to my knowledge, investigating the mediating effect of trust in the leader on the relationship between leader narcissism and the outcomes team performance and individual work engagement.

Narcissistic leaders engender positive initial impressions as they exhibit characteristics that personify a prototypical leader, including a confident demeanour, dominance, and authority; (Nevicka, 2018). I can suggest that these leaders are trusted (cognitive-based trust) by their followers, as they provide the essential cues and behaviours – they are confident, decisive, and persistent in the face of failure, work well under pressure and are capable to bring about stability and clarity in crises (Nevicka, 2018). These characteristics are testament to a strong and stable character and evidence to their ability and competence.

There is no evidence supporting the view that these leaders show concern and care for their followers (affect-based trust). Intimacy is difficult for these leaders, as they feel uncomfortable when expressing their feelings (Maccoby, 2004).

As these leaders are masters of impression management (Nevicka, 2011), I can suggest that it is the cognitive-based trust, shaped by leader behavioural cues, that dominates and ensures trust in the leader.

As mentioned before, this study focuses on a more nuanced, multi-faceted view of (leader) narcissism. Do the three different facets of leader narcissism exhibit the same relationships with mediator trust in the leader and ultimately downstream outcomes team performance and individual work engagement?

Based on extant research I can infer that those leaders, high on narcissistic admiration, with their agentic behaviours (e.g. self-assured voice, expressive gestures, and engagement)

are likely to be trusted by their followers as they project an air of confidence and superiority (Back, 2018). In contrast, I can posit that the aggressive and abusive leaders (Gauglitz et al., 2022), high on narcissistic rivalry, with their more antagonistic behaviours (e.g. less warm voice, arrogant gestures, and annoyed reactions) and a lower and fragile self-esteem (Back, 2018) are not likely to be trusted by their followers (Kwiatkowska et al., 2019; Szymczak et al., 2022). Finally, although empirical evidence is relatively scarce on vulnerable narcissism in the organizational domain, I can posit that it is unlikely that these neurotic, introvert, disagreeable (Weiss & Miller, 2018) and abusive (Braun et al., 2019) leaders, high on vulnerable narcissism, are trusted by their followers; on the contrary these leaders irritate their followers (Schyns et al., 2023), which ultimately leads to follower emotional exhaustion (Wirtz & Rigotti, 2020) and other mental impairments (Mohr et al., 2006).

1.5 Focus of the Research

In evaluating the impact of narcissistic leaders and thus contributing to extant research, my thesis: (a) examines three different sub-types of narcissism, i.e. narcissistic admiration, narcissistic rivalry, and vulnerable narcissism; (b) investigates the relationship of leader narcissism with individual engagement and team performance, the foundations of organizational performance; and (c) identifies and better understands the mediating mechanisms through which leader narcissism relates to these outcomes.

1.6 Research Questions

Focusing on teams in organizations, I will address the following research questions:

RQ1: How do different sub-types of leader narcissism, namely narcissistic admiration, narcissistic rivalry, and vulnerable narcissism, relate to (a) individual work engagement and (b) team performance?

RQ2: To what extent do mediating mechanisms at (a) the individual level, namely trust in the leader, and (b) the team level, namely psychological safety, *and climate for work group innovation, explain th*ese *relationship*s*?*

1.7 Research Aim

The purpose of this research is to identify and evaluate the relationship of different sub-types of leader narcissism with defined outcomes in the organizational domain.

To answer the research questions and achieve the research aim, the research objectives are:

(1) To identify and assess the relationship of leader narcissism (narcissistic admiration, narcissistic rivalry, and vulnerable narcissism) with individual work engagement via a multilevel, multi-source empirical study.
(2) To identify and assess the relationship of leader narcissism (narcissistic admiration, narcissistic rivalry, and vulnerable narcissism) with team performance, via a multilevel, multi-source empirical study.
(3) To investigate, confirm and better understand the mechanisms explaining the relationship of leader narcissism (narcissistic admiration, narcissistic rivalry, and vulnerable narcissism) with individual work engagement and team performance.

The underlying research model and each of the variables are introduced in the next chapter.

1.8 Expected Theoretical Contributions

1.8.1 The Trifurcated Model of Narcissism

My first and most important contribution is to supplement extant research and provide additional data and novel insights into a more nuanced, three-factor model of narcissism, namely the *Trifurcated Model of Narcissism* or TriMN (Miller et al., 2021), which integrates (1) the agentic extraversion or narcissistic admiration 'pathway' (NARQ; Back et al., 2013), (2) the self-centred antagonism or narcissistic rivalry 'pathway' (NARQ; Back et al., 2013), and (3) narcissistic neuroticism (vulnerable narcissism), under a single theoretical umbrella. There is a growing body of research that focuses and distinguishes between the two sub-types of narcissism (grandiose/vulnerable). In contrast, there are few studies that distinguish between the three sub-types or factors of narcissism, and fewer still have even attempted a differentiated conceptualization that investigates the different relationships, in terms of strength and directionality, of these sub-types with various organizational outcomes.

Leadership research has mostly examined narcissism and its grandiose form, or grandiose narcissism (Braun, 2017), and neglected other forms of narcissism including vulnerable, pathological, and communal (Gauglitz, 2022). I will expand on grandiose and vulnerable narcissism, which are pertinent to my research.

Grandiose narcissists strive for leadership positions offering power and status and crave for a 'stage to shine' (Nevicka, De Hoogh, et al., 2011), which perpetually reinforces their inflated self-views. Subsequently, they emerge as leaders (Grijalva et al., 2015) and are strongly motivated to lead (Chen, 2016). A key question beckons: when they achieve leadership positions, are these narcissists good and effective leaders?

As leaders, (grandiose) narcissists appear attractive at first but their charm and charisma fade with time (Ong et al., 2016). They are disinterested in and tend to avoid close and warm working relationships with followers (Campbell et al., 2002), tend to exploit their followers, and turn to destructive leadership or abusive supervision (Krasikova et al., 2013).

To better understand grandiose narcissism and explain some of its paradoxes mentioned above, a new instrument (NARQ), identified separate but interrelated 'pathways' (narcissistic admiration and narcissistic rivalry), with the common overarching goal of maintaining a grandiose self, but with different and unique nomological networks (Back et al., 2013). This instrument and its subsequent use as the core measure of narcissism in this study, is discussed in more detail in subsequent chapters.

Little is known about the possible link of vulnerable narcissism and leadership. These narcissists are less likely to emerge as leaders, as they are less extraverted than their grandiose counterparts (Gauglitz, 2022). In the unlikely event that, vulnerable narcissists do achieve a leadership position, they may encounter difficulties in building positive relationships with their followers as they are antagonistic, mistrusting (Miller et al., 2017), and abusive (Braun et al., 2019). Are the implications of vulnerable narcissism on leadership different than the implications stemming from their grandiose counterparts? There is empirical evidence, from the relatively limited research on distinguishing the three sub-types of narcissism discussed here, that support the need for a differentiated conceptualization of narcissism.

In exploring the role of leader narcissism as an antecedent of abusive supervision, using trait activation and threatened egotism theory, Gauglitz et al. (2022), conducting a field study with leader–follower dyads and an experimental vignette, using the NARQ (Back et al., 2013), have shown that leader narcissistic admiration was not related with abusive supervision (intentions); in contrast, leader narcissistic rivalry was positively related with abusive supervision (intentions).

In an empirical investigation of the relationship between grandiose/vulnerable narcissism and motivation to lead/avoidance to lead, Schyns et al. (2022) have found that grandiose narcissism is positively related to affective, calculative, and social-normative motivation to lead (MTL) but not related to avoidance to lead; in contrast, vulnerable narcissism was positively correlated with avoidance to lead but not correlated with affective MTL (Schyns et al., 2022).

The above evidence shows that it is important to investigate and assess the distinctly different relationships of each sub-type of narcissism (narcissistic admiration, narcissistic rivalry, and vulnerable narcissism) with specific outcomes in the organizational domain, and eventually provide a much needed and more nuanced view of leader narcissism and its implications on leadership.

1.8.2 Vulnerable Narcissism in the Organizational Domain

My second contribution is the investigation and provision of fresh empirical data on the role of leader vulnerable narcissism in the organizational domain. Research on the relevance of vulnerable narcissism in the work domain has been lacking, as organizational researchers, have traditionally focused on grandiose narcissism and ignored vulnerable narcissism, the clinical component of narcissism, and its relevance and impact in an organizational setting (Wirtz & Rigotti, 2020).

Although there is now a renewed interest in vulnerable narcissism, narcissistic vulnerability has been explored at a limited scale in the work context. Recent research has found evidence of its relationship with organizational outcomes, in sub-clinical samples.

In an important empirical study, Schyns et al. (2023), coining the term Vulnerable Narcissistic Leader Behaviours (VNLB), have shown that VNLB, over a five-week period within the C19 pandemic, exhibited a strong positive relationship with follower irritation. Moreover, past empirical evidence has also demonstrated that (leader) vulnerable narcissism is positively related to abusive supervision intentions (Braun et al., 2019), followers' emotional exhaustion (Wirtz & Rigotti, 2020), avoidance to lead (Schyns et al., 2022), and fear of failure (Jauk & Kaufman, 2018).

In addition, leader vulnerable narcissism is negatively related to achievement and affiliation motives (Jauk & Kaufman, 2018), affective MTL, and emotional intelligence (Zajenkowski et al., 2018).

I have found no evidence of any studies regarding the relationship of vulnerable narcissism with any of the organizational outcomes that I intend to examine in this research.

In addition to the above, my study, will provide further insights by examining the mechanisms at both individual and team levels that can explain these relationships.

1.8.3 Multilevel Theorizing

Yammarino and Gooty (2017) argue that theory, without specifying levels of analysis, is incomplete; data, without levels of analysis, is incomprehensible. They also highlight the "importance of clearly specifying the levels of analysis at which phenomena are expected theoretically… and ensuring measuring constructs and data analytic techniques correspond to the asserted levels of analysis" (Yammarino & Gooty, 2017, p. 229). They also warn that assuming only one level of analysis or choosing one level without consideration of other levels can mask results and indicate effects where none exist (Yammarino & Gooty, 2017). Levels in organizations do not exist independently but are nested. For example, as in my research, followers (individual, lower level of analysis) are nested in units, groups, or teams (team, higher level of analysis) managed by team leaders. These levels of analysis, together and in interaction, explain the leadership phenomena of interest (Bass, 2008) described above.

In the multi-level theorizing of this research, the relationship of leader narcissism (measured at the team level of analysis) and its sub-types (narcissistic admiration, narcissistic rivalry, and vulnerable narcissism), with outcomes relating to team performance (measured at the team level of analysis), and work engagement (measured at the individual level of analysis), is investigated.

This contributes to extant research as there are few other studies that theorize these relationships, focusing on all three sub-types of leader narcissism (narcissistic admiration, narcissistic rivalry, and vulnerable narcissism). In addition, this research provides useful insights to better understand how leader narcissism affects teams (as opposed to individuals or the entire organization); although there are many individual and organizational level studies of leader narcissism, there are very few studies at the team level (Braun, 2017).

1.9 Expected Practical Implications

There are several expected implications for practitioners (psychoanalysts, executive coaches, organizational health professional and consultants) and organizations, where narcissists are found, to be derived from our findings.

This research endeavour sheds additional light and reinforces the understanding of practitioners on the different sub-types of narcissism (narcissistic admiration, narcissistic rivalry, and vulnerable narcissism) and how they distinctly affect individuals/teams at work via their relationships with important organizational outcomes; this research helps organizations, working in tandem with trained professionals, to design and implement solutions that allow such organizations to capitalize on the positive effects of narcissism in leaders and restrict or diminish the negative effects.

To utilize the positive aspects of (mainly grandiose) leader narcissism, this research benefits organizations in identifying, assessing (selecting from an array of validated measures of narcissism presented in subsequent chapters), and consequently, 'exploiting', or curtailing narcissism. This can be enabled by implementing effective HR interventions (e.g. two-way feedback on performance) and customized leader development solutions (e.g. leadership coaching), which will improve leader and follower understanding, effectively manage conflicts (Wirtz & Rigotti, 2020) and ultimately boost team and organizational performance.

Vulnerable narcissism is strongly characterized by neuroticism, a trait with tremendous real-world implications (Lahey, 2009). Given their neurotic and passive nature, these narcissists will tend to "monitor the work environment searching for potential threats and simultaneously tend to ignore the opportunities to develop own potential through strengths use and deficit correction" (Sanecka, 2021, p. 11).

This research is not limited to highlighting the behavioural manifestations of vulnerable narcissistic leaders, but is extended to provide ideas, suggestions, and development interventions, for organizations and practitioners, to stabilize or enhance the self-esteem (Wirtz & Rigotti, 2020) of these leaders, create a safe and non-threatening environment,

enabling the development of their potential by capitalizing on their strengths and working to remedy their deficiencies, thus improving individual and, ultimately, team performance.

To diminish the negative aspects of (mainly vulnerable) leader narcissism, organizations could utilize (survey) diagnostic results to identify barriers to well-being and risk factors for mental health for individuals and teams, as vulnerable narcissism is positively related with reduced work engagement, enhanced emotional exhaustion (Wirtz & Rigotti, 2020), emotional dysregulation (Miller et al., 2018), and depression (Rogoza, Zemojtel-Piotrowska et al., 2018).

This research will also contribute to practice by offering insights and practical measures on how organizations can be 'shielded' against narcissism by (a) proactively identifying early warning signs of narcissism, including scapegoating, devaluing others, taking the credit for success (Lubit, 2002), *before* assigning these individuals to leadership roles, (b) effectively managing narcissists while in leadership roles, employing a delicate mix of confrontation, external coaching and support (Lubit, 2002) to eventually reduce their influence and diffuse their deleterious effect, and (c) ultimately carefully plan for exit, especially when the leader is replaceable and talent is available (Lubit, 2002).

To ensure effective measurement in multi-level leadership research, it is essential to utilize valid measures at the level of analysis these measures were intended for and in agreement with the level of analysis depicted in theory (Yammarino & Gooty, 2017).

Thus, my final practical contribution is the multilevel investigation of the relationship of narcissism with organizational outcomes, which can offer evidence-based insights to practitioners derived from rigorous empirical research (Yammarino & Gooty, 2017).

1.10 Summary

In this introductory chapter, I have defined my research focus, introduced the research questions, and articulated the research objectives guiding my effort. This chapter also summarizes expected theoretical contributions to extant research and discusses potential implications for organizations and practitioners.

In the next chapter, I will outline the early and contemporary theories on the construct of narcissism and describe its nomological network (with an emphasis on the 'phenotypic' description of narcissism and its grandiose and vulnerable dimensions). I will focus on and explain the 'disentangled' version of grandiose narcissism (into its admiration/rivalry 'pathways') in more detail and provide the link with the TriMN (Miller et al., 2021), which provides the theoretical framework for my study.

I will then discuss narcissism in leadership and provide empirical evidence regarding the relationship of the three sub-types of leader narcissism, discussed in this chapter, with outcomes at the team level of analysis. Finally, I will provide empirical evidence from extant research on the impact of leader narcissism on organizations and followers.

Chapter 2. Theoretical Background/Literature Review

2.1 Overview

In this chapter, I start by providing an outline of the early theories (1926–1986) on the construct of narcissism, under the 'Dark Triad' framework, followed by a more detailed discussion on the contemporary theories of narcissism since 1987. I then present the various conceptualizations of narcissism, as proposed by extant research, including an array of puzzling paradoxes that have sparked debates within the research community, and provide an overview of the nomological network of narcissism – a task resembling "organizing the Tower of Babel" (Pincus & Lukowitsky, 2010, p. 423) – eventually adhering to the 'phenotypic' (grandiose/vulnerable) description of narcissism.

Subsequently, I describe the 'disentangled' version of grandiose narcissism (NARQ; Back et al., 2013) and present its two 'pathways' (narcissistic admiration and narcissistic rivalry), with special reference to their underlying but distinct affective, cognitive, and behavioural processes. I then present, in more detail, the Trifurcated Model of Narcissism (TriMN; Miller et al., 2021), which also includes the third 'pillar' or dimension of narcissism, vulnerable narcissism, and explain how the two frameworks (i.e. NARQ/TriMN) are integrated to serve as the foundation of my research.

Following this, I introduce the construct of leadership and discuss narcissism in leadership. I then explore, more specifically, grandiose (narcissistic admiration, narcissistic rivalry) and vulnerable narcissism in leadership roles and provide a brief outline of its deleterious effects in the organizational domain. Finally, I provide recent empirical evidence published since 2017, on the outcomes of leader narcissism at the team level, the focal point of my research.

2.2 Early Theories on Narcissism

The concept of narcissism was first coined by Ellis (1927), connecting the mythological Narcissus to a clinical condition of perverse self-love. Freud (1931/1950) was the first to

suggest that there is a specific narcissistic personality type “characterized by outwardly unflappable strength, confidence, and sometimes arrogance” (Rosenthal, 2014, p. 43). Horney (1939) elaborated on this idea by stating that “the personality traits exhibited by narcissists are unfounded; self-inflation, self-admiration, and the expectation of admiration from others based on qualities that the narcissist does not actually possess” (Rosenthal, 2014, p. 43).

Kohut (1971, 1972) and Kernberg (1975) advanced the theory further by positing that narcissism constitutes a character pathology or personality disorder and described patients who presented an:

> “unusual degree of self-reference in their interactions, a seeming contradiction between an inflated self-concept and inordinate need for tribute from others, shallow emotional lives, lack of empathy, envy, vacillating extremes of idealization and devaluation of others, exploitativeness, and a charming and engaging presence that conceals an underlying coldness and ruthlessness” (Rosenthal, 2014, p. 43).

These theories provide an early identification of the paradoxes and contradictions of narcissism; although narcissists exhibit a confident and inflated self, they are tormented by feelings of inadequacy and rely on the tribute and affirmation of those they devalue. They appear, at first acquaintance, attractive, pleasant, and charismatic; these features serve as a façade, concealing their cold and ruthless demeanour and real intentions – the exploitation of others to achieve their goals.

2.3 Narcissism and the ‘Dark Triad’

Narcissism is an element of the ‘dark triad’ of personality, a set of three socially aversive traits – the other two being Machiavellianism and Psychopathy (Paulhus & Williams, 2002). Narcissism, “a stable individual difference factor incorporating the self, interpersonal relationships, and self-regulatory strategies” (Campbell et al., 2011, p. 269), is conceptualized as “a dysfunctional form of overly high self-esteem and a grandiose view of

the self that is associated with several intra-personal and interpersonal problems" (Back et al., 2010, p. 132).

The construct of Machiavellianism, attributed to the Italian political strategist Niccolo Machiavelli (1469–1527), describes a cold and manipulative personality (Jones & Paulhus, 2014; Paulhus & Williams, 2002) governed by a cynical worldview and lack of morality, and manifested by methodical planning, coalition formation, and reputation building (Jones & Paulhus, 2014).

Psychopathy is manifested by central character elements that include high impulsivity, thrill-seeking, recklessness, low empathy, and anxiety (Paulhus & Williams, 2002). Psychopathy is also identified by deficits in affect (i.e. callousness) and self-control (i.e. impulsivity). Whereas psychopaths act impulsively, abandon friends and family, and pay little attention to their reputations (Hare & Neumann, 2008), Machiavellians plan proactively, build alliances, and do their best to maintain a positive reputation (Jones & Paulhus, 2014).

2.4 Contemporary Theories on Narcissism

Narcissism is a polyhedric construct, a multi-coloured spectrum assuming different forms (Sedikides, 2021). A remarkable diversity of definitions has been generated in the last 45 years, leading to numerous phenotypic and taxonomic issues (Pincus & Lukowitsky, 2010).

Extant research confirms that "narcissism is inconsistently defined and assessed across clinical psychology, psychiatry and social/personality psychology" (Pincus & Lukowitsky, 2010, p. 422), which leads to the realization that "there is no gold standard as to the meaning of narcissism and thus it is difficult to synthesize the construct among and across clinical observations and empirical findings" (Pincus & Lukowitsky, 2010, p. 423).

It was Emmons (1987) who first shed some light by suggesting that "narcissism, rather than being a unidimensional construct, consists of four moderately correlated factors, tapping the domains of leadership, self-admiration, superiority, and interpersonal exploitativeness" (Emmons, 1987, p. 15). Contemporary researchers have also supported this view and

equally deviated from the notion of narcissism being a unidimensional construct and, using a depiction resembling the Roman God Janus, focused on two 'facets' of narcissism, (i.e. a 'bright' side, when narcissists are their best and a 'dark' side, when they are at their worst) (Braun, 2017).

Back et al. (2010) conceptualized narcissism as "a dysfunctional form of overly high self-esteem and a grandiose view of the self that is associated with a number of intra and interpersonal problems" (Back et al., 2010, p. 132). *Intra-personal problems* include anger, hypersensitivity, self-inflation (in relation to true abilities), constantly looking for enemies, and a perpetual need for external affirmation (Back et al., 2010). *Interpersonal problems* include lack of trust, lack of affective empathy, shallow emotional lives, vindictiveness, derogating and devaluing others, and aggressive and abusive behaviour (Back et al., 2010).

Narcissists are often described as arrogant, conceited, domineering, boastful, competitive, and as active seekers of attention and admiration (Pincus & Lukowitsky, 2010; Pincus et al., 2014).

2.5 Conceptualization of Narcissism

As indicated above, narcissism has assumed many forms and has been conceptualized in terms of its (1) nature (i.e. normal/pathological; Pincus & Lukowitsky, 2010), (2) impact (i.e. healthy/destructive; Lubit, 2002; Rosenthal, 2014), (3) expression (i.e. overt/covert; Ronningstam, 2011), and (4) phenotype (i.e. grandiosity/vulnerability; Pincus & Lukowitsky, 2010; Campbell & Miller, 2011; Ronningstam, 2011). The various conceptualizations of the narcissism construct are described below.

2.5.1 Normal/Pathological Narcissism

It is argued that "narcissism has both normal and pathological expressions, reflecting adaptive and maladaptive personality organization, psychological needs, and regulatory

mechanisms, giving rise to individual differences in managing needs for self-enhancement and validation" (Pincus & Lukowitsky, 2010, p. 423).

Normal manifestations of narcissism may contribute to self-esteem and well-being, can support interpersonal dominance and fuel achievement, if coupled with a strong work ethic (Pincus et al., 2009), and can generate positive and productive behaviours such as creativity and humour (Rosenthal, 2014).

In contrast, narcissism is described as pathological when the individual's needs of validation and admiration are extreme and, coupled with impaired self-regulatory capacities and self-enhancement, become the individual's overriding goal in all situations (Pincus & Roche, 2018).

Pathological narcissism occurs when an individual is unable to integrate or reconcile idealized self-ideas with the realities of their own inadequacies (Rosenthal, 2014). Pathologically narcissistic individuals "appear particularly troubled when faced with disappointments and threats to their positive self-image" and exhibit "significant regulatory deficits and maladaptive strategies to cope with these disappointments" (Pincus & Lukowitsky, 2010, p. 426).

2.5.2 Healthy/Destructive Narcissism

Early researchers have differentiated between 'well-functioning' and 'malignant' narcissists (Kernberg, 1975). Contemporaries have used the terms (a) 'healthy' for those narcissists who are visionaries, innovators, and charmers, often driven by power and glory hoarding (Chatterjee and Hambrick, 2007), and (b) 'destructive' for those narcissists who are particularly toxic when depressed or under pressure and who tend to devalue others, demoralize colleagues and staff, and drive people away (Lubit, 2002). According to Lubit (2002, p. 128):

> "Healthy narcissism is based on relatively secure self-esteem that can survive daily frustrations and stress. Failure to attain desired goals, criticism, and seeing the success of others may cause disappointment, but it does not threaten the self-image of healthy individuals as worthwhile, valuable people".

Healthy narcissists have a reality-based self-confidence, may enjoy power but are not obsessed with its accumulation, have real concern for others, do not exploit or devalue people, have a specific set of values that guide their decisions, are disciplined in action, and considerate to others (Lubit, 2002).

Narcissists may become destructive and can exhibit weaknesses that can hinder their progress and success, namely an "insatiable need for recognition and superiority, hypersensitivity and anger, lack of empathy, amorality, irrationality and inflexibility" (Rosenthal, 2014, p. 44). In the work domain, destructive narcissistic leaders with a grandiose self and a fragile self-esteem will pursue power at all costs and with no inhibitions, will devalue and exploit others without remorse, will show no consideration to others, and will see themselves as above the law (Lubit, 2004).

2.5.3 Overt/Covert Narcissism

Ronningstam (2011) provides a more 'clinical' differentiation of narcissism, focusing mostly on the overt/covert side of grandiose narcissism. She posits that this is manifested via:

> "… enhanced or unrealistic sense of superiority, uniqueness, value, or capability, expressed either overtly in unreasonable expectations, exceptional or unrealistically high aspirations, and self-centeredness, or covertly in persistent convictions and fantasies of unfulfilled ambitions or unlimited success, power, brilliance, beauty, or ideal relationships" (Ronningstam, 2011, p. 254).

2.5.4 Grandiosity/Vulnerability: The Phenotypic Description

Phenotype simply means the visible and observable characteristics or traits of a person. Phenotype labels for narcissism reflecting grandiosity and vulnerability were first coined by Gersten (1991), who used the terms 'overtly grandiose' and 'overtly vulnerable', followed by Dickinson and Pincus (2003), who simplified these labels to 'grandiose' and 'vulnerable'; finally, Pincus et al. (2009) described these dimensions as 'narcissistic grandiosity' and 'narcissistic vulnerability'.

2.5.4.1 Grandiose Narcissism

Li et al. (2022) argue that grandiose narcissism has a dark side of unethical behaviours and a light (bright) side of prosocial behaviours. Narcissists are often described as arrogant, conceited, domineering, active seekers of attention and admiration, boastful and competitive. These attitudes and behaviours can be captured by the term 'narcissistic grandiosity', which is a core component of narcissistic personality, often expressed behaviourally through "interpersonally exploitative acts, lack of empathy, intense envy, aggression and exhibitionism" (Pincus & Lukowitsky, 2010, p. 426). Interpersonal behaviour is predominantly self-serving, and grandiose narcissists react with retaliation and rage when expectations are not met (Ronningstam, 2011). It is important at this stage, without burdening the reader, to identify some key manifestations of grandiose narcissism. Grandiose narcissists can be described as "confident, extraverted, high in self-esteem, dominant, attention seeking, interpersonally skilled and charming, but also unwilling to take criticism, aggressive, high in psychological entitlement, lacking in true empathy, interpersonally exploitative and grandiose or even haughty" (Campbell et al., 2011, p. 270). Grandiose narcissists tend to amplify their personality characteristics, overestimate their potential, and inflate their individual contribution to success, level of intelligence, and leadership abilities (Nevicka, Ten Velden, et al., 2011). They are also hubristic, hypersensitive, cold, distant, ruthless, and demand unquestionable devotion and loyalty (Rosenthal, 2014).

2.5.4.2 The Narcissistic Admiration and Rivalry Concept (NARC)

"Narcissism is one of the most enigmatic constructs in academic psychology" (Back et al., 2013, p. 1013). Its paradoxical nature is simultaneously manifested by the narcissist's self-assuredness and tremendous energy that fascinates others, and their aggressiveness and lack of empathy that hinder their progress and drive people away (Back et al., 2013). Narcissists have been "described as struggling with paradoxical intra- and interpersonal processes" (Back et al., 2010, p. 1014). Back et al. (2010) posit that many of these

paradoxes can be resolved by ‘disentangling’ (grandiose) narcissism into two distinct but positively related dimensions or ‘pathways’ (narcissistic admiration and narcissistic rivalry), which both serve the overarching goal of maintaining a grandiose self (Back et al., 2013). The measure (NARQ: Back et al., 2013) assessing ’disentangled’ grandiose narcissism, serves as *the* core narcissism measure during the main empirical study.

The two ‘pathways’ mentioned above (narcissistic admiration/narcissistic rivalry), function jointly to support the common overarching goal of maintaining the grandiose self (Chen et al., 2019). The ‘pathways’ are positively correlated, but often have divergent associations with outcomes (Seidman et al., 2020). The narcissistic admiration and narcissistic rivalry ‘pathways’ have also markedly different nomological networks and distinct intra-personal and interpersonal consequences (Back et al., 2013). These ‘pathways’, serve the overarching goal of maintaining a grandiose self with different cognitive, affective-motivational, and behavioural processes (Back et al., 2013), which are discussed in detail in subsequent sections.

The new concept ‘disentangling’ (grandiose) narcissism (NARC) and the associated measure (NARQ) are crucial for the research community at large as they offer to scholars and practitioners alike a possible approach to address the paradoxical nature of narcissism. There is now a new ‘wave’ of emerging research using NARQ as the principal measure in assessing grandiose narcissism (Fehn & Schütz, 2020; Gauglitz et al., 2022; Rogoza, Wyszyńska, et al., 2016; Rogoza, Zemojtel-Piotrowska, et al., 2016; Seidman et al., 2020). Using the NARQ measure, recent research has focused on the relationship of the ‘disentangled’ grandiose narcissism and organizational outcomes including envy (Lange et al., 2016), mental toughness (Manley et al., 2019), self-esteem (Cichocka et al., 2019), implicit followership theories (Helfrich & Dietl, 2019), and intelligence (Gignac & Zajenkowski, 2023).

2.5.4.2.1 The Admiration 'Pathway'

The admiration pathway stems from an assertive orientation that leads to popularity and is aimed at achieving social adulation and social potency by means of self-promotion (Back et al., 2013).

The admiration pathway, unique to grandiose narcissism, is the adaptive facet of narcissism, posing fewer interpersonal problems. Individuals high on the admiration pathway are described as being assertive, are prone to be attracted by leadership roles, present a high and stable self-esteem, are proactive, and motivated by rewards (Miller et al., 2021). These individuals tend to overestimate their intelligence and charisma, are 'immune' to distress and fear, and are status sensitive (Leniarska & Zajenkowski, 2022). These individuals also seek status via prestige-based strategies (i.e. competence and self-promotion) and partly via dominance-based strategies (i.e. fear and intimidation) (Sedikides, 2021).

The admiration 'pathway' is manifested by three domains, representing distinct processes; (1) striving for uniqueness (affective-motivational), (2) grandiose fantasies (cognitive), and (3) charmingness (behavioural) (Back et al., 2013).

2.5.4.2.2 The Rivalry 'Pathway'

Narcissistic rivalry, representing the self-defensive aspect of (grandiose) narcissism, comprises predominantly hostile behaviours that aim to diminish threats to a fragile ego (Rogoza, Zemojtel-Piotrowska et al., 2018).

Narcissistic rivalry, the maladaptive facet of narcissism (Miller et al., 2021), causing interpersonal problems and conflicts, is positively correlated with low self-esteem, impulsivity, malicious envy, loneliness, low empathy, low trust, lack of forgiveness, low emotional contagion (Rogoza, Zemojtel-Piotrowska et al., 2018), low agreeableness, hubristic pride, entitlement, exploitativeness, and neuroticism (Rogoza, Kwiatkowska et al., 2018). Individuals high on the rivalry pathway are also arrogant, callous, deceitful, entitled, and cynical (Miller et al., 2021).

Narcissistic rivalry was found to have a negative association with willingness to apologize (Leunissen et al., 2017). Individuals with high levels of rivalry are also status-sensitive; they differ from their admiration counterparts in that they crave status, employing fear and intimidation (Sedikides, 2021). Their emotionality differs from that of individuals high on the admiration pathway, as individuals high on the rivalry pathway exhibit low empathy, are tormented by an unstable and fragile self-esteem, experience a lower subjective well-being, and are often 'exposed' to others due to lower emotional regulation (e.g. anger). Individuals with high levels of rivalry also adopt less cooperative and more competitive team conflict resolution processes (Lynch et al., 2022).

The rivalry 'pathway' stems from an antagonistic orientation that leads to unpopularity. It is aimed at preventing social failure and is manifested in cognitive, affective-motivational, and behavioural processes with distinct intra-personal and interpersonal consequences. These processes include (a) striving for supremacy (affective-motivational), (b) devaluation of others (cognitive), and (c) aggressiveness (behavioural) (Back et al., 2013).

2.5.4.3 Vulnerable Narcissism

Vulnerable narcissism, a core component of narcissistic personality, is a "dysfunction characterized by a depleted, enfeebled self-image, angry, shameful, and depressed affects, self-criticality and interpersonal hypersensitivity and social withdrawal" (Pincus & Lukowitsky, 2010, p. 427).

Although vulnerable narcissism has originated in a clinical setting, it has been considered a personality trait "due to its intra-personal and inter-personal malevolent correlates such as hypersensitivity, introversion, shyness, vulnerability to depression, incompetence, anxiety, defensiveness, avoidance, hostility, passive aggression, low self-esteem, and poor well-being" (Rogoza, Zemojtel-Piotrowska et al., 2018, p. 2); vulnerable narcissism is also behaviourally expressed as helplessness, emptiness, shame, avoidance (Pincus et al., 2009), anger, and envy coupled with aggression (Pincus et al., 2014).

In stark contrast with the assertive, extroverted grandiose narcissists, vulnerable or 'shy' narcissists exhibit a covert self-presentation, are governed by shame (Pincus & Lukowitsky, 2010) and tend to avoid interpersonal relationships because of hypersensitivity to rejection and fear of criticism (Ronningstam, 2011). Vulnerable narcissists overtly or covertly react to perceived threats (e.g. negative feedback) to a fragile self-esteem with strong emotions (e.g. hostility), mood variations (e.g. depression), avoidance, and retaliating behaviours (Ronningstam, 2011).

Vulnerable narcissists are neurotic, depressive, self-inhibited, perpetually in high interpersonal distress, and ridden with feelings of hypersensitivity and shyness (Dickinson & Pincus, 2003). They are introvert and socially avoidant (Pincus et al., 2009) and are constantly tormented by a perpetual fear of failure (Braun et al., 2019).

2.5.5 The Trifurcation of Narcissism

It is argued that "the initial move from a unidimensional conceptualization i.e. narcissism or narcissistic personality disorder, to a two-dimensional conceptualization (i.e. grandiose vs. vulnerable narcissism), was an important advance over the past two decades" (Miller et al., 2021, p. 520). Currently there are calls to move to an even more articulated model. The reason is that within grandiose narcissism, the agentic-extraversion (admiration) and antagonism (rivalry) dimensions, are associated with important differences regarding basic traits, motives, values, evaluations of self and others, social behaviours, and interpersonal outcomes (Back et al., 2013; Back, 2018).

In response to these calls, three-factor models of narcissism, clarifying narcissism's cloudy and variable relations (Miller et al., 2021) have emerged, providing a fine-grained articulation of its core components (Crowe et al., 2019; Krizan & Herlache, 2018).

The three-factor, or trifurcated model of narcissism (TriMN; Miller et al., 2021; Weiss et al., 2019), adheres to a hierarchical structure of narcissism and includes three distinct components, namely (1) the agentic extraversion factor (i.e. the admiration 'pathway'), which is unique to grandiose narcissism, (2) the self-centred antagonism (i.e. the rivalry

'pathway'), which is shared by both grandiose and vulnerable narcissism, and (3) narcissistic neuroticism, which is unique to vulnerable narcissism.

The trifurcated model of narcissism illustrating the hierarchical structure of narcissism and its foundational traits and correlates, is shown in Figure 2-1. The phenotypic description of narcissism is depicted as the two-factor model.

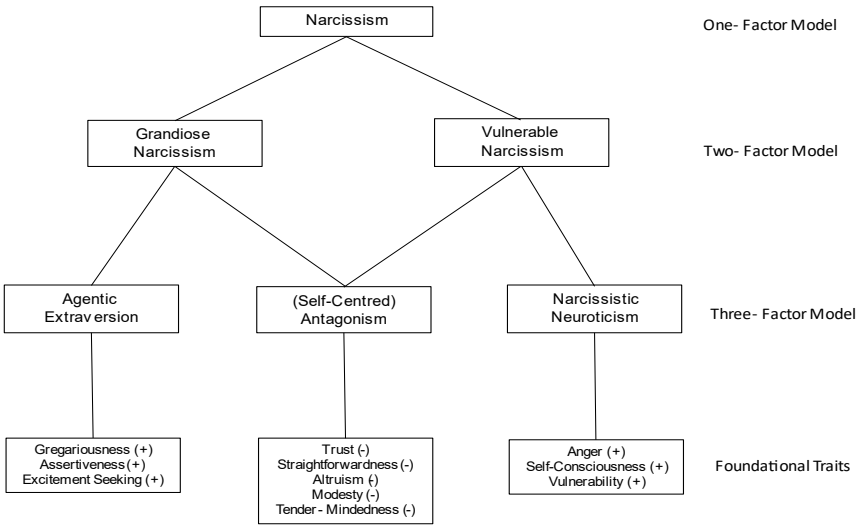


Figure 2-1: The hierarchical structure of narcissism and the three-factor (trifurcated) model of narcissism (TriMN) (adapted from "Narcissism Today: What We Know and What We Need to Learn" by Miller et al., 2021, *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 30(6), pp. 519-525).

There is growing attention and an emerging body of empirical research utilizing the TriMN in studying narcissism (Schneider et al., 2023) as it provides a clear and useful distinction of the three core elements, or factors, of narcissism (Miller et al., 2021). So far, only the Five-Factor Narcissism Inventory (FFNI; Glover et al., 2012) and its shorter version (FFNI-BF; Sherman et al., 2015) allow for a direct and simultaneous assessment of the three factors. Specific parts of the TriMN have also been measured, in the past, by other

narcissism measures, namely NARQ (for the admiration and rivalry 'pathways') and the Hypersensitive Narcissism Scale (HSNS; Cheek et al., 2013), a measure used throughout this study to assess vulnerable narcissism.

In two empirical studies (*N*=2,266), using two different samples of German-speaking participants recruited from a survey pool of a university and the social network of enrolled students, Schneider et al. (2023) have used a model-driven NARQ/HSNS combination to assess the three narcissism dimensions. In these empirical studies, they have showed that the "combined NARQ/HSNS outperforms the FFNI-BF in terms of structure, theory-consistent relations among narcissistic traits, and predictive validity with respect to personality pathology" (Schneider et al., 2023, p. 1).

Szymczak et al. (2022) have used the TriMN to examine the relationship between narcissism and (a) interpersonal trust (the belief that human nature is good), and (b) cynicism (the belief that human nature is evil and egoistic). The sample included 238 Polish volunteers (73.5% female, M_{age} *= 23.91, SD = 5.90*). Narcissism was measured by the Five-Factor Narcissism Inventory Short Form (FFNI; Sherman et al., 2015), which contains 15 separate subscales that can be used to calculate scores for grandiose *and* vulnerable narcissism as well as three empirically derived higher order factors, namely agentic extraversion (narcissistic admiration), antagonism (narcissistic rivalry), and neuroticism (vulnerable narcissism). Szymczak et al. (2022) found that agentic extraversion (narcissistic admiration) was positively related to trust and unrelated to cynicism; antagonism (narcissistic rivalry) was negatively related to trust and positively related to cynicism; finally, narcissistic neuroticism (vulnerable narcissism) was not related to trust or cynicism.

An empirical study (Crowe et al., 2019) was carried out to explore the factor structure of narcissism by examining it at varying hierarchical levels. Participants recruited from Amazon's Mechanical Turk (*N*=591) completed 303 narcissism items, encompassing 46 narcissism scales and subscales.

Narcissism was measured by the Five-Factor Narcissism Inventory Short Form (FFNI; Sherman et al., 2015). Five meaningful factors – grandiosity (narcissistic admiration),

antagonism (narcissistic rivalry), neuroticism (vulnerable narcissism), distrustful self-reliance, and attention-seeking – were identified and assessed.

Results have shown that, as compared with other measures of narcissism, the three-factor structure of narcissism depicted by the TriMN (i.e. agentic extraversion, self-centred antagonism, and narcissistic neuroticism) is the "most parsimonious conceptualization" (Crowe et al., 2019, p. 1152) of narcissism.

Weiss et al. (2021) have also used the TriMN to comprehensively evaluate narcissism's instantiation in several commonly used self-report psychopathy measures. Participants included 397 undergraduates (74% female; 76% White; M_{age} *= 18.9; SD =1.12*), from a large, southeastern US university, who received research credit for their participation. Grandiose narcissism was measured by the Five-Factor Narcissism Inventory Short Form (FFNI; Sherman et al., 2015); vulnerable narcissism was measured by the 10-item Hypersensitive Scale (HSNS; Hendin & Cheek, 1997). Using self-ratings and informant-ratings of narcissism, researchers enhanced their knowledge, given the theoretical and empirical overlap between psychopathy and narcissism, regarding the degree to which psychopathy measures capture narcissistic content.

2.5.6 Integrating the Conceptual Frameworks (NARC/TriMN)

As previously mentioned, Schneider et al. (2023) have used a model driven NARQ/HSNS combination, serving as a valuable tool to assess the three narcissism dimensions. They have showed that the combined NARQ/HSNS (which includes the three-factor model depicted by the TriMN), outperforms the FFNI-BF, the only currently available measure assessing all three factors.

Moreover, Schneider et al. (2023) have shown that one should conceptually distinguish between the three factors of TriMN (narcissistic admiration, narcissistic rivalry, and vulnerable narcissism) as they are correlated but do not exhibit signs of collinearity and thus are distinct, separate constructs. Schneider et al. (2023) have shown that NARQ-measured narcissistic admiration was positively correlated (*r*=.44***) with NARQ-measured

narcissistic rivalry; narcissistic admiration was positively correlated (*r*=.07) with HSNS-measured vulnerable narcissism; narcissistic rivalry was also positively related (*r*=.42***) to HSNS-measured vulnerable narcissism.

Schneider et al. (2023) have also shown that the three factors of TriMN exhibit *differential* relationships with outcomes. NARQ-measured narcissistic admiration was negatively related (*r*=−.35***) to honesty/humility, positively related (*r*=.41***) to extraversion and negatively related (*r*=−.17***) to agreeableness. NARQ-measured narcissistic rivalry was negatively related (*r*=−.50***) to honesty/humility, negatively related (*r*=−.19***) to extraversion and negatively related (*r*=−.37***) to agreeableness. HSNS-measured vulnerable narcissism was negatively related (*r*=−.15***) to honesty/humility and negatively related (*r*=−.46***) to extraversion. Similarly, Szymczak et al. (2022) have shown that the three factors of TriMN should be distinguished conceptually. They have shown that FFNI-measured agentic extraversion (i.e. narcissistic admiration) was positively correlated (*r*=.58***) with FFNI-measured antagonism (i.e. narcissistic rivalry). Moreover, Szymczak et al. (2022) have also shown that FFNI-measured antagonism was positively related (*r*=.29***) to cynicism.

Weiss et al. (2021) have also confirmed the notion that the three factors of TriMN should be distinguished conceptually and that they do indeed exhibit differential relationships with outcomes. They have shown that FFNI-measured agentic extraversion (i.e. narcissistic admiration) was positively correlated (*r*=.32, $p < 0.01$) with FFNI-measured antagonism (i.e. narcissistic rivalry) and negatively correlated (*r*=−.07, $p < 0.01$) with FFNI-measured vulnerable narcissism. In addition, antagonism (i.e. narcissistic rivalry) was also negatively related (*r*=−.14, $p < 0.01$) to FFNI-measured vulnerable narcissism.

FFNI-measured agentic extraversion (i.e. narcissistic admiration) was positively related (*r*=.26, $p < 0.01$) to interpersonal manipulation, positively related (*r*=.01, $p < 0.01$) to callousness, and positively related (*r*=.17, $p < 0.01$) to emotional stability.

Somewhat differently, FFNI-measured antagonism (i.e. narcissistic rivalry) was positively related (r=.75, p < 0.01) to interpersonal manipulation, positively related (r=.53, p < 0.01) to callousness and positively related (r=.12, p < 0.01) to emotional stability.

Finally, FFNI-measured neuroticism (i.e. vulnerable narcissism) was negatively related (r=−.18, p < 0.01) to interpersonal manipulation, negatively related (r=−.27, p < 0.01) to callousness and negatively related (r=−.66, p < 0.01) to emotional stability.

Lastly, in another example indicative of the differential relationships of the TriMN factors with outcomes (e.g. self-esteem), Crowe et al. (2019) have shown that narcissistic admiration is positively related (r=.30, p < 0.01) to self-esteem; in contrast, vulnerable narcissism exhibits a large negative correlation with self-esteem (r=−.60, p < 0.01).

Encouraged by the robustness and parsimony of the TriMN, I have opted to integrate the two frameworks by using a model driven NARQ/HSNS combination assessing the agentic (narcissistic admiration), antagonistic (narcissistic rivalry) and neuroticism (vulnerable narcissism) factors.

It should be noted that a key aspect of this study is to utilize the TriMN, in the context of leadership, and investigate the relationships between narcissistic admiration, narcissistic rivalry and vulnerable narcissism with mediators, of psychological safety, climate and trust, and the outcomes engagement and team performance.

2.5.7 Conceptualizing Trait Narcissism: Conclusions

A key question beckons: What is the chosen conceptualization of narcissism, among those presented in previous sections, that will inform my research design?

It is essential to adequately specify the conceptual meaning of the study's focal construct (i.e. narcissism); failure to do so will undermine construct, statistical conclusion, and internal validity, lead to model misspecification, and adversely influence the study's hypotheses, as it is impossible to develop a coherent theory without well-developed construct definitions (MacKenzie, 2003).

The normal/pathological conceptualization of narcissism (Pincus & Lukowitsky, 2010) is inadequate as the definition of the *normal* dimension solely includes references to consequences (e.g. elevated self-esteem) which must be avoided (MacKenzie, 2003), while the *pathological* dimension, instead of specifying the construct's conceptual theme in unambiguous terms is too ambiguous; moreover, no evidence is given on the relationship of each dimension with narcissism – the superordinate construct (MacKenzie, 2003).

The focal construct should be carefully defined to distinguish itself from related constructs (MacKenzie, 2003). The healthy/destructive conceptualization (Lubit, 2002) is also inappropriate for this study as it is not adequately differentiated from similar or related narcissism constructs like well-functioning/malignant (Kernberg, 1975), normal/pathological (Pincus & Lukowitsky, 2010) or 'bright'/'dark' side (Braun, 2017). Moreover, it includes ambiguous definitions that are confusing and hard to accurately detect (healthy narcissists are innovators, destructive narcissists are toxic).

The focal construct should be defined in such a way as to faithfully represent its full domain (MacKenzie, 2003). The overt/covert conceptualization, mostly appropriate for clinical populations, does not adequately represent the sub-clinical domain, which is of paramount importance for this study. Moreover, the definition includes ambiguous and abstract terms (e.g. brilliance, beauty), which are hard to detect, measure and evaluate.

Based on the above conclusions and to inform the rest of this work, I will be taking forward the phenotypic conceptualization of trait narcissism suggested by Pincus et al. (2009). The phenotypic conceptualization (a) is clearly distinguished from other conceptualizations, (b) is an effective synthesis of earlier conceptualizations, (c) serves as a clear and concise definition of the focal construct and associated facets, (d) uses unambiguous terms and lay language, (e) solely includes behavioural manifestations of narcissism, thus making this abstract construct visible and more observable, and (f) captures the full domain of the focal construct, thus enabling the selection of appropriate measures.

To effectively describe the focal construct of narcissism and to better capture its multidimensionality while faithfully representing its full domain (MacKenzie, 2003), I will

adhere to the three-dimensional, phenotypic-based conceptualization for the main study; to enable and inform my research design, I will use the conceptualization of 'disentangled' grandiose narcissism (Back et al., 2013) including the narcissistic admiration and narcissistic rivalry facets or pathways (which represent the sub-clinical domain) supplemented by vulnerable narcissism (which represents the clinical domain).

What is the relationship between the three facets (i.e. narcissistic admiration, narcissistic rivalry, vulnerable narcissism)? What is their uniqueness and overlap?

The narcissistic admiration and narcissistic rivalry pathways (of the 'disentangled' grandiose narcissism) overlap as they share and both serve the one overarching goal of narcissism – "to maintain a grandiose self" (Back et al., 2013, p. 1013).

Although positively correlated and working in tandem, their uniqueness lies on the fact that the two pathways have different 'agendas' and strive to achieve the overarching goal relying on different cognitive, affective-motivational, and behavioural strategies. Social consequences are also quite different for each pathway.

The *narcissistic admiration pathway*, which represents the agentic orientation and is manifested via narcissistic self-promotion and assertive self-enhancement (Back, 2018), aims to achieve social admiration and social potency through striving for uniqueness, grandiose fantasies, and charmingness. Social consequences include popularity and social potency, including attainment of social status and social resources (Back et al., 2013).

The *narcissistic rivalry pathway*, which represents the antagonistic orientation and is manifested via narcissistic self-defence and antagonistic self-protection (Back, 2018), aims to prevent social failure, exposure, and ridicule, through striving for supremacy, devaluation of others and aggressiveness. Social consequences include unpopularity and conflict, including rejection, lack of trust, relationship dissolution and criticism (Back et al., 2013).

The uniqueness of the two pathways is also extended to how they are related to outcomes at the intra and interpersonal level. At the intra-personal level, while narcissistic admiration is positively related to a high and stable self-esteem, narcissistic rivalry is positively related to a lower and more fragile self-esteem; at the interpersonal level, while narcissistic

admiration is positively related to a low preference for solitude, narcissistic rivalry is positively related to preference for solitude (Back, 2018).

Observing the conceptual and empirical relation between the three-dimensional, phenotypic-based conceptualization (i.e. admiration/rivalry/vulnerable) of narcissism I will adhere to, and the more 'classic'; two-dimensional distinction (i.e. grandiose/vulnerable), one may identify the overlap between grandiose and vulnerable narcissism in the form of the antagonistic aspects of narcissistic rivalry. Moreover, the antagonistic aspects of narcissistic rivalry also overlap with the neurotic aspects of vulnerable narcissism (Back, 2018).

Consequently, the chosen conceptualization of narcissism, among those presented in previous sections, informing my research design will be the phenotypic description of narcissism (grandiose/vulnerable narcissism) to be employed during the pilot studies and the three faceted depiction of narcissism (narcissistic admiration, narcissistic rivalry, vulnerable narcissism) to be employed during the main empirical study.

2.6 Narcissism in Leadership

2.6.1 Leadership: An Introduction

More than half a century ago, Bennis (1959, p. 259) stated that despite "an endless proliferation of terms to deal with it [leadership] … still the concept is not sufficiently defined". This is true even today. Despite the intense research effort since Bennis' statement, and a flurry of research around the concept, the definition of leadership still lacks coherence and agreement.

Offering just one of many definitions, leadership is "a social influence process … being focused on the achievement of specific goals and …being concerned with both means and ends" (Higgs, 2009, p. 167), whereby "intentional influence is exerted over other people to guide, structure, and facilitate activities and relationships in a group or organization" (Yukl, 2013, p. 18).

In search of clarity, Stogdill (1974, p. 259) noted that “there are almost as many definitions of leadership as there are persons who have attempted to define the concept”. Literature is bustling with theories, models, and best practices on leadership. Dionne et al. (2014) have identified 29 different leadership approaches including authentic leadership, charismatic leadership, leader–member exchange, trait theory, transformational leadership, and many more.

The theory most relevant with my research involving leaders is the trait theory, which refers to “stable characteristics of individuals or other inherent characteristics that define a leader… dispositions, gender, personality, attributes, intelligence, and dark side and destructive leadership such as narcissism” (Dionne et al., 2014, p. 18). Adhering to trait theory, I will investigate narcissism as a personality trait and not as a process (i.e. narcissistic leadership) as explored by Rosenthal and Pittinsky (2006).

Leadership success is determined by its positive influence on desirable outcomes including performance and achievement of goals, follower attitudes and perceptions of the leader, and contribution to the quality of group processes (Yukl, 2013).

It is therefore essential at this stage to examine how the two distinct facets of narcissism (grandiose/vulnerable) manifest within the organizational domain and influence or shape leadership success.

2.6.2 Grandiose Narcissism in Leadership

2.6.2.1 ‘Stage to Shine’

Grandiose narcissists constantly look for a ‘stage to shine’; an enabling platform that will not only ensure self-presentation and self-promotion but will also equally serve as an effective setting for social manipulation (Nevicka, De Hoogh et al., 2011), aiding their unrelenting quest to gain recognition and prove their superiority (Rosenthal & Pittinsky, 2006).

2.6.2.2 The Incredible Pros

To achieve the recognition they crave, and prove their superiority, leaders with high levels of grandiose narcissism are great visionaries and effective strategists, who can articulate a

clear and compelling vision, convert the masses, and create cult-like followers; moreover, they are prone to taking bold risks and have the audacity to push through massive organizational changes (Maccoby, 2004).

These leaders promote bold and radical innovations (Gerstner et al., 2013) and exhibit confidence and competence to decrease insecurity among followers in uncertain contexts or crises (Nevicka et al., 2013). They are decisive, show persistence in the face of failure (Wallace et al., 2009), and increase performance in response to critique (Nevicka, Baas, Ten Velden, et al., 2016). They work well in contexts that provide opportunities to showcase their abilities, such as those found in high pressure challenges or in situations having an evaluative audience (Wallace & Baumeister, 2002) where reward and public admiration are forthcoming.

2.6.2.3 The Inevitable Cons

Conversely, narcissists are notoriously poor, overinvolved, and abusive managers, take more credit for successes than they are due, blame others for their own failures and shortcomings, and are only motivated by success and personal gain (Hogan et al., 1990). The Achilles heel, for these 'larger than life' destructive and toxic characters, is their grandiosity, manifested as unrealistic dreams and grand schemes, lack of self-awareness and restraining anchors, lack of empathy (a hallmark of narcissism), excessive self-involvement/micromanagement, and paranoia (Lubit, 2002).

They are unrealistically optimistic and overconfident in their own abilities (Judge et al., 2009); their self-serving behaviour, impulsiveness, sense of entitlement and superiority not only lead to their eventual self-destruction (Lubit, 2002) but can result in potentially disastrous consequences for the teams and organizations they lead.

Their relative absence of empathy (Hepper et al., 2014) lies at the heart of narcissists' interpersonal deficits and interpersonal failures. Empathy – experiencing another's perspective or emotions or simply 'walking in others' shoes' – is a fundamental basis of social functioning, prosocial behaviour, and interpersonal harmony (Miller & Eisenberg,

1988; Vreeke & van der Mark, 2003). Without empathy, socially clueless grandiose narcissistic leaders see no reason to curtail their antisocial behaviour or engage in prosocial acts.

They are abrasive with employees who fight back and instead strive to be constantly surrounded by ‘yes men’. They tend to recruit and nurture submissive teams, hoard glory in success and deflect blame in failure (Chatterjee, 2009). They are inclined to dominate discussions and reduce or curtail information sharing among their followers, leading to reduced team performance (Nevicka et al., 2011). Finally, they pursue risky investments and exhibit unethical and deviant work behaviours, including work slowdowns, sabotage, white collar crime, and theft (Nevicka, 2018).

2.6.3 Vulnerable Narcissism in Leadership

Little is known about the link (if any) between vulnerable narcissism and leadership. These narcissists are less likely to emerge as leaders as they lack the extraversion exhibited by their grandiose counterparts. In the unlikely event that they do attain leadership roles, vulnerable narcissists exhibit high interpersonal distress, are domineering, cold, vindictive, self-inhibited, shy, constrained, and hostile (Dickinson & Pincus, 2003), and are constantly tormented by fears of inadequacy (Braun et al., 2019). These leaders are prone to exhibit abusive supervision, as mistakes and failures, although internally attributed, are externally directed to followers (Braun et al., 2019). Their neurotic nature derails the leader–follower relationship and increases follower irritation (Schyns et al., 2023), which ultimately adversely affects follower well-being. Behaviours mentioned above are described, in more detail, in subsequent sections.

2.6.3.1 Neuroticism

Vulnerable narcissistic leaders, in stark contrast with their grandiose ‘colleagues’ (who possess agentic externalizing features), exhibit depressive, neurotic internalizing features. These features include hypersensitivity, shyness, need for external affirmation, hostile

outbursts, social avoidance, coldness, vindictiveness, self-inhibition (Dickinson & Pincus, 2003), pathological distress, fragility, feelings of being belittled, anxiety (Rogoza, Zemojtel-Piotrowska et al., 2018), aggression, envy, anger, shame (Pincus et al., 2014), emptiness, and helplessness (Pincus et al., 2009).

2.6.3.2 Derailing the Leader–Follower Relationship

Vulnerable narcissists, who are equally self-centred but more problematic than their grandiose counterparts, tend to be more covertly antagonistic, which renders the leader–follower relationship difficult. They are prone to disrupt communication, have chronic feelings of inadequacy, micromanage, and demonstrate a heightened need for affirmation (Schyns, et al., 2023).

2.6.3.3 Vulnerable Narcissistic Leadership Behaviours

It is difficult to make a hard-to-detect personality like vulnerable narcissism visible without highlighting specific behaviours. Schyns et al. (2023) have coined the term 'vulnerable narcissistic leadership behaviour' or VNLB, defined as "the specific behavioural expression that vulnerable narcissistic leaders show in daily work life" (Schyns et al., 2023, p. 816).

In an empirical study, the first of its kind to assess the impact of visible work–life behaviours of vulnerable narcissistic leaders in an organizational context, Schyns et al. (2023) collected cross-lagged data from 245 followers in the UK education sector (one of the sectors worst-affected by workplace uncertainty during the pandemic) over five weeks, during the first weeks (May–June 2020) of the C19 pandemic.

Schyns et al. (2023), based on the conservation of resources theory, have found, that VNLB is positively related (ranging from r=.48** for week 1 to r=.49** for week 5; max r=.56** for week 3) to follower irritation at the between-person level. This is significant in that (follower) irritation is an indicator of (follower) reduced well-being (Grebner et al., 2003) and (follower) stress (Merino-Tejedor et al., 2013) and seen as an antecedent of more severe mental health impairments (Mohr et al., 2006) for followers and organizations.

Irritation comprises (a) the component ‘cognitive rumination’ (i.e. being unable to mentally switch off from work during one’s leisure time), and (b) the component ‘emotional irritability’ (i.e. feeling anxious and on edge or sudden rushes of anger) (Mohr et al., 2006). Follower irritation was particularly pertinent throughout the pandemic, as followers, when dealing with a problematic vulnerable narcissistic leader, became strained and “likely to have to use cognitive resources to make sense of their leader …, which drains available resources” (Schyns et al., 2023, p. 2). In organizational research, strain in reaction to uncertainty is often referred to as irritation, defined as “subjectively perceived emotional and cognitive strain in occupational contexts” (Mohr et al., 2006, p. 198).

2.6.4 Do Narcissists Make Great Leaders?

There seems to be a ‘perfect match’ between narcissism and leadership as the demeanour and behaviours of narcissists are perceived by followers to match the profile of the ‘prototypical leader’ (Epitropaki et al., 2013; Grijalva et al., 2015; Nevicka, 2018). The alluring externalizing characteristics of the ‘prototypical leader’, including confidence, dominance, extraversion (Nevicka, 2018), self-esteem, generalized self-efficacy, authority, and dominance (Sedikides, 2021), are found in abundance in narcissists. Do these characteristics make them great leaders? Do these characteristics make them effective leaders of teams and followers?

Although there is a growing fascination among scholars regarding narcissism in leadership, research has not adequately focused on the impact of narcissism in the organizational domain. Chatterjee and Hambrick (2007) argue that this is because there is the misconception that (a) narcissism is a lay concept not grounded in good psychological science, (b) it is quite difficult to measure narcissism and collect data, and (c) leader narcissism is not of much theoretical or practical significance.

A comprehensive and ever-expanding body of extant research has shown that leader narcissism has a predominantly adverse effect in the organizational domain; leader narcissism exhibits negative correlations with the quality of leader–follower exchange,

subordinate performance, moral decision making, and socialized vision (Grijalva et al., 2015). Moreover, leader narcissism exhibits positive correlations with counter-productive work behaviours (Grijalva & Harms, 2014), low empathy, low guilt, and willingness to apologize (Leunissen et al., 2017). Leader narcissism is also positively related to impulsivity (Vazire & Funder, 2006), which hinders effective team decision making and creates unnecessary risks to individuals. Leader narcissism is also negatively related to servant leadership, a form of leadership that focuses on follower needs and welfare (Peterson et al., 2012). Finally, there is empirical evidence that suggests that leader narcissism exhibits no relationship with task performance and (follower) job satisfaction (O'Boyle et al., 2012), which can boost morale and enhance team performance. To answer the nagging question posed in this section, I present a 'snapshot' of empirical studies that provide evidence on the (adverse) effect of leader narcissism for teams, followers and organizations. A more detailed description of empirical evidence that sheds further light on the outcomes of leader narcissism is presented in section 2.7.

2.6.4.1 Teams

At the *team level*, leader narcissism adversely affects team dynamics, team communication, leader–follower information exchange, team decision making, and team performance (Nevicka, Ten Velden, et al., 2011). There is a recent strong interest on the impact of leader narcissism at the team level of analysis.

Consequently, extant research has further shown that leader narcissism is positively related to team information search (Zhou et al., 2019) and negatively related to team voice climate (Zhou et al., 2019) and team followership (Wang, 2021). More specifically, narcissistic rivalry is negatively related to team psychological safety (Mao et al., 2019) and team exploratory learning (Wu et al., 2022), and positively related to team knowledge hiding (Long et al., 2023), a major barrier in fostering team innovation. These studies are also depicted in Table 2-1.

2.6.4.2 Followers

At the *individual level* (follower), leader narcissism (narcissistic rivalry and vulnerable narcissism only) is positively related to abusive supervision (Gauglitz et al., 2022), negatively related to trust (narcissistic rivalry and vulnerable narcissism only) (Szymczak et al., 2022), positively related (vulnerable narcissism) to workplace incivility, a milder form of psychological mistreatment (Moon & Morais, 2022), and positively related to follower irritation (Schyns et al., 2023).

Moreover, narcissistic admiration is positively related to employee (follower) voice and psychological empowerment (Helfrich & Dietl, 2019), interpersonal trust (Szymczak et al., 2022) and lower preference for solitude (Back, 2018) thus encouraging and fostering interpersonal relationships with followers.

In contrast with narcissistic admiration, narcissistic rivalry is positively related to employee (follower) envy (Lange et al., 2016) and emotional contagion (Rogoza et al., 2018), and negatively related to trust in the leader (Kwiatkowska et al., 2019), employee psychological empowerment, psychological safety, and voice (Helfrich & Dietl, 2019).

Finally vulnerable narcissism is positively related to abusive supervision intent (Braun et al., 2019), follower emotional exhaustion (Wirtz & Rigotti, 2020), and aggression towards followers (Zhang & Zhu, 2021). Vulnerable narcissism, in the form of Vulnerable Narcissism Leadership Behaviours (VNLBs) is positively related to follower irritation and rumination (Schyns et al., 2023). These studies are also depicted in Table 2-2.

2.6.4.3 Organizations

At the *organizational level*, leader narcissism affects strategy, structure, people (Chatterjee, 2009), ethics (Rosenthal, 2014), and talent (Lubit, 2002). Chatterjee and Hambrick (2007) posit that as narcissistic leaders require admiration, adulation, and applause at frequent intervals, they are compelled to undertake bold strategies to fulfil their chronic goal of continuous external self-affirmation. These leaders are likely to favour strategic dynamism

and grandiosity over strategic incrementalism and stability and thus tend to deliver extreme and fluctuating levels of performance.

Ultimately, these leaders are bound to fail and fall as their warped psychological make-up serves as the essential fuel for the manifestation of toxic narcissism in teams and followers, where all plans, systems, processes, structure, and ideas reflect the leader twisted pathology (De Vries, 2014).

2.7 The Outcomes of Leader Narcissism

2.7.1 Introduction

In this important section, I present the results of the literature review on the outcomes of narcissism in the organizational domain, which is organized, to ensure clarity for the reader, in two distinct time periods, representing the 'initial' and 'expanded' literature review.

The 'initial' literature review, spanning the period 1921–2016, covers publications identified by the seminal article by Braun (2017, Frontiers in Psychology), which identifies only five (out of a total of 121), peer-reviewed articles associated with outcomes of leader narcissism at the team level of analysis.

The 'expanded' literature review, spanning the period 2017–2024, concentrates on empirical studies associated with team-level and other outcomes of leader narcissism, including mediation, which is the underpinning mechanism of my hypothesized model. This systematic literature review was carried out using the Web of Science database. The search strategy used for the systematic literature review is described in detail in subsequent sections and effectively illustrated on the PRISMA flow diagram (McKenzie et al., 2020), shown in Figure 2-2.

2.7.2 'Initial' Literature Review (1921–2016)

As mentioned above, this literature review identified five, peer-reviewed seminal empirical studies (Brunell et al., 2008; Nevicka, De Hoogh et al., 2011, Nevicka, Ten Velden, et al., 2011, Ong et al., 2016; Wisse & Sleebos, 2016) that provide evidence on the outcomes of

leader narcissism at the team level of analysis (Braun, 2017). Each study is described in detail below in terms of sample, measures, methods, and key findings.

2.7.2.1 Leader Narcissism and Leadership Emergence in Teams

Brunell et al. (2008), in a series of three empirical studies, hypothesized that narcissists would emerge as leaders during leaderless (unacquainted) group discussions. In three studies, participants completed personality questionnaires and were involved in four-person leaderless group discussions. Results from all three studies revealed an association between narcissism and leader emergence.

In study 1, participants comprised 432 psychology students (54.6% male, M_{age}*=19.36, SD=1.41*) who were rewarded with class credit for their participation. At the outset, participants completed (a) a measure of narcissism, the 40-item Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI; Raskin & Terry, 1988), (b) the 44-item Big Five Inventory (John & Srivastava, 1999), and (c) a 10-item measure of self-esteem (Rosenberg, 1965). After completing the questionnaires, participants were randomly assigned to groups of four, each group tasked with convincing a deciding 'committee' on the best candidate for a campus student position (Brunell et al., 2008). Following the discussion, participants completed a questionnaire regarding their leadership evaluation of themselves and other group members. Higher scores revealed higher leader emergence. Using multilevel modelling (as the 432 participants were nested in 108 groups), Brunell et al. (2008) determined that the 'power' dimension of narcissism was positively and significantly associated with all three leadership emergence variables (i.e. desire to lead, leadership self-rating, and leadership rating by others). "In sum, narcissism positively predicted leader emergence in unacquainted groups" (Brunell et al., 2008, p. 1669).

Study 2 (Brunell et al., 2008) investigated narcissism and emergent leadership in a context in which both individual and team performance could be assessed. In study 2, participants comprised 408 psychology students (68.3% female, M_{age}*=19.22, SD=1.20*), organized to participate in groups of four for class credit. Participants completed the same set of

questionnaires as in study 1 and then each group was tasked with evaluating and ranking (for importance) an array of items, first as individuals and then as a team, relevant to a specific survival scenario.

Brunell et al. (2008) confirmed, using multilevel modelling, that narcissism was a significant predictor for each of the three leadership emergence variables mentioned in study 1. More specifically, study 2 demonstrated that as narcissism increases, the desire to lead, propelled by the 'power' dimension of narcissism, increases similarly, which explains the propensity of narcissists to seek and attain leadership positions (Nevicka, De Hoogh et al., 2011). It was also shown that as narcissism increases, narcissistic individuals tend to have a stronger self-view as leaders. Moreover, the analysis of survival item rankings revealed that narcissism did not predict team performance on the task, or individual-level performance (Brunell et al., 2008).

Finally, study 2 revealed that narcissism in the student sample, was positively related (r=.37**) with the desire to lead; both the 'power' and 'exhibitionism' factors of narcissism were also positively related (r=.32** and r=.33**, respectively) to desire to lead. Narcissism was unrelated to individual or team effectiveness; both 'power' and 'exhibitionism' factors of narcissism were also unrelated to individual or team effectiveness.

Study 3 (Brunell et al., 2008) steps away from student samples and again, to investigate leadership emergence, employs leaderless group discussion with practicing managers. Participants comprised 153 managers enrolled in an executive MBA program; at the time of enrolment, participants worked as managers in different organizations and industries. The majority were Caucasian (82%), males (68%), M_{age}=*44*.6, with 11.3 average years of managerial experience and responsibility in supervising ten direct reports on average. Prior to embarking on the program, participants completed the narcissistic scale (Wink & Gough, 1990) of the California Psychological Profile (CPI; Gough & Bradley, 1992), which assesses authority, inflated self-views and attention seeking. To measure leadership emergence, observers provided ratings on the extent to which each participant served as a leader during the discussion. As proposed, "narcissism significantly predicted leadership

emergence ratings made by expert raters" (Brunell et al., 2008, p. 1672); in other words, individuals with high levels of narcissism were perceived by raters as more 'leadership worthy'.

In addition to the findings presented above, Ong et al. (2016) have proposed and confirmed that the leader narcissism/leadership emergence relationship is mediated by transformational leadership and moderated by time.

2.7.2.2 Leader Narcissism and Emergence in High Reward Interdependence Teams

In their search for a social stage to shine, narcissists prefer team-based settings with high reward interdependence (where members are rewarded based on team performance), as this provides an excellent opportunity to demonstrate their competence and superiority (Nevicka, De Hoogh et al., 2011).

The authors have investigated the relationship of narcissism with leadership emergence and the moderating role of reward interdependence. In their study, participants comprised 221 psychology students (59.7% females) organized in primarily four-person leaderless work teams, earning class credit. Teams were engaged in a dynamic and networked computer simulation, namely 'Distributed Dynamic Decision Making' (DDD; Michigan State University) allowing for substantial interaction, communication and information sharing between team members, with greater interaction occurring under high reward interdependence conditions. Participants had ample opportunity during the task to demonstrate their leadership characteristics (e.g. whether they took over decision making), but also to evaluate the leader qualities of other team members (Nevicka, De Hoogh et al., 2011).

Narcissism was measured using the forced choice, 16-item Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI; Raskin & Terry, 1988). Leadership emergence was measured using a ranking score of other group members. Individual performance was objectively obtained from the DDD output report.

Exploring the link between narcissism and leadership emergence, and in line with the work of Brunell et al. (2008) mentioned in previous sections, Nevicka, De Hoogh et al. (2011) found that narcissistic individuals emerge as leaders irrespective of the context (whether high or low reward interdependence).

Nevicka, De Hoogh et al. (2011) have also found, again in line with study 2 findings (Brunell et al., 2008), that narcissism was unrelated with individual performance; in addition, no correlation of narcissism and team performance was reported.

2.7.2.3 Leader Narcissism and Perceived Leadership Effectiveness

Building on the work of Brunell et al. (2008), which found no evidence of the effect of narcissistic leaders on performance, Nevicka, Ten Velden, et al. (2011) investigated the issue further and examined the effects of narcissistic leaders on team dynamics, communication, information exchange, team decision making (Stasser, 1999), and team performance. Participants comprised 150 students (68.7% female, M_{age}*=21,9*), rewarded with class credit and randomly assigned to one of 50 three-person groups, with one member within each group randomly assigned to be the leader (Nevicka, Ten Velden, et al., 2011). Teams were tasked with making a group decision on the best candidate for a fictitious position. Team leader narcissism was measured using the 40-item NPI (Raskin & Terry, 1988). Team performance (i.e. the quality of the group's decision) was assessed as a dichotomous variable – assigning 1 point and 0 points for correct and incorrect choices, respectively.

Results demonstrated that (1) leader narcissism positively affected team members' perceptions of leader authority and effectiveness, (2) the positive relationship of leader narcissism with perceived leadership effectiveness was mediated by leader authority, (3) leader narcissism was negatively related to (self-reported) information exchange, and (4) the negative relationship of leader narcissism on team performance, was mediated by reduced exchange of unshared information (Nevicka, Ten Velden, et al., 2011). This study has also reinforced the notion that leaders with high levels of narcissism curtail information

exchange among team members, leading to sub-optimal decisions that adversely influence team performance, particularly in situations where affective empathy and social sensitivity are required by the leader (Nevicka, Ten Velden, et al., 2011). Braun (2017) has provided a summary of empirical evidence for the outcomes of leader narcissism at the team level of analysis. In addition to the seminal empirical studies presented in previous sections, the interest in (leader) narcissism in the organizational domain is still going strong; this effort has yielded a promising body of new research, with more empirical evidence on the outcomes of leader narcissism on teams and followers.

2.7.3 Leader Narcissism and Team Outcomes

Empirical evidence on the outcomes of the various forms and facets of the narcissism variable is shown in Table 2-1. It should be noted that evidence on the outcomes of narcissistic admiration at the team level of analysis are scarce.

Table 2-1: Team Outcomes of (Leader) Narcissism

Outcome Variable	Narcissism Variable	Source (Author/Year)	Result (+/-)
Team Information Search Effort	Leader Narcissism	Zhou et al. (2019)	(+)
Team Voice Climate	Leader Narcissism	Zhou et al. (2021)	(-)
Team Followership	Leader Narcissism	Wang (2021)	(-)
Team Psychological Safety	Narcissistic Rivalry	Mao et al. (2019)	(-)
Team Exploratory Learning	Narcissistic Rivalry	Wu et al. (2022)	(-)
Team Knowledge Hiding	Narcissistic Rivalry	Long et al. (2023)	(+)
Abusive Supervision (intention)	Vulnerable Narcissism	Braun et al. (2019)	(+)
Affective Motivation to Lead, Avoidance to Lead	Vulnerable Narcissism	Schyns et al. (2022)	(-)/(+)

2.7.4 Leader Narcissism and Follower Outcomes

Following Braun (2017), and a review of the empirical evidence on outcomes of leader narcissism (followers), an outpour of additional recent research has offered more insights

on the outcomes of leader narcissism on followers. An overview of research, associated with the outcomes of narcissism on *followers* is summarized in Table 2-2.

Table 2-2: Outcomes of (Leader) Narcissism on Followers

Outcome Variable	Narcissism Variable	Source (Author/Year)	Result (+/-)
Follower Neuroticism/Job Insecurity	Grandiose Narcissism (CEO) [a]	Kim et al. (2021)	(+)
Supervisor-targeted CWB (by follower), follower malicious envy	Narcissism	Braun et al. (2016)	(+)
Follower Job Satisfaction/Well-being, Follower Stress/ Intention to Quit	Narcissism	Ul-Haq & Anjum (2020)	(-)/(+)
Follower Innovative Behaviour	Narcissism	Yang et al. (2020)	(-)
Aggression (reactive/proactive)	Narcissism	Kjaervik & Bushman (2021)	(+)
Follower OCB (leader directed)	Narcissism	Wang et al. (2021)	(-)
Follower Well-Being	Narcissism	Schyns et al. (2023)	(-)
Employee Voice, Employee Psychological Empowerment	Narcissistic Admiration	Helfrich & Dietl (2019)	(+)
Interpersonal Trust	Narcissistic Admiration	Szymczak et al. (2022)	(+)
Preference for Solitude	Narcissistic Admiration	Back (2018)	(-)
Emotional Contagion	Narcissistic Rivalry	Rogoza et al. (2018)	(+)
Trust in the Leader (by follower)	Narcissistic Rivalry	Kwiatkowska et al. (2019)	(-)
Employee Psychological Empowerment, Follower Psychological Safety, Employee Voice	Narcissistic Rivalry	Helfrich & Dietl (2019)	(-)
Abusive Supervision	Narcissistic Rivalry	Gauglitz et al. (2022)	(+)
Preference for Solitude	Narcissistic Rivalry	Back (2018)	(+)
Abusive Supervision Intent	Vulnerable Narcissism	Braun et al. (2019)	(+)
Follower Emotional Exhaustion	Vulnerable Narcissism	Wirtz & Rigotti (2020)	(+)
Aggression (towards followers)	Vulnerable Narcissism	Zhang & Zhu (2021)	(+)
Follower Irritation	VNLB	Schyns et al. (2023)	(+)

Note: [a]= perceived; CWB=Counter-Productive Work Behaviours; OCB=Organizational Citizenship Behaviours; VNLB = Vulnerable Narcissism Leadership Behaviours; the terms 'employees' and 'followers' are used interchangeably.

2.7.5 Nil-Linear Relationship of Leader Narcissism with Outcomes

Leader narcissism also exhibits nil-linear relationships with outcomes. This is highlighted and supported by extant research, suggesting a curvilinear relationship where low and high levels of leader narcissism result in *leadership malfunction*, while a moderate level of leader narcissism results in *leadership effectiveness* (Back, 2018; Fatfouta, 2019; Grijalva et al., 2015). As evidenced by extant research, the narcissism variable exhibits nil-linear relationships with various outcomes, including firm innovation, (CEO) humility, OCB, leadership effectiveness, job satisfaction, job performance, social rejection, and achievement/failure. This evidence is summarized in Table 2-3.

Table 2-3: Nil-Linear Relationships of (Leader) Narcissism with Outcomes

Outcome Variable	Narcissism Variable	Source (Author/Year)
Firm Innovation	Grandiose Narcissism (CEO) [a]	Zhang et al. (2017)
CEO Humility	Grandiose Narcissism (CEO)	Zhang et al. (2017)
OCB	Narcissism	Judge et al. (2006)
Leadership Effectiveness	Narcissism [b]	Grijalva et al. (2015)
Job Satisfaction	Narcissism [c]	Bruk-Lee et al. (2009)
Job Performance	Narcissism [c]	O'Boyle et al. (2012)
Social Rejection	Grandiose Narcissism	Jauk & Kaufman (2018)
Achievement/Failure	Vulnerable Narcissism	Jauk & Kaufman (2018)

Note: a self-reported; b reported by others (observers); c= meta-analysis; OCB=Organizational Citizenship Behaviours

2.7.6 Leader Narcissism/Outcome Mediated Relationships

In a perpetual quest to understand how the 'external' effect of leader narcissism is internally 'transmitted' to organizational outcomes, extant research has explored a wide range of variables, potentially mediating the leader narcissism–outcome relationship. Table 2-4 exhibits an overview of extant research associated with mediating processes on the *leader narcissism–outcome relationship.* Moreover, Table 2-5 exhibits an overview of extant

research on the mediating processes on the *narcissistic admiration/outcome and narcissistic rivalry–outcome relationships* (there is no evidence, to my knowledge, of mediating relationships involving vulnerable narcissism). Finally, Table 2-6 provides an overview of research relevant with outcomes associated with my hypothesized model, namely *work engagement and performance*.

Table 2-4: Overview of Extant Research (Narcissism/Outcome Mediating Processes) – Leader Narcissism

Narcissism Variable	Mediator	Outcome	Source (Author/Year)
Leader Narcissism	Leader Humility	Leadership Effectiveness [a]	Owens et al. (2015)
Leader Narcissism	Team Voice Climate	Team Voice Behaviour	Zhou et al. (2021)
Leader Narcissism	Leader trustworthiness [a]	Employee Silence	Hamstra et al. (2021)
Leader Narcissism	Organizational Aggression	Workplace Deviance	Al-Hasnawi & Abbas (2021)
Leader Narcissism	Toxic work culture	Organizational Deviance	Towari & Jha (2021)
Leader Narcissism	Psychological Contract Breach	Employee CWB	Qayyum et al. (2020)
Leader Narcissism	Malicious Envy	Supervisor-targeted CWB	Braun (2016)
Leader Narcissism [a]	Interactional Justice [a]	CWB	Ni et al. (2021)
Leader Narcissism	Supervisor/Subordinate Relationship Conflict	Career Satisfaction	Wang et al. (2021)
Leader Narcissism	Supervisor/Subordinate Relationship Conflict	Objective Career Success	Wang et al. (2021)
Leader Narcissism	Self-Esteem	Leadership Effectiveness	Korn et al. (2022)
Leader Narcissism	Job Engagement	Employee Innovation Behaviour	Norouzinik et al. (2021)
Leader Narcissism	Positivity in Leader Identity	Affective MTL	Chen (2016)
Leader Narcissism	Team information collaboration	Team radical creativity	Liu et al. (2021)

Note: [a] reported by others (observers); CWB=Counter-productive work behaviours; MTL = Motivation to Lead

Table 2-5: Overview of Extant Research (Narcissism/Outcome Mediating Processes) – Narcissistic Admiration/Narcissistic Rivalry

Narcissism Variable	Mediator	Outcome	Source (Author/Year)
Narcissistic Admiration	Psychological Empowerment	Employee Voice	Helfrich & Dietl (2019)
Narcissistic Admiration	Challenge Appraisal	OCB	Zhu et al. (2023)
Narcissistic Admiration	Trust	Leadership Effectiveness [a]	Lynch et al. (2022)
Narcissistic Admiration	Teamwork Competencies	Team Cohesion/Team Conflict	Bush-Evans (2020)
Narcissistic Rivalry	Leader's evaluation of follower likeability	Abusive Supervision (Intentions)	Fehn & Schütz (2020)
Narcissistic Rivalry	Leader Ego Threats [a]	Abusive Supervision (Intentions)	Fehn & Schütz (2020)
Narcissistic Rivalry	Hindrance Appraisal	OCB	Zhu et al. (2023)
Narcissistic Rivalry	Trust	Leadership Effectiveness [a]	Lynch et al. (2022)
Narcissistic Rivalry	Teamwork Competencies	Team Cohesion/Team Conflict	Bush-Evans (2020)

Note: [a] reported by others (observers); OCB=Organizational Citizenship Behaviours

Table 2-6: Overview of Extant Research (Narcissism/Outcome Mediating Processes) – Outcomes: Performance & Engagement

Narcissism Variable	Mediator	Outcome	Source (Author/Year)
Leader Narcissism [a]	Interactional Justice [a]	Work Engagement	Ni et al. (2021)
Leader Narcissism	Work Centrality [b]	Employee Engagement	Burawat (2023)
Leader Narcissism	Employee Engagement	Discretionary Effort	Burawat (2023)
Leader Narcissism	Follower self-enhancement opportunity [a]	Individual Performance	Nevicka (2023)

Note: [a] = perceived; [b]= partial mediation

2.7.7 'Expanded' Literature Review (2017–2024)

As previously mentioned, the 'expanded' literature review (2017–2024), utilized the Web of Science database. The search strategy is best illustrated on the PRISMA flow diagram (McKenzie et al., 2020), shown in Figure 2-2.

I have set out to identify records, initially relying on a wide search, relevant with leader narcissism, using the term Leader* AND Narcissism. This search identified 840 records. Using the criterion 'year of publication' (2017 onward), I identified 597 records (243 records excluded). Using the criterion 'language' (English only), I identified 590 records (7 records excluded). Using the criterion 'type of publication' (articles only), I identified 542 records (48 records excluded). Using the criterion 'categories' (i.e. Management, Business, Applied Psychology), I identified 228 records (314 records excluded). Finally, using criterion 'ABS Journal Rankings' (journals with 4*, 4 and 3 ratings plus *Journal of Business Ethics* by exception), I identified a total of 50 records (178 records excluded). Consequently, the wider search produced 50 records fulfilling the above criteria.

I continued the effort with a narrower search, using the term Leader* AND Narcissism* AND Team, to identify records relevant with (the outcomes of) leader narcissism at the team level. This search identified 83 records. Using the criterion 'year of publication' (2017 onward), I identified 72 records (11 records excluded). Using the criterion 'language' (English only), I identified 71 records (1 record excluded). Using the criterion 'type of publication' (articles only), I identified 67 records (4 records excluded). Using the criterion 'categories' (Management, Business, Applied Psychology), I identified 45 records (22 excluded). Finally using criterion 'ABS Journal Rankings' (journals with 4*, 4 and 3 ratings), I identified a total of 15 records (30 records excluded). Consequently, this search produced 15 records fulfilling above criteria. When duplicates were removed across both searches, 50 records/articles remained; 34 articles were excluded for reasons shown in Figure 2-2. Ultimately, 16 empirical studies were retained. These are summarized in Table 2-7.

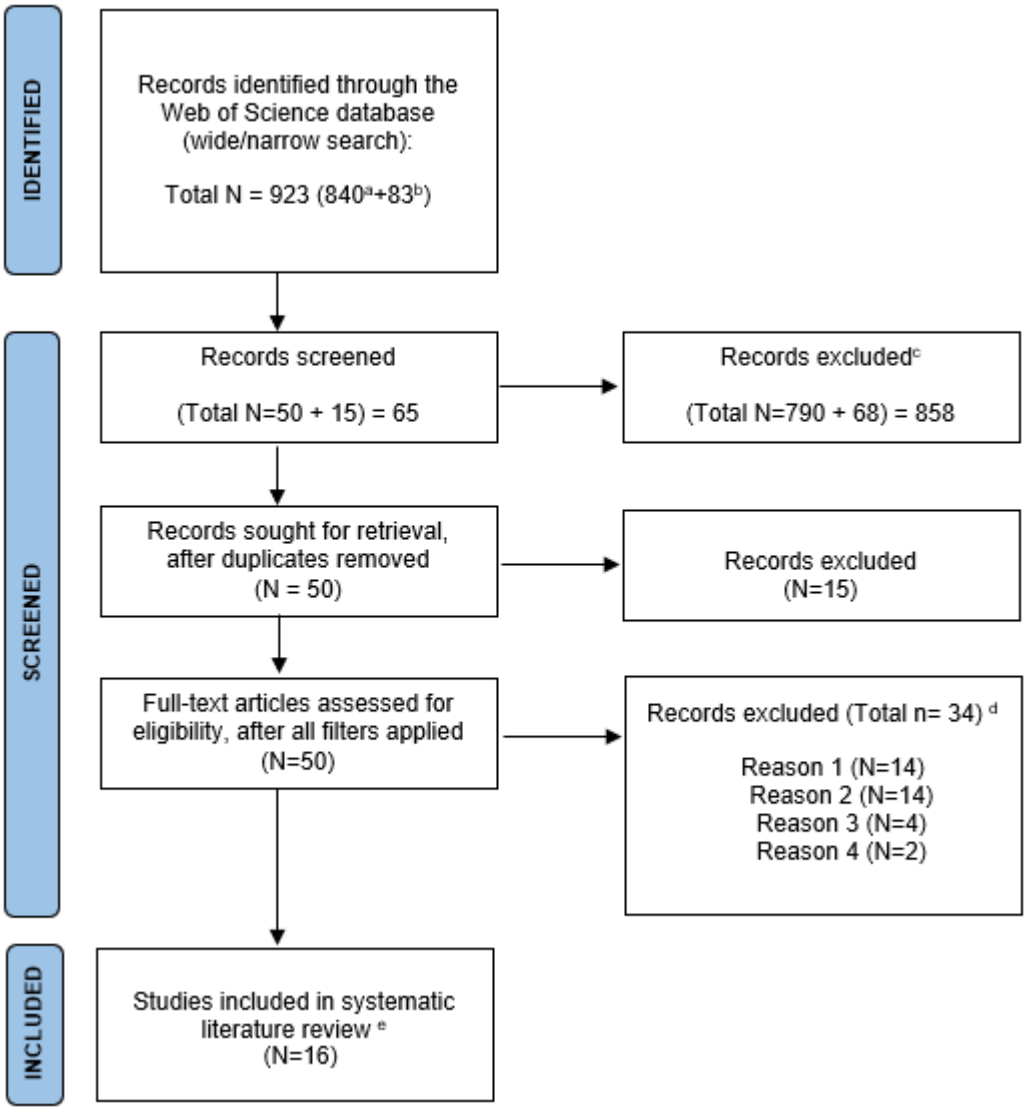


Figure 2-2 Systematic Literature Review (SLR)

[a] These records were identified (wide search) by using the search term Leader * AND Narcissism * in the Web of Science database

[b] These records were identified (narrow search) by using the search term Leader * AND Narcissism AND Team * in the Web of Science database

[c] These records were excluded using the following criteria/filters namely (1) 'year of publication' (2017-), (2) 'language of publication' (English), (3) 'type of publication' (articles only), (4) 'categories' (including Management, Business and Applied Psychology only), (5) 'ABS Journal Rankings' (4*, 4 and 3 ratings).

[d] Reasons for excluding records are as follows: Reason 1 (record identified did not study, as a predictor, 'leader narcissism' but other 'versions of narcissism, e.g. 'employee narcissism'); Reason 2 (record identified was not compatible with research focus, e.g. involving moderation rather than mediation); Reason 3 (record identified did not include any of the variables in my hypothesized model, e.g. predictor was 'leadership'); Reason 4 (record identified did not represent empirical studies).

[e] These empirical studies are shown in Table 2-7 (outcomes of leader narcissism).

Note: I have set 2017 as the date to span all articles published after Braun (2017, Frontiers in Psychology), which study spanned publications between 1921 and 2016.

2.7.7.1 Outcomes of Leader Narcissism (Empirical Studies)

The ‘expanded’ literature review has identified and ultimately retained 16 empirical studies providing evidence on the outcomes of leader narcissism. These are shown in Table 2-7. Mediators are shown where applicable.

Table 2-7: Outcomes of Leader Narcissism – Empirical Studies (2017–2024)

Narcissism Variable	Mediator(s)	Outcome(s)	Source (Author/Year)
Grandiose Narcissism (CEO)	N/A	Ethical Misconduct, Fraud, Excess Risk Taking, Sex Misconduct, Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness, Agreeable	Van Scotter & De Dea Roglio (2018)
Grandiose Narcissism (CEO)	N/A	Accrual-based earnings management, Low Earnings Quality [a]	Buchholtz et al. (2019)
Grandiose Narcissism (CEO)	N/A	Total Number (Lawsuits), Duration (Lawsuits)	O'Reilly et al. (2018)
Grandiose Narcissism (CEO)	TMT [a] Strategic Decision Comprehensiveness	Innovation Opportunity Exploitation	Rovelli et al. (2023)
Grandiose Narcissism (CEO)	TMT [a] Members' Participation (Decision Making)	SDM [e] Comprehensiveness, SDM [e] Speed	She et al. (2020)
Grandiose Narcissism (CEO)[b]	Leader Prototype/anti-prototype difference	Perceived Uncertainty	Kim et al. (2021)
Leader Narcissism [c]	LMX [d] Quality, Average LMX	Individual Subordinate Perceptions of LMX, Job Satisfaction (Follower), Emotional Exhaustion	Bernerth (2022)
Leader Narcissism [f, g]	Interpersonal Justice, Follower Effort	Collective Task/Contextual Performance, OCB [h]	Bernerth et al. (2022)
Leader Narcissism	Group Level LMX [d] Differentiation	Employee Voice	Huang et al. (2019)
Leader Narcissism	Narcissistic Supervision (Perception)	Job Performance (Follower)	Liu et al. (2021)
Narcissistic Rivalry [i]	Perceived Supervisor Support	, Quality of Leader–Member Relationship, Performance-Based Self Esteem, Job Engagement	Fehn & Schütz (2020)
Narcissistic Rivalry [i]	Leader Injury Initiation Motive	Abusive Supervision (Intentions)	Gauglitz et al. (2023)
Vulnerable Narcissism [i]	N/A	Follower Emotional Exhaustion, Follower Job Engagement	Wirtz & Rigotti (2020)

Note: [a] TMT= Top Management Team; [b] perceived; [c] follower rated; [d] LMX= Leader–Member Exchange; [e] SDM= Strategic Decision Making; [f] identity; [g] Reputation; [h] OCB= Organizational Citizenship Behaviours; [i] (leader); N/A- Not Applicable.

2.7.8 Conclusions

Reviewing the empirical evidence, I can observe that the two distinct 'pathways' of grandiose narcissism (i.e. narcissistic admiration and narcissistic rivalry) do not lead to the same outcomes in terms of *directionality*; for example (see Table 2-2); while narcissistic admiration is *positively related* to employee psychological empowerment, narcissistic rivalry is *negatively related* to employee psychological empowerment (Helfrich & Dietl, 2019); in addition, while narcissistic admiration is *positively related* to employee voice, narcissistic rivalry is *negatively related* to employee voice (Helfrich & Dietl, 2019). Moreover, as also shown in Table 2-2, narcissistic admiration is *negatively related* to preference to solitude while narcissistic rivalry is *positively related* to preference for solitude (Back, 2018).

It should also be noted that the *nature of relationships* is also quite different; extant research (Back, 2018) has shown that narcissistic admiration is positively related to benign envy, while narcissistic rivalry is positively related to malign envy, and narcissistic admiration is positively related to self-directed values, while narcissistic rivalry is positively related to power values. Narcissistic admiration is positively related to trait self-esteem, while narcissistic rivalry is positively related to low trait self-esteem (Back, 2018). Finally, narcissistic admiration is positively related to employment, while narcissistic rivalry is positively related to unemployment (Back, 2018).

2.7.9 Implications for Theorizing and Research Design

The review of relevant empirical evidence, presented in previous sections, have enabled and clarified my theorizing and informed my subsequent research design. I have concluded that (1) it is important, adhering to the phenotypic description presented in previous sections and during a series of familiarization studies with test (business) populations, to identify the different relationship of grandiose/vulnerable narcissism on a preliminary set of variables/outcomes, (2) it is imperative to identify and evaluate, during the main empirical study, the differential relationship (strength/directionality) of each dimension of the three-faceted construct of leader narcissism (i.e. narcissistic admiration, narcissistic rivalry,

vulnerable narcissism), (3) the source of reporting is critical, thus leading to my decision to use a combination of self-reported and others-reported measures in assessing leader narcissism and outcomes.

2.8 Summary

In this chapter, I have presented the early and contemporary theories on narcissism and offered an overview of the nomological network of the construct. I have adhered to the phenotypic description of narcissism and have described the two dimensions of narcissism, namely grandiosity and vulnerability. I have presented the 'disentangled' version of grandiose narcissism and its associated 'pathways' (narcissistic admiration, narcissistic rivalry), which helps to decipher some of the paradoxes of the construct. I have also discussed the tendency of narcissists to gravitate to leadership roles and challenged the notion that narcissists make great leaders; I have also explained how grandiose and vulnerable narcissism manifest in leadership roles.

Moreover, I have presented the three-factor (trifurcated) model of narcissism (TriMN), which provides an economical and robust new measure of narcissism and explained how, encouraged by the emerging body of research and current practice, I have integrated the two frameworks (NARC/TriMN) into a model-driven combination of measures assessing grandiose (narcissistic admiration and narcissistic rivalry) and vulnerable dimensions of narcissism under the same hierarchical structure (Miller et al., 2021). Finally, I have presented empirical evidence that illustrates the relationship of leader narcissism with organizational outcomes at the team level.

I have also described, in detail, the outcomes of leader narcissism in the organizational domain, as illustrated and depicted by the 'initial' research (1921–2016) and the 'expanded' research (2017–2024); moreover, I have presented empirical evidence that points to a curvilinear leader narcissism–outcome relationship. Finally, I have presented additional empirical evidence on the mediated leader narcissism–outcome relationship. Lastly, I have presented my conclusions that have shaped my theorizing and my research design.

In the next chapter, I will develop, and present relevant theory supporting my research model and thus clearly articulate the set of hypotheses to be tested during the empirical study.

Chapter 3. Theory Development & Hypotheses

3.1 Overview

In this chapter, I synthesize insights gained from the literature review (Chapter 2) and present relevant empirical evidence and theoretical arguments to support an articulated set of 18 hypotheses (six per narcissism factor).

3.2 The Overriding Rationale of the Hypothesized Model

Teams are complex, multilevel systems that function over time, tasks, and contexts. A shift of the focus of research on teams is noticeable – from what predicts team performance to why some teams are more effective than others (Ilgen et al., 2005). Prior to 1996, empirical research focused on the outcome of team performance and on inputs like team composition, structure, and rewards. During the next decade, more attention was paid to the mediating processes that explain why certain inputs affect team performance.

3.2.1 The Input-Process-Output Model (I-P-O)

To investigate the mediating processes that explain why certain inputs affect team performance, researchers relied on classic systems model thinking (Hackman; 1987; McGrath, 1984), where inputs lead to processes, that in turn, lead to outcomes (the input-process-output, or I-P-O model).

The I-P-O model, despite some of its deficiencies (Ilgen et al., 2005) provides a useful framework to draw on to explain the mediating effects on team performance as exhibited on my hypothesized model. According to the I-P-O model, Input I, is represented by the three-faceted leader narcissism (i.e. narcissistic admiration, narcissistic rivalry, and vulnerable narcissism); Process P, is represented by mediators – this is compatible with my hypothesized model in the sense that mediational factors are not just processes but emergent cognitive (climate for work group innovation) and affective (team psychological safety, trust in the leader) states (Ilgen et al., 2005); Outcome O, is represented by the

outcomes team performance and individual work engagement**,** as proposed by my hypothesized model.

The evolution of the I-P-O model into the expanded IMOI model**,** which allows for non-linear relationships (Ilgen et al., 2005) and where I stands for input, M for mediator, O for output and I for input, is not terribly useful to draw on, as my model does not assume or propose a cyclical causal feedback mechanism.

3.2.2 The Job Demands-Resources Model (JD-R)

To provide an overarching rationale for the hypothesized model and on the mediating effect of leader narcissism (narcissistic admiration, narcissistic rivalry, vulnerable narcissism) on outcome individual work engagement, I have drawn on the Job Demands-Resources Model, or JD-R model, first proposed by Demerouti et al. (2001) and which is based on empirically tested propositions relevant with this work and my hypothesized model.

Firstly, the JD-R model states that all types of job characteristics (or working conditions) can be classified as *job demands* and *job resources.* Job demands are defined as those physical, psychological, social, or organizational aspects of the job that require sustained physical and/or psychological effort and are therefore associated with certain physiological and/or psychological costs (Demerouti et al., 2001). work pressure and emotionally demanding interactions with clients or customers. Job resources refer to those physical, psychological, social, or organizational aspects of the job that are functional in achieving work goals, reduce job demands and the associated physiological and psychological costs, or stimulate personal growth, learning, and development (Bakker, 2011; Bakker & Demerouti, 2008). Examples of job resources are autonomy, skill variety, performance feedback, and opportunities for growth.

Secondly, the JD-R model states that job resources are a unique predictor of cynicism or disengagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Thirdly, the JD-R model states that personal resources (e.g. optimism, self-efficacy) influence motivation (and thus individual engagement) when job demands are high (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Fourthly, the JD-R

model states that motivation (engagement) has a positive impact on job performance (and consequently team performance).

Synthesizing the above, a key question beckons: Does the JD-R model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017) provide an overarching rationale for the mediating effects on individual work engagement?

The JD-R model is a well-established model supported by many studies and although this framework treats engagement differently, it is still quite useful in developing my hypothesized model.

Engagement is depicted, in the JD-R model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017), as a dimension of motivation rather than an outcome, as proposed by my hypothesized model. Engagement is considered as a mediator and not as an outcome. The JD-R model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017), which does include any leader-related predictors, proposes the role of job resources (team psychological safety, climate for work group innovation and trust in the leader) as antecedents to engagement rather than mediators.

Overall, the I-P-O model (Ilgen et al., 2005) and the JD-R model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017) provide the overarching rationale in elaborating on the mediating effects on team performance and individual work engagement.

3.3 The Research Model and Hypotheses

The research model is shown in Figure 3-1, overleaf; the model exhibits predictor, mediator, and outcome variables, hypotheses (and proposed direction), levels of analysis and data sources. The set of 18 research hypotheses are numbered H1a to H1f for predictor narcissistic admiration, H2a to H2f for predictor narcissistic rivalry, and H3a to H3f for predictor vulnerable narcissism. Variables shown unshaded are self-reported by team leaders. Variables shown shaded are reported by followers. Table 3-1 provides an overview of the hypotheses.

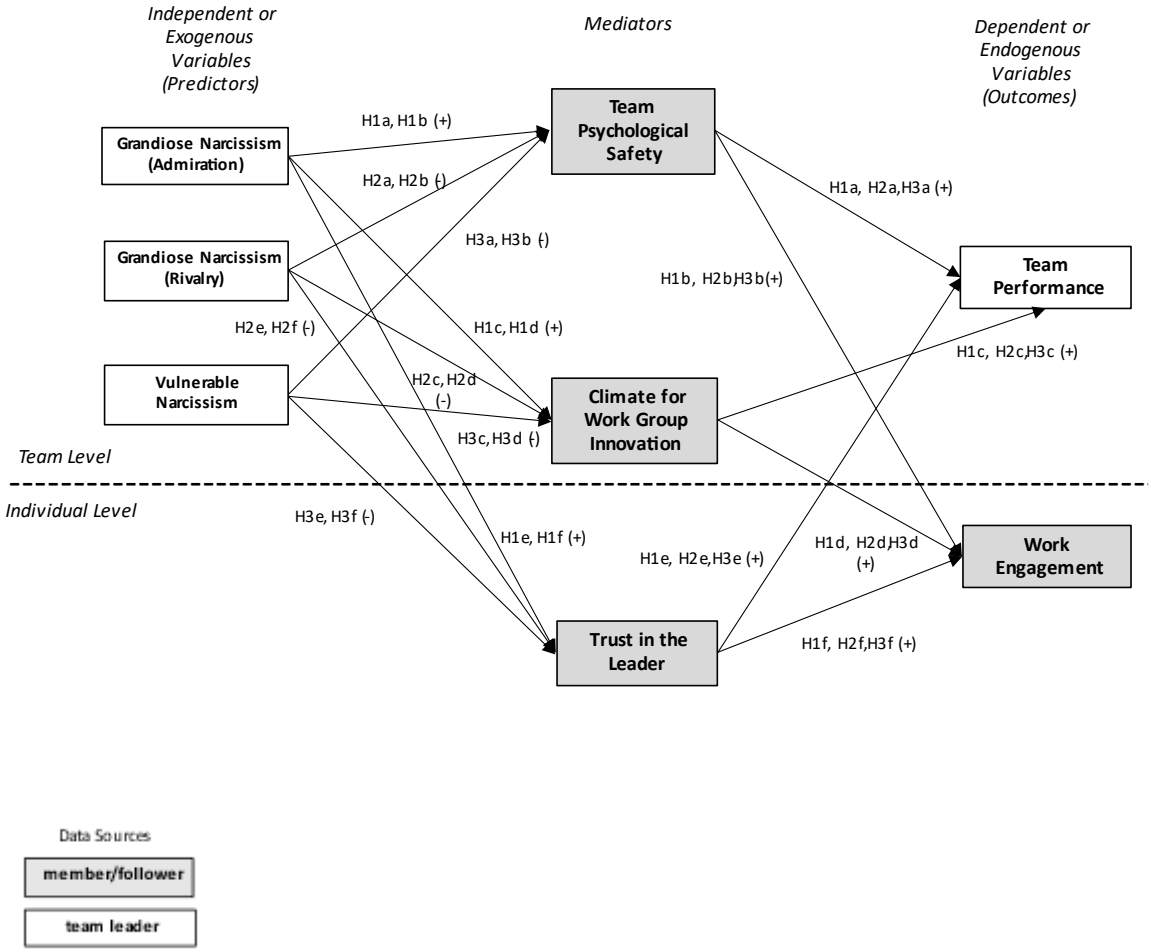


Figure 3-1: The Research Model.

Table 3-1: Overview of Hypotheses

Hypothesis	Description
H1a	Team psychological safety mediates the positive relationship between narcissistic admiration and team performance
H1b	Team psychological safety mediates the positive relationship between narcissistic admiration and individual work engagement
H1c	Climate for work group innovation mediates the positive relationship between narcissistic admiration and team performance
H1d	Climate for work group innovation mediates the positive relationship between narcissistic admiration and individual work engagement
H1e	Trust in the leader mediates the positive relationship between narcissistic admiration and team performance
H1f	Trust in the leader mediates the positive relationship between narcissistic admiration and individual work engagement
H2a	Team psychological safety mediates the negative relationship between narcissistic rivalry and team performance
H2b	Team psychological safety mediates the negative relationship between narcissistic rivalry and individual work engagement
H2c	Climate for work group innovation mediates the negative relationship between narcissistic rivalry and team performance
H2d	Climate for work group innovation mediates the negative relationship between narcissistic rivalry and individual work engagement
H2e	Trust in the leader mediates the negative relationship between narcissistic rivalry and team performance
H2f	Trust in the leader mediates the negative relationship between narcissistic rivalry and individual work engagement
H3a	Team psychological safety mediates the negative relationship between leader vulnerable narcissism and team performance
H3b	Team psychological safety mediates the negative relationship between leader vulnerable narcissism and individual work engagement
H3c	Climate for work group innovation mediates the negative relationship between leader vulnerable narcissism and team performance
H3d	Climate for work group innovation mediates the negative relationship between leader vulnerable narcissism and individual work engagement
H3e	Trust in the leader mediates the negative relationship between leader vulnerable narcissism and team performance
H3f	Trust in the leader mediates the negative relationship between leader vulnerable narcissism and individual work engagement

3.4 Hypotheses Development

3.4.1 Predictor: Narcissistic Admiration (H1a to H1f)

As shown in Figure 3-1, the first six hypotheses investigate the mediated relationships between predictor (leader) narcissistic admiration and outcomes team performance (H1a, H1c, and H1e) and work engagement (H1b, H1d, and H1f). I present relevant empirical evidence and theoretical arguments and subsequently articulate hypotheses. I start with the first set of six hypotheses, which investigate the mediating role of team psychological safety, climate for work group innovation, and trust in the leader, on the relationship of predictor narcissistic admiration with outcomes team performance and work engagement.

3.4.1.1 Narcissistic Admiration, Team Psychological Safety, and Team Performance (H1a)

Team psychological safety is defined "as a shared belief that the team is safe for interpersonal risk taking […] a sense of confidence that the team will not embarrass, reject, or punish someone for speaking up" (Edmondson, 1999, p. 354).

Team performance is defined as the ability of a team to achieve three essential criteria, namely (1) a team product, service, or decision acceptable to customers (internal/external), (2) growth in team capability, and (3) an experience meaningful and satisfying for team members (Hackman, 2002).

What is the relationship of narcissistic admiration with the psychological safety experienced by the team? In other words, do leaders with high levels of narcissistic admiration create a team environment where team members feel accepted and perceive that environment to be safe for interpersonal risk taking, this stemming from mutual respect and trust (Edmondson, 1999)? What is the available empirical evidence to support or reject this view?

For all empirical studies presented in subsequent sections, unless otherwise stated, narcissistic admiration was measured by the Narcissistic Admiration and Rivalry Questionnaire (NARQ; Back et al., 2013). Empirical evidence is derived from general (review, meta-analysis) and specific (individual) studies.

Having found little direct empirical evidence on the specific relationship of narcissistic admiration with team psychological safety, I have turned to similar constructs and made some informed inferences. Helfrich and Dietl (2019) have investigated the relationship of narcissistic admiration with employee voice, via psychological empowerment. Interestingly, employee voice, a form of extra-role behaviour, which is positive and discretionary (Helfrich & Dietl, 2019), is closely tied to team psychological safety (Edmondson, 1999). Employee voice is measured by assessing behaviours such as:

> "develops and makes recommendations concerning issues that affect this work group, communicates his/her opinions about work issues to others in this group even if his/her opinion is different and others in the group disagree with him/her, and speaks up in this group with ideas for new projects or changes in procedures" (Helfrich & Dietl, 2019, p. 264).

Helfrich and Dietl (2019), adhering to self-determination theory, conducted a multi-wave field study of 268 leader–employee dyads in German organizations, who completed a leader survey. Leaders evaluated employee voice behaviour on three items, indicated above, from LePine and Van Dyne's (1998) measure. Helfrich and Dietl (2019) found that narcissistic admiration was positively related to psychological empowerment (r=.26**), which in turn, was positively related to employee voice (r=.22*).

Narcissists with high levels of narcissistic admiration, being bold, self-confident and re-assuring, can be particularly attractive in uncertain situations (Nevicka et al., 2013; O'Reilly & Chatman, 2020), such as C19, which simultaneously represented a major financial and global health crisis leading to severe organizational disruptions and grave loss of life. It is reasonable to assume that a self-assured and decisive leader can provide a sense of psychological safety to anxious groups of followers (O'Reilly & Chatman, 2020), especially during a crisis.

Thus, I propose that narcissistic admiration is positively related to team psychological safety.

Is team psychological safety, created by narcissistic admiration, positively related to team performance? It should be noted that, unless otherwise stated, in all empirical studies discussed here, team psychological safety was measured by the 7-item instrument developed by Edmondson (1999).

In a comprehensive meta-analytic review of 136 independent samples on the outcomes of team psychological safety, Frazier et al. (2017) found that team psychological safety is positively related (*r*=.24 to .29) to task performance and a myriad of other outcomes, including information sharing, citizenship behaviours, creativity, commitment, satisfaction, and learning behaviour.

On a smaller scale, Edmondson (1999), treating psychological safety as a team-level construct, empirically investigated team psychological safety in 53 teams in a manufacturing company. In a preliminary qualitative research phase, Edmondson (1999) observed 8 team meetings and conducted 17 taped interviews with members of these groups. A total of 427 team members from 51 teams completed the survey and 31 team managers were interviewed.

While scales were developed by the researcher, mentioned above, in assessing team psychological safety, team performance was assessed using Hackman's self-reporting team performance scale (Hackman, 1987). Empirical evidence has shown that team psychological safety is positively correlated (*r*=.47) with observer-rated team performance. This is the same variable measured in my research model, where team performance is rated by team leaders (observers) rather than being assessed by team members.

I can preliminarily conclude from this evidence that teams where members enjoy high levels of psychological safety perform better.

Fyhn et al. (2022) have investigated the relationship of team psychological safety with team performance. The sample consisted of 160 management teams in Norwegian organizations (57% in the private sector), with 50.4% of teams being top management teams. In this empirical study, team performance (self-reported) was assessed by seven items, developed

by the researchers (Fyhn et al., 2022). Empirical evidence has shown that team psychological safety was positively related (*r*=.56**) with (self-reported) team performance. Choo et al. (2007) explored the relationship of psychological safety with learning behaviours and team performance, in an empirical study comprising 951 team members and total quality management (TQM) specialists participating in 206 projects in a manufacturing firm. This empirical study has shown that a psychologically safe environment enables divergent thinking, creativity, risk taking, and exploratory and exploitative learning, thereby promoting team performance.

Thus, I posit that team psychological safety is positively related to team performance.

I have previously proposed that narcissistic admiration is positively related to team psychological safety. I have also suggested above that team psychological safety is, in turn, positively related to team performance.

Overall, I argue that, as narcissistic admiration is positively related to openness (Back, 2018), such leaders are perceived by team members, as approachable, open to different ideas, accepting, tolerating, and embracing of diversity. Moreover, narcissistic admiration is related to agentic behaviours (Back, 2018), including being engaged in issues and conversations; this may further reinforce the notion that the leader is genuinely interested in, and will actively listen to, the ideas and suggestions of team members. Narcissistic admiration is supplemented by a self-assured voice and a stable and strong self-esteem (Back, 2018), which may be perceived as a 'protection shield' for team members. Finally, narcissistic admiration is positively related to forgiveness and lower distrust (Back, 2018), projecting an image of a tolerant and trusting leader. These leader characteristics can create and foster team psychological safety, where team members feel secure, accepted, and protected, which in turn, leads to high levels of team performance.

In sum, I hypothesize that:

H1a *Team psychological safety mediates the positive relationship between narcissistic admiration and team performance.*

3.4.1.2 Narcissistic Admiration, Team Psychological Safety, and Individual Work Engagement (H1b).

Individual work engagement is defined as “a positive, fulfilling work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigour, dedication and absorption” (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2006, pp. 701–702).

I have already argued above and posited (H1a) that narcissistic admiration is positively related to team psychological safety. Is this belief shared by team members positively related to individual work engagement (H1b)?

In other words, do team members led by a narcissistic leader, high on narcissistic admiration, feel secure and free to speak up and take interpersonal risks, and thus are more engaged in their work as individuals? In all empirical studies outlined below, unless otherwise stated, work engagement is measured by the 17-item instrument developed by Schaufeli et al. (2006).

In a systematic review of empirical research on team psychological safety, Edmondson and Bransby (2023) identified a total of 36 studies investigating the relationship between leadership and psychological safety, at the team level of analysis. Qualitative research suggests that team psychological safety is closely related to *leader attitudes*, e.g. resolving conflict (O’Donovan & McAuliffe, 2020) and *leader behaviours*, e.g. openly discussing criticism (Coutifaris & Grant, 2021).

There is a vast body of empirical research and associated data investigating the relationship of psychological safety with engagement in the work domain. Even early work, building on the influential research of Kahn (1990), was concentrated on the direct relationship between psychological safety and engagement.

Kahn (1990, p. 694) defines engagement at work as “the harnessing of organization members' selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances”. Kahn suggested that psychological safety was a necessary condition for people to feel attached

and engaged in their work and thus invest time and energy into their roles and tasks (Christian et al., 2011).

To investigate the outcomes of team psychological safety, Frazier et al. (2017) have aggregated theoretical and empirical work and drawn on 136 independent samples in a comprehensive meta-analysis. They found that team psychological safety is also positively related (*r*= .32 to .44) to work engagement.

Results from two early qualitative, theory-generating studies exploring psychological safety and work engagement, with samples including 16 camp counsellors (study 1) and members of a US architecture firm (study 2), suggest "that people were personally engaging in situations characterized by more psychological safety than those in which they were personally disengaging" (Kahn, 1990, p. 708).

Building on the work of Kahn (1990), May et al. (2004) have also investigated the relationship of team psychological safety with work engagement. Their questionnaire-based field study, conducted at a large US insurance firm, included 213 participants comprising employees and managers (May et al., 2004). Psychological safety was measured by averaging items based on Kahn's (1990) work. These items assessed whether individuals felt comfortable to be themselves and express their opinions at work or whether there was a threatening environment at work. Engagement was measured by a 13-item scale, also developed by the researchers.

May et al. (2004) have also found that (team) psychological safety was positively linked with employees' investment in their work roles; results have shown that (team) psychological safety was positively related (*r*=.35*) with engagement.

In an empirical, questionnaire-based study of Malaysian hospital employees, Basit (2017) investigated the relationship of psychological safety with employee engagement. Participants included 337 public hospital nurses (97% female, 98% Malay, M_{age}=29.0, SD=4.51). Psychological safety was measured by the 5-item scale developed by Liang et al. (2012). Engagement was measured using the 18-item Job Engagement Scale (JES;

Rich et al., 2010). Results demonstrated that psychological safety is positively correlated (*r*=.54***) with job engagement.

Rabiul et al. (2021), building on the work of Basit (2017), further investigated the relationship of psychological safety with work engagement. Field study participants included 434 staff working in five-star hotels in Malaysia (59% female, 12.4% managerial, 1–7 years of experience). Engagement was measured with nine items adapted from Schaufeli et al. (2006). Results demonstrated that psychological safety is positively correlated (*r*=.32**) with individual work engagement.

I have argued above (H1a) that narcissistic admiration is positively related to team psychological safety. I have also presented empirical evidence to propose that team psychological safety is, in turn, positively related to individual work engagement.

There is an overlap between characteristics exhibited by leaders high on narcissistic admiration (dominance, authority, and competence) and characteristics of the 'prototypical' leader. As these leaders are perceived to be 'leader like', this being enhanced by their confident presence, reassuring voice, and stable self-esteem, it is likely that their team members feel secure, accepted, and protected, when coping with internal threats (e.g. threat of being rejected by other team members for deviant opinions or behaviours) and external threats (e.g. when their employment, welfare/wellbeing are being jeopardized by the organization). Consequently, as they feel more psychologically safe and so have no reason to be looking over their shoulders or be vigilant for threats from within the team, they can conserve and direct, rather than waste, precious cognitive resources on their work thus becoming more engaged, dedicated and happily engrossed.

In sum, I hypothesize that:

H1b *Team psychological safety mediates the positive relationship between narcissistic admiration and individual work engagement.*

3.4.1.3 Narcissistic Admiration, Climate for Work Group Innovation and Team Performance (H1c)

It is important at this point to reinforce clarity for the reader regarding key concepts associated with innovation and in particular 'climate', 'proximal work group', 'innovation', and 'climate for work group innovation'.

Climate is defined, as "shared perceptions of organizational policies, practices and procedures" (Anderson & West, 1998, p. 236). Proximal work group is defined as "either the permanent or semi-permanent team to which individuals are assigned, whom they identify with, and whom they interact with regularly in order to perform work-related tasks" (Anderson & West, 1998, p. 236).

Schneider and Reichers (1983) assert that it is meaningless to apply the concept of climate without a particular referent (e.g. climate for change, climate for quality). I have opted to use innovation as the climate referent, which is defined as: "[…] the intentional introduction and application […] of ideas, processes, products or procedures [...] to significantly benefit role performance, the group, the organization or the wider society" (Anderson & West, 1998, p. 239).

Consequently, climate for work group innovation is a series of shared processes and practices, within a proximal team that fosters, supports (or curtails) innovation.

I have also elected to focus on the four-factor climate construct (dimensions include vision, participative safety, task orientation, and support for innovation) suggested by Anderson and West (1998); this construct is appropriately measured at the team level as innovation is usually originated and developed by a team and eventually adopted by the organization (Anderson & West, 1998).

Vision is manifested by the visionary nature of innovation and the clarity, sharedness, and attainability of agreed objectives (Anderson & West, 1998). *Participative safety* is manifested by the attitude that we are in it together and the notion that team members feel understood, are accepted by other members, and are kept informed about work-related issues, through team participation and information sharing (Anderson & West, 1998). *Task*

orientation is manifested by constructive controversy, where team members critically evaluate performance and appraise potential weaknesses to achieve the best possible outcome and build on each other's ideas, creating a climate for excellence (Anderson & West, 1998). *Support for innovation* is manifested by the two elements essential in the implementation of innovation, namely articulated support (promoting and articulating the need to find fresh ways of looking at problems and exploiting opportunities) and enacted support (investing time and resources to develop and implement new ideas) (Anderson & West, 1998).

Are leaders, high on narcissistic admiration, capable of fostering a (team) climate conducive to work group innovation?

To answer this question, I will provide, in the following sections, empirical evidence illustrating (a) the relationship (assumed positive) of narcissistic admiration and innovation, and, whenever possible, (b) the distinct relationship (assumed positive) of narcissistic admiration with each factor of climate, defined above, namely vision, participative safety, task orientation, and support for innovation.

There is no empirical evidence, to my knowledge, which explores the specific relationship between narcissistic admiration and the four factors of innovation.

Devoid of relevant empirical evidence, I will provide theoretical arguments that link narcissistic admiration and climate for work group innovation (for which I will use henceforth 'climate', for brevity).

Although not directly relevant, but offered as a first indication, in a meta-analysis on the relationship of (CEO) narcissism with innovation, Kraft (2022) found that (CEO) narcissism is positively related (r=.09***) to innovation. Cragun et al. (2020) have shown, in a meta-analysis that CEO narcissism is positively related (mean corrected correlation ρ=.14**), with innovation.

Kashmiri et al. (2017) have shown, in a longitudinal analysis, that CEO narcissism is positively related to (the rate of) new product introductions (r=.10***) and the proportion of radical innovation in the firm's new product portfolio (r=.16***). Zhang et al. (2021) have

shown that CEO narcissism is positively correlated (*r*=.06**) with innovation performance (number of patent applications). Rovelli et al. (2023) have shown that CEO narcissism is positively correlated with innovation opportunity exploitation (all firms: *r*=.13; family firms: *r*=.15).

With little available evidence and reverting to narcissistic admiration and its relationship with climate, it is now essential to closely examine the behavioural manifestations of narcissistic admiration and derive theoretical arguments supporting the notion that these leaders truly foster a climate conducive to innovation.

Maccoby (2004), describing the 'incredible pros' of narcissistic leaders, argues that these leaders are daring innovators, creative strategists, and gifted visionaries who see the big picture, and are bold enough to take risks and drive massive transformations.

To start with, I argue that these leaders seem to have very strong motives to foster a team climate conducive to innovation. As they strive for uniqueness and aim to fulfil their grandiose fantasies (Back et al., 2013) and seek status via prestige-based strategies (Sedikides, 2021), they are bound to use attractive rhetoric (Maccoby, 2004) to provide clarity for and promote innovation; their confidence, competence and assured demeanour will convince team members of the attainability of the innovation deliverables and objectives. I argue that the above behavioural manifestations of narcissistic admiration, are positively related to climate (vision).

Leaders high on narcissistic admiration, are open to novelty (Back, 2018), want to be around people (thus exhibiting a lower preference for solitude), are engaged in conversations (Back, 2018) where information is shared and participation is encouraged, and support processes where novel ideas are exchanged and interactions stimulate creativity. In sum, I argue that manifestations of narcissistic admiration, outlined above, are positively related to climate (participative safety).

Although these leaders, like all narcissists, are inclined to be overinvolved and notoriously poor managers (Rosenthal, 2014), they are driven to create a climate of excellence that will help them achieve uniqueness (Back et al., 2013), nurture a grandiose self, and enhance

social potency (Back, 2018). As they do not want to be directly bothered with operational minutiae, they are likely to involve others in monitoring progress/results and instigating changes or improvements during innovation implementation. In sum, I argue that these behavioural expressions are positively related to the task orientation dimension of climate. Innovation (and associated success and societal impact) serves as the ideal 'stage to shine', as it provides an effective platform for narcissistic leaders, not only to achieve their grandiose fantasies (Back, 2018), but also to ensure and perpetuate an attractive self-presentation (Nevicka, De Hoogh et al., 2011) and secure a constant supply of social admiration and adulation. Moreover, as narcissistic admiration is positively related to benign envy (Back, 2018), this perpetually drives these leaders to outperform and outmanoeuvre the competition. Thus, I argue that they are bound to provide articulated support to innovation (relentlessly promoting innovation using aggressive and attractive rhetoric), and perpetually push for novel ideas, as they are driven by stimulation (Back, 2018) and thrill seeking, which are both offered by innovation. Their popularity, 'leader like' image coupled with their charmingness (Back, 2018) manifested as expressive gestures, self-assured voice, and dominant posture, are bound to convince innovation stakeholders to invest time and resources (supported innovation) in driving and harvesting innovation. Therefore, I argue that narcissistic admiration is also positively related to climate (support for innovation).

The above theoretical arguments, aided by the somewhat scarce and indirect empirical evidence in relation to CEO narcissism and innovation, provide the rationale on why leaders with high levels of narcissistic admiration can instil an innovative climate in their teams.

Do teams, led by these leaders, high on narcissistic admiration, who foster and support an innovation climate, perform better?

Growing research has linked work group innovation (interchangeably referred to as team climate for innovation) with team performance outcomes. Climate for work group innovation was measured, for mentioned empirical studies, by the team climate for innovation inventory (TCI; Anderson & West, 1998), unless otherwise specified.

A meta-analysis by Tumasjan et al. (2012) yielded 35 independent studies, with a total of 106 correlations. The analysis found that all dimensions of team climate for innovation (i.e. vision, participative safety, task orientation, and support for innovation) were all positively related (*r*=.13 to .46) to team performance.

In an empirical study investigating the relationship of team climate for innovation with team outcomes (specifically production creativity, quantity, and quality), with a sample including 124 employees in 17 teams in Sweden, Agrell and Gustafson (1994) demonstrated that team climate for innovation is positively related (*r*=.50* for creativity, *r*=.25 for quantity and *r*=.22 for quality) to group production performance.

Similarly, Bain et al. (2001), investigating the relationship of team climate for innovation with team outcomes, with a sample including 193 scientists and technologists from 38 teams in Australia, have shown that factors of team climate for innovation are positively related (*r*=.58** for participative safety, *r*=.58** for support for innovation and *r*=.40* for task orientation) to team performance.

Pirola-Merlo et al. (2002) investigating the relationship of team climate for innovation with team outcomes, with a sample including 313 R&D professionals in 54 teams in Australia, have shown that factors of team climate for innovation are positively related (*r*=.54** for vision; *r*=.51** for participative safety; *r*=.63** for support for innovation) to team effectiveness.

Pirola-Merlo (2010) investigating the relationship of team climate for innovation with team outcomes, with a sample including 255 employees in 33 R&D teams in Australia, also found a positive relationship of team climate for innovation (*r*=.49** for participative safety; *r*=.52** for task orientation; *r*=.51** for support for innovation) and team project performance.

Adopting a longitudinal design, Ceschi et al. (2014), working with a sample including 183 business professionals in 50 teams in Italy, found a positive relationship (*r*=.30*) of team innovation climate with the decision-making performance of teams.

Similarly, Sun et al. (2014), working with a sample including 184 managers from various industries in China, found a strong positive relationship (*r*=.85**) between team innovation climate and team performance.

I thus propose, from the empirical evidence assembled and presented above, that climate for work group innovation is positively related to team performance.

As previously argued, innovation offers a unique thrill-seeking opportunity for leaders, high on narcissistic admiration, as it offers a platform for the much-needed self-presentation and self-enhancement, provides a perpetual source of social adulation, and helps accumulate social potency. Devoid of relevant empirical evidence, I have provided theoretical arguments that propose a positive narcissistic admiration/climate link. I have also provided specific empirical evidence confirming a positive climate/team performance association. Summarizing, teams working for leaders high on narcissistic admiration enjoy stronger climates for work group innovation, which in turn, helps teams to perform better.

In sum, I hypothesize that:

H1c *Climate for work group innovation mediates the positive relationship between narcissistic admiration and team performance.*

3.4.1.4 Narcissistic Admiration, Climate for Work Group Innovation, and Individual Work Engagement (H1d)

I have already discussed and provided empirical evidence supporting the proposition that narcissistic admiration is positively related to team climate for innovation. Do individual team members, led by individuals high on narcissistic admiration, enjoy a strong team climate for innovation, and are thus more engaged in their work?

There is no relevant direct empirical evidence on the relationship between climate for work group innovation and work engagement. Deprived of any empirical data, I can only theorize that a strong climate for innovation – where a vision for innovation is well articulated, a strong task orientation exists that promotes and ensures excellence, and innovation is not

simply articulated but reinforced and supported with dedicated resources – is conducive to individual work engagement.

As discussed in previous sections, leaders high on narcissistic admiration are likely to create and foster a strong climate for innovation. Does this strong climate make team members more engaged? Demircioglu (2023), in an empirical study with 98 federal agencies in Australia and a total of 98,943 participating employees, has tested the effects of innovation climate on affective commitment (which is akin to the 'dedication' factor in work engagement).

A strong innovation climate makes the work more interesting, provides opportunities for employees to have a new and considerable impact on the organization and encourages employees to become more engaged with their work (Demircioglu, 2023). The empirical results demonstrate that innovation climate is positively related to affective commitment (*r*=.57***).

When leaders encourage and accept new ideas generated by team members, enable sharing and free exchange of ideas, and provide enacted support to innovation, employees tend to report higher job satisfaction, higher commitment, and higher levels of engagement. Thus, a strong climate for innovation can increase employee job satisfaction, commitment, and engagement (Demircioglu, 2023).

In sum, I hypothesize that:

H1d *Climate for work group innovation mediates the positive relationship between narcissistic admiration and individual work engagement.*

3.4.1.5 Narcissistic Admiration, Trust in the Leader, and Team Performance (H1e)

In the last 25 years, trust has emerged as a core concept in organizational psychology and organizational behaviour and a vast body of research has been amassed, resulting in hundreds of empirical studies, meta-analyses, literature reviews, and international conferences (Dirks & De Jong, 2022).

“Trust is essential for initiating, maintaining, repairing, and elevating social relationships at work and permeates the full range of workplace relationships, including those between leaders/followers” (Dirks & De Jong, 2022, p. 248).

Trust is critical for leadership effectiveness and organizational success; the degree to which followers trust the leader is a key component in the leader ability to be effective in the organizational context (Burke et al., 2007).

The field of organizational trust research took off a quarter of a century ago, with several influential pieces (Mayer et al., 1995; McAllister, 1995; Kramer & Tyler, 1996; Rousseau et al., 1998). I have selected from the multitude of definitions available, the one suggested by McAllister (1995).

Trust is distinguished in two principal forms namely (1) cognition-based trust, and (2) affect-based trust (McAllister, 1995). Cognition-based trust is shaped by beliefs and perceptions that individuals (e.g. peers, leaders) are reliable and dependable. Affect-based trust is about respect among individuals and confidence that these individuals genuinely care about the needs of others (McAllister, 1995).

For the purposes of this research, I view trust (in the leader) as a specific attitude of team members towards their leader; moreover, I examine trust as a mediator of the (assumed positive) relationship between narcissistic admiration and team performance (H1e) and, in the next section, between narcissistic admiration and work engagement (H1f).

I will refer to leaders as ‘trustees’ – the leadership referent (Burke et al., 2007) – and followers as ‘trustors’ (Dirks & De Jong, 2022) – the trust target (Burke et al., 2007). It is essential to clarify that trust is not the same as trustworthiness or distrust (Lewicki et al., 1998).

Mayer et al. (1995) conceptualized trust as a multidimensional construct and have interchangeably used the term ‘trustworthiness’. This construct comprises of three dimensions namely (a) ability (trustee is perceived to have the skills or characteristics to perform well in a specific domain), (b) benevolence (trustee is believed to want to do good

to the trustor aside from egocentric motives), and (c) integrity (trustee is perceived to adhere to a set of principles that the trustor finds acceptable) (Dirks & De Jong, 2022).

To avoid ambiguity and confusion between the terms trust and trustworthiness, I have adopted, for this work, the approach suggested by McAllister (1995) that conceptualizes trust in its cognition-based and affect-based components, rather than trustworthiness, often treated in research as an antecedent of trust (Burke et al., 2007).

Trust, in empirical studies mentioned below, is measured by the 11-item instrument by McAllister (1995), unless otherwise stated. Firstly, I explore the empirical evidence on the relationship of narcissistic admiration and trust in the leader.

Legood et al. (2021), in a meta-analysis of empirical results, including more than 230 studies and nearly 570,000 participants, have shown that transformational (rather than transactional) leadership exhibited a positive relationship with overall trust (59 studies and 279,182 participants), cognitive (11 studies and 2,857 participants) and affective trust (14 studies and 3,583 participants) with sample weighted correlations of ρ=.64, .61 and .55 respectively. This is quite relevant as leader narcissists, high on narcissistic admiration, are strong transformational leaders; they demonstrate the vision and charisma to inspire, engage, and drive people to action, although most often their goals are self-serving and lacking in integrity (O'Reilly & Chatman, 2020).

In an empirical study, Szymczak et al. (2022), have investigated the relationship between narcissistic personality, depicted by the Trifurcated Model of Narcissism (TriMN; Crowe et al., 2019; Miller et al., 2016; Weiss et al., 2019, Miller et al., 2021), which includes narcissistic admiration, narcissistic rivalry and vulnerable narcissism, and interpersonal trust (the social belief that human nature is good). It should be clarified at this point that interpersonal trust (leaders trusting others), examined in Szymczak et al. (2022), is not the same as trust in the leader (the leader being trusted by individual team members) currently investigated in my model; nevertheless, this finding is reported as interpersonal trust can invoke trust in the leader. Narcissism was measured by the Polish adaptation of the 60-item Narcissism Inventory Short Form (FFNI-SF; Rogoza et al., 2021). Interpersonal trust

(leaders trusting others) was measured by the Polish adaptation (Kwiatkowska et al., 2019) of the 6- item General Trust Scale (GTS; Yamagishi & Yamagishi, 1994). Empirical data has shown that agentic extraversion was positively related (*r*=.09) to interpersonal trust, only after controlling the two remaining aspects of narcissism (Szymczak et al., 2022); this is relevant in the sense that narcissistic admiration is depicted on the TriMN as the 'agentic extraversion' (see Figure 3-1). Interpersonal trust is positively related to agentic extraversion (i.e. narcissistic admiration), which is considered as the adaptive aspect of narcissism.

Although research on trust is vast, it can be observed that there is limited empirical evidence on the specific relationship between narcissism, as depicted by the TriMN, and trust, as measured by its cognitive and affective components (McAllister, 1995). Based on the meta-analyses presented above and empirical evidence presented in previous sections, aided by the theoretical arguments on the antecedents of trust (i.e. trustworthiness), I posit that when narcissistic admiration is elevated, then trust in a confident and seemingly competent leader will increase too. I will now investigate the relationship of trust in the leader with team performance – in other words, do followers, trusting their leader, achieve higher levels of team performance?

Although sports teams are somewhat different than working teams, some useful inferences can be made. Dirks & Ferrin (2000) have empirically examined the relationship between trust in the leader (i.e. the coach in this context) and future team performance in the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). The sample included 31 teams, with 355 individuals completing surveys. Trust in the leader (coach) was measured using an adapted, 9-item (dropping items not applicable for this context and changing the referent 'leader' to 'coach'), cognitive/affective trust measure (McAllister,1995). Empirical data by Dirks and Ferrin (2000), demonstrated that trust in the leader (coach) is positively related (*r*=.57**) to team performance.

In another empirical study, Wei and Long (2008) have examined the relationship between trust in the leader and team performance utilising a sample comprising 75 work teams

employed in various departments in China and a total of 552 participants (77.9% male, M_{age}=31.6, *SD*=7.54). Trust in the leader was measured by a nine-item abbreviated scale from McAllister (1995) consisting of four items for cognition-based trust and five items for affect-based trust. Empirical results demonstrated that cognitive-based and affect-based trust are positively related (*r*=.42** and *r*=.46**, respectively) to team performance.

In another empirical study Schaubroeck et al. (2011) also investigated the relationship of cognitive-based and affect-based trust on team performance. The sample included 89 financial services teams (including relationship managers, loan officers, bank tellers, etc.) from Hong Kong banking branches (73% female) and 102 teams from US. banking branches (72% female). The study included a total of 999 participants. Overall, team size ranged from four to seven members (M = 5.2, SD = 0.56). The sample had a mean age and organization tenure of 32.5 years (SD = 5.31) and 5.3 years (SD = 2.8), respectively (Schaubroeck et al., 2011). Trust in the leader was measured by a six-item abbreviated scale from McAllister (1995), with three items for cognition-based trust and three items for affect-based trust. Empirical results demonstrated that cognitive-based and affect-based trust are positively related (*r*=.40** and *r*=.44**, respectively) to team performance (Schaubroeck et al., 2011).

In a meta-analysis comprising 13 studies and 1,004 participants, investigating the relationship between trust in the leader and team performance, De Jong et al. (2016) have shown that trust in the leader, is positively related (mean true score correlation ρ=.41) to team performance.

In another meta-analysis of empirical results, including 14 studies and 1,397 participants, on the relationship between cognitive-based and affect-based trust in the leader and various organizational outcomes, Legood et al. (2023) have shown that cognitive-based and affect-based trust in the leader are positively related (mean true score correlation ρ=.52 and ρ=.41, respectively) to team performance.

Leaders, high on narcissistic admiration, can win the ‘hearts and minds’ of their followers. Thus, I can safely reconfirm that, as discussed in previous sections, these leaders are

trusted by their followers. In addition, I have also presented ample empirical evidence to support a positive relationship of trust in the leader with team performance. In other words, teams in which members trust their leaders, perform better.

In sum, I hypothesize that:

H1e *Trust in the leader mediates the positive relationship between narcissistic admiration and team performance.*

3.4.1.6 Narcissistic Admiration, Trust in the Leader, and Individual Work Engagement (H1f)

I have already provided, in previous sections, empirical evidence and theoretical argument that support the proposition that narcissistic admiration is positively related to trust in the leader. Are followers who trust these narcissistic leaders more engaged in their work? There are several relevant empirical studies in the work domain that support that narcissistic admiration is positively related to work engagement.

Chughtai and Buckley (2011) have empirically investigated, in a cross-sectional survey study, the relationship of trust in the leader (using the referent 'supervisor') with employee work engagement. Participants (62% male; 60% Irish nationals; 64% Masters/PhD holders) included 168 research scientists in a leading university in Ireland. Trust in supervisor was measured by the 16-item Mishra and Mishra (1994) scale. Empirical evidence has shown that trust in the supervisor is positively related (r=.47**) to employee work engagement.

Hassan and Ahamed (2011) have also investigated in an empirical study the relationship of trust in the leader (referent 'supervisor') with employee work engagement. Participants included 395 bank employees (47% executives) in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Trust in the leader was measured by the International Trust Scale (ITS; McKnight et al., 2002). Empirical evidence has shown that trust in the supervisor is positively related (r=.32) to employee work engagement (Hassan and Ahamed, 2011).

Li et al. (2020) have also investigated, in an empirical study, the relationship of trust in the leader and employee work engagement; in this study, the sample included 281 participants (73% male, 47.6% with 1–5 years of experience). Trust in the leader was measured by a

seven-item trust scale (Robinson & Rousseau, 1994). Empirical evidence has shown that trust in the leader is positively related (*r*=.52**) to employee work engagement.

Finally, Christian et al. (2011), building on the work of Kahn (1992), have also argued that when employees have trust in their leaders, they feel a sense of security and thus are more willing to invest themselves in their work; consequently, this enhances engagement.

In sum, I hypothesize that:

H1f *Trust in the leader mediates the positive relationship between narcissistic admiration and individual work engagement.*

3.4.2 Predictor: Narcissistic Rivalry (H2a to H2f)

3.4.2.1 Narcissistic Rivalry, Team Psychological Safety and Team Performance (H2a)

The overarching goal of narcissistic rivalry is to maintain a grandiose self and ultimately prevent social failure, through cognitive, affective-motivational, and behavioural processes, namely striving for supremacy, devaluation of others, and aggressiveness (Back et al., 2013).

The antagonistic and conflict-prone narcissistic rivalry is positively associated with power-dominance, low agreeableness, aggressiveness, malicious envy, low empathy, and low trust (Rogoza, Wyszyńska, et al., 2016; Rogoza, Zemojtel-Piotrowska, et al., 2016). Narcissistic rivalry is the strongest negative predictor of emotional contagion and cognitive empathy, and the strongest positive predictor of emotional disconnection (Rogoza, Kwiatkowska, et al., 2018; Rogoza, Zemojtel-Piotrowska et al., 2016). Narcissistic rivalry predicts less helping behaviour (Chen et al., 2019) and is associated with giving and receiving less respect in relationships.

Do these attributes, which make up narcissistic rivalry, make followers feel less psychologically safe in interacting with these leaders within a team environment? In other words, are followers led by leaders, high on narcissistic rivalry, overly concerned about interpersonal risk-taking as they perceive they cannot speak up without being embarrassed, rejected, or punished (Edmondson, 1999)?

Lange et al. (2016), over five empirical studies (*N*=1,225), found that leaders, high on narcissistic rivalry, are fearful of failure (Back, 2018) and will tend to devalue followers when they speak up, denigrate, and negate followers when errors occur, expose followers when interpersonal risks are taken, reject divergent ideas and 'pull members down' when they express their opinions. These behaviours, exhibited by leaders, high on narcissistic rivalry, are bound to adversely affect team psychological safety.

In a multi-wave field study with 268 employees and their leaders, Helfrich and Dietl (2019) found that narcissistic rivalry (follower-rated) is negatively related (*r*=−.18**) with follower psychological safety. In addition, it was found that narcissistic rivalry was negatively related (*r*=−.03) to employee voice, a self-determined behaviour (Helfrich & Dietl, 2019) that enables team psychological safety via constructive suggestions to change, speaking up and encouraging others to get involved in issues affecting their work group (LePine & Van Dyne, 1998).

Moreover, other studies investigating related constructs such as self-serving leader behaviours (for example, placing their interests above those of their team) have shown that these behaviours are negatively related (*r*=−.28**) to team psychological safety, as team members perceive the leader as a 'competitor' and a 'taker' of total available resources (Mao et al., 2019).

This is quite relevant as leaders, high on narcissistic rivalry, habitually exhibit self-serving behaviours and place their needs and interests above those of their teams (and organizations). As narcissistic rivalry captures elements of self-importance, e.g. supremacy, devaluing, and aggressiveness (Back et al., 2013), these power-driven (Rogoza, Zemojtel-Piotrowska, et al., 2016), entitled and exploitative (Miller et al., 2021) leaders are bound to exhibit antagonistic behaviours and claim, grab, and exploit resources for their own benefit, often creating hostility and social conflict (Back et al., 2013), which eventually dissolves relationships (Back, 2018).

Gauglitz et al. (2022), in two studies investigating narcissistic rivalry and abusive supervision, found that rivalry was positively related (*r*=.40***) to abusive supervision

(intentions) in both studies; moreover, leaders, high on narcissistic rivalry, were particularly prone to showing abusive supervision when dealing with defiant followers. This is relevant for the arguments presented as I can conclude that the narcissistic rivalry/team psychological safety link is mediated by abusive supervision (intentions).

Finally, Helfrich and Dietl (2019) also found that narcissistic rivalry (follower-rated) is negatively related to employee empowerment (r=−.15*), an important prerequisite of team performance.

In addition to the above empirical evidence, I theorize that these leaders, high on narcissistic rivalry, will rarely provide the opportunity for followers to freely interact, express their ideas, comments or grievances; these lonely individuals, exhibiting a preference for solitude (Back, 2018), will unlikely opt for or encourage close working relationships with followers or among followers, where the free flow of information, ideas and two-way feedback is the norm.

Each divergent idea or different opinion (from followers) is likely to be interpreted as an ego threat to the leader with a low and fragile sense of self-worth (Back, 2018). As leaders, high on narcissistic rivalry, are disagreeable (Back, 2018), unforgiving, neurotic, and not emotionally robust (Rogoza, Wyszyńska, et al., 2016; Rogoza, Zemojtel-Piotrowska, et al., 2016), I infer that this ‘unforgivable’ deviation, manifested as follower free expression, will not be tolerated, and will be met with annoyed and hostile behaviour (Back, 2018). Feedback sharing (leader openly discussing criticisms and suggestions from followers), which is positively associated with psychological safety (Coutifaris & Grant, 2021), will be curtailed as it is considered an ‘anathema’ by these insecure leaders.

I have so far presented relevant empirical evidence and provided theoretical arguments to support the notion that narcissistic rivalry, the maladaptive dimension of grandiose narcissism, is negatively related to team psychological safety. I have also previously provided evidence to support the team psychological safety/team performance link (Choo et al., Edmondson, 1999; 2007; Frazier et al., 2017; Fyhn et al., 2022).

Consequently, why do leaders, high on narcistic rivalry, destroy team psychological safety? And why do teams with a weakened sense of psychological safety perform less well? Leaders, high on narcissistic rivalry, are insecure neurotics who are constantly tormented by fear of failure and social disapproval (Back et al., 2013; Back, 2018). To protect poor self-esteem and shield an insecure ego from perceived threats, these leaders strive to appear superior; to achieve this they use dominance-based strategies and devalue employees, negate novel ideas, curtail experimentation, suppress employee voice, and ultimately destroy employee engagement. Psychological safety is replaced by fear and insecurity, which eventually dissolves working relationships and destroys team performance.

In sum, I hypothesize that:

H2a *Team psychological safety mediates the negative relationship between narcissistic rivalry and team performance.*

3.4.2.2 Narcissistic Rivalry, Team Psychological Safety, and Individual Work Engagement (H2b)

Narcissistic rivalry was found to be negatively related to team psychological safety and to adversely affect employee voice and employee empowerment (Helfrich & Dietl, 2019). Similarly, narcissistic rivalry, often manifested as self-serving leader behaviours (Mao et al., 2019), was found to be negatively related to team psychological safety. Narcissistic rivalry was also found to be (positively) related to malicious envy (Lange et al., 2016) and abusive supervision (Gauglitz et al., 2022), the combined effect destroying the feeling of being interpersonally safe in the team.

Saks (2006) has suggested that team psychological safety is an antecedent of work engagement – a necessary condition for people to feel attached and engaged in their work and thus invest time and energy into their roles and tasks (Christian et al., 2011). There is ample empirical data to support the proposition that team psychological safe is positively related to work engagement (May et al., 2004; Frazier et al., 2017; Basit, 2017).

Narcissistic rivalry will tend to suppress employee voice (Helfrich & Dietl, 2019) and follower self-determination in general, which are perceived as threats to a fragile self-esteem, triggering antagonistic self-defensive reactions and behaviours that destroy team psychological safety. Employee voice is also perceived as a sign of social disapproval, an anathema for leaders, high on narcissistic rivalry. Narcissistic rivalry is also likely to destroy employee empowerment (Helfrich & Dietl, 2019) as this 'privilege' is perceived as a direct threat to their efforts to achieve supremacy. Their dark, neurotic, and antagonistic nature renders them maliciously envious towards followers (Lange et al., 2016). They are anger prone, aggressive, callous, and abusive leaders (Gauglitz et al., 2022), likely to strike back when their grandiosity or superiority is threatened (Back, 2018).

In sum, I hypothesize that:

H2b *Team psychological safety mediates the negative relationship between narcissistic rivalry and individual work engagement.*

3.4.2.3 Narcissistic Rivalry, Climate for Work Group Innovation, and Team Performance (H2c)

I have provided in previous sections the empirical evidence and theoretical arguments supporting the proposed positive relationship between narcissistic admiration and climate for work group innovation. I propose that the directionality of the relationship of narcissistic rivalry with climate for work group innovation is different. As relevant empirical evidence is missing, I will draw on other areas to show that, in contrast with narcissistic admiration (which supports climate for work group innovation), narcissistic rivalry undermines climate for work group innovation.

In subsequent sections, I provide theoretical arguments and review empirical evidence on the proposed negative association of narcissistic rivalry with every dimension of climate for work group innovation – vision, participative safety, task orientation, and support for innovation.

I firstly offer theoretical arguments that support the proposed negative relationship of narcissistic rivalry with each climate dimension and ultimately climate for work group innovation.

Vision is manifested by the visionary nature of innovation and the clarity, sharedness, and attainability of agreed objectives (Anderson & West, 1998). It is important to note that innovation is a process riddled with interpersonal and organizational risk, is associated with an elevated chance of failure, and represents major threats to the credibility and reliability of the leader.

The aim of narcissistic rivalry is to prevent social failure (Back et al., 2013). Thus, it is likely that these neurotic (Rogoza, Zemojtel-Piotrowska et al., 2016) and self-protective (Leckelt et al., 2015) leaders will avoid articulating a vision for innovation as this represents an immense personal risk for failure, ridicule, and social rejection. At best, as narcissistic rivalry is positively associated with impulsivity (Rogoza, Zemojtel-Piotrowska et al., 2016) these leaders may tend, if left with no other choice, to articulate megalomaniac but obscure 'spur of the moment' visions; this is likely to blur communication, provide conflicting messages, frustrate followers, and confuse priorities and objectives. Even if they do impulsively articulate a vision, these interpersonally cold leaders, showing a preference for solitude rather than togetherness (Back, 2018), will be reluctant to share information (which constitutes, in their minds, yielding power to others), or to create mechanisms enabling information exchange – essential in innovation; ultimately, they are rendered incapable of instilling 'sharedness' in the minds and hearts of their followers.

Participative safety is manifested by 'togetherness' and exemplified by the notion that team members feel understood, accepted, safe, and abreast of work-related issues, through information sharing and team participation (Anderson & West, 1998).

It is highly unlikely that followers, led by these leaders, will ever feel understood, as narcissistic rivalry is associated with low cognitive empathy. These leaders are not only emotionally disconnected (Rogoza, Zemojtel-Piotrowska et al., 2016) but also incapable of empathizing with their followers; thus, they are reluctant or incompetent to provide clarity

and stability, which are essential for fostering a team climate for innovation. As narcissistic rivalry is the strongest negative predictor of emotional contagion (Rogoza, Zemojtel-Piotrowska et al., 2016), these leaders, devoid of any restraints and self-control (Rogoza, Zemojtel-Piotrowska et al., 2016), are likely to spread panic and instil insecurity and doubt to followers when faced with major challenges or unforeseen difficulties during innovation execution, rather than stability and a sense of safety. It is also unlikely that followers, led by these leaders, will ever feel accepted and safe in their teams as narcissistic rivalry is associated with devaluing others (Rogoza, Zemojtel-Piotrowska et al., 2016) and a lack of forgiveness (Back, 2018). Being anger prone, these self-defensive and antagonistic leaders (Back, 2018) are likely to aggressively respond to every 'bad' idea, experimentation error or follower mistake, naturally inherent in the innovation realm, and resort to diminishing comments, accompanied by malevolent retributions (Rogoza, Kwiatkowska, et al., 2018) and outbursts of rage (Back, 2018).

These leaders are power dominant (Rogoza et al., 2018) and aggressively protect a fragile ego (Rogoza, Zemojtel-Piotrowska et al., 2016). For them, information is power; thus, sharing information with followers is perceived by these insecure leaders as a real threat to their ego, a risky dissemination of power to followers and a barrier to achieving their own supremacy. Finally, the notions of team interaction and participation, critical for innovation, are further nullified by their lower need for intimacy (Chatterjee, 2009), interpersonal coldness and preference for solitude.

Task orientation is manifested by "a shared concern with excellence of quality of task performance in relation to shared vision or outcomes, characterized by evaluations, modifications, control systems and critical appraisals" (Anderson & West, 1998, p. 240) with emphases on accountability, reflection on performance, intra-team advice, feedback and cooperation, clear outcome criteria, exploration of opposing opinions, and constructive controversy (Anderson & West, 1998).

I have previously argued that these leaders are likely to curtail intra-team advice, devalue feedback from trusted advisors, reject opposing opinions, pose significant barriers to

cooperation, avoid setting clear outcome criteria, and ‘strike’ back even at well-intended, constructive feedback.

Do these leaders, high on narcissistic rivalry, support or undermine an environment of excellence compatible with shared outcomes? Even articulating a vision and being personally accountable for its realization is frowned upon by these neurotic leaders with a ‘shaky’ self (Back, 2018), as it accentuates their fears and risks of failure and ridicule. Strong task orientation and productive interpersonal relationships, essential for effectiveness of (innovation) execution, are likely to lie beyond these leaders, as rivalry has been positively correlated with impulsivity, low conscientiousness, disagreeableness, hostility, and social conflict (Back, 2018).

Critical evaluation aimed at appraising weaknesses and identifying opportunities for improvement is again laden with risks of ‘exposing’ their own incompetence. When criticized, these maliciously envious leaders become defensive, particularly when the perceived social outcomes do not fit the desired social outcomes (Back, 2018). With their grandiosity and superiority threatened, they ‘strike back’ with devaluing, annoying, hostile, and socially insensitive behaviours. Not only they are rarely accountable in failure, which is often the outcome, as they are notoriously poor, over-involved, and abusive managers (Rosenthal, 2014), but they tend to look for and chase ‘ghost enemies’ (Maccoby, 2004). Subsequently, they artfully deflect blame, publicly ridicule followers (Schyns & Schilling, 2013), without ever apologizing for their inadequacies (Back, 2018) or being aware of their destructive impact on followers (Lubit, 2002).

Finally, support for innovation (Anderson & West, 1998) is exhibited as articulated support (often found in executive messaging and strategy statements, which are usually orally conveyed, or spread by word of mouth) and enacted support (a necessary condition for group innovation whereby active support and resources are provided for innovation). Leaders, high on narcissistic rivalry, are constantly tormented by fear of failure (Back, 2018). To shield poor self-esteem and prevent social exposure, these leaders are unlikely to articulate, promote or foster innovation, as innovation requires close interactions,

generates expectations and is inherent with risk. Thus, I propose that narcissistic rivalry is negatively related to articulated support for innovation. With the same line of reasoning, these leaders are highly unlikely to devote time and provide resources to support innovation during implementation. Similarly, I propose that narcissistic rivalry is also negatively related to enacted support for innovation.

Although there is scarce direct empirical evidence on the relationship between narcissistic rivalry and climate for work group innovation, I will, in addition to theoretical arguments provided in previous sections, provide some indirect evidence that further reinforce my proposition that narcissistic rivalry is negatively related to climate for work group innovation. In an empirical study with 296 participants from six high-tech enterprises in China, Long et al. (2023) found that narcissistic rivalry is positively related to knowledge hiding. This is important as the innovation process depends not only on the generation of ideas or new knowledge, but also on the willingness of leaders, who serve as important innovation contributors, to offer, share, disseminate and build on hidden or unexplored ideas and encourage followers to unveil and share ideas with the other team members. This accords with the exploitative (Miller et al., 2021), antagonistic, and failure-fearing (Back, 2018) nature of narcissistic rivalry striving for supremacy (Back, 2018), which drives these leaders to extract (rather than offer, share or stimulate), exploit, and harvest new ideas for their own self-interest and achieve status through dominance-based strategies, including fear and intimidation (Sedikides, 2021). This is also relevant as it shows that narcissistic rivalry, instead of inspiring, stimulating, and encouraging followers to generate and reveal knowledge leading to new ideas, provides a strong incentive to hide rather than share and build on knowledge.

In exploring the relationship between narcissistic rivalry and personality traits, Rogoza, Zemojtel-Piotrowska, et al. (2016) found, using a sample of 719 adults completing surveys on an online platform, that narcissistic rivalry is negatively related (r=−.36**) with agreeableness, negatively related (r=−.19**) with conscientiousness, and negatively related (r=−.30**) with emotional stability.

This is quite relevant for my hypothesis, given that leader agreeableness is essential in creating a team climate that is conducive to innovation as it renders the leader more open, more accepting, and more tolerant for new ideas and concepts generated by followers. Leader conscientiousness is also essential in fostering a team climate that is conducive to innovation as it fosters time sensitivity and promotes operational discipline and effective project management during the implementation phase of innovation. Finally, leader emotional stability is essential in fostering a team climate that is conducive to innovation as the leader is more emotionally equipped to cope with upsets, challenges, and even failure, during execution, inherent in the innovation process.

In an investigation of narcissistic rivalry and learning strategies (exploratory and exploitative), with 215 new ventures in China, Wu et al. (2022) found that narcissistic rivalry is negatively related (r=−.10) with exploratory learning. This is quite relevant for my hypothesis; I argue that leaders, high on narcissistic rivalry, avoid, discourage, and even curtail exploratory learning, which involves challenges and risks (essential in experimentation and radical generation of new knowledge and discovery) as it poses a high risk for social exposure and failure and reinforces their fear of failure (Back, 2018).

In contrast, leaders with narcissistic rivalry tend to exhibit arrogance and an unstable self-esteem, which renders them risk-averse, thus focusing more on exploitative learning (Wu et al., 2022), which restricts incremental learning in the team, stifles creativity, and creates a team climate 'hostile' to innovation. It is thus no surprise that narcissistic rivalry is negatively related (r=−.24*) to new venture performance, the ultimate outcome of innovation (Wu et al., 2022).

In addition, leaders, high on narcissistic rivalry, tend to view others as aggressive and untrustworthy (Back, 2018), they become defensive, and consequently dominate and belittle others (Grove et al., 2019). As a result, narcissistic rivalry can potentially harm the relationships with external stakeholders, such as suppliers and investors, and may lead to more conflicts within innovation ventures (Wu et al., 2022). Moreover, leaders, high on narcissistic rivalry, are driven by malicious envy (Lange et al., 2016), which renders them

hostile and aggressive and often interferes with their ability to objectively process information at hand or explore new information and alternative perspectives, essential in creating a conducive team climate for innovation and naturally inherent in innovation.

In addition to the above, Shen and Yuan (2022) found, in investigating CEO narcissism, that narcissistic rivalry was positively related with the reduction of affordable loss; in other words, to limit risk and prevent failure during innovation, these leaders would rather 'cut their losses' than opt for, encourage, or drive innovation.

From the above theoretical arguments and empirical evidence, I support the proposition that narcissistic rivalry is negatively related to climate for work group innovation. In other words, any increases to leader behaviours that are associated with narcissistic rivalry will deteriorate the team climate essential for generating, supporting, and managing innovation. This deterioration in a climate fostering innovation at the team level, will in turn, as discussed in detail in previous sections, decrease team performance.

In sum, I hypothesize that:

H2c *Climate for work group innovation mediates the negative relationship between leader narcissistic rivalry and team performance.*

3.4.2.4 Leader Narcissistic Rivalry, Climate for Work Group Innovation, and Work Engagement (H2d)

In the previous section I have developed theoretical arguments showing that narcissistic rivalry undermines all four climate dimensions and provided relevant empirical evidence to support a proposed negative association between narcissistic rivalry and climate for work group innovation. Empirical evidence shows that leaders, high on narcissistic rivalry, are prone to knowledge hiding (Long et al., 2023), thus stifling idea generation. Moreover, narcissistic rivalry is shown to be negatively related with agreeableness, conscientiousness, and emotional stability (Rogoza, Zemojtel-Piotrowska, et al., 2016), essential enablers of innovation. These leaders focus on exploitative learning and curtail the explorative learning

(Wu et al., 2022) that underpins innovation. Finally, they choose to cut their losses and avoid risks (Shen & Yuan, 2022) rather than opt for innovation.

Deprived of relevant empirical data, I have theorized in previous sections that a strong climate for innovation – where vision for innovation is well articulated and is supported by a strong task orientation and adequate resources for execution – is conducive to individual work engagement.

A team climate conducive to innovation makes the work more interesting for team members, provides opportunities for team members to have a new and considerable impact on the organization, and encourages team members to become more engaged with their work (Demircioglu, 2023).

The deterioration of the climate for work group innovation will in turn, as discussed in previous sections, decrease team performance.

In sum, I hypothesize that:

H2d *Climate for work group innovation mediates the negative relationship between leader narcissistic rivalry and individual work engagement.*

3.4.2.5 Leader Narcissistic Rivalry, Trust in the Leader, and Team Performance (H2e)

There are only limited studies examining the relationship between narcissism and trust. In an empirical study, using online snowball sampling, with 727 Polish participants (30.1% male), Kwiatkowska et al. (2019) have reported negative relationships (r=−.21* and r=−.35*, respectively) between narcissistic rivalry and trust as measured by the General Trust Scale (GTS: Yamagishi & Yamagishi, 1994) and the trust facet scale derived from the Big Five Inventory-2 (BFI: Soto & John, 2017) respectively. Similarly, Szymczak et al. (2022), using TriMN in an empirical study, have shown that narcissistic rivalry (measured as antagonistic narcissism), was negatively related (r=−.08) to trust.

Leaders, high on narcissistic rivalry, are neurotic, aggressive, interpersonally cold, and anger prone (Back, 2018) and are more likely to act abusively (Back, 2018; Gauglitz et al., 2022; Szymczak et al., 2022), particularly when their superiority is threatened (Back, 2018).

Moreover, Gauglitz et al. (2022) have also shown, in two studies, a field study and an experimental vignette, that narcissistic rivalry is positively related to abusive supervision, r=.20* (field study) and r=.40** (vignette). Abuse, a behaviour likely to be exhibited by leaders, high on narcissistic rivalry, manifested as "yelling at subordinates in front of others or invading privacy, constitute(s) an extreme breach in the relational contract between subordinate and supervisor" (Duffy & Ferrier, 2003, p. 241), upsets the leader–follower relationship and ultimately destroys trust in the leader.

In a meta-analysis, investigating the relationship of an array of leadership styles (including abusive leadership) with various facets of trust in the leader (overall, cognitive, affective), Legood et al. (2021) have shown that abusive leadership was the only leadership style negatively related with overall trust (ρ=−.42), cognitive trust (ρ=−.35) and affective trust (ρ=−.39).

Although my research does not focus on leadership styles, this finding provides indirect empirical evidence supporting the proposed negative relationship of narcissistic rivalry and trust in the leader, given that abusive supervision is an outcome of narcissistic rivalry as it is associated with the devaluation of others (Back et al., 2013), diminishing and derogatory comments, dominance-based strategies, including intimidation and fear (Sedikides, 2021), anger proneness and lack of forgiveness (Back, 2018), ultimately corroding trust in the leader, and eventually resulting in the dissolution of the relationship.

Based on the above limited empirical evidence, I can safely argue that followers, led by leaders, high on narcissistic rivalry, are less likely to trust their leaders.

I have already presented evidence and arguments that support the proposition that trust in the leader is positively related to team performance.

Thus, I hypothesize that:

H2e *Trust in the leader mediates the relationship between leader narcissistic rivalry and team performance.*

3.4.2.6 Leader Narcissistic Rivalry, Trust in the Leader, and Individual Work Engagement (H2f)

In the previous section, I have used scarce and predominantly indirect empirical evidence showing that narcissistic rivalry is negatively related to trust in the leader (Kwiatkowska et al., 2019; Szymczak et al., 2022). Moreover, Gauglitz et al. (2022) have also shown that narcissistic rivalry is positively related to abusive supervision, an outcome of narcissistic rivalry, while Legood et al. (2021) have shown that abusive leadership was the only leadership style negatively related with overall, cognitive, and affective trust.

I have also presented evidence and arguments that support the proposition that trust in the leader is positively related with individual work engagement.

There is an abundance of empirical evidence supporting the negative relationship of trust in the leader with individual work engagement. Trust (with supervisor or leader as referent) was found to be positively related to individual work engagement (Chughtai & Buckley, 2008; Li et al., 2020; Wong et al., 2011).

Finally, Christian et al. (2011) have argued that when employees have trust in their leaders, they feel a sense of security and thus are more happily engrossed and willing to invest themselves in their work.

In sum, I hypothesize that:

H2f *Trust in the leader mediates the relationship between leader narcissistic rivalry and individual work engagement.*

3.4.3 Predictor: Vulnerable Narcissism (H3a to H3f)

Building on the two-factor conceptualization of narcissism, which 'disentangles' grandiose narcissism into its narcissistic admiration/rivalry 'pathways' (Back et al., 2013), and to provide a finer-grained articulation of its core components (Crowe et al., 2019; Krizan & Herlache, 2018), emerging three-factor models (e.g. TriMN) now also include vulnerable narcissism (Miller et al., 2021).

The trifurcated model (TriMN) outlined in the previous chapter clarifies narcissism's cloudy and varying relationships, explains its various paradoxes, provides a clear depiction and a nuanced distinction of the three factors (narcissistic admiration, narcissistic rivalry, and vulnerable narcissism), and offers new insights on the differential relationship of each factor with organizational outcomes.

Until recently, vulnerable narcissism and its impact in an organizational, rather than a clinical setting, has been largely ignored; consequently, a substantial body of empirical evidence is missing (Wirtz & Rigotti, 2020).

As pointed out in Chapter 2, individuals, high on vulnerable narcissism, have been described as possessing feelings of helplessness, emptiness, and low self-esteem (Pincus et al., 2009), anger, envy, and aggression (Pincus et al., 2014) and neuroticism (Lamkin et al., 2014). They are vindictive and cold (Dickinson & Pincus, 2003), with a marked lack of confidence in maintaining social relationships and are tormented by fear of failure, incompetence, and inadequacy (Miller, 2011).

Vulnerable or 'shy' narcissists do not exhibit an assertive or antagonistic orientation, like grandiose narcissists, but a covert self-presentation, governed by shame and a depleted self-image (Pincus & Lukowitsky, 2010); thus, they tend to avoid interpersonal relationships because of hypersensitivity to rejection and criticism (Ronningstam, 2011). Vulnerable narcissists overtly or covertly react to threats to a fragile self-esteem (e.g. failures) with strong emotions (e.g. hostility), mood variations (e.g. depression), avoidance, and deceitful or retaliating behaviours.

Although there is a growing interest in the role and consequences of vulnerable narcissism in the organizational domain, there is scarce empirical evidence on the specific relationship of leader vulnerable narcissism with organizational outcomes, associated with my research model. Consequently, I explore empirical evidence relevant with relationships of vulnerable narcissism with similar or related constructs. In addition, I selectively supplement the above with theoretical arguments to further reinforce the relevant set of hypotheses.

3.4.3.1 Leader Vulnerable Narcissism, Team Psychological Safety, and Team Performance (H3a)

As previously mentioned, team psychological safety entails a shared belief by team members that the team setting is a safe environment to freely take actions, embark on conversations, and make suggestions that are respected and explored (Edmondson, 1999). I posit that it is highly unlikely that leaders, high on vulnerable narcissism, exhibiting a fragile and contingent self-esteem, a distrustful and interpersonally impaired demeanour (Miller et al., 2021), coupled with severe emotional dysregulation, will ever create such a psychologically safe environment.

In a meta-analysis (*K*=121, *N*=73,687) investigating the relationship between vulnerable narcissism and aggression, Zhang and Zhu (2021) have shown that vulnerable narcissism is positively related (*r*=.28, *r*=.29, *r*=.36, *r*=.49, *r*=.27 and *r*=.24, respectively) to proactive aggression, reactive aggression, anger, hostility, physical aggression, and verbal aggression. It is quite evident that behavioural manifestations by leaders, high on vulnerable narcissism, are detrimental to team psychological safety, a concept almost synonymous with acceptance, tolerance, and respect. Physical aggression not only destroys team psychological safety but also dissolves the leader–team relationship. Similarly, in an empirical study, with a sample of 128 students, completing online surveys for credit, Krizan and Johar (2015) found that leader vulnerable narcissism is positively related to anger externalization (*r*=.31***) and anger internalization (*r*=.40***), and negatively related to anger control (*r*=−.18*).

I posit that the above evidence points to a team setting where even the simplest of conversations, the brightest of ideas, and the subtlest of actions, are met by these neurotic leaders with anxiety, distrust (Rogoza, Kwiatkowska, et al., 2018; Rogoza, Zemojtel-Piotrowska et al., 2016), hostile outbursts (Dickinson and Pincus, 2003), and anger-based, abusive supervision (Braun et al., 2019). This irreversibly undermines (rather than supports) team psychological safety, as information exchange is stifled, diversity is suppressed, and interpersonal risks are discouraged or even ‘penalized’.

Edmondson (2019) suggested that leaders can create team psychological safety when (a) they acknowledge their own fallibility (this assumes, of course, high levels of emotional intelligence manifested as heightened self-awareness and self-critique), and (b) they ask lots of questions.

Leaders, high on vulnerable narcissism, will rarely, if ever, embark on self-critique to enhance self-awareness and bring about personal improvement as vulnerable narcissism has been shown to be negatively related (r=−.55***) to trait emotional intelligence (Zajenkowski et al., 2018). I posit that their neurotic and shameful nature and fragile self-esteem (Miller et al., 2021), contingent on the feedback they receive, will not permit any serious self-doubting questions to be addressed as possible solutions are misconstrued by these leaders and are hard to accept or assimilate.

Based on the above empirical evidence and the psychopathology of vulnerable narcissism illustrated, I conclude that followers, working for leaders, high on vulnerable narcissism, are unlikely to feel a sense of psychological safety in their teams.

I have also provided additional evidence and arguments, in previous sections, to support the proposition that team psychological safety is positively related to team performance. Consequently, I argue that increases in leader vulnerable narcissism will decrease team psychological safety, which will, in turn, decrease team performance.

In sum, I hypothesize that:

H3a *Team psychological safety mediates the negative relationship between leader vulnerable narcissism and team performance.*

3.4.3.2 Leader Vulnerable Narcissism, Team Psychological Safety and Work Engagement (H3b)

I have provided, in previous sections, evidence to support the negative relationship of leader vulnerable narcissism and team psychological safety. More specifically, this evidence has shown that vulnerable narcissism is positively related to anger, physical and verbal aggression, and hostility (Zhang & Zhu, 2021), positively related to anger

externalization and internalization (Krizan & Johar, 2015), and negatively related to trait emotional intelligence (Zajenkowski et al., 2018).

It is thus not surprising, given the climate of fear they create, their neurotic outbursts (Dickinson & Pincus, 2003), and the eventual deterioration of psychological safety in their teams, that in an empirical multilevel analysis of 235 followers in 71 teams from German organizations in different industries, Wirtz and Rigotti (2020) found that leader vulnerable narcissism is positively (r=.13) related to workplace exhaustion of followers, which represents a "state of depletion and fatigue" (Wirtz & Rigotti, 2020, p. 3) and a primary indicator of job burnout, the antipode of work engagement.

Moreover, I have provided empirical evidence and theoretical arguments, in previous sections on the positive relationship of team psychological safety and individual work engagement.

In sum, I hypothesize that:

H3b *Team psychological safety mediates the negative relationship between leader vulnerable narcissism and individual work engagement.*

3.4.3.3 Leader Vulnerable Narcissism, Climate for Work Group Innovation and Team Performance (H3c)

I firstly provide theoretical arguments on the relationship of leader vulnerable narcissism and the four dimensions of climate for work group innovation (vision, participative safety, task orientation, and support for innovation) and then reinforce insights with important empirical evidence.

How is leader vulnerable narcissism related with the four dimensions of climate for work group innovation (vision, participative safety, task orientation, and support for innovation)? For the pathologically distressed (Miller et al., 2017) vulnerable leaders, innovation is perceived as an 'unnecessary evil'. Given their low and fragile self-esteem (Pincus et al., 2009; Rogoza, Zemojtel-Piotrowska et al., 2016) and feelings of inferiority and inadequacy (Weiss & Miller, 2018), it is safe to posit that these self-inhibited (Kwiatkowska et al., 2019),

shy (Dickinson & Pincus, 2003), contact-shunning (Weiss & Miller, 2018) neurotics are incapable or reluctant to publicly communicate and promote a vision for innovation, articulate its strategic impact or provide executive sponsoring during its execution.

As leaders, high on vulnerable narcissism, are antagonistic (Weiss & Miller, 2018), and feel entitled (Campbell et al., 2011), it is safe to argue that they will curtail or undermine participative safety, with the 'we are in it together" attitude being replaced by an ongoing 'it is all about me' attitude. It is also safe to posit that there will be no 'sharedness', or team ownership of successes and failures for teams led by these individuals.

I have already argued that leaders, high on vulnerable narcissism, are uncomfortable or incapable of providing clarity on the innovation effort or creating team 'sharedness' of vision and outcomes. As these leaders exhibit an excessive vulnerability to criticism (Nevicka, 2011), any process aimed at 'critically' assessing performance and reinforcing task orientation is considered a personal attack and a potential threat that risks exposing their own inadequacy and incompetence (Nevicka, 2011).

These leaders are unlikely to sponsor or spearhead the innovation effort; at best, they will offer scarce 'lip service' (articulated support), but only as part of promoting their own grandiose fantasies; ultimately, they will be reluctant to commit any time or resources (enacted support) to drive innovation.

Ultimately, innovation is driven by passionate, confident, and gifted visionaries. Leaders, high on vulnerable narcissism, are pathologically distressed, fragile neurotics, characterized by feelings of helplessness and emptiness (Pincus et al., 2009; Pincus et al., 2014), rendering them oblivious or utterly incapable of creating or fostering a climate conducive to innovation.

Finally, innovation is inherently laden with risk and is associated with failure and public exposure. It is highly likely that these leaders, high on vulnerable narcissism, will curtail innovation in general and refrain from fostering a climate for work group innovation, as their sponsoring of innovation would bring about potentially unfavourable consequences for them, including failure, public ridicule, social exposure, and shame (Miller et al., 2021).

Moreover, empirical evidence further reinforces my initial arguments and provides additional insights on the psychopathology of vulnerable narcissism.

In an empirical study to investigate the relationship of vulnerable narcissism with fear (among other variables), using the Trifurcated Model of Narcissism (TriMN; Crowe et al., 2019; Miller et al., 2016; Weiss et al., 2019), with a sample of 891 English-speaking participants, Jauk and Kaufmann (2018) found that leader vulnerable narcissism is positively related to fear of failure (*r*=.62) and fear of losing reputation (*r*=.40). Consequently, scared of being socially ridiculed, it is highly likely that these narcissists will curtail innovation and make no effort to create a team climate conducive to innovation. Instead, they are likely to suppress any form of creativity and deprive innovation of any articulated or enacted support.

A team cannot generate innovation by its own volition and without the support of a confident and competent team leader. Thus, it is no wonder that vulnerable narcissism exhibits a strong positive relationship (*r*=.64*) with 'gelotophobia' (Blasco-Belled et al., 2022) – the fear of being laughed at. This is relevant, in the sense that any failure stemming from the team as a consequence of the innovation effort is likely to be interpreted by these neurotic leaders, plagued with feelings of inadequacy, shame and helplessness (Fatfouta, 2019) and focusing on cutting their losses rather than maximizing their gains (Sedikides, 2021), as a personal failure with a great danger of social exposure attached to it; this failure is internally attributed but externally directed (Krizan & Johar, 2015) on unsuspicious followers with anger and hostility (Fatfouta, 2019). I can thus safely argue that innovation will be strongly opposed and neutralized at the team level by these leaders.

Innovation requires leader grit (firmness of mind and unyielding courage); additionally, innovation requires perseverance of effort as resources are invested in uncharted waters, and a continued interest in consistently pursuing agreed priorities and implementing innovation plans (Chang & Gong, 2023).

In a longitudinal survey of 455 college students in China, Chang, and Gong (2023) found that vulnerable narcissism is negatively related (*r*=−.19**) to grit (perseverance of effort)

and negatively related (*r*=−.32***) to grit (consistency of interest). Grit (perseverance of effort) is defined as the extent to which individuals exert durable effort when faced with difficulties and challenges (Chang & Gong, 2023). Grit (consistency of interest) is defined as the tendency to exhibit a similar array of interests towards an objective for a long period of time (Chang & Gong, 2023).

I posit that based on the above evidence, these leaders, devoid of grit, both in terms of perseverance and consistency of effort, are less likely to foster a climate conducive to work group innovation – a complex and unpredictable process that, by default, ventures into the unknown and requires specific attributes vulnerable narcissists are oblivious to or simply lack.

I have provided theoretical arguments backed up with empirical evidence to support the proposition that vulnerable narcissism is negatively related to climate for innovation. In addition, in previous sections, I have argued that climate for innovation is (positively) related to team performance.

In sum, I hypothesize that:

H3c *Climate for work group innovation mediates the negative relationship between leader vulnerable narcissism and team performance.*

3.4.3.4 Leader Vulnerable Narcissism, Climate for Work Group Innovation and Work Engagement (H3d)

I have already provided arguments and evidence, albeit limited, proposing the negative relationship between leader vulnerable narcissism and climate for work group innovation. Despite the relative scarcity of empirical evidence, I have provided information on studies focusing on areas relevant to and enabling innovation. More specifically, empirical evidence has shown that vulnerable narcissism is positively related to fear of failure and fear of losing reputation (Jauk & Kaufman, 2018), both of which are inherent in innovation, positively related to fear of being ridiculed (Blasco-Belled et al., 2022) and negatively related to perseverance of effort and consistency of interest (Chang & Gong, 2023), which are

important enablers of innovation. In addition, in previous sections I have argued that climate for innovation is positively related to work engagement.

In sum, I hypothesize that:

H3d *Climate for work group innovation mediates the negative relationship between leader vulnerable narcissism and individual work engagement.*

3.4.3.5 Leader Vulnerable Narcissism, Trust in the Leader, and Team Performance (H3e)

In an empirical multilevel analysis, Szymczak et al. (2022) found that leader vulnerable narcissism is negatively (r=−.06) related to trust. The researchers posit that it is the antagonistic (rather than the neurotic) aspect of vulnerable narcissism that is related to trust.

In addition, in another empirical study, investigating the relationship of vulnerable narcissism and abusive supervision (intention), with a total sample of 926 German speaking managers, in three empirical studies, Braun et al. (2019) found that leader vulnerable narcissism is positively related (r=.58, r=.43, r=.52) to abusive supervision (intention), the relationship being stronger than that of grandiose narcissism (r=.45, r=.34, r=.42). This is compatible with extant research proposing a positive relationship of vulnerable narcissism with abusive supervision (Braun et al., 2019).

I posit that it is highly unlikely that followers will place their trust in a leader who is aggressive and can readily resort to verbal and physical aggression when a fragile, unstable, and poor self-esteem is threatened.

Lastly, in an empirical multilevel analysis of 310 employees in the UK, completing surveys via a panel provider (respondi) and using the Trifurcated Model of Narcissism (TriMN; Crowe et al., 2019; Miller et al., 2016; Weiss et al., 2019), Schyns et al. (2022) found that leader vulnerable narcissism is negatively (r=−.08) related to affective motivation to lead (Chan & Drasgow, 2001), which relates to the liking of or preference for leading. In addition, they have shown that leader vulnerable narcissism is positively (r=.36**) related to avoidance to lead.

Similarly with the above rationale, followers are unlikely to trust a leader who is not only unmotivated to lead but will also tend to exhibit a genuine lack of interest in leadership-related demands and thus avoids leading. Consequently, I put forward, given the evidence and theoretical arguments above, that leader vulnerable narcissism is negatively related to trust in the leader. In addition, in previous sections, I have argued that trust in the leader is positively related to team performance.

Thus, I hypothesize that:

H3e *Trust in the leader mediates the negative relationship between leader vulnerable narcissism and team performance.*

3.4.3.6 Leader Vulnerable Narcissism, Trust in the Leader, and Work Engagement (H3f)

I have already proposed, in previous sections, that leader vulnerable narcissism is negatively related to trust in the leader. More specifically, empirical evidence has shown that vulnerable narcissism is negatively related to trust in the leader (Szymczak et al., 2022) and affective motivation to lead (Schyns et al., 2022); vulnerable narcissism is also positively related to abusive supervision (Braun et al., 2019) and avoidance to lead (Schyns et al., 2022). I have also previously argued that trust in the leader is positively related to work engagement.

In sum, I hypothesize that:

H3f *Trust in the leader mediates the negative relationship between leader vulnerable narcissism and work engagement.*

In this chapter so far, I have presented theoretical arguments augmented by empirical evidence, where available, to support the articulated set of 18 hypotheses regarding the relationship of the three dimensions of narcissism under investigation (narcissistic admiration, narcissistic rivalry, and vulnerable narcissism) with selected organizational outcomes (team performance, individual work engagement).

3.5 Summary

In this chapter, I have discussed the theoretical background and introduced the conceptual model and its 'building blocks', i.e. the constituting variables: (a) predictor leader narcissism (narcissistic admiration, narcissistic rivalry, and vulnerable narcissism), (b) mediators, including team psychological safety, climate for work group innovation, and trust in the leader, and (c) outcomes including work engagement and performance measured at the individual and team level of analysis, respectively. I have offered empirical evidence and provided theoretical arguments to help articulate a set of 18 hypotheses (6 for each narcissism dimension) to be tested during the empirical study.

In the next chapter, I will provide more details on the research sample, research design, research process, measures, results, and overall observations for the three short preparatory familiarization pilot studies.

Chapter 4. Pilot Studies – Methods and Results

4.1 Overview

Before investing effort in testing the set of articulated hypotheses in the empirical study, it was deemed appropriate to familiarize myself with testing an initial set of variables associated with my research model and 'experiment' on different combinations of measures, assessing these variables. To this end, during the period June 2018 to May 2019 (before the onset of C19), I carried out three pilot studies with selected client organizations in Greece. By coincidence, all participating organizations were Greek, family-owned, medium-sized enterprises managed by ambitious, well-educated, second-generation family members. These organizations were active in the quarrying (pilot 1), building materials and chemicals (pilot 2), and facility management (pilot 3) sectors. In all three pilots, participants included leaders (members of the leadership team) and followers (their direct reports). In total, these studies included 24 leaders and 132 followers. All pilot studies utilized measures available in Greek; when a measure was not available in Greek, a translation/back-translation procedure (Brislin, 1970) was followed. Pilot studies are shown in Appendix 2.

The pilot studies were carried out to: (a) enhance my understanding on the variables constituting the building blocks of my hypothesized research model, (b) explore different variants and combinations of measures to assess these variables, (c) evaluate the validity and suitability of each measure and consequently decide on the most effective set of instruments for the main study, (d) establish a small working data sample to practice performing statistical analysis using IBM SPSS, (e) observe participant reactions or objections to procedure and measures, and (f) incorporate amendments and improvements in the main empirical study.

Pilot 1 relies on well-established measures (PNI-52; Karakoula et al., 2013) to assess self-reported predictors (grandiose narcissism and vulnerable narcissism), mediators (climate for work group innovation, trustworthiness of the leader and respect for the leader) and

outcome work engagement, assessed by followers. As the PNI was judged by participants as too long and cumbersome and narcissism was still ‘entangled’, in Pilot 2, predictors were measured by the ‘industry standard’ (NPI-16; Raskin & Hall, 1981) for grandiose narcissism, and the Maladaptive Covert Narcissism Scale (MCNS-23; Cheek et al., 2013) for vulnerable narcissism. The same set of measures (including a shorter version for climate) was utilized as in Pilot 1 for mediators and outcome. Pilot 3 utilized the same set of measures as in Pilot 2. Details for sample, research design, research procedure, variables, results, and observations are provided, for each pilot study, in the subsequent sections.

4.2 The Pilot Studies

4.2.1 The Professional Relationship

All participating business entities were client organizations; I met the respective CEOs of these organizations after I was recommended by other organizations (which I did not know but somehow seemed familiar with my work) or trusted clients (with whom I have enjoyed a continuing consulting relationship); word of mouth is a powerful way to generate consulting work in Greece.

4.2.2 The Common Need

These CEOs (representing second generation ownership), leading, family-run, fast growing organizations, requested my services in articulating their strategic focus (i.e. vision, mission and values) – a common entry point in organizational consulting – as well as strategic objectives and strategic enablers (market differentiators, success factors, critical processes and roles) and thus enabling and navigating strategic growth with the participation and support of their top management teams; after this phase (phase 1: Strategic Articulation) for each organization was successfully completed, they requested my support for the next phase (phase 2: Operational Articulation) in working with strategic action teams to help implement strategic action plans, devised per strategic objective.

During this phase it became apparent that the top management teams (including the CEO) did not have the essential leadership attitudes, competencies, and skills to support the articulated strategic journey. Consensus was reached quite easily with these CEOs for the need to introduce an assessment process to identify skills deficiencies, but also to identify barriers or factor that could potentially derail the strategic effort. It was agreed that this survey-based assessment would be supplemented by client-specific development centres to fully describe the leadership landscape. It was confirmed that findings from (a) the survey (including specific sections assessing predictors, mediators, and outcomes) and (b) the development centre, would fully describe the different leadership landscape for each client organization.

The whole process, objectives, logistics, and constructs assessed were presented to the CEO and management team (sample items, scales and sample reporting was included) prior to survey administration/development centre implementation.

4.2.3 Data Collection/Data Processing

Surveys (self-reporting) were completed eponymously by the 'leader' cluster, which comprised only members of the management team for each organization. This was done to clearly identify individual development needs. Surveys (others) were completed anonymously (to safeguard confidentiality of data) by the 'follower' cluster, which included direct reports of the members of the management team. Each participant was given a code by the HR department and was requested to use it throughout. Completed surveys from both sources were directly sent to me by email (without the intervention of any intermediary).

4.2.4 Presentation of Data/Feeback

Findings from these two sources were analysed and needs and recommendations for actions were presented to the CEO and his management team. Feedback sessions were subsequently organized where individual results/development needs were presented (in the form of Personal Development Plans) in strict confidence (with only the CEO present during these sessions; the HR function having been excluded at the request of the CEO). Findings were subsequently used to design leadership development programs and leader person specific coaching programs for members of the management team (in one case a coaching program involved the CEO as well). Most of these programs are still being implemented using internal training and development resources.

4.3 Pilot Study 1

4.3.1 Sample

Survey data on narcissism was collected from the leadership team of the participating organization. The sample consisted of 9 leaders (Male 77.8%) and 37 followers; 78% of participants were aged 46–50 and 100% of Greek nationality, all working in managerial or executive roles. Participants were holders of graduate degrees (78.1%) and had limited working experience within the company (78.5% with 0–5 years of experience).

4.3.2 Research Design

To ‘prepare the ground’ and ensure ‘buy-in’ for the process, in May 2018, in a one-hour presentation, I introduced the concept, methodology, and business case to the HR team, customarily the internal sponsor of similar initiatives,; this was followed by the submission of a formal document outlining the purpose of the study, measures, administration and logistics, sample reporting (customized), and organizational support requirements. This was supplemented by several telephone conversations with the CEO (owner) and the GM to agree on next steps. Sample items for each measure were provided to the HR team prior to the survey to improve understanding and alleviate any initial concerns. There was no extra incentive for participants to complete the survey.

The suggested time plan was submitted to the HR team and approved by the CEO, who in turn, via email, invited members of the leadership team and direct reports to participate. I also discussed (with CEO and HR) logistics, particularly the confidentiality of responses, means of sending and receiving completed questionnaires, ways of efficiently monitoring the completion process (to ensure high response rates), and communication with respondents. To further ensure clarity, I provided written administration instructions in a letter disseminated to all participants.

4.3.3 Procedure

Surveys (and an accompanying letter) were sent out by the HR team in early June 2018; participants were allowed two weeks to complete and return surveys, which were collected by the third week of June 2018. Surveys completed by 'leader' were not anonymized (to enable self-development), while those completed by 'followers' were anonymized (coded) to ensure data confidentiality and encourage honest responses. Self-reporting surveys (for predictors) were sent to me directly via email by each participating leader. Surveys completed by followers were collected in code form by HR and sent to me via postal courier for processing. During the administration of the survey, timeliness of completion was monitored, and reminders were sent to ensure submission within the official deadline. The Pilot 1 response rate was 100%.

4.3.4 Measures (Variables)

For this study, measures assessing grandiose and vulnerable narcissism (PNI-52; Karakoula et al., 2013), climate for work group innovation (TCI-38; Chatzi & Nicolaou, 2007), and work engagement (Utrecht Work Engagement Survey – UWES-17; Xanthopoulou et al., 2012) were available in Greek. There were no measures available in Greek for trustworthiness (of the leader) and respect (for the leader); these were translated into Greek, using the translation/back-translation method (Brislin, 1970).

4.3.4.1 Predictors (Independent Variables)

4.3.4.1.1 Grandiose Narcissism

Grandiose narcissism was measured by the Greek version of the PNI (PNI-52; Karakoula et al., 2013). This variable was assessed by the 52-item PNI, using a six-point Likert-type scale ranging from '0 – not at all like me' to '5 – very much like me'. Reliability was good (α=.88); sample item: "I often fantasize about being rewarded for my efforts".

4.3.4.1.2 Vulnerable Narcissism

Vulnerable narcissism was measured by the Greek version of the PNI (PNI-52; Karakoula et al., 2013). This variable was assessed by the 52-item PNI, using a Likert-type scale ranging from '0 – not at all like me' to '5 – very much like me'. Reliability was good (α=.88); sample item: "I hate asking for help".

4.3.4.2 Mediators

4.3.4.2.1 Climate for Work Group Innovation

Climate for work group innovation was measured by the Greek version of the instrument (TCI-38; Chatzi & Nicolaou, 2007), using a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from '1 – strongly disagree' to '5 – strongly agree'. Reliability was excellent (α=.98); sample item: "People in this team are always searching for fresh, new ways of looking at problems".

4.3.4.2.2 Trustworthiness (of the leader)

Trustworthiness, an antecedent of trust (in the leader), comprising of ability, benevolence and integrity, was measured by an instrument by Mayer et al. (1995), including 17 items on which respondents answer using a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from '1 – strongly disagree' to '5 – strongly agree'. Reliability was excellent (α=.98); sample item: "My direct supervisor would not knowingly do anything to hurt me".

4.3.4.2.3 Respect (for the leader)

Respect (for the leader) was measured by an instrument by van Quaquebeke et al. (2011), comprising 6 items on which respondents answer using a five-point Likert-type scale

ranging from ‘1 – not at all like me’ to ‘5 – very much like me’. Reliability was excellent (α=.97); sample item: “At work I enjoy being able to learn from my leader”.

4.3.4.3 Outcomes

4.3.4.3.1 Individual Work Engagement

Individual work engagement was measured by the Greek version of the instrument (UWES-17; Xanthopoulou et al., 2012), comprising 17 items on which respondents answer using a seven-point Likert-type scale ranging from ‘0 – never at all’ to ‘6 – always’. Reliability was acceptable (α=.77); sample item: “I am proud of the work that I do”.

4.3.5 Results/Observations

As the sample size at the leader level is very small (N=9), correlation results for Pilot study 1 are included, along with correlation results for Pilot studies 2 and 3, in the aggregated correlation matrix in Table 4-1. With a similar rationale (i.e. small sample size), no observations were derived or are reported.

4.4 Pilot Study 2

4.4.1 Sample

Data was collected from the leadership team of the organization and respective followers. The sample consisted of 7 leaders (Male 84.6%) and 33 followers (direct reports); 46.2% of participants were aged 51+ and 100% of Greek nationality, all were working in executive roles. Participants were holders of graduate degrees (38.5%) and had extensive working experience and long tenure with this company (69.3% with 10–20 years of experience).

4.4.2 Research Design

To ‘prepare the ground’ and ensure executive support, in February 2019 I presented the concept, methodology, and business case to the departing 76-year old chairman, traditionally the sponsor of similar initiatives, during a one-hour presentation; this was followed up by the submission of a formal document to his son, the incoming CEO, outlining

the purpose of the study, measures, administration and logistics, sample reporting (customized), and organizational support requirements. Details on the process and sample items for each measure were provided to the HR Team prior to the survey to improve understanding and alleviate any initial concerns. There was no extra incentive for participants to complete the survey.

The suggested time plan was submitted and approved by the CEO who in turn, via email, invited members of the leadership team and direct reports to participate in the survey. I discussed (with the chairman and the CEO) provisions for the confidentiality of responses, and communication with respondents. To reinforce clarity, I provided written administration instructions, in a letter disseminated to all participants.

4.4.3 Procedure

Surveys (and accompanying letter) were sent out by the HR Team, via email, in mid-March 2019; participants were allowed two weeks to complete/return surveys, which were collected by early April 2019. Surveys completed by 'leader' were not anonymized (to enable self-development), while those completed by 'followers' were anonymized (coded) to ensure data confidentiality and encourage honest responses. Self-reporting surveys (for predictors) were sent to me directly, via email, by each participating leader. Surveys completed by followers, were collected in code form, by HR and sent to me via postal courier, for processing. During the administration of the survey, timeliness of completion was monitored, and reminders were sent, to ensure submission within the official deadline. The Pilot 2 response rate was 100%.

4.4.4 Measures (Variables)

4.4.4.1 Predictors (Independent Variables)

4.4.4.1.1 Grandiose Narcissism

Feedback from Pilot 1 participants completing the Pathological Narcissism Inventory (PNI-52), revealed that the PNI-52 was long and tiring and included obscure items and confusing language; this is not surprising given its complex structure and clinical focus. Consequently,

for Pilot 2, I employed two different measures, each separately assessing each narcissism predictor. For grandiose narcissism, I used the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI; Raskin & Hall, 1981). There is no Greek validated version for NPI-16; thus, the Greek version was generated, using the translation/back-translation method (Brislin, 1970). As administration time was of the essence for participating executives, I used the shorter, 16-item, self-reporting inventory (NPI-16; Ames et al., 2006) to assess leader grandiose narcissism. This a forced-choice measure and participants are 'forced' to choose between 16 pairs of statements, on which respondents answer using scores of 0 and 1. Reliability was poor for NPI-16 (α=.56); sample (pair of items): "I am much like everybody else Vs I am an extraordinary person".

Poor reliability and inherent problems of the NPI have already been raised by the research community, as there are specific doubts as to whether the NPI is indeed a valid measure of (grandiose) narcissism. Extant research posits that NPI has poor validity and inconsistent factor structure (Brown et al., 2009). In addition, it is argued that "the forced-choice format violates the assumption of independence […] potentially questionable scoring practices" (Wetzel et al., 2016, p. 87-88) as it includes a mixture of items that reflect both unidimensional and multi-dimensional frameworks, thus rendering it difficult to provide a clear and simple interpretation (Ackerman et al., 2016).

For the above reasons, I have evaluated the internal consistency of items for grandiose narcissism using the Kuder Richardson Formula 20 (KR-20), a special case of Cronbach's α, which checks the internal consistency of measures with dichotomous choices. For this study, KR-20 for this instrument was good (α=.84).

4.4.4.1.2 Vulnerable Narcissism

For the distinct assessment of vulnerable narcissism, I selected the Maladaptive Covert Narcissism Scale (MCNS; Cheek et al., 2013); this instrument comprises 23 items on which respondents answer using a five-point Likert-type scale, ranging from '1 - strongly disagree' to '5 - strongly agree'. Reliability was good (α=.84); sample item: "I feel that I have enough

on my hands without worrying about other people's troubles". There is no Greek validated version for MCNS; thus, the Greek version was generated, using the translation/back-translation method (Brislin, 1970).

4.4.4.2 Mediators

4.4.4.2.1 Climate for Work Group Innovation

Climate for work group innovation was measured by a shorter version of the measure used in Pilot 1 (TCI-14; Anderson & West, 1998). The shorter version comprises 14 items on which respondents answer using a five-point Likert-type scale, ranging from '1 – strongly disagree' to '5 – strongly agree'. This instrument measures four super-ordinate scales, namely vision, participative safety, task orientation, and support for innovation. Reliability was good (α=.88); sample item: "Members of the team build on each other's ideas in order to achieve the best possible outcome".

4.4.4.2.2 Trustworthiness (of the leader)

Trustworthiness, an antecedent of trust (in the leader), comprising of ability, benevolence and integrity, was measured by an instrument by Mayer et al. (1995). This includes 17 items on which respondents answer using a five-point Likert-type scale, ranging from '1 – strongly disagree' to '5 – strongly agree'. Reliability was excellent (α=.91); sample item: "My direct supervisor would not knowingly do anything to hurt me".

4.4.4.2.3 Respect (for the leader)

Respect for the leader was measured again by the instrument used in Pilot 1 by van Quaquebeke et al. (2011). This comprises 6 items on which respondents answer using a five-point Likert-type scale, ranging from '1 – not at all like me' to '5 – very much like me'. Reliability was good (α=.85); sample item: "At work I enjoy being able to learn from my leader".

4.4.4.3 Outcomes

4.4.4.3.1 Individual Work Engagement

Work engagement was measured by the Greek version of the instrument (UWES-17; Xanthopoulou et al., 2012). This comprises 17 items on which respondents answer using a seven-point Likert-type scale, ranging from '0 – never at all' to '6 – always'. Reliability was good (α=.89); sample item: "I am proud of the work that I do".

4.4.5 Results/Observations

As the sample size at the leader level is very small (*N*=7), correlation results for Pilot study 2 are not generated but are included, along with correlation results for Pilot studies 1 and 3, in the aggregated correlation matrix in Table 4-1. With a similar rationale (i.e. small sample size), no observations were derived or are reported.

4.5 Pilot Study 3

4.5.1 Sample

Data was collected from the leadership team and direct reports. The sample consisted of 8 leaders (Male 75.0%) and 62 followers (direct reports); 75% of participants were aged 36-45 and 100% of Greek nationality, all working in executive/managerial roles. Participants were holders of graduate degrees (37.5%) and had substantial working experience within this company (77.5% with 0–9 years of experience).

4.5.2 Research Design

To 'prepare the ground' and ensure executive support, in April 2019, I presented the concept, methodology, and business case to a young and ambitious CEO (in the presence of the GM), an enthusiastic believer in such initiatives, during a one-hour presentation; this was followed up by the submission of a formal document to the GM outlining the purpose of the study, measures, administration and logistics, sample reporting (customized), and organizational support requirements. Details on the process and sample items for each measure were provided to the HR Team, prior to the survey, to improve understanding and

alleviate any initial concerns. There was no extra incentive for participants to complete the survey.

The suggested time plan was submitted and approved by the CEO, who in turn, via email, invited members of the leadership team and direct reports to participate in the survey. I also discussed (with the GM) provisions for the confidentiality of responses, and communication with respondents. To reinforce clarity, I provided written administration instructions, in a letter disseminated to all participants.

4.5.3 Procedure

Surveys (and accompanying letter) were sent out by the HR director, via email, in early May 2019; participants were allowed two weeks to complete/return surveys, which were collected by late May 2019. Surveys completed by 'leader were not anonymized (to enable self-development), while those completed by 'followers' were anonymized (coded) to ensure data confidentiality and encourage honest responses. Self-reporting surveys (for predictors) were sent to me directly, via email, by each participating leader. Surveys completed by followers, were collected in code form, by HR and sent to me via postal courier, for processing. During the administration of the survey, timeliness of completion was monitored, and reminders were sent to ensure submission within the official deadline. The Pilot 3 response rate was 100%.

4.5.4 Measures (Variables)

4.5.4.1 Predictors (Independent Variables)

4.5.4.1.1 Grandiose Narcissism

For grandiose narcissism, and despite its inherent problems, as in pilot 2, I again used the translated/back-translated (Brislin, 1970) Greek version of the shorter,16- item dichotomous version of the NPI (NPI-16; Ames et al., 2006). This a forced-choice measure and participants are 'forced' to choose between 16 pairs of statements, on which respondents answer using scores of 0 and 1. Reliability was excellent, (α=.93); sample (pair of items): "I am much like everybody else Vs I am an extraordinary person".

4.5.4.1.2 Vulnerable Narcissism

For the assessment of vulnerable narcissism, I selected the translated/back-translated (Brislin, 1970) Maladaptive Covert Narcissism Scale (MCNS; Cheek et al., 2013); this instrument comprises 23 items on which respondents answer using a five-point Likert-type scale, ranging from '1 – strongly disagree' to '5 – strongly agree'. Reliability was excellent (α =.95); sample item: "I feel that I have enough on my hands without worrying about other people's troubles".

4.5.4.2 Mediators

4.5.4.2.1 Climate for Work Group Innovation

Climate for work group innovation was measured, by a shorter version of the measure as in Pilot 2 (TCI-14; Anderson & West, 1998). The shorter version comprises 14 items on which respondents answer using a five-point Likert-type scale, ranging from '1 – strongly disagree' to '5 – strongly agree'. This instrument measures four super-ordinate scales, namely vision, participative safety, task orientation, and support for innovation. Reliability was excellent (α=.96); sample item: "Members of the team build on each other's ideas in order to achieve the best possible outcome".

4.5.4.2.2 Trustworthiness (of the leader)

Trustworthiness, an antecedent of trust (in the leader), comprising of ability, benevolence and integrity, was measured by an instrument by Mayer et al. (1995). This includes 17 items on which respondents answer using a five-point Likert-type scale, ranging from '1 – strongly disagree' to '5 – strongly agree'. Reliability was excellent (α=.98); sample item: "My direct supervisor would not knowingly do anything to hurt me".

4.5.4.2.3 Respect (for the leader)

Respect for the leader was measured again by the instrument used in Pilot 1 by van Quaquebeke et al. (2011). This comprises 6 items on which respondents answer using a five-point Likert-type scale, ranging from '1 – not at all like me' to '5 – very much like me'.

Reliability was excellent (α=.97); sample item: “At work I enjoy being able to learn from my leader”.

4.5.4.3 Outcomes

4.5.4.3.1 Individual Work Engagement

Individual work engagement was measured by the Greek version of the instrument (UWES-17; Xanthopoulou et al., 2012). This comprises 17 items on which respondents answer using a seven-point Likert-type scale, ranging from ‘0 – never at all’ to ‘6 – always’. Reliability was good (α=.84); sample item: “I am proud of the work that I do”.

4.5.5 Results/Observations

As the sample size at the leader level is very small (*N*=8), correlation results for Pilot study 3 are not generated but are included, along with correlation results for Pilot studies 1 and 2, in the aggregated correlation matrix in Table 4-1, shown below. With a similar rationale (i.e. small sample size), no observations were derived or are reported.

4.5.6 Ethical Considerations (Empirical Study)

4.5.6.1 Anonymity

As mentioned in previous sections, full anonymity was observed for the ‘follower’ cluster for each survey. The HR department arbitrarily generated codes for participants to use and was not briefed, informed or subsequently privy to any information in the form of raw data or processed results. I was not aware of any codes, names or identities linked with the participants. On the antipode, as processed data for the ‘leader’ cluster’ was to be employed to identify individual leadership development needs, help draft Personal Development Plans (to be shown and distributed to members of the management team during carefully designed feedback sessions), the author had no choice but to suggest that surveys for the ‘leader’ cluster were to be eponymously completed. The suggestion was accepted by both the CEO (owner) and the GM (salaried executive) for each participating

organization. No raw data in any form were subsequently returned or kept by the client organization.

4.5.6.2 Confidentiality

As a result of the above practices, full confidentiality was observed for all participants in the 'follower' cluster; this not only helped achieve 100% response rates without any coercion or even a single reminder from the CEO but created a climate of trust towards the purely developmental nature of the process, validity of measures, expected use of processed results and the credibility of the researcher.

4.5.6.3 Legitimate use of deception in research

According to the ESRC Research Ethics Guidelines, under the section 'Consent', "in some contexts, verbal consent may be ethically preferable to written consent. Where possible this should include audio-recorded consent". For *every* pilot study, *verbal consent* was secured by the CEO and members of the management team ('leader' cluster) at the end of the detailed one-hour oral PowerPoint presentation (by the author) on survey objectives, measures, sample items, scales, logistics, sample reporting and intended subsequent use of data. *Written consent* was secured by the CEO, as indicated by his signature on the formal document submitted by the author for executive approval, prior to the survey. Each member of the management team was then instructed to use the same presentation (to ensure that this was an open and transparent process) to inform the corresponding members of his/her 'follower' cluster of the process. Survey respondents were informed on the (1) rationale and auspices of the survey, (2) nature of the survey (developmental), (3) constructs to be assessed (… "leadership attitudes, skills and behaviours as linked with important organizational outcomes" – see Appendix 3), (4) data collection and analysis, (5) results and executive recommendations.

The management team of the organization was aware, as they were verbally informed by the author, that this survey constitutes an important part of my doctoral research (and were

offered a complimentary copy of the completed thesis when available). No written consent (to provide their approval on the use of data for research purposes) was required to be secured (by followers) as this was considered inappropriate given the hierarchy and strictly top-down cultures of these organizations.

Audio-recorded consent was not necessary or required – if proposed, it would have been fully rejected by the CEOs as an inappropriate and unnecessary practice that would increase rather than alleviate any fears or insecurities.

Research did not involve users of illegal drugs or political activists (where written consent might also create unnecessary risks); thus, no unnecessary risk was created or brought upon the research participants (leaders and followers). As consent (oral and written) was explicitly secured, no full statement, submitted as part of the ethics review, was required.

It is important to note that, due to the culture of the Greek organizations, where self-protection, non-exposure to the eyes of owner, job security and saving face is important, any use or mention of complex, unknown, clinical or psychological terms like 'leader narcissism', 'trait narcissism', 'grandiose narcissism' or 'vulnerable narcissism' would be frowned upon, and highly scrutinised by the CEO and leaders/followers alike. To alleviate fears and concerns that could destroy any survey process, before it began, the author has utilized more familiar concepts that were compatible with their current knowledge and job experience; this is not equivalent to deception but merely essential in effective communication at all levels and in all human interactions – the sender of the message (researcher) should be sensitive and sufficiently cautious to *code* the key message in a manner appropriate and compatible with the attitudes, experience, and knowledge of the receiver (participants), so that the receiver can comfortably and suitably *decode* the message in a favourable and non-threatening manner.

The author has used, for the narcissism concept (for the leader cluster only), words and terms like 'leadership personality', 'leadership behaviours', 'leadership enablers' and 'leadership barriers', explaining to participants that these aspects can ensure or hinder their leadership effectiveness and success. This explanation helped ease any concerns and

made the language (items) used by the narcissism measures more familiar, non-threatening and thus more acceptable. No comments or negative feedback were expressed in any of the pilot studies for the narcissism measures used in these surveys. Thus, the psychological and emotional safety of participants was safeguarded (reinforced by open and transparent communication at all stages), participant well-being was protected and not threatened in any way.

4.5.6.4 Potential harm (to participants)

According to the ESRC Research Ethics Guidelines, under the section 'Risk and Benefit' and more specifically on the sub-section relevant with how participants can be affected by the undertaken research, "researchers should consider potential physical or psychological harm, discomfort, stress or reputational risk to participants and their associates.

This research did not carry any physical risk for participants; it was not deemed disruptive or out of context, as (a) it was linked to the recently articulated vision (that all members of the management team, with little interference by the CEO, had drafted and agreed), (b) it was connected to an ongoing generic (for all) internal development program, aimed at equipping the CEO and the management team with attitudes, behaviours and skills essential in driving and supporting the strategic growth plans they had drafted and would eventually drive, and (c) it would culminate in person-specific development programs and actions that would ensure their own professional growth and success.

During the feedback sessions, the first question was: What did you think about the questionnaires? All replied that although some sentences (items) were rather complex (for the narcissism measures) and hard to answer, in general they did not feel confused or threatened in any way. The credibility of survey items was further enhanced by connecting these behaviours with specific developmental actions and customized interventions. Participants'' sense of security was further reinforced in coaching sessions using the same non-threatening terminology and connected with individual needs communicated during the

feedback sessions. There was no need whatsoever to refer to or revert to complex or confusing language and ambiguous terms.

4.5.6.5 Reputational damage risk (for participants)

In addition, there was no reputational damage risk as participants' personal social standing within the organization, their privacy, personal values and beliefs, links to family and community were left untouched and unaffected. Their position of employment was not weakened in any way; on the contrary, for members of respective management teams (as drivers of the strategic effort) and followers (active members of strategic action teams involved in execution of strategic plans), their position of employment was elevated and highly respected. Finally, any information revealed to the CEO, regarding unfavourable or unproductive behaviour was linked with development plans and constructive, non-threatening person-specific coaching dialogues.

The impact of these surveys on the participating organizations was highly beneficial as evidenced by the commitment, enthusiasm, and engagement of all stakeholders and subsequent growth and business success of each participating organization. Overall, these surveys constituted low-risk, clearly beneficial interventions with no harm to participants, their employment, reputation, and well-being.

4.6 Correlations (Aggregate Results – All Pilot Studies)

Table 4-1: Aggregate Correlation Matrix – (Pilot Studies 1, 2 and 3)

Variables	*N*	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Grandiose narcissism	24	1.39	1.17		.06	.05	.14	.17	.37
2. Vulnerable narcissism	24	1.90	0.51			−.21	−.35	−.37	−.27
3. Climate (for innovation)	132	4.04	0.35				.82**	.70**	.34
4. Trust	132	4.25	0.38					.86**	.40
5. Respect (for the leader)	132	4.29	0.42						.33
6. Work engagement	132	4.95	0.30						

Note. *N*= Sample Size (at the leader level for variables 1 and 2; at the follower level for variables 3 to 6); M=Mean; SD=Standard Deviation; Cronbach alphas are not reported for the aggregated sample, as the reliability of constructs has been measured using different instruments; Cronback alphas were used for Pilot 1, while for Pilot studies 2 and 3, due to collinearity and structural problems presented by the NPI, Kuder-Richardson formula (KR-20) a special case of Cronbach alpha, computed for dichotomous scores, was used to test reliability.* *p<.05, ** p<.01.*

As the sample size, even when data is aggregated for all pilot studies, is very small (N=24) at the leader level, correlations are not suitable for interpretation. Still, although not statistically significant, initial signs of the negative relationship of vulnerable narcissism, the neurotic component of narcissism, on organizational outcomes are emerging. I posit that these negative relationships could have been statistically significant with a larger sample size.

4.7 Implications (for the main empirical study)

The pilot study observations reinforced the preliminary insight that grandiose and vulnerable narcissism are distinct and need to be measured by separate instruments that can provide a robust and more reliable basis to help better understand the paradoxical nature of narcissism, and the 'entangled' (Back et al., 2013) nature of grandiose narcissism; it is hoped that the new NARQ measure will shed additional light in that direction.

Extant research highlights problems and difficulties with the PNI. Questions have been raised about whether the PNI's grandiosity scale adequately captures narcissistic grandiosity as well as other popular measures do. Specifically, some researchers have noted that PNI grandiosity shows a pattern of external associations that diverges from patterns for narcissistic grandiosity predicted by experts and is more like the predictions for the vulnerability scale (Edershile et al., 2018).

Recent research also highlights problems and difficulties with the NPI. In a meta-analysis, Rosenthal et al. (2011) found that a subset of NPI items were indeed problematic, functioning poorly at differentiating narcissists from non-narcissists. These items were also strongly associated with self-esteem but unrelated to aggression/anger.

Consequently, these instruments are somewhat 'fading from view' as they no longer constitute reliable options in accurately depicting narcissism. In contrast, the measure used to assess vulnerable narcissism proved to be a reliable and robust instrument and was kept for the main study.

The pilot phase also reinforced my interest in placing greater emphasis and attention during the main empirical study on the more 'clinical' and largely ignored dimension of narcissism, namely vulnerable narcissism, which was the only 'active' ingredient of narcissism during the pilot phase adversely affecting important aspects of organizational life (i.e. leader trustworthiness), while grandiose narcissism remained mostly 'inert'.

The pilot phase also confirmed the critical importance of leader-related parameters, namely, leader trustworthiness and respect for the leader, which are shown to be important prerequisites for creating a team climate conducive to innovation.

The pilot phase indicated that emphasis during the main study needed to shift from trustworthiness, an antecedent of trust, to a more precise and specific instrument assessing the affective and cognitive bases of trust in the leader (McAllister, 1995).

To make a research model as parsimonious as possible, it is essential to 'drop' similar or 'adjacent' constructs. Signs of collinearity guided my decision to retain variable 'trustworthiness' – albeit in a more precise and finely grained measure assessing trust in the leader – and replace the variable 'respect for the leader' with another variable, namely 'team psychological safety' to provide more evidence on the proposed mediated relationship between leader narcissism and team level outcomes.

The pilot phase also confirmed my decision to refrain from using longer versions of measures but to replace them with the shortest possible version without sacrificing the statistical quality of results; thus, the decision to use the shorter 14-item, and 17-item versions for climate for work group innovation and work engagement, respectively, within the empirical study.

Levels of analysis were not clearly specified during the pilot studies and thus provided a 'fuzzy' picture of the relation of narcissism and organizational outcomes. This was remedied for the main study by explicitly specifying constructs to be measured at the team (e.g. climate) and individual levels of analysis (e.g. engagement).

Finally, the pilot studies reaffirmed that my research model required enrichment by further exploring the relationship of leader narcissism, not only at the individual level (i.e. work

engagement), but also at the team level, and more specifically on its relationship with team performance, a ‘cornerstone’ of organizational performance.

4.8 Lessons Learned

In the previous section, I have described the various implications for the main study as indicated, derived, or concluded from the pilot phase, focusing mainly on the *content* of the research process including selection of variables, decisions on ‘optimum’ measures to be finally utilized and appropriate levels of analysis. It is also now imperative, as an essential part of the learning process, to explain how my acquisition of knowledge and skills through the pilot phase, provided important lessons learnt, relevant with the *context* of the research process, influencing my attitude, shaping my decisions, and determining my actions during the main study. This is what I have learned.

Firstly, it is crucial to provide an overriding positive context of a developmental nature (e.g. a new vision by an incoming CEO, a strategic initiative, or a leadership development program), which is conducive for human growth and essential for organizational success. This will ensure legitimacy, alleviate initial concerns and fears, and enable the engagement of participants during the process (although it will not necessarily ensure more honest responses). A letter from the CEO (to be requested for the main study), who will act as the executive sponsor will help the process immensely. It is thus no wonder that for the three organizations represented in the three pilot studies, the CEO was the true executive champion of the process, resulting to a 100% response rate with no reminders or coercion. Communication should be comprehensive and systematic, providing information regarding logistics, confidentiality, sample items, sample reporting and subsequent used of data by the organization.

Secondly, measures should be short and parsimonious, with simple language suitable for general populations (and not clinical samples), avoiding jargon and ambiguous terms (PNI-52), and ‘user-unfriendly’ scoring schemes (NPI-16) or including items that may appear

insulting or incompatible with cultural and organizational sensitivities that make participants uncomfortable, or put in an awkward position.

Thirdly, tight deadlines for completion are crucial, reducing the opportunity for respondents to discuss items and thus shape their responses; this will curtail 'spillover' and reduce respondent biases (Hansbrough et al., 2015). Frequent reminders should also be avoided as this can be perceived as a form of coercion.

Fourthly, line managers (immediate supervisors of participants) should be convinced of the importance of the process and act (like the CEO) as executive sponsors of this effort encouraging participation and stressing the need for honest and unbiased responses. If not, they may discourage their subordinates to participate or even worse, 'sabotage' the process by stressing its dubious nature and unfavourable outcomes.

Lastly, it should be borne in mind that 'context is king'; the pilot studies were carried out in 2018–2019, at the end of a bitter decade of financial hardship, social upheaval, organizational disruption, dissolution of working relationships, high unemployment, bank closures and even food rations. Given the sensitivity of the context and prevailing conditions, communication must be crystal clear focusing on not only disseminating information but listening to and alleviating fears, worries and insecurities, compatible with the gravity of these turbulent times.

4.9 Summary

In this chapter, I have provided an overview of the pilot phase, which comprised three short preparatory familiarization studies with small samples. For each study, I have described the sample demographics, research design and research procedure, measures for research variables and results. As participant sample sizes were small, I have limited myself to general observations that provide useful lessons to be utilized during the empirical study, rather than to arrive at premature and thus erroneous conclusions.

These pilot studies have served as a learning platform and a useful testing ground for methods and measures. They have not only 'set the scene' for the main study but have also

reinforced clarity, ‘streamlined’ my research thinking and honed my analytical skills. I am confident that lessons learnt during the pilot phase have considerably enhanced my research design, procedure, and data quality for the main study and improved my confidence in drawing valid, well supported conclusions, based on robust data analysis. In the next chapter, I will present methods, including sample demographics, research design, research procedure and measures for the main empirical study.

Chapter 5. Empirical Study – Methods

5.1 Overview

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the pilot phase, consisting of three short familiarization field studies, has served as a useful testing ground, and enabled my preparation for the main empirical study. In this chapter, based on insights and observations derived from the pilot phase, I provide information on the participating sample, research design and procedure, and measures employed to assess variables, which constitute the 'building blocks' of my research model.

5.2 The Organization

The participating organization, when the empirical study was carried out (2020), operated a network of 225 retail stores with 4,000 staff in Greece and 18 retail stores with 600 staff in Cyprus. The study was carried out in Greece in September/October 2020, at the peak of the pandemic, under the auspices of an ongoing internal development program evaluating leadership effectiveness during the COVID crisis and its impact on designated organizational outcomes. The retail network is managed by store managers (designated as L1- or level-1 team members/followers), who report to area managers (designated as L-2 or level-2 leaders) responsible for managing a cluster of stores in a district, who in turn report to directors managing geographical regions. Survey data for this cross-sectional, multi-level, multi-source study was collected from L-2 participants (leaders) and L-1 participants (followers) in stores in Greece and Cyprus.

5.3 Sample

A total of 225 store managers (L-1) and 53 area managers (L-2) in Greece were invited to participate in the survey. A total of 18 store managers (L-1) and 4 area managers (L-2) in Cyprus were invited to participate in the survey, constituting a total sample of 243 followers nested in 57 leaders.

During the pandemic, in the joint Greece/Cyprus operation (the Cyprus business unit is a subsidiary of the Greek organization), 37 store managers left, 31 store managers did not return or submitted largely incomplete questionnaires, and one store manager was unable to return a questionnaire due to maternity leave, leading to a total final usable sample of 174 ‘follower’ questionnaires (L-1).

Similarly, for area managers, 11 participants did not return questionnaires, and two respondents did not complete large parts of the questionnaire (11 items out of 65) and were consequently excluded, leading to a total final usable sample of 44 ‘leader’ questionnaires (L-2). Thus, a total of 218 participants (156 store managers and 40 area managers in Greece and 18 store managers and 4 area managers in Cyprus) returned usable questionnaires within the specified time limits.

All respondents were 100% Greek (for stores in Greece) and 100% Cypriot (for stores in Cyprus) nationals. No further demographic information was provided by the organization, citing the Personal Data Protection Law.

5.4 Research Design

5.4.1 The Professional Relationship

In one of my routine business development trips to identify new clients and secure consulting work, I met with representatives from the HR and L&D departments of a big retailer. I briefly described our consulting portfolio and key clients and they, in turn, provided an outline of some of their current internal development activities. There were thoughts of launching an ambitious leadership development program; they had been thinking of specific learning modules but had not decided on the exact final content. I proposed designing a survey-based process, a mechanism often used by the organization, to identify leadership development needs and thus help customize the program they were intending to implement, using internal training resources. I outlined the constructs that could be measured and again, as in the pilot phase, talked about leadership enablers and derailers rather than complex clinical narcissistic concepts that could be judged as business

irrelevant, create confusion and ambiguity, and reinforce insecurity among participating populations. They liked the idea of identifying ineffective or unproductive leader behaviours that they could remedy, and they were impressed that these leadership behaviours and practices could be linked to specific outcomes that were compatible with their interests and HR priorities (like engagement, an acknowledged driver of performance and trust in the leader – very critical because of the general upheaval and disruption of working relationships during the pandemic). They confirmed their interest a week later and sent me some additional briefing materials regarding their organizational values and some of the then-current leadership initiatives along with a long confidentiality agreement to be signed by the lead consultant (researcher) and accompanied, later, with an even longer contract of engagement. No specific details were discussed at that point. Their only request was to include additional sections that were pertinent at the time for their organization, namely 'Leadership Skills' and 'Resource Adequacy'; this request, which reinforced client customization, was readily accepted.

5.4.2 Preparatory Activities

Prior to survey administration, in June 2020, I presented the proposed concept, methodology and business case to the Learning & Development (L&D) department of the participating organization, usually the internal sponsor of such work, during a one-hour 'buy-in' session. This was followed by the submission of a formal document outlining the purpose of the study, measures, administration and logistics, sample reporting (customized), and organizational support requirements; this effort was enabled by several telephone conversations, with key stakeholders, to decide on the best way forward. Sample items for each measure were also provided to L&D, prior to the survey, to improve understanding and alleviate any concerns. There was no extra incentive for participants to complete the survey.

I then discussed the time plan (including key project milestones) with L&D and briefed the management team, who approved the initiative. I also discussed logistics, particularly the

confidentiality of responses, means of sending and receiving completed questionnaires, ways of efficiently monitoring the completion process (to ensure high response rates), and communication with respondents. I also explained coding and provided administration instructions in a letter to be disseminated to all participants (Appendix 3). To ensure confidentiality, participants were invited to complete and submit the questionnaires online or send hard copies via postal courier, sealed in envelopes quoting only their code number (mainly for small or remote stores with no access to personal email).

5.4.3 Procedure

Two separate survey questionnaires were utilized, with a view of minimizing single source of data bias. The first survey was distributed to executives at the higher hierarchical level of the store network (i.e. L-2 area managers) and included a self-reporting measure based on the trifurcated model of narcissism (narcissistic admiration, narcissistic rivalry, and vulnerable narcissism) discussed in previous chapters. The second survey was distributed to managers at the lower hierarchical level of the store network (i.e. L-1 store managers) and included different measures assessing mediators, as per my theoretical model, namely trust in the leader, team psychological safety, and climate for work group innovation, and outcomes individual work engagement and team performance. Survey questionnaires are shown in Appendix 4.

All questionnaires were administered in Greek. For measures not available in Greek, translation in Greek was carried out by a team of a psychoanalyst and a psychology university professor and subsequently checked by the researcher, following the generally accepted translation/back-translation procedure described by Brislin (1970). Surveys were sent out in September 2020 and submitted by the end of October 2020; Surveys completed by ‘leader’ were not anonymized (to enable self-development plans), while those completed by ‘followers’ were anonymized (in code form), to ensure data confidentiality and encourage honest responses. Surveys completed online were sent to the author on a USB stick via a courier for processing. Surveys completed as hard copies, were placed in sealed envelopes

denoted only by the designated code for each respondent and delivered to me, via courier, for processing. During administration of the survey, frequent and person-specific reminders were sent by L&D, in some instances even after the official deadline, to ensure the highest possible response rate.

For Greece, response rates were 75.5% for area managers (L-2) and 69.3% for store managers (L-1). For Cyprus, due to the small sample and proximity, a 100% response rate was possible for store (L-1) and area managers (L-2). Overall (Greece/Cyprus), response rates were 71.6% for store managers (L-1) and 77.1% for area managers (L-2). The overall average cluster size was 3.955.

5.4.4 Reporting Findings to Management

Despite having recommended effective ways of reporting data and findings, the participating organization insisted on using their own format, resembling a dashboard, with the intention of facilitating their thinking and helping them derive and design specific development programs and coaching interventions. They clarified that our involvement would be completed once findings were presented to designated members of the management team. I have complied with these requirements and eventually presented all findings in the requested/imposed format. Overall results were finally presented for each construct and for each pertinent population. The participating organization would eventually utilize our findings to design/implement their own targeted interventions using internal resources.

5.5 Measures

5.5.1 Predictors (Independent Variables)

5.5.1.1 Grandiose Narcissism - Admiration

Grandiose narcissism – admiration, was measured by the self-reporting Narcissistic Admiration and Rivalry Questionnaire (NARQ; Back et al., 2013). This variable was assessed by the 9-item section of NARQ assessing the agentic admiration ‘pathway’ using a five-point Likert-type scale, ranging from ‘1 – strongly disagree’ to ‘5 – strongly agree’.

Reliability was questionable for the admiration dimension (α=.66); sample item: “I deserve to be seen as a great personality”.

It should be noted that while Cronbach’s α was further increased to an acceptable .74 when item #2 (‘one day I will be famous’) was removed, despite questionable reliability, the item was retained. As there was no validated Greek version, the instrument was translated into Greek using the translation/back-translation method (Brislin, 1970).

5.5.1.2 Grandiose Narcissism – Rivalry

Grandiose narcissism – rivalry, was measured by the self-reporting Narcissistic Admiration and Rivalry Questionnaire (NARQ; Back et al., 2013). This variable was measured by the 9-item section of NARQ assessing the antagonistic rivalry ‘pathway’ using a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from ‘1 – strongly disagree’ to ‘5 – strongly agree’. Reliability was acceptable for the rivalry dimension (α=72); sample item: “I want my rivals to fail”. As mentioned above, the instrument was translated into Greek using the translation/back-translation method (Brislin, 1970).

5.5.1.3 Vulnerable Narcissism

Vulnerable narcissism was measured (as in Pilot studies 2 and 3) by the self-reporting Maladaptive Covert Narcissism Scale (MCNS; Cheek et al., 2013), an enriched version of the unidimensional Hypersensitive Narcissism Scale, or HSNS (Hendin & Cheek, 1997); this is a unidimensional construct comprised of 23 items on which respondents answer using a five-point Likert type scale, ranging from ‘1 – strongly disagree’ to ‘5 – strongly agree’. Reliability for the scale was good (α=86); sample item: “I feel that I have enough on my hands without worrying about other people's troubles”. As mentioned in previous chapters, the instrument was translated into Greek using the translation/back-translation method (Brislin, 1970).

5.5.2 Mediators

5.5.2.1 Team Psychological Safety (Team Level)

Team psychological safety was measured by the seven-item scale (Edmondson, 1999) using a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from '1 – strongly disagree' to '5 – strongly agree'. Reliability was acceptable for this measure (α=88); sample item: "It is safe to take a risk on this team". The instrument was also translated into Greek using the translation/back-translation method (Brislin, 1970).

5.5.2.2 Climate for Work Group Innovation (Team Level)

Climate for work group innovation was measured by the shorter, 14-item version of the climate for work group innovation instrument (TCI-14; Anderson and West, 1998), using a five-point Likert-type scale, ranging from '1 – strongly disagree' to '5 – strongly agree'. Reliability was excellent for this measure (α=.95); sample item: "Members of the team build on each other's ideas in order to achieve the best possible outcome". Again, the instrument was translated into Greek using the translation/back-translation method (Brislin, 1970).

5.5.2.3 Trust in the Leader (Individual Level)

Trust in the leader was evaluated by the 11-item trust measure by McAllister (1995), assessing affect-based and cognitive-based trust (five items for affect-based and six items for cognitive-based trust), on which respondents answer using a seven-point Likert-type scale with anchors ranging from '1 – very strongly disagree' to '7 – very strongly agree'. Reliability was excellent for this measure (α=97); sample items: "if I shared my problems with this person, I know (s)he would respond constructively and caringly" for affect-based trust, and "I can rely on this person not to make my job more difficult by careless work" for cognitive-based trust. As there was no validated Greek version, the instrument was translated into Greek using the translation/back-translation method (Brislin, 1970).

5.5.3 Outcomes

5.5.3.1 Team Performance

Team performance was measured by a four-item scale (Edmondson, 1999) using a seven-point Likert-type scale, ranging from ‘1 – very inaccurate’ to ‘7 – very accurate’. Reliability was good (α=.80); sample item: “This team keeps getting better and better”.

5.5.3.2 Individual Work Engagement

Work engagement was measured (as in all pilot studies) by the existing validated Greek version of the instrument for work engagement (UWES-17; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004) using a seven-point frequency scale ranging from ‘0 – never’ to ‘6 – always’. Reliability was excellent for this measure assessing work engagement (α=.96); sample item: “I am proud of the work that I do”.

5.6 Summary

In this chapter, I have provided information on sample, research design, research procedure and measures for the main empirical study. In the next chapter, I will present the results of the statistical analysis (correlation, aggregation, multilevel confirmatory factor analysis, regression, and mediation) and provide evidence supporting (or not supporting) the set of articulated hypotheses, inherent to my research model. Moreover, I will discuss the results and findings of the supplemental exploratory analysis.

Chapter 6. Results

6.1 Overview

In this chapter, I report on the results of the main empirical study including descriptive statistics and correlations, aggregation, multilevel confirmatory factor analysis (MCFA), regression and mediation (main empirical study). The approach followed for the analysis (for testing the models with team performance as a level-2 outcome Vs those with engagement as a level-1 outcome) is also described in detail in subsequent sections. Descriptive statistics and correlations were generated using the IBM SPSS statistical software and M*plus v8.8* (Muthén & Muthén, 1998-2017). Aggregation, MCFA, regression, mediation and moderation analyses were also carried out using M*plus v8.8.*

6.2 Descriptive Statistics

The psychometric properties of the empirical study variables constituting my hypothesized research model, and defined in previous chapters, are shown in Table 6-1.1. The mean values for the narcissism variables (i.e. narcissistic admiration, narcissistic rivalry, and vulnerable narcissism) for my empirical study were 3.74 (SD=0.41), 1.78 (SD=0.50) and 2.07 (SD=0.43), respectively. For similar empirical studies reviewed, assessing the same three facets of narcissism, using the same narcissism measure (NARQ: Back et al., 2013; NARQ-S: Leckelt et al., 2018), mean values, standard deviations, measure, scales used, and reference (source) are shown in Table 6-1.2. As the Likert scale is the same for NARQ used in studies reviewed but different to the scale used in my study (1 to 5) rescaling (i.e. multiplying each member of a data set with a constant term) is deemed necessary to enable comparison. Rescaled psychometric properties are shown in Table 6-2 shows the correlation matrix for the empirical study, identified at individual and team level of measurement. For correlations, shortened one-word names for research variables are occasionally used for convenience of depiction; these shortened versions are also occasionally used in the text for brevity.

Table 6-1.1: Psychometric properties of empirical study variables

Variable	*N*	*M*	*SD*	α	Potential Range	Actual Range
Narcissistic Admiration	44	3.74	0.41	.66	1-5	2.9–4.4
Narcissistic Rivalry	44	1.78	0.50	.72	1-5	1.0−3.0
Vulnerable Narcissism	44	2.07	0.43	.86	1-5	1.3−3.2
Team Psychological Safety	174	3.96	0.39	.95	1-5	3.0–4.8
Climate for Work Group Innovation	174	5.32	0.73	.97	1-7	3.1–6.7
Trust in the Leader	174	4.07	0.40	.88	1-5	3.1–4.8
Team Performance	44	4.74	0.72	.78	1-7	3.2–6.5
Individual Work Engagement	174	5.10	0.54	.96	0-6	2.6–5.7

Note. The variation in sample size *N* is due to different populations i.e. 174 followers (level-1) nested in 44 leaders (level-2); measures for leaders (*N*=44) were self-reported; *M*= Mean; *SD*= Standard Deviation; α = Cronbach alpha. Likert scales for each measure are depicted in the column 'potential range'; actual range of scores, for each measure, are depicted in the last column.

Table 6-1.2: Psychometric properties of narcissism variables (similar studies)

Variable	*M*	*SD*	Measure (Items)	Scale	Author/Year
Narcissistic Admiration	3.22[f]	0.98	NARQ (18)	1–6 (Likert)	Lange et al. (2016)
Narcissistic Rivalry	2.40[f]	0.94	NARQ (18)	1–6 (Likert)	
Narcissistic Admiration	3.34[f]	1.09	NARQ-S (6)	1–6 (Likert)	Rogoza et al. (2018)
Narcissistic Rivalry	3.15[f]	1.11	NARQ-S (6)	1–6 (Likert)	
Narcissistic Admiration	3.11[a]	0.84	NARQ (18)	1–6 (Likert)	Helfrich & Dietl (2019)
Narcissistic Rivalry	2.19[a]	0.86	NARQ (18)	1–6 (Likert)	
Narcissistic Admiration	2.94[f]	1.17	NARQ-S (6)	1–6 (Likert)	Kwiatkowska et al. (2019)
Narcissistic Rivalry	3.18[f]	1.19	NARQ-S (6)	1–6 (Likert)	
Narcissistic Admiration	3.11[b]	0.79	NARQ (18)	1–6 (Likert)	Gauglitz et al. (2022)
Narcissistic Rivalry	1.91[b]	0.52	NARQ (18)	1–6 (Likert)	
Narcissistic Admiration	3.30[c]	0.93	NARQ (18)	1–6 (Likert)	Gauglitz et al. (2022)
Narcissistic Rivalry	1.99[c]	0.85	NARQ (18)	1–6 (Likert)	
Narcissistic Admiration	3.13[d]	0.65	NARQ (18)	1–6 (Likert)	Fehn & Schütz (2020)
Narcissistic Rivalry	1.88[d]	0.52	NARQ (18)	1–6 (Likert)	
Narcissistic Admiration	3.35[e]	1.07	NARQ (18)	1–6 (Likert)	Fehn & Schütz (2020)
Narcissistic Rivalry	2.01[e]	1.10	NARQ (18)	1–6 (Likert)	
Vulnerable Narcissism	2.49	0.69	HSNS (10)	1–7 (Likert)	Wirtz & Rigotti (2020)

Note: [a] pertaining to employee narcissism; [b] results from study 1 (leader–follower dyads); [c] results from study 2; [d] results are self-rated; [e] results are rated by others; [f] non-managerial population.
NARQ= Narcissistic Admiration & Rivalry Questionnaire (Back et al., 2013); S= Short Version;
HSNS=Hypersensitive Narcissism Scale (Hendin & Chick, 1997)

Table 6-1.3: Psychometric properties of my empirical study (rescaled)

Variable	*M*	*SD*	Range	*M* [a]	*SD* [a]	Range [a]
Narcissistic Admiration	3.74	0.41	2.9–4.4	4.49	0.49	3.5–5.3
Narcissistic Rivalry	1.78	0.50	1.0−3.0	2.14	0.60	1.2–3.6
Vulnerable Narcissism	2.07	0.43	1.3−3.2	2.90	0.60	1.8–4.5

Note. As the scale used in studies reviewed for admiration and rivalry is 1 to 6 (Likert) and I have used a scale of 1 to 5 (Likert), rescaling is essential (ultimately changing the range of my data and not the shape of distribution). This is achieved by multiplying admiration/rivalry mean/SD by a scaling constant of 1.2. Similarly, as the scale used in the single study identified for vulnerable narcissism is 1 to 7 (Likert) and I have used a scale of 1 to 5 (Likert) then rescaling is essential and is achieved by multiplying vulnerable narcissism mean/SD by a scaling constant of 1.4.
[a] rescaled values of mean, SD, and extended range.

For narcissistic admiration, as the mean for this agentic form of narcissism is quite high (4.49 on a 1.0 to 6.0 Likert scale), its prevalence in the workplace is significant and confirms the need to continue studying narcissistic admiration (as evidenced by most of the extant research focusing on grandiose narcissism – admiration is a key manifestation of grandiose narcissism) and its effect in the organizational domain. For narcissistic rivalry, although the mean of this antagonistic form of narcissism is about average (2.14 on a 1.0 to 6.0 Likert scale), its prevalence in the workplace is also significant as shown by its adverse effect, supported by extant research, on important organizational outcomes. For vulnerable narcissism, the mean of this neurotic form of narcissism is also about average (2.90 on a 1.0 to 6.0 Likert scale).

Table 6-2: Correlation Matrix (Empirical Study)

	N	*M*	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Admiration	44	3.74	0.41	(0.66)	.11	.35*	−.01	−.06	−.01	.00	−.05
2. Rivalry	44	1.78	0.50		(0.72)	.50**	−.23	−.21	−.40**	−.22	−.12
3. Vulnerable	44	2.07	0.43			(0.86)	−.07	−.16	−.24	−.41**	−.07
4. Safety	174	4.07	0.40				(0.88)	.75	.63***	−.11	.59**
5. Climate	174	3.96	0.39					(0.95)	.54**		.53**
6. Trust	174	5.32	0.73						(0.97)	.04	.23
7. Performance	44	4.74	0.72							(0.80)	−.14
8. Engagement	174	5.10	0.54								(0.96)

Note. The variation in sample size *N* is due to different populations i.e. 174 store managers (L-1) nested in 44 store cluster areas (L-2); measures for leaders (*N*=44) were self-reported; *M*= Mean; *SD*= Standard Deviation; Cronbach alphas are shown, in brackets, on the diagonal; ** p<.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001.*

A Pearson coefficient r correlation analysis was performed to evaluate the relationships between study variables associated with the hypothesized model shown in Figure 3-1. Correlations between study variables are shown in Table 6-2 above.

6.2.1 Correlations (significant relationships)

For predictor (leader) narcissism, it was found that both dimensions of grandiose narcissism (i.e., narcissistic admiration, narcissistic rivalry) are positively related to vulnerable narcissism. More specifically, narcissistic admiration exhibited a positive significant correlation with vulnerable narcissism (*r*=.35, *p* < .05*)*; moreover, narcissistic rivalry also exhibited a positive significant correlation with vulnerable narcissism (*r*=.50, *p* < .001*).* Mediator team psychological safety exhibited a positive significant correlation with mediator trust in the leader (*r*=.63, *p* < .001*)*. Moreover, mediator climate for work group innovation also exhibited a positive significant correlation with mediator trust in the leader (*r*=.54, *p* < .001*)*. In contrast, predictor narcissistic rivalry exhibited a negative significant correlation with mediator trust in the leader (*r*=-.40, *p* < .001*)*.

Most importantly, vulnerable narcissism exhibited a negative significant correlation with outcome team performance *(r*=-.40, *p* < .001).

6.2.2 Correlations (non-significant relationships)

Predictor narcissistic admiration did not correlate significantly with narcissistic rivalry (*r*=.11, *p*=0.471), and mediators team psychological safety (*r*=−.01, *p* =0 .823), climate for work group innovation (*r*=−.06, *p*=0.456) and trust in the leader (*r*=−.01, *p*=0.519). Moreover, narcissistic rivalry did not correlate significantly with team psychological safety (*r*=−.23, *p*=0.100) and climate for work group innovation (*r*=−.21, *p*=0.178). Finally, vulnerable narcissism did not correlate significantly with team psychological safety (*r*=−.07, *p*=0.703), climate for work group innovation (*r*=−.16, *p*=0.555), and trust in the leader (*r*=−.24, *p*=0.151).

Narcissism predictors (i.e., narcissistic admiration, narcissistic rivalry and vulnerable narcissism) did not correlate significantly with outcome individual work engagement (r=−.05, p=0.493; r=−.12, p=0.478; r=−.07, p=0.771, respectively). Narcissistic rivalry did not correlate significantly with outcome team performance (r=−.22, p=0.173). Finally, narcissistic admiration has shown a nonsignificant nil-linear relationship, with team performance (r=0.00, p=0.885).

Mediators team psychological safety, climate for work group innovation and trust in the leader did not correlate significantly with outcome team performance (r=−.11, p=0.404; r=−.11, p=0.567; r=0.04, p=0.896 respectively). Only mediator trust in the leader did not correlate significantly with outcome individual work engagement (r=.23, p=0.107).

6.2.3 Core Findings (Descriptive Statistics)

Overall, actual correlations were in the predicted direction (i.e. negative) for the self-centred, antagonistic, conflict-prone, and unpopular narcissistic rivalry (Back et al., 2013; Back, 2018) and the neurotic, depressive, socially withdrawn, and fragile vulnerable narcissism (Pincus & Roche, 2018). Somewhat contrary to the predicted direction (i.e. positive), were correlations shown for the agentic, extraverted narcissistic admiration (Back et al., 2013) and covariates team psychological safety, climate for work group innovation, and trust in the leader, and outcome individual work engagement.

It should be noted that some non-significant relationships found and shown above, contradict what had been predicted. More specifically, the non-significant relationships between (1) narcissistic admiration and mediators team psychological safety, climate for work group Innovation and trust in the leader, and (2) narcissistic admiration and individual work engagement, were originally predicted to be positive and significant.

6.3 Aggregation

6.3.1 Aggregation Coefficients

6.3.1.1 The Intraclass Correlation Coefficient – ICC (1)

According to Field (2013, p. 816), the ICC (1) "represents the proportion of the total variability in the outcome that is attributable to the classes".

The Intraclass Correlation Coefficient, ICC (1) can be estimated as shown below:

$$\text{Intraclass Correlation Coefficient, ICC (1)} = V_b / (V_b + V_w) \quad (1)$$

where V_b= between-level variance (attributed to the cluster), V_w= within-level variance, and $(V_b + V_w)$ is total variance (total variability of the outcome).

The ICC (1), encompassing the estimation of both Interrater Agreement (IRA) and Interrater Reliability (IRR) (LeBreton & Senter, 2008), is the first criterion for confirming aggregation. The value of ICC (1), must be greater than 0. If the value of ICC (1) is near zero, then constructs are conceptually relevant at the individual level and cannot be aggregated.

I have estimated the ICC (1) values (occasionally referred to as simply 'ICC' for simplicity of depiction) for constructs relevant with my hypothesized model, namely team psychological safety, climate for work group innovation, and trust in the leader. Narcissism variables and outcomes team performance and individual work engagement were excluded. ICC results for team psychological safety (ICC=0.09), climate for work group innovation (ICC=0.11), and trust in the leader (ICC=0.11) are shown in Table 6-3.

Table 6-3: Interclass Correlation Coefficient, ICC (1)

Variable	ICC (1)[a]	Effect	Criterion 1[b]
Team Psychological Safety	0.09	Small	Yes
Climate for Work Group Innovation	0.11	Medium	Yes
Trust (in the leader)	0.11	Medium	Yes

Note. ICC (1) values were estimated by M*plus* v8.8; Bliese (2000) posits that a value of 0.05 and above would indicate the appropriateness of aggregation.

[a] According to guidelines by LeBreton and Senter (2008, p. 838), ".01<ICC<.09 is a small effect, .10<ICC<.24 is medium effect and ICC>.25 is a large effect".

[b] All variables shown above meet the first criterion for aggregation.

6.3.1.2 Interrater Agreement Coefficient (r_{wg})

The Interrater Agreement Coefficient (r_{wg}) is the second criterion necessary for aggregation (Kenny & La Voie, 1985). The Interrater Agreement Coefficient (r_{wg}) "assesses the extent of consensus agreement (within-unit variability), within a single unit for a single measure" (Klein & Kozlowski, 2000, p. 222). Values for r_{wg} were estimated for constructs that met criterion 1 (i.e. team psychological safety, climate for work group innovation, and trust in the leader). These are shown in Table 6-4.

Table 6-4: Interclass Correlation Coefficient (ICC) and Interrater Agreement (r_{wg})

Variable	ICC (1)	Criterion 1	r_{wg} [a]	Agreement [b]	Criterion 2
Team Psychological Safety	0.09	Yes	0.62	Moderate interrater agreement	Yes
Climate for Work Group Innovation	0.11	Yes	0.72	Moderate interrater agreement	Yes
Trust (in the leader)	0.11	Yes	-0.17[c]	Lack of interrater agreement	No

[a] ICC (1) values were estimated by M*plus* v8.8; although there are no strict standards of acceptability, James (1982) recommends an r_{wg} cutoff point of 0.60 for the aggregation of individual-level constructs to team level. r_{wg} values were calculated based on the estimation formula by LeBreton and Senter (2008, p. 818) and skewness interpretation (Bulmer, 1979).

[b] According to LeBreton and Senter (2008), r_{wg} values of 0.00–0.30 denote lack of interrater agreement; values of 0.31–0.50 denote weak interrater agreement; values of 0.51–0.70 denote moderate interrater agreement; values of 0.71–0.90 denote strong interrater agreement and values of 0.91–1.00 denote very strong interrater agreement. LeBreton and Senter (2008) suggest that research questions in the social sciences only necessitate the establishment of weak to moderate agreement.

[c] Out of range values (observed for trust) are possible (LeBreton & Senter, 2008, p. 826); trust presents a negative (left) skewness.

I observe that constructs (a) team psychological safety and (b) climate for work group innovation meet both criteria discussed above as they both generate small to medium values of ICC, exhibit moderate interrater agreement, and compare favourably with accepted cutoff values (James, 1982). Aggregation to team level is thus warranted for team psychological safety and climate for work group innovation. Aggregation is *not* warranted for trust in the leader.

Consequently, analyses involving *aggregated variables* were carried out for:

(a) narcissism/team psychological safety/team performance (3 models),

(b) narcissism/climate for work group innovation/ team performance models (3 models),

(c) narcissism/team psychological safety/work engagement (3 models), and

(d) narcissism/climate for work group innovation/work engagement (3 models). Similarly, analyses were carried out involving *disaggregated variables,* namely (e) narcissism/trust in the leader/team performance (3 models), and (f) narcissism/trust in the leader/work engagement (3 models). All models are depicted in predictor/mediator/outcome format.

6.3.2 Aggregated Variables

From the aggregation analysis carried out, I can conclude that model variables (a) team psychological safety and (b) climate for work group innovation meet aggregation criteria. Both variables exhibit accepted values (Bliese, 2000) of Intraclass Correlation Coefficient (ICC), exhibit moderate interrater agreement (LeBreton & Senter, 2008), and compare favourably with accepted cutoff values (James, 1982). Aggregation to team level is thus warranted for team psychological safety and climate for work group innovation.

6.3.3 Disaggregated Variables

Trust in the leader does not meet criterion 2 (Table 6-4) and is thus disaggregated.

6.4 Multilevel Confirmatory Analysis (MCFA)

6.4.1 Testing the Factor Structure (Narcissism)

Confirmatory factor analyses (CFA) were conducted to test the factor structure of the narcissism measure and the overall measurement model. I have used M*plus* with a maximum likelihood estimator (ML) and robust standard errors. Model fit (χ^2), degrees of freedom (df), the probability value and two appropriate fit indices, namely Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) and Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) are hereby reported. It should be noted that goodness-of-fit indices should not be used as golden rules but are employed to compare different models (Nye & Drasgow, 2011).

To test the narcissism factor structure, I conducted a CFA for nested data and compared three alternative narcissism models: (a) a *one-factor model* where all three narcissism dimensions load on an overall narcissism construct, (b) a *two-factor model* including

narcissistic admiration and narcissistic rivalry, which load on one grandiose narcissism factor plus vulnerable narcissism, and (c) a *three-factor model* (depicted by my hypothesized model), which includes the three dimensions of narcissism (i.e. narcissistic admiration, narcissistic rivalry, and vulnerable narcissism).

On comparing the above mentioned three narcissism models, I observe that the theoretically predicted three-factor narcissism model ($\chi 2(28)=299.138$, p <0.001, $\chi 2/df=10.68$, RMSEA=0.236, SRM*R*=0.194 and $\chi^2 diff=9.313$) is better than the two-factor model ($\chi^2(21)=289.825$, p <0.001, $\chi^2/df=13.80$, RMSEA=0.271 and SRM*R*=0.211), and the one-factor model ($\chi^2(15)=203.989$, p <0.001, $\chi^2/df=13.60$, RMSEA=0.269, SRM*R*=0.203 and $\chi^2 diff=85.836$). Results for the three models are shown in Table 6-5.

Table 6-5: Fit Statistics (Narcissism Factor Structure)

Model	X^2	df	X^2/df	RMSEA	SRMR
(1) *one-factor model* (where the three narcissism dimensions load on an overall narcissism construct)	203.989	15	13.60	0.269	0.203
(2*) two-factor model* (where narcissistic admiration and narcissistic rivalry load on one grandiose narcissism construct)	289.825	21	13.80	0.271	0.211
(3) *three-factor model* (including the three dimensions of narcissism, i.e. narcissistic admiration, narcissistic rivalry, and vulnerable narcissism)	299.138	28	10.68	0.236	0.194

Note. Chi-square index or X^2= Model Fit; df=Degrees of Freedom; X^2/df= Relative index by degree of freedom; RMSEA= Root Mean Square Error of Approximation; SRM*R*= Standardized Root Mean Square Residual.

As shown in Table 6-5, using the criterion X^2/df (relative index by degree of freedom), which adjusts for sample size, rather than the absolute X^2, I confirm that my theoretically predicted three-factor model has a better fit than the comparable models tested.

6.4.2 Measurement Model

Before estimating the regression-based structural model (depicting causal paths between latent variables), it is important to estimate the measurement model and test assumptions regarding the dimensionality (factor structure) of the hierarchical data at multiple levels (Stride, 2021). As the data is nested in a multilevel structure, i.e. followers nested in leaders, common practice stipulates that it is important to partition the variance of the outcome and predictor variables into their within-group and between-group parts and explain them, via multilevel modelling, as separate constituent parts (Stride, 2021) based on the premise that both outcome and predictor variables may naturally operate on both levels.

The first stage of a simple Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) is to examine the ICC statistics of each variable measured at the individual level. This is important because "if items have only trivial levels of higher-level variability, it is unlikely that a clear factor structure will exist […] at the higher level" (Stride, 2021, p. 54). Residual variances, at within-level and between-level indicate that a multilevel analysis is likely to be beneficial. Variances are shown in Table 6-6.

Table 6-6: Residual Variances (Within/Between)

Variable	*Residual Variance (within-level)*	*Residual Variance (between-level)*	ICC (1)
Team Psychological Safety	0.404	0.040	0.092
Climate for Work Group Innovation	0.304	0.037	0.112
Trust in the Leader	1.146	0.208	0.155
Individual Work Engagement	0.394	0.113	0.224

6.4.2.1 Fitting a measurement model (at the lower level)

Where data is multilevel, the measurement model needs to be considered at each level; Stride (2021) suggests that the lower level (i.e. followers) should be investigated first as this is the larger sample (174 followers nested in 44 teams). To fit a measurement model at the lower level, I have run a traditional single-level CFA (to test the fit of two measurement

models, with the assumption that all variables operate at the within-level only) for, (a) the *five-factor model*, which includes the three narcissism predictors (narcissistic admiration, narcissistic rivalry, and vulnerable narcissism) and outcomes work engagement and performance, and (b) the *four-factor model*, which includes the two narcissism predictors (where admiration and rivalry 'pathways' are combined into a 'grandiose narcissism' factor) and vulnerable narcissism, and outcomes work engagement and team performance. Goodness-of-fit statistics for the two models described above are shown in Table 6-7.

Table 6-7: Fitting a measurement model at the lower level (e.g. individual)

Model	X^2	df	X^2/df	ΔX^2, Δdf	RMSEA	SRMR (within)
Five-factor model	110.749	10	11.07	N/A	0.241	0.178
Four-factor model	101.437	6	16.91	9, 4	0.302	0.193

Note. The five-factor model includes narcissistic admiration, narcissistic rivalry, and vulnerable narcissism and outcomes work engagement and team performance; the four-factor model includes narcissistic admiration and narcissistic rivalry combined into a single 'grandiose narcissism' variable and vulnerable narcissism and outcomes work engagement and performance. Chi-square index or X^2= Model Fit; df=Degrees of Freedom; X^2/df= Relative index by degree of freedom; ΔX^2= Difference in X^2; Δdf= Difference in df; RMSEA= Root Mean Square Error of Approximation; SRM*R*= Standardized Root Mean Square Residual. N/A=Not Applicable.

6.4.2.2 Multilevel CFA (MCFA)

The next step (Stride, 2021) is to fit a measurement model at both the lower and higher level, i.e. carry out a MCFA.

According to Hox (2010), this entails (a) retaining the best model(s) at the lower level (see Table 6-6 above), (b) specifying an accompanying team level model, and (c) fitting two benchmark models at the higher level; these are the *independence or baseline model,* which specifies no relationship between variables and represents the simplest fit, and the *saturated model*, which specifies unconstrained relationships between variables and represents the best possible fit. Goodness-of-fit statistics for MCFA comparing alternative multilevel measurement models, are shown in Table 6-8.

Table 6-8: Multilevel Confirmatory Factor Analysis (MCFA)

Models	X^2	df	X^2/df	ΔX^2	Δdf	RMSEA	SRMR (within/ between)
(1) Five-factor model at the employee level, *independence (baseline) model* at the team level (worst fit).	246.870	27	9.14	N/A	N/A	0.216	0.352/ 0.393
(2) Five-factor model at the employee level, three factor model at the team level.	110.749	10	11.07	137	17	0.241	0.178
(3) Four-factor model at the employee level, two factor model at the team level.	101.437	6	16.91	9	4	0.302	0.193
(4) Five-factor model at the employee level, *saturated model* at the team level (best fit).	31.924	10	3.19	69	4	0.000	0.002/ 0.007

Note. For model 2, variables include narcissistic admiration, narcissistic rivalry, and vulnerable narcissism; for model 3, narcissistic admiration and narcissistic rivalry are combined into a single 'grandiose narcissism' construct.
Chi-square index or X^2= Model Fit; df=Degrees of Freedom; X^2/df= Relative index by degree of freedom; ΔX^2= Difference in X^2, Δdf= Difference in df; RMSEA= Root Mean Square Error of Approximation; SRM*R*= Standardized Root Mean Square Residual. N/A=Not Applicable.

Adhering to the methodology suggested by Hox (2010) and Stride (2021), I have compared four models, retaining the best two models at the lower level, and comparing them with the baseline (independence) and saturated models. The five-factor model 2 ($\chi^2(10)=110.749$, p <0.001, χ^2/df=11.07, RMSEA=0.241, SRM*R*=0.178 and χ^2diff=136.121) provides a better fit than the four-factor model 3 ($\chi^2(6)=101.437$, p <0.001, χ^2/df=16.91, RMSEA=0.302, SRM*R*=0.193 and χ^2diff=9.312) and lies, as expected, between the *baseline model* ($\chi^2(27)=246.870$, p <0.001, χ^2/df=9.15, RMSEA=0.216, SRM*R*=0.352/0.393) and the *saturated model* ($\chi^2(10)=31.924$, p=0.004, χ^2/df=3.19, RMSEA=0.000, SRM*R*=0.002/0.007 and χ^2diff=69.513).

6.5 Model Testing Strategy

6.5.1 Introduction

The treatment of multilevel or hierarchical data (as in the current empirical study, where followers are nested in leaders), for purposes of statistical analysis, throws up specific practical, technical, and conceptual issues that standard regression techniques are unable

to adequately resolve (Stride, 2021). These include (1) modelling the cluster effect, and (2) sample size inflation, which in turn leads to type I errors when testing hypotheses (i.e. finding significant effects when they don't really exist) (Stride, 2021). Moreover, this can also lead to ecological fallacy, as a hypothesis conceptualised at the lower level, and the results obtained when testing it, can be very different when the equivalent constructs are measured, and the equivalent relationship is tested at the higher level (Stride, 2021).

6.5.2 Fitting a Multilevel Model in Mplus

Thus, ignoring the multilevel structure and using standard multiple regression, or aggregating to create a single level are both clearly unsuitable. The answer is multilevel regression which is about separating out (i.e. partitioning) the variance according to my multilevel structure and then explaining it (Stride, 2021). This involves modelling the variance at multiple levels rather than as one big jump, which allows predictors variables to explain variance at theoretical level and facilitates the calculation of the amount of variance explained in the outcome at each level (Stride, 2021). These variances are labelled 'individual level residual variance' or within-groups variances and 'team level residual variance' or between-groups variances. These are shown in Table 6-8 (7^{th} and 8^{th} columns). Enabled by the above guidelines, I have evaluated a series of increasingly complex models (1^{st} column) by following a 'bottom up' strategy, suggested by Stride (2021); this entails constructing consecutive models by sequentially adding the required predictors,

This process starts with model 1 – the unconditional model – with no predictors added and not acknowledging the multilevel structure of my data. Model 1 serves as a baseline to evaluate other models. Models 2, 3, and 4 consecutively add observed narcissism predictors namely narcissistic admiration, narcissistic rivalry, and vulnerable narcissism, respectively, while models 5, 6, and 7 consecutively add covariates trust in the leader, team psychological safety, and climate for work group innovation, at the individual level (L-1).

An overall measure of the improvement in fit of a model is the Change in Deviance statistic (4^{th} column), calculated as the −2 x the difference in the Log-Likelihood, or LL (2^{nd} column)

statistics or −2 x (LLM0 – LLM1) where LLM0 is the Log-Likelihood of the simpler model and LLM1 is the Log-Likelihood of the more complex model (3rd column). These are shown, for each model, in Table 6-9. At each level, variance explained = reduction in unexplained variance/variance of baseline model (Stride, 2021).

6.5.2.1 The Unconditional Model (Model 1)

When testing my hypotheses, it is important to be able to calculate variance in individual work engagement (Dependent Variable or DV), explained at each level when I incrementally add the narcissism predictors. To assess this, I need to know the variance that was to be explained before any narcissism predictors were added. Thus, I fit an 'unconditional' model (i.e. with no predictors) that simply partitions the variance in my DV. Using M*plus,* for the unconditional model, loglikelihood (LL)=−182.210; deviance (−2 x LL) =364.420; Level-1 (individual) residual variance of work engagement =0.394, Level-2 (team) variance of engagement=0.113, thus yielding an ICC value of 0.222 [0.113/ (0.394 + 0.113)] for work engagement. So approximately 22% of variance is attributed to group differences.

6.5.2.2 Adding 'Narcissistic Admiration' (Model 2)

The second step adds the predictor narcissistic admiration to the model. For model 2, using M*plus*, loglikelihood (LL)=−182.183; deviance (−2 x LL) =364.366, change in deviance=0.054; Level-1 (individual) residual variance of engagement=0.394, Level-2 (team) variance of engagement=0.113, thus yielding an ICC value of 0.222 [0.113/ (0.394 + 0.113)] for work engagement. So approximately 22.2% of variance is attributed to group differences. With the addition of predictor narcissistic admiration to the model, residual variances remain the same. The between-level regression of engagement on narcissistic admiration is b=−0.040, *p*=0.815; the *p*-value is not statistically significant, *consequently, narcissistic admiration does not predict engagement*.

6.5.2.3 Adding 'Narcissistic Rivalry (Model 3)

The third step continues building the model in a 'bottom up' approach and adds narcissistic rivalry. Using M*plus*, Loglikelihood =−181.623; deviance (−2 x LL) =363.246; change in deviance=1.120; Level-1 (individual) residual variance of engagement=0.396, Level-2 (team) variance of engagement=0.103, thus yielding an ICC value (when rivalry is added) of 0.206 [0.103/ (0.396 + 0.103)] for work engagement. So approximately 20.6% of variance is attributed to group differences. The (between-level) regression of work engagement on narcissistic rivalry is b=−0.150, *p*=0.283; the *p*-value is not statistically significant, *consequently, narcissistic rivalry does not predict work engagement*.

6.5.2.4 Adding 'Vulnerable Narcissism' (Model 4)

The fourth step adds vulnerable narcissism. Using M*plus*, Loglikelihood =−181.621; deviance (−2 x LL) =363.242; change in deviance=0.004; Level-1 (individual) residual variance of work engagement=0.396, Level-2 (team) variance of work engagement=0.103, thus yielding an ICC value (when vulnerable is also added) of 0.206 [0.103/ (0.396 + 0.103)] for work engagement. So approximately 20.6% of variance is attributed to group differences The (between-level) regression of work engagement on vulnerable narcissism is b=−0.012, *p*=0.952; the *p*-value is not statistically significant, *consequently, vulnerable narcissism does not predict work engagement*. It should be noted that the almost unchanged deviance (from 363.246 for model 3 to 363.242 for model 4), signifies lack of model improvement, when adding predictor vulnerable narcissism.

6.5.2.5 Adding 'Trust in the Leader' (Model 5)

The fifth step adds group-mean centred level-1 trust in the leader. Using M*plus,* Loglikelihood =−172.477; deviance (−2 x LL) =344.954; change in deviance=18.288; Level-1 (individual) residual variance of work engagement=0.374, Level-2 (team) variance of work engagement=0.078, thus yielding an ICC value (when trust is added) of 0.172 [0.078/ (0.374 + 0.078)] for work engagement. So approximately 17.2% of variance is attributed to group differences The (between-level) regression of work engagement on trust in the leader

is b=0.153, *p*=0.001***; the *p*-value is statistically significant, *consequently, trust in the leader predicts work engagement*. It should be noted that deviance exhibits a significant reduction of 18.288 (from 363.242 for model 4 to 344.954 for model 5), which signifies model improvement.

6.5.2.6 Adding 'Team Psychological Safety' (Model 6)

The sixth step adds group-mean centred level-1 team psychological safety. Using M*plus,* Loglikelihood =−169.699; deviance (−2 x LL) =339.398; change in deviance=5.406; Level-1 (individual) residual variance of work engagement=0.362, Level-2 (team) variance of work engagement=0.077, thus yielding an ICC value (when safety is added) of 0.175 [0.077/ (0.362 + 0.077)] for work engagement. So approximately 17.5% of variance is attributed to group differences The (between-level) regression of work engagement on safety is b=0.210, *p*=0.019*; the *p*-value is statistically significant, *consequently, team psychological safety predicts work engagement*. It should be noted that deviance exhibits a significant reduction of 5.406 (from 344.954 for model 5 to 339.398 for model 6), which signifies model improvement.

6.5.2.7 Adding 'Climate for Work Group Innovation' (Model 7)

The seventh step adds group-mean centred level-1 climate for work group innovation. Using M*plus,* Loglikelihood =−165.434; deviance (−2 x LL) =330.868; change in deviance=8.530; Level-1 (individual) residual variance of work engagement=0.336, Level-2 (team) variance of work engagement=0.087, thus yielding an ICC value (when climate is added) of 0.206 [0.087/ (0.336 + 0.087)] for work engagement. So approximately 20.6% of variance is attributed to group differences. The (between-level) regression of work engagement on climate for work group innovation is b=0.411, *p*=0.003**; the *p*-value is statistically significant, *consequently, climate for work group innovation predicts work engagement*. It should be noted that deviance exhibits a significant reduction of 8.530 (from 339.398 for model 6 to 330.868 for model 7), which signifies model improvement.

Table 6-9: Comparison of Alternative Models – Random Intercepts (DV=ENG)

	Model	LL	Deviance	Change (Deviance)	Added Variable	*p*	Individual level residual variance	Team level residual variances
1	Unconditional	−182.210	364.420	N/A	N/A	N/A	0.394	0.113
2	Add admiration	−182.183	364.366	0.054	1	0.815	0.394	0.113
3	Add rivalry	−181.623	363.246	1.120	1	0.283	0.396	0.103
4	Add vulnerable	−181.621	363.242	0.004	1	0.952	0.396	0.103
5	Add trust	−172.477	344.954	18.288	1	0.001***	0.374	0.078
6	Add safety	−169.699	339.398	5.406	1	0.019*	0.362	0.077
7	Add climate	−165.434	330.868	8.530	1	0.003**	0.336	0.087

LL= Loglikelihood; Deviance=−2 x LL; L1= Individual Level; *$p < .05$ ** $p < 0.01$ *** $p < 0.001$.

6.5.3 Conclusions

The addition of the narcissism predictors (models 2 to 4), namely narcissistic admiration, narcissistic rivalry and vulnerable narcissism, offers minor model improvements (Table 6-9), as evidenced by small changes in deviance (0.004 for vulnerable, 0.054 for admiration and 1.120 for rivalry). Narcissism predictors do not predict outcome individual work engagement as *p*-values are significant.

The addition of mediators (models 5 to 7), namely trust in the leader, team psychological safety and climate for work group innovation, offers significant model improvement (Table 6-9), as evidenced by large changes in deviance (5.406 for safety, 8.530 for climate and 18.268 for trust); all mediators predict outcome individual work engagement as *p*-values are significant.

Overall, the 'bottom-up' addition (Stride, 2021) of predictors and mediators, to the baseline model, offers a significant model improvement (a total change in deviance of 33.552 in comparison with the baseline model, the majority contributed by the three mediators).

6.6 Mediation Analysis

Based on the above results, one may doubt the necessity or question the additional effort to carry out any mediation analyses as none of the nine tested models were successful in meeting regression criteria. Nevertheless, for the sake of completeness and research rigor, I have tested 18 different models for mediation utilizing narcissistic admiration, narcissistic

rivalry, and vulnerable narcissism as predictors and adhering to two criteria to test for mediation: (1) the standardized regression coefficients signifying mediation effect (ab) must be significantly different than zero (i.e. 95% confidence intervals should 'straddle' zero); and (2) the *p*-value of the estimate must be statistically significant. All mediation models were estimated using M*plus.* Mediation models and associated variables are shown in Tables 6.10.1 to 6.10.3. Like the predictor/covariate/outcome format employed in my regression analysis, I have similarly used the predictor/mediator/outcome format here for mediation analysis. Mediation models starting with numbers 1, 2, and 3 denote models with predictors narcissistic admiration, narcissistic rivalry, and vulnerable narcissism, respectively. Numbers denoting models are also in alignment with the set of hypotheses articulated and discussed in previous chapters.

6.6.1 Testing Mediation

Mediation models 1a to 1f utilize narcissistic admiration as predictor, and engagement and performance as outcomes.

6.6.1.1 Testing Mediation – Hypotheses 1a to 1f

Hypothesis 1a proposed that safety mediates the relationship between admiration and performance. As relationships are non-significant, admiration did not relate to safety (B=−0.016, SE=0.137, *p*=0.908), which in turn, did not relate to team performance (B=−0.538, SE=1.052, *p*=0.609). The mediated (indirect) effect included zero and was not significant (B=0.008, SE=0.076, *p*=0.911). Thus, data did not support Hypothesis 1a. Hypothesis 1b proposed that safety mediates the relationship between admiration and engagement. Admiration did not relate to safety (B=−0.028, SE=0.147, *p*=0.849), which in turn, related to engagement (B=1.359**, SE=0.522, *p*=0.009). The mediated (indirect) effect included zero and was not significant (B=−0.038, SE=0.201, *p*=0.850). Thus, data did not support Hypothesis 1b.

Hypothesis 1c proposed that climate mediates the relationship between admiration and team performance. As relationships are non-significant, admiration did not relate to climate (B=−0.061, SE=0.123, *p*=0.619), which in turn, did not relate to performance (B=0.937, SE=1.126, *p*=0.405). The mediated (indirect) effect included zero and was not significant (B=−0.057, SE=0.134, *p*=0.669). Thus, data did not support Hypothesis 1c.

Hypothesis 1d proposed that climate mediates the relationship between admiration and engagement. As relationships are non-significant, admiration did not relate to climate (B=−0.076, SE=0.132, *p*=0.565), which, in turn, related to engagement (B=1.484**, SE=0.548, *p*=0.007). The mediated (indirect) effect included zero and was not significant (B=−0.112, SE=0.201, *p*=0.576). Thus, data did not support Hypothesis 1d.

Hypothesis 1e proposed that trust mediates the relationship between admiration and performance. As relationships are non-significant, admiration did not relate to trust (B=−0.044, SE=0.258, *p*=0.863), which in turn, did not relate to team performance (B=0.196, SE=0.380, *p*=0.607). The mediated (indirect) effect included zero and was not significant (B=−0.009, SE=0.053, *p*=0.870). Thus, data did not support Hypothesis 1e.

Hypothesis 1f proposed that trust mediates the relationship between admiration and engagement. As relationships are non-significant, admiration did not relate to trust (B=−0.043, SE=0.259, *p*=0.870), which, in turn, did not relate to engagement (B=−0.014, SE=0.278, *p*=0.960). The mediated (indirect) effect included zero and was not significant (B=0.001, SE=0.012, *p*=0.961). Thus, data did not support Hypothesis 1f.

Mediation effects for models 1a to 1f (i.e. hypotheses 1a to 1f) are shown in Table 6-10.1.

Table 6-10.1 Mediation Models 1a to 1f (Predictor: Narcissistic Admiration)

Structural Paths	B [95%CI]	SE	*p*	Hypothesis
Model 1a (NADM/PSY/TP)				
Admiration → Psychological Safety	-0.016[-0.284,0.253]	0.137	0.908	
Psychological Safety → Team Performance	-0.538[-2.600,1.523]	1.052	0.609	
Admiration → Team Perf	-0.011[-0.537,0.515]	0.268	0.968	
Admiration → Safety → Team Perf	0.008[-0.141,0.158]	0.076	0.911	H1a/Not supported
Model 1b (NADM/PSY/ENG)				
Admiration → Psychological Safety	-0.028(-0.316,0.260)	0.147	0.849	
Psychological Safety → Engagement	1.359(0.337,2.381)	0.522	0.009	
Admiration → Engagement	0.007(-0.372,0.385)	0.193	0.972	
Admiration → Psychological Safety → Team Perf	-0.038(-0.432,0.356)	0.201	0.850	H1b/Not supported
Model 1c (NADM/CL/TP)				
Admiration → Climate for Innovation	-0.061[-0.302,0.180]	0.123	0.619	
Climate for Innovation →Team Performance	0.937[-1.270,3.144]	1.126	0.405	
Admiration → Team Perf	0.055[-0.494, 0.604]	0.280	0.844	
Admiration → Climate → Team Perf	-0.057[-0.319,0.205]	0.134	0.669	H1c/Not supported
Model 1d (NADM/CL/ENG)				
Admiration → Climate for Innovation	-0.076(-0.334,0.183)	0.132	0.565	
Climate for Innovation →Engagement	1.484(0.409,2.558)	0.548	0.007	
Admiration → Engagement	0.081(-0.293,0.454)	0.191	0.672	
Admiration → Climate → Engagement	-0.112(-0.507,0.282)	0.201	0.576	H1d/Not supported
Model 1e (NADM/TRT/TP)				
Admiration → Trust in the Leader	-0.044(-0.550,0.461)	0.258	0.863	
Trust in the Leader→ Team Performance	0.196(-0.549,0.940)	0.380	0.607	
Admiration → Team Performance	0.006(-0.512,0.525)	0.265	0.981	
Admiration → Trust → Team Performance	-0.009(-0.113,0.095)	0.053	0.870	H1e/Not supported
Model 1f (NADM/TRT/ENG)				
Admiration → Trust in the Leader	-0.043(-0.551,0.466)	0.259	0.870	
Trust in the Leader →Engagement	-0.014(-0.559,0.530)	0.278	0.960	
Admiration → Engagement	-0.046(-0.382,0.291)	0.172	0.791	
Admiration → Trust → Engagement	0.001(-0.023,0.025)	0.012	0.961	H1f/Not supported

Note. B= Standardized regression coefficients; CI=Confidence Intervals; SE=Standard Error.

6.6.1.2 Testing Mediation – Hypotheses 2a to 2f

Mediation models 2a to 2f utilize narcissistic rivalry as predictor, and engagement and performance as outcomes. Hypothesis 2a proposed that safety mediates the relationship between rivalry and team performance. As relationships are non-significant, rivalry did not relate to safety (B=−0.193, SE=0.112, *p*=0.084); which in turn did not relate to team performance (B=−1.174, SE=1.532, *p*=0.443). The mediated (indirect) effect included zero and was not significant (B=−0.227, SE=0.326, *p*=0.487). Thus, data did not support Hypothesis 2a.

Hypothesis 2b proposed that safety mediates the relationship between rivalry and engagement. As the first relationship is non-significant, rivalry did not relate to safety (B=−0.181, SE=0.120, *p*=0.131), which, in contrast, is positively related to engagement (B=1.410*, SE=0.594, *p*=0.018). The mediated (indirect) effect included zero and was not significant (B=−0.255, SE=0.201, *p*=0.204). Thus, data did not support Hypothesis 2b.

Hypothesis 2c proposed that climate mediates the relationship between rivalry and performance. As relationships are non-significant, rivalry did not relate to climate (B=−0.174, SE=0.100, *p*=0.080), which in turn, climate did not relate to team performance (B=0.754, SE=1.337, *p*=0.573). The mediated (indirect) effect included zero and was not significant (B=−0.131, SE=0.245, *p*=0.593). Thus, data did not support Hypothesis 2c.

Hypothesis 2d proposed that climate mediates the relationship between rivalry and engagement. As the first relationship is non-significant, rivalry did not relate to climate (B=−0.163, SE=0.107, *p*=0.129), which in turn and in contrast, was positively related to engagement (B=1.529*, SE=0.612, *p*=0.013). The mediated (indirect) effect included zero and was not significant (B=−0.249, SE=0.192, *p*=0.194). Thus, despite the positive relationship between climate and engagement, data did not support Hypothesis 2d.

Hypothesis 2e proposed that trust mediates the relationship between rivalry and team performance. As the first relationship is significant, rivalry was negatively related to trust (B=−0.584**, SE=0.199, *p*=0.003), which in turn and in contrast, did not relate to team performance (B=−0.031, SE=0.524, *p*=0.953). The mediated (indirect) effect included zero

and was not significant (B=0.018, SE=0.306, *p*=0.953). Thus, despite the negative relationship between trust and team performance, data did not support Hypothesis 2e. Hypothesis 2f proposed that trust mediates the relationship between rivalry and engagement. As the first relationship is significant, rivalry was negatively related to trust (B=−0.589**, SE=0.200, *p*=0.003), which in turn and in contrast, did not relate to engagement (B=−0.236, SE=0.424, *p*=0.578). The mediated (indirect) effect included zero and was not significant (B=0.139, SE=0.255, *p*=0.587). Thus, despite the negative relationship between trust and engagement, data did not support Hypothesis 2f. Mediation effects for models 2a to 2f (Hypotheses 2a to 2f) are shown in Table 6-10.2.

Table 6-10.2 Mediation Models 2a to 2c (Predictor: Narcissistic Rivalry)

Structural Paths	B [95%CI]	SE	*p*	Hypothesis
Model 2a (NRIV/PSY/TP)				
Rivalry → Psychological Safety	-0.193[-0.412,0.026]	0.112	0.084	
Psychological safety → Team Performance	-1.174[-4.177,1.829]	1.532	0.443	
Rivalry → Team Perf	-0.531[-1.271, 0.208]	0.377	0.159	
Rivalry → Safety → Team Perf	0.227[-0.412,0.865]	0.326	0.487	H2a/Not supported
Model 2b (NRIV/PSY/ENG)				
Rivalry → Psychological Safety	-0.181(-0.416,0.054)	0.120	0.131	
Psychological Safety→ Engagement	1.410(0.245,2.575)	0.594	0.018	
Rivalry → Engagement	0.106(-0.287,0.499)	0.200	0.596	
Rivalry → Safety → Engagement	-0.255(-0.649,0.138)	0.201	0.204	H2b/Not supported
Model 2c (NRIV/CL/TP)				
Rivalry → Climate for Innovation	-0.174(-0.369,0.021)	0.100	0.080	
Climate for Innovation → Team Perf	0.754(-1.867,3.375)	1.337	0.573	
Rivalry → Team Performance	-0.174(-0.797,0.449)	0.318	0.585	
Rivalry → Climate → Team Perf	-0.131(-0.612,0.349)	0.245	0.593	H2c/Not supported

Note. B= Standardized regression coefficients; CI=Confidence Intervals; SE=Standard Error.

Table 6-10.2 (continued) Mediation Models 2d to 2f (Predictor: Narcissistic Rivalry)

Structural Paths	B [95%CI]	SE	*p*	Hypothesis
Model 2d (NRIV/CL/ENG)				
Rivalry → Climate	-0.163(-0.373,0.048)	0.107	0.129	
Climate→ Engagement	1.529(0.329,2.728)	0.612	0.013	
Rivalry → Engagement	0.099(-0.271,0.469)	0.189	0.600	
Rivalry → Climate → Engagement	-0.249(-0.624,0.127)	0.192	0.194	H2d/Not supported
Model 2e (NRIV/TRT/TP)				
Rivalry → Trust in the Leader	-0.584(-0.974, -0.193)	0.199	0.003	
Trust in the Leader→ Team Performance	-0.031(-1.057,0.995)	0.524	0.953	
Rivalry → Team Performance	-0.323(-1.049,0.403)	0.370	0.384	
Rivalry → Trust → Team Performance	0.018(-0.581,0.617)	0.306	0.953	H2e/Not supported
Model 2f (NRIV/TRT/ENG)				
Rivalry → Trust in the Leader	-0.589(-.982, -0.196)	0.200	0.003	
Trust in the Leader→ Engagement	-0.236(-1.066,0.595)	0.424	0.578	
Rivalry → Engagement	-0.286(-0.858,0.285)	0.292	0.326	
Rivalry → Trust → Engagement	0.139(=0.362,0.640)	0.255	0.587	H2f/Not supported

Note: B= Standardized regression coefficients; CI=Confidence Intervals; SE=Standard Error.

6.6.1.3 Testing Mediation – Hypotheses 3a to 3f

Mediation models 3a to 3f utilize vulnerable narcissism as predictor, and again engagement and team performance as outcomes. Hypothesis 3a proposed that safety mediates the relationship between vulnerable narcissism and performance. As relationships are non-significant, vulnerable did not relate to safety B=−0.064, SE=0.138, *p*=0.642), which, in turn, did not relate to team performance (B=−0.740, SE=1.018, *p*=0.467). The mediated (indirect) effect included zero and was not significant (B=0.047, SE=0.122, *p*=0.698). Thus, data did not support Hypothesis 3a.

Hypothesis 3b proposed that safety mediates the relationship between vulnerable narcissism and engagement. As the first relationship is non-significant, vulnerable narcissism did not relate to safety B=−0.054, SE=0.147, *p*=0.715), in turn and in contrast, safety was positively related to engagement (B=1.349**, SE=0.520, *p*=0.010). The mediated (indirect) effect included zero and was not significant (B=−0.072, SE=0.200,

p=0.718). Thus, despite the positive relationship between safety and engagement, data did not support Hypothesis 3b.

Hypothesis 3c proposed that climate mediates the relationship between vulnerable narcissism and team performance. As relationships are non-significant, vulnerable narcissism did not relate to climate B=−0.150, SE=0.122, *p*=0.217), which in turn, did not relate to team performance (B=0.484, SE=1.035, *p*=0.640). The mediated (indirect) effect included zero and was not significant (B=−0.073, SE=0.166, *p*=0.661). Thus, data did not support Hypothesis 3c.

Hypothesis 3d proposed that climate mediates the relationship between vulnerable narcissism and engagement. As the first relationship is non-significant, vulnerable narcissism did not relate to climate B=−0.142, SE=0.130, *p*=0.273), which, in turn and in contrast, was positively related to engagement (B=1.508**, SE=0.574, *p*=0.009). The mediated (indirect) effect included zero and was not significant (B=−0.214, SE=0.212, *p*=0.311). Thus, despite the positive relationship between climate and engagement, data did not support Hypothesis 3d.

Hypothesis 3e proposed that trust mediates the relationship between vulnerable narcissism and performance. As relationships are non-significant, vulnerable narcissism did not relate to trust (B=−0.422, SE=0.252, *p*=0.094), which, in turn did not relate to team performance (B=−0.064, SE=0.382, *p*=0.866). The mediated (indirect) effect included zero and was not significant (B=0.027, SE=0.162, *p*=0.867). Thus, data did not support Hypothesis 3e.

Hypothesis 3f proposed that trust mediates the relationship between vulnerable narcissism and engagement. As relationships are non-significant, vulnerable narcissism did not relate to trust (B=−0.430, SE=0.253, *p*=0.088), which in turn, did not relate to engagement (B=−0.072, SE=0.318, *p*=0.822). The mediated (indirect) effect included zero and was not significant (B=0.031, SE=0.139, *p*=0.824). Thus, data did not support Hypothesis 3f.

Mediation effects for models 3a to 3f (Hypotheses 3a to 3f) are shown in Table 6-10.3.

Table 6-10.3 Mediation Models 3a to 3f (Predictor: Vulnerable Narcissism)

Structural Paths	B [95%CI]	SE	*p*	Hypothesis
Model 3a (VULN/PSY/TP)				
Vulnerable → Psychological Safety	-0.064(-0.334,0.206)	0.138	0.642	
Psychological safety → Team Performance	-0.740(-2.736,1.256)	1.018	0.467	
Vulnerable → Team Perf	-0.738(-1.225, -0.251)	0.248	0.003	
Vulnerable → Safety → Team Perf	0.047(-0.192,0.287)	0.122	0.698	H3a/Not supported
Model 3b (VULN/PSY/ENG)				
Vulnerable → Psychological Safety	-0.054(-0.341,0.234)	0.147	0.715	
Psychological Safety→ Engagement	1.349(0.329,2.369)	0.520	0.010	
Vulnerable → Engagement	-0.026(-0.414,0.362)	0.198	0.896	
Vulnerable → Safety → Engagement	-0.072(-0.464,0.319)	0.200	0.718	H3b/Not supported
Model 3c (VULN/CL/TP)				
Vulnerable → Climate for Innovation	-0.150	0.122	0.217	
Climate for Innovation → Team Perf	0.484	1.035	0.640	
Vulnerable→ Team Performance	-0.618	0.279	0.027	
Vulnerable → Climate → Team Perf	-0.073	0.166	0.661	H3c/Not supported
Model 3d (VULN/CL/ENG)				
Vulnerable → Climate	-0.142(-0.396,0.112)	0.130	0.273	
Climate→ Engagement	1.508(0.383,2.633)	0.574	0.009	
Vulnerable→ Engagement	0.116(-0.291,0.523)	0.208	0.577	
Vulnerable → Climate → Engagement	-0.214(-0.629,0.200)	0.212	0.311	H3d/Not supported
Model 3e (VULN/TRT/TP)				
Vulnerable → Trust in the Leader	-0.422(-0.915,0.072)	0.252	0.094	
Trust in the Leader→ Team Performance	-0.064(-0.813,0.684)	0.382	0.866	
Vulnerable → Team Performance	-0.718(-1.266, -0.169)	0.280	0.010	
Vulnerable → Trust → Team Performance	0.027(-0.290,0.345)	0.162	0.867	H3e/Not supported
Model 3f (VULN/TRT/ENG)				
Vulnerable → Trust in the Leader	-0.430(-0.925,0.065)	0.253	0.088	
Trust in the Leader→ Engagement	-0.072(-0.695,0.552)	0.318	0.822	
Vulnerable → Engagement	-0.129(-0.559,0.302)	0.220	0.558	
Vulnerable → Trust → Engagement	0.031(-0.241,0.302)	0.139	0.824	H3f/Not supported

Note. B= Standardized regression coefficients; CI=Confidence Intervals; SE=Standard Error.

6.6.2 Conclusions

This section provides an integrated summary of empirical results (main study) with emphasis on an extended *interpretation* of *statistically significant* results and associated conclusions. As nonsignificant findings do not constitute evidence, interpretation of these results is not attempted. Where my empirical results do not support the proposed relationship, this is acknowledged; in this case, studies that, in contrast, support the proposed relationship, are cited. Finally, reasons, justifying the difference between my empirical results and existing literature, are provided.

6.6.2.1 Relationships of Predictors with Mediators

6.6.2.1.1 Narcissistic Rivalry/Trust

Empirical results (main study) have shown that the above proposed negative relationship is supported by my research. Empirical data from the main study have shown that narcissistic rivalry exhibits a significant negative correlation (r=−.40**) with trust in the leader. In other words, leaders high on narcissistic rivalry, do not foster high levels of trust, as narcissistic rivalry is detrimental to building trust in the leader.

The aggressive, antagonistic, conflict-prone narcissistic rivalry is the only narcissism predictor that demonstrates such a strong negative statistically significant relationship with mediator trust in the leader.

This negative narcissistic rivalry/trust (in the leader) relationship is supported by extant research. Kwiatkowska et al. (2019) have reported a negative relationship (r=−.35*) between narcissistic rivalry and trust.

This negative relationship of narcissistic rivalry with trust can be attributed, in my view, to three distinct behavioural manifestations of narcissistic rivalry, namely (1) abusive supervision, (2) devaluation of others, and (3) social conflict.

Firstly, extant research shows that narcissistic rivalry is positively related to abusive supervision (Gauglitz et al., 2022), which is manifested as “yelling at subordinates in front of others or invading privacy” (Duffy & Ferrier, 2003, p. 241). These leader behaviours

constitute extreme breaches in the relational contract between follower and leader, upset the leader–follower information exchange and quality of the leader–follower relationship and ultimately destroy trust in the leader.

Secondly, leaders high on narcissistic rivalry, with a lower and more fragile self-esteem (than leaders high on narcissistic admiration), and to cope with perceived ego threats, tend not only to strike back with annoyed, hostile, and socially insensitive behaviours but also devalue others using derogatory, negating, and insulting comments (Back, 2018) that belittle followers and elevate the leader.

Thirdly, these self-defensive leaders, fearful of failure and protecting a grandiose self, will resort to social conflict, particularly when the perceived social outcomes (e.g. negative feedback, doubt), denote social disapproval; consequently the 'enemy' or the 'threat' needs to be neutralized with aggression, anger, and vindictiveness (Back, 2018).

Ultimately, the above manifestations of narcissistic rivalry, lead to the destruction of trust in the leader and the dissolution of interpersonal relationships.

6.6.2.1.2 Narcissistic Rivalry/Team Psychological Safety

I acknowledge that the above proposed negative relationship between narcissistic rivalry and team psychological safety was not supported by my research as empirical results are nonsignificant. As the above relationship has not yet been specifically explored by the research community, empirical evidence (regarding the proposed negative narcissistic rivalry/team psychological safety relationship) remains indicative and indirect and mostly associated with factors contributing to, or prerequisites or antecedents of, team psychological safety.

Fehn and Schütz (2020) have shown, in an empirical study, that followers of leaders, high on narcissistic rivalry, reported less perceived supervisor support and lower quality leader–member relationships. It is safe to argue that as a consequence, team psychological safety suffers as followers feel isolated and neglected thus becoming more introvert, cautious and

apprehensive in freely expressing divergent opinions and ideas, divulging mistakes or even 'going on a limb', elements reflective of a low-quality leader–member relationship. Moreover, in a time-lagged study of leaders and followers, Mao et al. (2019) found that leader self-serving behaviour is an important contingent factor for how subordinates perceive their leader. Specifically, it was shown that when leaders were perceived as being non-self-serving, team psychological safety was enhanced. This is quite relevant as leaders high on narcissistic rivalry, like all narcissists are self-serving, thus adversely affecting team psychological safety.

Finally, in a three-wave survey, Long et al. (2024) have shown that narcissistic rivalry facilitates knowledge hiding, which curtails dissemination and information exchange among team members, affecting team psychological safety. Moreover, in two empirical studies, Gauglitz and Schyns (2024) have shown that leaders, high on narcissistic rivalry, demonstrated abusive supervision (intentions) in response to supervisor-directed deviance (Study 1). Leaders high on narcissistic rivalry are antagonistic and thus are likely to perceive diversity of opinions, free expression of ideas, and experimentation within the team as manifestations of defiance and deviance, to be met with aggression and abuse. This adversely affects team psychological safety and creates a climate of fear, silence, and compliance (Sedikides, 2021).

6.6.2.1.3 Narcissistic Rivalry/Climate for Work Group Innovation

I acknowledge that the above proposed negative relationship, between narcissistic rivalry and climate for work group innovation was not supported by my research as empirical results (main study) are nonsignificant. As the above relationship has not yet been specifically explored by the research community, empirical evidence remains again indicative and indirect.

Innovation thrives on explorative learning (i.e. perpetually identifying, analysing, and evaluating new avenues and opportunities for growth). Utilizing empirical data collected from new ventures, Wu and al. (2022), have shown that narcissistic rivalry motivates

leaders to curtail explorative learning (which is laden with risk and increased chances of failure) and focus more on the risk-free exploitative learning (i.e. exploiting existing resources, cutting one's losses), in direct contrast with narcissistic admiration, which encourages a focus on explorative learning. This is bound to adversely affect the team climate for innovation as leaders become introvert, cautious and risk averse.

Innovation is by default, an unpredictable, stressful and risky endeavour that requires grit, perseverance, and mental toughness. In an empirical study, Manley et al. (2019) have shown that narcissistic rivalry is negatively associated with ratings (self/others) of mental toughness; it is noteworthy that, in contrast, narcissistic admiration is positively associated with ratings (self/others) of mental toughness. Thus leaders, high on narcissistic rivalry, are likely to suppress, discourage or curtail rather than promote or foster a team climate conducive to innovation. It is thus no wonder that Wang et al. (2002), in an empirical study with entrepreneurs, have shown that narcissistic rivalry negatively affected new venture growth. Their reluctance to foster and support a climate conducive to innovation can be partly attributed to the fact that narcissistic rivalry is related to perfectionistic concerns (Vecchione et al., 2023), which predominantly reflect maladaptive aspects (e.g. concern over others' expectations, self-doubts, and negative reactions to perceived failure).

6.6.2.1.4 Vulnerable Narcissism/Trust

I acknowledge that the above proposed negative relationship, between vulnerable narcissism and trust was not supported by my research as empirical results (main study) are nonsignificant. As the construct of vulnerable narcissism is only now beginning to attract considerable attention, empirical evidence remains scarce and indirect.

In an empirical study with managers, Braun et al. (2019) have found that vulnerable narcissism is positively related to abusive supervision intent through internal contributions and shame in response to failure. This finding is further reinforced by Braun et al. (2024), who investigated, across three empirical studies, the role of internal attribution of failure and

shame in the relationship between leaders' vulnerable narcissism and abusive supervision and found that leaders' vulnerable (rather than grandiose) narcissism was the main driver. Thus, I can safely argue that these neurotic and abusive leaders, who internally attribute failure but express it externally with aggression and abuse, are unlikely to ever be trusted by their followers.

Moreover, in an empirical study, Schyns et al. (2022) have shown that vulnerable narcissism is positively related to avoidance to lead (MTL). With similar thinking, I can safely argue that this responsibility-shunning leaders, avoiding the role and demands of leadership and rendering teams dysfunctional and followers directionless and leaderless, are unlikely to ever be trusted by their followers.

Finally, followers who deal with a vulnerable narcissistic leader are likely, rather than allowing themselves to be vulnerable to the actions of the leader in a trusting relationship, to instead spend precious cognitive resources to make sense of an unpredictable and toxic leader. Schyns et al. (2023) have shown that vulnerable narcissism is positively related to follower cognitive rumination (i.e. being unable to mentally switch off from work during one's leisure time) and emotional irritability (i.e. feeling anxious and on edge or sudden rushes of anger), antecedents of more severe mental health impairments (Mohr et al., 2006).

Overall, empirical evidence in extant research, although far from being direct or demonstrative, clearly point to the abrasive effect of vulnerable narcissism on trust in the leader.

6.6.2.1.5 Vulnerable Narcissism/Climate for Work Group Innovation

I acknowledge that the above proposed negative relationship, between vulnerable narcissism and climate for work group innovation, was not supported by my research as empirical results (main study) are nonsignificant. As above, I can only provide indirect empirical evidence to shed some light on the relationship discussed.

In an empirical study, utilizing the Trifurcated Model of Narcissism (TriMN) to depict narcissism, Jauk and Kaufmann (2018) have shown that neurotic vulnerable narcissism is

positively related to fear of failure, rejection, losing control and losing reputation. In other words, such leaders are fearful of all the elements associated with the opportunities and perils of the innovation process.

Moreover, in an empirical study, Blasco-Belled et al. (2022) have also shown that people who scored higher on vulnerable narcissism are more likely to fear being laughed at and were more likely to enjoy laughing at others. Vulnerable narcissists were also more likely to resort to using isolation and social withdrawal as methods to avoid interactions where they might feel vulnerable, shameful, and inferior. Failure, mistakes and unfavourable exposure are unavoidable ingredients of innovation; the process requires constant social presence, effective communication and coordination with multiple project teams and stakeholders. These neurotic and contact-shunning leaders will discourage, prevent or curtail any team actions or initiatives that may contribute to a strong team climate for innovation, as they are perpetually tormented by feelings of inadequacy and inferiority and consumed by fear of social exposure and ridicule.

Finally, innovation requires grit, an unflinching dedication and a 'never say die' attitude. Chang and Gong, (2023) have found, in an empirical study, that vulnerable narcissism is negatively related to (a) grit – consistency of interest and (b) grit – perseverance of effort. It is safe to argue that these leaders not only destroy rather than foster a team climate conducive to innovation but will tend to lose interest very quickly and summarily abandon innovation efforts with the first glitch or difficulty.

Overall, empirical evidence in extant research, although far from being direct or demonstrative, clearly point to the detrimental effect of vulnerable narcissism on team climate for innovation.

6.6.2.2 Relationships of Predictors with Outcomes

6.6.2.2.1 Vulnerable Narcissism/Team Performance

One of the key findings of the main study is that vulnerable narcissism exhibits a significant negative correlation (r=−.41**) with team performance. In other words, leaders high on

vulnerable narcissism destroy rather than foster team performance. Thus, vulnerable narcissism, often regarded as the ‘clinical’ component of narcissism and consequently deemed irrelevant in organizational settings (Wirtz & Rigotti, 2020), is indeed very relevant in the work domain, as it adversely affects team performance.

Vulnerable narcissism adheres to the overall common pattern of negative directionality, except for narcissistic admiration, which exhibits a nil linear relationship with team performance (to be discussed in the subsequent section); it is noticeable that vulnerable narcissism is more detrimental to team performance than the equally destructive antagonistic, conflict-prone narcissistic rivalry.

Extant research provides ample insights on the problematic nature of the vulnerable narcissism–team performance relationship. I can infer from extant research, that the negative relationship of vulnerable narcissism with team performance can be attributed to three distinct aspects of vulnerable narcissism, namely (1) abusive supervision (a common theme with narcissistic rivalry only), (2) hostile, aggressive, and vindictive behaviours, and (3) (weak) leader self-identity and consequently avoidance to lead.

Firstly, narcissists view themselves as superior beings and others as inferior and thus are easier to aggress and resort to violence, even in the absence of provocation; in addition, they have several characteristics that predispose them to behave in an aggressive manner, namely antagonism, disagreeableness, and lack of empathy (Kjærvik & Bushman, 2021). Narcissistic individuals are not particularly picky on how they aggress on others.

In a meta-analysis, Kjærvik and Bushman (2021) have found that narcissism is positively related to the two forms of aggression, i.e. direct (when person is present) and indirect aggression (when person is not present), and positively related to the two functions of aggression, i.e. reactive (hot-tempered annoyance-based aggression) and proactive aggression (cold blooded incentive-based aggression). More specifically, the meta-analysis has shown that vulnerable narcissism, the neurotic component, is positively related to aggression. This insight is also confirmed by a preregistered meta-analysis (Du et al., 2022)

exploring the association between the three facets of narcissism, as depicted by the TriMN, and three indices of aggression (i.e., general, proactive, reactive).

Results revealed that narcissistic neuroticism (akin to vulnerable narcissism) associates positively with general and reactive aggression, in contrast with agentic extraversion (akin to narcissistic admiration), which associated negatively with all indices of aggression and interpersonal antagonism (akin to narcissistic rivalry), which associated positively with all indices of aggression (Du et al., 2022).

Aggression and exhibition of violence by the narcissist, often unprovoked, is bound to derail leader–follower exchange, render the relationship dysfunctional, lead to dissolution of interpersonal bonds, and ultimately adversely affect downstream team performance. Secondly, rage (Krizan & Johar, 2015), reactive anger (Glover et al., 2012), high emotional distress (Nevicka, 2018), and a hostile attribution bias, reading malevolent intent in the actions of others (Weiss & Miller, 2018), exhibited by leaders high on vulnerable narcissism, are bound to create a climate based on fear and intimidation (Sedikides, 2021), rather than a healthy climate conducive to team performance. In addition, leaders high on vulnerable narcissism are governed by avoidance/prevention orientation, which focuses on avoiding or cutting one's losses (through vigilant defending against threats to their distinctiveness) rather than pursuing opportunities to highlight their distinctiveness. The combination of the above creates an unhealthy, toxic, and even paranoid environment where human effort is stifled and team performance negated.

These insights are further supported by recent research focusing on two distinguishable dimensions of vulnerable narcissism (Rogoza et al., 2022), namely antagonistic enmity aimed at diminishing the experiences of shame and inadequacy, and neurotic isolation aimed at preventing the vulnerable core from being exposed. It appears that these neurotic leaders are totally preoccupied with protecting a weak and fragile self-esteem through withdrawal and social isolation or fighting 'ghost enemies' and perceived threats, rather than managing a team or boosting team performance.

Thirdly, leaders, high on vulnerable narcissism, are shy and introvert (Pincus & Lukowitsky, 2010) and exhibit a weak and fragile self-esteem (Zeigler-Hill et al., 2008); in contrast with their grandiose counterparts, who seek out a 'stage to shine' and aspire to leadership positions (Nevicka et al., 2011), these narcissists avoid this 'stage' as it implies exposing themselves to others' (negative) judgments (Schyns et al., 2022) and being subject to social rejection and ridicule.

Leadership positions come with "elevated expectations, high levels of responsibility, and high visibility" (Kark et al., 2021, p. 3), and involve social interactions that represent a threat to vulnerable narcissists due to a risk of negative feedback or social exclusion (Mazinani et al., 2021). This is supported by Schyns et al. (2022), whose empirical study showed that vulnerable narcissism is positively related to avoidance to lead, a genuine lack of interest in leading in response to leadership-related demands (Felfe et al., 2012).

Their reluctance to lead when responsibility beckons, is bound to adversely affect team performance as the team, now effectively leaderless, directionless, and barely motivated, desperately struggles to find a semblance of clarity, purpose, and direction. I can argue that a leader that avoids leading and shies away from the burden and responsibility of leadership is highly unlikely to create a highly functional and high-performing team. The team thus experiences the notion of 'non-leadership' or laissez-faire leadership, which has been found to adversely affect follower well-being (Aasland et al., 2010) and is negatively correlated with follower job satisfaction, follower motivation, leader job performance and leadership effectiveness (Judge & Piccolo, 2004).

Finally, Schyns et al. (2023) have shown that Vulnerable Narcissism Leader Behaviours (VNLB) are positively related to follower irritation, an indicator of (follower) reduced well-being (Grebner et al., 2003) and (follower) stress (Merino-Tejedor et al., 2013) leading to more severe mental health impairments (Mohr et al., 2006), rendering teams damaged, dysfunctional, and ineffective. This is also relevant as followers are strained and "likely to have to use cognitive resources to make sense of their leader, … which drains available resources" (Schyns et al., 2023, p. 2), which could have otherwise been productively

invested in making sense of the extraordinary situation at hand or enabling their contribution to the team's performance.

6.6.2.2.2 Narcissistic Rivalry/Team Performance

I acknowledge that the above proposed negative relationship, between narcissistic rivalry and team performance, was not supported by my research as empirical results (main study) are nonsignificant. As in above sections, I can only provide indirect empirical evidence to shed some light on this relationship.

In an empirical study examining the conditional effects of narcissistic rivalry on social identity, perceptions of group member ability, desire to abandon the group, and desire to expel group members, Benson et al. (2019) found that narcissistic rivalry predicted more negative views of group ability, as well as a higher desire to abandon the group and expel group members in response to individual success combined with ingroup failure. Findings also suggest that narcissistic rivalry is positively related to self-protective group distancing and devaluation. In other words, leaders, high on narcissistic rivalry, exhibit a fickle attachment to the team, readily abandon, expel or devalue followers in failure, while distancing themselves for self-protection. These actions are likely to upset follower commitment to the team and adversely affect follower motivation and work engagement (thus providing justification for a proposed negative narcissistic rivalry/work engagement relationship), and ultimately destroy team performance.

In two empirical studies, using cross-sectional and time-lagged data respectively, Harms et al. (2022) have shown that narcissistic rivalry is associated with higher levels of family-work conflict, which in turn, is associated with greater levels of follower emotional exhaustion and lower job performance. Dealing with and trying to figure out an antagonistic and abrasive leader, high on narcissistic rivalry, is a real challenge and is bound to generate increased levels of stress that will readily 'spillover' to domestic affairs, creating, in a vicious circle, more stress to be carried back to professional affairs, again adversely affecting individual

work engagement (providing justification for a proposed negative narcissistic rivalry/work engagement relationship), and ultimately affecting job and team performance.

In an empirical study tracking project teams, Lynch et al. (2022), have shown that narcissistic rivalry corresponded to less cooperative and more competitive team conflict processes. This is to be expected, as leaders high on narcissistic rivalry, tend to experience more negative social outcomes (e.g. rejection, criticism) due to their arrogant and aggressive interpersonal behaviours (Back et al., 2013; Leckelt et al., 2015) and are likely to aggressively advance their own ideas and derogate others in disagreement (Lynch et al., 2022). Consequently, these leaders are likely to foster more competitive and less cooperative conflict processes. I can safely argue that these processes will create more tension and aggression among followers, eradicate synergies, curtail individual work engagement (thus again providing justification for a proposed negative narcissistic rivalry/work engagement relationship), and ultimately destroy team performance.

6.6.2.3 Relationships of Mediators with Outcomes

6.6.2.3.1 Team Psychological Safety/Individual Work Engagement

Evidence from the main empirical study have shown that mediator team psychological safety has a statistically significant positive relationship (*r*=.59**) with outcome individual work engagement. This is supported by a vast body of empirical research and associated data investigating the relationship of psychological safety with engagement in the work domain. May et al. (2004), in an empirical study, have also found that (team) psychological safety was positively linked with employees' investment in their work roles; results have shown that (team) psychological safety was positively related with engagement. In a comprehensive meta-analysis, Frazier et al. (2017) have found that team psychological safety is positively related to work engagement. Similarly, in an empirical study, Basit (2017) has found that (team) psychological safety is positively correlated with job engagement. Rabiul et al. (2021), building on the work of Basit (2017), has found that (team) psychological safety is positively correlated with individual work engagement.

6.6.2.3.2 Climate for work group innovation /Individual Work Engagement

Evidence from the main empirical study have shown that mediator climate for work group innovation, has a statistically significant positive relationship (*r*=.53**) with outcome individual work engagement.

There is limited and only recent evidence testifying to the positive relationship between climate for innovation and engagement. Demircioglu (2023), in an empirical study has tested the effects of innovation climate on affective commitment (which is akin to the 'dedication' factor in work engagement). The empirical results demonstrated that innovation climate is positively related to affective commitment. When leaders encourage and accept new ideas generated by team members, enable sharing and free exchange of ideas, and provide enacted support to innovation, employees tend to report higher job satisfaction, higher commitment, and higher levels of engagement. Thus, a strong climate for innovation can increase employee job satisfaction, commitment, and engagement (Demircioglu, 2023).

6.6.2.3.3 Trust /Individual Work Engagement

I acknowledge that the above proposed positive relationship, between trust and work engagement*,* was not supported by my research as empirical results (main study) are nonsignificant. The proposed positive relationship is supported by extant research.

In investigating a trust/work engagement conceptual model, Chughtai and Buckley (2011) posit that the trust/engagement relationship is not only positive but mutually reinforcing, leading to an upward spiral effect. They argue that trust can promote engagement by (1) allowing employees to focus on their work without being preoccupied with non-productive issues, (2) creating the perception of more available resources in their work environment, enabling them to be happily engrossed in their work, thus driving engagement, and (3) inspiring followers to adopt more cooperative and pro-social behaviours, thus again driving engagement (Colquitt et. al., 2007; Van Dyne et. al., 2000). Moreover, in an empirical study investigating trust in the leader, work engagement and voice behaviour, Wong et al. (2010) have shown that trust is positively related to work

engagement. In addition, while investigating transformational leadership, Li et al. (2020) have shown that trust in the leader is positively related to work engagement. Finally, Basit (2017), in an empirical study in public hospitals. has shown that trust in the supervisor is positively related to job engagement.

6.6.2.3.4 Team Psychological Safety/Team Performance

I acknowledge that the above proposed positive relationship, between team psychological safety and team performance, was not supported by my research as empirical results (main study) are nonsignificant. The proposed positive relationship is supported by extant research.

In investigating team psychological safety with a variety of real work teams in an organization, Edmondson (1999) has found that psychological safety, representing beliefs that the team is safe for interpersonal risk taking, is positively related to team performance. In addition, Choo et al. (2007) investigating quality management teams, has shown that team psychological safety enables knowledge creation, which boosts team performance. In addition, in an empirical study with management teams, Fyhn et al. (2023) have shown that psychological safety, is positively related to team performance; interestingly they have shown that having at least one member who perceives the team as psychologically safe, may lift team performance. Finally, in a comprehensive meta-analysis on the outcomes of psychological safety Frazier et al. (2017) have shown that team psychological safety is not only positively related to task performance but also to an array of outcomes reinforcing team performance, including information sharing, employee voice, creativity, learning behaviours, commitment and satisfaction.

6.6.2.3.5 Climate for Work Group Innovation/Team Performance

I acknowledge that the above proposed positive relationship, between climate for work group innovation and team performance, was not supported by my research as empirical

results (main study) are nonsignificant. Extant research supports the proposed positive relationship.

In an empirical study involving research and development teams, Bain et al. (2001) have shown that team climate for innovation (or climate for work group innovation as referred to in this thesis) is positively related to team performance, with relationships being stronger for research teams than development teams. In addition, in an empirical study investigating team climate for innovation with R&D teams, Pirola-Merlo (2010) has shown that team climate for innovation is positively related to team performance. Interestingly, three of the four climate scales (namely participative safety, support for innovation, and task orientation) were significantly correlated with project performance rated by managers and customers, and two scales (namely support for innovation, and vision) correlated with project leaders' ratings of project innovation. Teams with more positive initial ratings of these climate factors progressed significantly faster towards project completion, confirming that climate also predicts rate or speed of innovation and thus boosts team performance. Finally, in a longitudinal study, with teams participating in a business simulation, Ceschi et al. (2014) have shown that team climate for innovation is positively related to team performance, which also confirms that a conducive climate, fostering communication and support for innovation, can boost decision making and ultimately team performance.

6.6.2.3.6 Trust/Team Performance

I acknowledge that the above proposed positive relationship, between trust and team performance, was not supported by my research as empirical results (main study) are nonsignificant. Extant research supports the proposed positive relationship.

In empirically studying the relationship between trust in the leader, and team performance in athletics, Dirks (2000) has tested and confirmed the assumption that a team's trust in its leader has a significant effect on the team's performance, supporting for the notion that trust in leadership is a determinant of team performance and a product of team performance. Moreover, Wei and Long (2008), in an empirical study with work teams, have confirmed that

trust in the leader is positively related to team performance, with affect-based trust exhibiting a stronger positive relationship in comparison with cognition-based trust. Schaubroeck et al. (2011), in an empirical study with financial services teams, has also shown that both affect-based and cognition-based trust are positively related to team performance and team potency. Finally, De Jong et al. (2016), in a comprehensive meta-analysis, investigating the trust-performance relationship, has shown that trust is positively related to task interdependence and ultimately team performance.

6.7 Summary

In this chapter, I have reported on the results of the main empirical study, including descriptive statistics and correlations, aggregation, multilevel confirmatory factor analysis (MCFA and mediation (main empirical study).

Descriptive statistics include correlation results for the variables associated with the main empirical study; these variables, constituting the 'building blocks' of my research model, include predictors narcissistic admiration, narcissistic rivalry, and vulnerable narcissism, mediators including team psychological safety, climate for work group innovation, and trust in the leader, and outcomes team performance and individual work engagement. Variables were tested for aggregation to ascertain whether variables can be aggregated to the higher (team) level; aggregation was carried out using two criteria – Intraclass Correlation Coefficient ICC (1), and Interrater Agreement Coefficient **(**r_{wg}). Multilevel confirmatory analysis (MCFA) was also carried out to test the factor structure (narcissism) by estimating model fit statistics for the regression-based structural model (depicting causal paths between latent variables) and fitting a measurement model at the lower level. A structured, step-by-step model testing process, adding a new variable every time, was followed to test various models. Models were also tested for mediation, in association with the articulated set of hypotheses.

I have acknowledged that most of the results do not support the articulated set of hypotheses, a phenomenon often met in empirical research; this may be attributed to a

small sample size, a ‘business unusual’ context imposed by the pandemic and other factors to be discussed in the final chapter. Nevertheless, for each proposed relationship not supported, I have provided an array of empirical evidence, from extant research, that support my initial proposition.

Out of the proposed nine mediated relationships between variables, associated with my hypothesized model, three relationships regarding outcomes and two regarding mediators were supported by empirical results (main study). In contrast, six relationships regarding outcomes and four relationships regarding mediators were not supported, although again extant research provides ample empirical evidence that do support these relationships.

On a more general note, results and findings reported in existing literature are habitually generated in, and associated with, normal conditions during relatively tranquil periods (‘business as usual’), where the external macroeconomic environment remains stable and mostly predictable and manageable, as leaders, assured of their role and power and admired and trusted by their followers are given free rein to manage people and business operations.

What are the possible reasons that explain the differences between my empirical results and extant literature?

Firstly, the extraordinary C-19 conditions produced, by default, extraordinary, unorthodox or even paradoxical results that challenged and contradicted findings validated over time and long-held beliefs among researchers.

Secondly, the pandemic profoundly shook and derailed the leader–follower relationship. The leader was rendered a distant, absent and confused figure, trying to figure out how to virtually manage teams and operations from a computer screen, using new, untested and unprepared work arrangements and technology; followers, yearning for direction, guidance and support from their leaders, were not only left directionless but were forced to revisit and radically change their priorities.

Thirdly, the dramatic ‘life and death’ conditions, imposed by the pandemic, not only drastically modified the power and authority structure of the role of the leader but also

temporarily negated the importance, appeal and influence of the flamboyant narcissistic leader (high on narcissistic admiration) and highlighted the detrimental effects of the antagonistic narcissistic leader (high on narcissistic rivalry) and deleterious impact of the 'covert' neurotic narcissistic leader (high on vulnerable narcissism). It is likely that other *contextual* (e.g. loss of life, strict health protocols, government control, organizational disruption) and *structural* factors (e.g., heavy restructuring, dissolution of teams, new working arrangements, virtual supervisor monitoring) may have had a more derailing effect on individual work engagement and team performance.

Finally, the pandemic, amidst the horrendous loss of life, has illustrated the need for a more humane, caring, empathetic and supportive leader, serving rather than managing followers. In the next and final chapter, where the above reasons are further discussed, I will present the findings of the main empirical study, in the light of the unprecedented conditions described above, outline novel theoretical contributions to extant research, provide guidelines for organizations and practitioners managing with or dealing with narcissism respectively, and finally provide my conclusions.

Chapter 7. Discussion

7.1 Overview

There are few studies that investigate the effects of leader narcissism at the team level (Braun, 2017), even fewer that examine the differential relationship of narcissism dimensions or variants (i.e. narcissistic admiration, narcissistic rivalry, and vulnerable narcissism) with team level outcomes, and quite scarce studies investigating the effect of vulnerable narcissism, a factor often ignored in organizational research (Wirtz & Rigotti, 2020; Schyns, et al., 2023).

The unprecedented pandemic offered an extraordinary setting to investigate leader narcissism at the team level, within a hazardous context, that culminated in tremendous loss of life, massive layoffs, strict medical protocols, social distancing, radical changes in work arrangements, and the deterioration of working and interpersonal relationships. This afforded a rare chance to enrich the relatively lacking extant research in this area with fresh data within a unique perspective.

To provide this fresh perspective, while adhering to rigorous research methods, I have used 'matched' leader/direct reports (followers) data. I have focused entirely on teams in organizations, in their natural habitat, functioning under turbulent and uncertain conditions, as prevailed during the pandemic.

I have generated empirical data and subsequently derived insights to address two questions:

(1) What is the relationship of leader narcissism and its variants, namely narcissistic admiration, narcissistic rivalry, and vulnerable narcissism, with team performance and individual work engagement?
(2) To what extent do mediating mechanisms at the individual level (i.e. trust in the leader) and team level (i.e. team psychological safety and climate for work group innovation) explain the above relationships?

7.2 The Overarching Integrated Framework (NARC/TriMN)

To address these questions, I have used, as an overarching framework, the trifurcated model of narcissism (TriMN: Weiss et al., 2019; Miller et al., 2021), which includes the 'disentangled' narcissistic admiration and narcissistic rivalry 'pathways' (measured by NARC) and vulnerable narcissism (measured by HSNS). This is a robust framework that has outperformed the FFNI-BF, the only currently available approach to consider all three narcissism factors jointly (Schneider et al., 2023).

7.3 Core Findings

7.3.1 High/Low/Moderate Levels of Narcissism (Behavioural Manifestations & Implications)

I have consistently discussed, during this study, high levels of leader narcissism, to enable the analysis and interpretation of results. It is important at this point, before embarking on presenting the core study findings, to discuss the behavioural manifestations associated with (a) high, (b) low, and (c) moderate levels of each facet of predictor (leader) narcissism; in addition, I will refer to the implications, for each level of the predictor, on mediators and outcomes.

7.3.1.1 High Levels of (Leader) Narcissism

Empirical research has shown that the following categories of leadership behaviours are the most frequent, for leaders with high levels of narcissism: (1) exploiting others, (2) dominating others, and (3) showing off/wanting to be the centre of attention while bragging about their own achievements (Schmid et al., 2021).

High levels of narcissistic admiration are likely to result in leadership 'malfunction' (Grijalva et al., 2015) and low levels of trust in the leader and team psychological safety, but not necessarily team climate for innovation, as innovation is often associated with and even driven by arrogance, tendency to brag/show off, projecting an air of superiority and dominance, coupled with the ability to exploit ideas and people. High levels of narcissistic rivalry, which fosters aggressiveness and conflict, are likely to lead to low levels for all

mediators (trust in the leader, team psychological safety and climate for work group innovation) and both outcomes (individual work engagement, team performance). High levels of vulnerable narcissism will 'destroy' all mediators and both outcomes.

7.3.1.2 Low Levels of (Leader) Narcissism

Moreover, research has also shown that the following categories of leadership behaviours are the most frequent for leaders with low levels of narcissism: (1) serving others, (2) accommodating others, and (3) showing confidence as a leader (Schmid et al., 2021).

I can posit that low levels of narcissism, in conjunction with the tendency to deny or avoid the leadership role (Schmid et al., 2021) or to shy away from leadership responsibilities, will positively affect trust, team psychological safety and team climate and both outcomes, as these leaders are modest and humble and thus tend to create an agreeable atmosphere for their teams, and exhibit a (follower) serving attitude akin to 'servant' leadership (Schmid et al., 2021). Low levels for narcissistic admiration are likely to result in leadership 'malfunction' (Grijalva et al., 2015); low levels for narcissistic rivalry and vulnerable narcissism are likely to positively affect trust, team psychological safety and team climate and both outcomes.

7.3.1.3 Moderate Levels of (Leader) Narcissism

Research has also found that the following categories of leadership behaviours are the most frequent for leaders with moderate (i.e. around the mean) levels of narcissism:

(1) sharing leadership behaviours, (2) dominating others, and (3) exploiting others. Sharing leadership behaviours entails including team members in joint decisions, taking into consideration team and individual needs, empowering team members, appreciating the input and opinions of team members, taking responsibility and focusing on task achievement (Schmid et al., 2021).

Dominating others is associated with behaviours that are authoritative; this includes being difficult to collaborate with, dominating discussions and meetings, and selective listening.

Exploiting others includes seeing others as a ‘vehicle’ to achieve their goals (Schmid et al., 2021).

Moderate levels for narcissistic admiration will result in leadership effectiveness (Grijalva et al., 2015) and best team performance; moderate levels for narcissistic rivalry are likely to positively affect trust, team psychological safety, team climate, and both outcomes; moderate levels for vulnerable narcissism, and its associated depressive, neurotic, and vindictive elements, are still likely to negatively affect trust, team psychological safety, team climate, and both outcomes.

Overall, I would posit that maximum levels for outcomes (i.e. highest engagement, best performance) would be attained when (i) narcissistic admiration is moderate, (ii) narcissistic rivalry is low, and (iii) vulnerable narcissism is low.

As my findings and associated discussion are structured around the two research questions, it is important, at this stage, to remind the reader of the research questions that shaped my thinking and guided this research endeavour. These are outlined in section 7.1.

7.3.2 Narcissism and Outcomes (RQ1)

Proposed relationships between the designated variables exhibited in my hypothesized model, except for the vulnerable narcissism–team performance relationship, were not supported by my empirical results. It should be borne in mind that these relationships were explored under extraordinary circumstances, manifested by grave loss of life, societal upheaval, and organizational disruption; it would be useful to investigate these relationships, in future studies, under conditions of organizational normality, economic stability and societal order.

Most importantly, the key finding from my empirical study is that vulnerable narcissism, the ‘covert’ neurotic facet of (leader) narcissism, is the most deleterious as it exhibits a negative relationship with team performance. This relationship is explained below.

7.3.2.1 Vulnerable Narcissism/Team Performance

Empirical evidence from the main study clearly point to the problematic nature of the vulnerable narcissism–team performance relationship (r=−.41**). As previously argued, leaders high on vulnerable narcissism, render their followers emotionally exhausted (Wirtz & Rigotti, 2020), irritate their team members via their daily behaviours or Vulnerable Narcissism Leadership Behaviours (VNLBs; Schyns et al., 2023); follower irritation is an indicator of reduced well-being (Grebner et al., 2003) and elevated stress (Merino-Tejedor et al., 2013) and an antecedent of more severe mental health impairments (Mohr et al., 2006) for followers and organizations in general, rendering teams damaged, dysfunctional, and ineffective. As previously discussed, followers dealing with a problematic vulnerable narcissistic leader, waste resources to make sense of and decipher a complex and neurotic (leader) personality (Schyns et al., 2023), rather than investing their cognitive resources in boosting team performance. In addition, these leaders, constantly feeling inferior and overwhelmed by feelings of inadequacy, devalue followers (Pincus et al., 2009), are more likely to experience anger (internally attributed but externally directed) and lash out or become abusive (Braun et al., 2024) and aggressive towards followers (Zhang & Zhu, 2021). Their anger, hostility, and rage create an unhealthy team climate based on threats and intimidation, which consequently affects team functionality and team performance.

In addition, these leaders, tormented by feelings of inferiority and inadequacy (Braun, 2019), possess a weak leader self-identity - a major barrier to assuming a leadership role – rendering teams leaderless and directionless. Moreover, as they avoid leading (Schyns et al., 2022), and shy away from leader responsibilities, they perpetuate chaos and unconsciously instal a regime of an ‘absent’ form of non-leadership (akin to laissez-faire leadership), which is detrimental to follower well-being (Aasland et al., 2010), follower job satisfaction, and motivation (Judge & Piccolo, 2004). Finally, these leaders destroy, not only team performance, but the very foundations of a team, which would ideally be a wonderful habitat for learning and belongingness (Hackman, 2002), as they are fearful of errors and

suppress learning, isolate members, curtail feedback and frown upon experimentation and novelty.

7.3.3 Mediation (RQ2)

Results from the empirical study did not support the proposed mediation models; these models should be re-examined in future studies, under 'business as usual' conditions.

7.3.4 Differences (Main Study Findings Vs Extant Research)

I turn now to present the possible reasons that explain the differences or discrepancies between my empirical results and existing literature.

7.3.4.1 Extraordinary Circumstances – Paradoxical Results

Firstly, this empirical study was carried out at the peak of C-19, within an extraordinary and unprecedented business context, unlike any context the research community has ever studied, or contemporary humanity has ever seen, experienced or coped with.

Business, industry, and societal shutdowns, implemented to curb the global virus spread, brought about a wide array of dramatic changes for industries, organizations, leaders and followers.

Entire industries were disrupted, dramatically downsized, dismantled or ceased to exist. Organizations were forced to introduce, with little preparation, the strictest of health protocols, fostering social distancing and causing follower isolation and alienation (Kniffin et at., 2021); alternative work practices including working from home, virtual teams, and virtual/remote management were introduced with little warning and no training.

Leaders downplayed the virus, dismissed expert advice, resisted or violated health protocols or were simply left confused, shocked, and incapacitated in a world that changed overnight and had little use for their charisma, eloquence, and flamboyant attitudes. The global pandemic even questioned the concept, role, requirements, and responsibility of leadership and exposed its flaws and fault lines (Maak et al., 2021), including leader

narcissism. In addition, the pandemic highlighted the need for more compassionate, caring and humanized leadership (Guyottot & Le Fur, 2022).

Followers, almost overnight, were furloughed, laid-off temporarily or permanently, or branded ‘essential’ (Kniffin et at., 2021), working under the most dismal of conditions (Kniffin et at., 2021). Physical distancing (handshakes were forbidden) and the loss of high-quality social connections, for those who were laid off or required to work from home, were harmful for mental and physical health (Brooks et al., 2020). The loss of social connections, in conjunction with the use of virtual communication, enhancing misunderstandings rather than clarity, contributed to workplace loneliness (Cacioppo et al., 2006), which was shown to have strong negative relationships with follower affective commitment, affiliative behaviours and performance (Ozcelik & Barsade, 2018), job burnout, rumination, due to the continuous exposure to C-19 media news, and alcohol and substance abuse, as human vulnerabilities were heightened (Kniffin et at., 2021). Finally, loss of income and financial deprivation triggered a spiral of adversity affecting the entire family (McKee-Ryan & Maitoza, 2018).

These extraordinary conditions produced extraordinary, puzzling, and even paradoxical results, some of which are reflected in my findings; for example, (a) the ‘inert’ nature or ‘negated’ effect of flamboyant narcissistic admiration, which is often associated in extant research with positive organizational outcomes, and (b) the explicitly detrimental effect of vulnerable narcissism with team performance, often invisible, ignored (Wirtz & Rigotti, 2020), or tolerated in a stable and thriving business environment.

7.3.4.2 The Leader–Follower Relationship Redefined

The leadership literature has largely assumed that for the leader–follower relationship to thrive, leaders and followers need to be physically, socially, and interactionally close for leadership processes and outcomes to be effective (Antonakis & Atwater, 2002).

The pandemic and the enforcement of remote working turned leadership, almost overnight, from a close and interpersonally intimate process to a distal, impersonal arrangement. The

lack of leader frequency interaction, not only upset and derailed the equilibrium of the leader–follower relationship but it also adversely affected followers' levels of effort, performance, and withdrawal, which were contingent on leader interaction frequency (Carsten et al., 2022). Moreover, the lack of physical proximity imposed by the pandemic, previously ensuring follower attachment security (Hinojosa et al., 2020), further upset the fragile leader–follower relationship and burdened followers globally with anxiety and depression (Kupcova et al, 2023).

The pandemic also enforced a new set of priorities and altered the focus of the leader–follower relationship; thus, the safety, physical, and mental wellbeing and resilience of the employees took precedence over individual performance achievement. This also shifted and redefined the previously predominant transactional leader–follower relationship to a kinder, more compassionate, supportive and trusting leader (Buchan et al., 2022). Thus, key concepts, previously essential for team performance (such as team climate for innovation, team psychological safety, and even trust) were rendered secondary or inconsequential.

Moreover, dark triad traits (i.e. narcissism) exhibited by leaders during the pandemic had negative effects on followers' evaluations of the organization's response to the pandemic, adversely affecting trust and increasing C-19 related anxiety, and further upsetting the leader–follower relationship (Williams et al., 2023). These characteristics (i.e. leader narcissism) had a further negative impact on followership due to their (follower) perception of leader self-interest behaviour (Wang & Quo, 2022), a predominant characteristic of narcissistic admiration and rivalry.

Even the balance of power in the leader–follower relationship considerably shifted because of the pandemic, as follower self-leadership strategies (e.g. self-goal setting, self-rewards, self-talk) were adopted to reduce dependency on the leader and mitigate the negative effects of leader narcissism (Williams et al., 2023).

Ultimately, unprecedented conditions and enforced interventions (e.g. relocating workforce, closing entire divisions, disassembling project teams) derailed and eventually dissolved

precious interpersonal relationships, cultivated over the years. Constructs like engagement, innovation, and psychological safety, once critical for followers and leaders alike, became secondary or even irrelevant during the pandemic, their inferior role reflected in some of my findings.

Thirdly, there was an abrupt, silent but drastic shift in the 'ideal' leader profile, described by traits such as intelligence, dynamism, tyranny and masculinity (Epitropaki et al., 2013); this well-established prototype (often personified by narcissistic leaders) was 'weakened' during the pandemic and replaced by a new one centred around a more caring, empathetic and supportive leader, serving rather than managing followers. The megalomaniac, confident and competent leader, once admired and respected, was perceived, during the pandemic, as ineffective or even judged as dangerous.

This point is best illustrated by the handling of the pandemic in Brazil by President J Bolsonaro, an egocentric and unrepentant narcissist, once admired for his flamboyant exhibitions of competence and authority. Brazil's governance of the pandemic, a dangerous mixture of 'government by exception', 'strategic ignorance', neoliberal authoritarianism, science denialism, and ableism, has been described as nothing short of tragic, plunging his country into chaos and catastrophe (Ortega & Orsini, 2020). It is no surprise that countries like the USA, UK and Brazil, led by 'dangerous' narcissistic leaders, accounted for almost 30% of the global death toll.

The shift of the ideal leader 'prototype' and its underpinning traits not only brought into question perceptions and beliefs regarding leadership styles and practices, long perceived as effective, but also generated renewed interest in other alternative leadership approaches.

Transformational leadership, a leadership practice traditionally perceived as effective, focusing on increasing employees' performance, satisfaction, and engagement, was 'neutralized', during the pandemic, as it exhibited no significant impact on follower performance (Meiryani et al., 2022). In addition, transformational leadership, due to lack of

physical proximity, encountered communication difficulties and lack of mutual trust, in virtual working environments (Tautz et al., 2022).

Empirical evidence during the pandemic has shown that *servant leadership* had a positive impact on task and team performance in virtual working environments. In addition, servant leadership reduced follower psychological distress, reinforced follower psychological empowerment, and enhanced perceptions of supervisor support (Zada et al., 2022).

Empirical evidence has also shown that *authentic leadership*, encompassing leader behaviours illustrating ability, promoting ethics and forging strong and positive relationships, favourably impacted and restored trust and enhanced leader member exchange (LMX). Moreover, authentic leadership, encompassing the ability to manage change effectively, boost employees' work motivation, provide support, and take appropriate action, increased trust and fostered a positive working relationship (Chen & Sriphon, 2022). Moreover, authentic leadership was found to be positively related to follower emotional resilience, an important 'shield of protection' during the pandemic (Mao et al., 2023). Finally, empirical studies have also shown negative correlations between authentic leadership and follower emotional exhaustion, cynicism, job stress and job-stress-related presenteeism, and a positive correlation between authentic leadership and professional efficacy (Pillay et al., 2024).

7.3.5 Theoretical Implications (Correlations)

7.3.5.1 Context

The first important implication for research is that *context***,** determined by macroeconomic conditions, and not content, is king!

Although many studies have examined the impact of context on leadership and its outcomes, there is neither a systematic approach to, nor consensus regarding, what constitutes the context for leadership, which does not occur in a vacuum as leaders function in a specific multilayered and multifaceted context (Oc, 2018); to obtain better outcomes,

there must be a match between a leader's traits and the situational factors within that context (Fiedler, 1978).

The leadership context is fully portrayed by the categorical framework (Johns, 2006) where context, affecting the leadership process (e.g. leadership styles) and resultant outcomes (e.g. leadership effectiveness), is described/depicted in its omnibus (where, who, when) and discrete (task, social, physical, temporal) context levels.

The 'when' dimension is of relevance to this work as it pertains to crises, economic conditions and organizational changes, all devastatingly present in the recent pandemic. This dimension is also important as the time at which research is performed can act as an important proxy for the contextual factors related to time effects; additionally, events at the macro level (the pandemic) have the potential to shape social and economic relations that are embedded in the leadership context (Johns, 2006).

Other ingredients of the categorical framework (Hiller et al., 2011; Johns, 2006) are also pertinent to this work, including 'physical' (e.g. physical distance), 'leader' (e.g. leadership styles, leader behaviours, perceptions of followers), 'effectiveness' (e.g. team performance), 'cognition' (e.g. leader prototypicality), and 'attitude' (e.g. trust in leader).

Firstly, I can argue that, during the pandemic there was a total 'mismatch' between leaders' traits (leader narcissism and its self-centred agentic, antagonistic, and neurotic manifestations) and the situational factors (grave loss of life, societal disruption, upheaval of organizational life) within that context; this 'mismatch' has been best illustrated by empirical results that showed (a) a negated and incapacitated narcissistic admiration facet, (b) an antagonistic narcissistic rivalry facet, shown to be detrimental to trust in the leader, and (c) a neurotic and depressive vulnerable narcissism facet, shown to be deleterious to team performance.

Secondly, according to the categorical framework (Hiller et al., 2011; Johns, 2006), physical distance (lack of proximity), an important dimension of the discrete level of context, deprived followers of attachment security and influenced follower perceptions (e.g. followers altering their priorities and investing more cognitive resources on domestic issues).

Thirdly, leader (narcissistic) behaviours have modified (follower) ‘cognition’; followers not only questioned and challenged the long-established ideal leader ‘prototype’ of authority, competence, and dominance, but also brought about a major, although temporary, shift in leader prototypicality, focusing on sensitivity, empathy, care, and support.

Fourthly, leader (narcissistic) behaviours have also influenced (follower) ‘attitude’ and in particular trust in the leader, as best illustrated by the adverse effect of narcissistic rivalry on trust in the leader.

Fifthly, new leadership practices (influencing process – leader), imposed by health protocols and alternative work arrangements, have challenged, ‘stretched’, and dissolved interpersonal relationships, rendered more fragile by leader distance/absence, excessive controls, perpetual checks and balances, and loss of interpersonal trust. To manage performance remotely, supervisors had to increase or vary monitoring; research has shown that daily (performance) monitoring was negatively associated with daily felt trust, which in turn had a negative impact on follower daily well-being in both contexts. Furthermore, supervisor monitoring variability intensified the negative relationship between daily supervisor monitoring and subordinates' daily felt trust in the newly introduced remote working context (Zheng et al., 2023).

Lastly, integrating the components of the context–leadership relationship, I can conclude that a crisis of the pandemic proportions, altering economic conditions and bringing about massive organizational change (omnibus context – when), in conjunction with physical distance (discrete context – physical) and the resulting deterioration and dissolution of interpersonal relationships, worsened by situation-incompatible leader narcissistic behaviours (influencing process – leader), adversely affected team performance (outcomes – effectiveness), challenged long-held beliefs regarding leader prototypicality (outcomes – cognition), and negatively affected trust in the leader (outcomes – attitude).

Researchers argue that, in times of turbulence and uncertainty, followers would gravitate to a confident and assured leader (personified by leaders high on narcissistic admiration) who will reinstate order and project a sense of clarity and certainty (Nevicka et al., 2013). In

contrast with this belief, narcissistic admiration was not only ‘neutralized’ by context and rendered inert and inactive but was found to be adversely influential to engagement (thus challenging well established propositions) and other outcomes (e.g. trust).

There are no explicit studies in extant research, to my knowledge, that describe a specific shift during the pandemic to a new validated leader prototype or propose a new leadership model with an impressively new set of traits. Nevertheless, the pandemic has plentiful examples, at the national or the organizational level, that illustrate the effective coping and management of the pandemic through the utilization of leadership practices, previously in the background, but now brought into a sharper focus (Lawton-Misra & Pretorius, 2021). New Zealand, a success story in coping with the pandemic and minimizing harm to lives and livelihoods, established during the pandemic a shared sense of purpose to secure the commitment of its citizens. Charismatic leadership, effective in bringing about clarity and composure in ambiguity and crises (Antonakis, 2021), in conjunction with key leadership practices, including the government's willingness to be led by expertise, effectively mobilizing the population and enabling coping, served to build the trust in leadership needed for transformative, collective, and remedial action (Wilson, 2020).

On the antipode, the reluctance of hypermasculine leaders (Trump, Johnson, Bolsonaro, Orban), personifying narcissism, to take the pandemic seriously and implement or adhere to mitigation measures, contributed to incoherent policymaking, poor and confused communication, reducing levels of public trust, and contributing to high rates of infection and death (Waylen, 2021).

In the education sector, it became clear that a deviation from the agentic confident and dominant leader profile, largely personified by narcissists, was essential; empathy (narcissists lack empathy), vulnerability (grandiose narcissists show no vulnerability), self-awareness (narcissists have little self-awareness), agility (narcissists are disagreeable and rigid in their convictions), and containment (in contrast, narcissism is positively related to emotional contagion) were some of the qualities needed during this crisis and evidently not possessed by narcissists. Leaders were expected to not only fully understand the meaning

of empathy and compassion, but to know how to sincerely demonstrate these qualities (Lawton-Misra & Pretorius, 2021).

At the organizational level, followers showed the way by asserting that communal (rather than agentic) leader behaviours were more important when managing within the crisis-related context; interestingly, empirical research has shown that communality was a stronger predictor than competence or supervisor likability (Eichenauer et al., 2022).

Finally, a paradigm shift was also witnessed in terms of preferred gender in leadership roles during the pandemic. Research has shown that stakeholders advantaged female leaders, based on mental schemas of what is required in a pandemic (relational leadership) and their prescriptive expectations of female leaders as more relational (Oliver et al., 2024).

I do not imply that the widely held profile of the 'prototypical' leader of authority, confidence and competence (Epitropaki et al., 2013) was rendered overnight obsolete or destructive; I argue that this prototype was temporarily doubted, questioned, and challenged under the new conditions for its compatibility and effectiveness during the pandemic.

Ultimately, to ensure high levels of leadership effectiveness, leaders should expand their existing leadership practice portfolio to include elements and practices from relational, charismatic, and servant leadership styles, which need to be brought again into sharper focus.

7.3.5.2 The 'Silent' Killer

As mentioned in previous sections, the research community has ignored vulnerable narcissism (Wirtz & Rigotti, 2020), the neurotic facet of narcissism, in organizational life as it was judged to be irrelevant, inactive, too clinical, or out of context. My empirical findings, in line with a body of emerging research, show that vulnerable narcissism, is not only present and active in organization life, but is detrimental to key organizational outcomes and deleterious to team performance, the 'cornerstone' of organizational performance. Given its destructive effects and its 'overt' nature, my research validates recent calls for further research and reinforces the need to study vulnerable narcissism more systematically

and to identify the specific impact of its behavioural manifestations (VLNB; Schyns et al., 2023) on organizational life.

7.3.5.3 Curvilinear

Extant research (see Table 2-3) has provided ample evidence of a nil linear relationship of leader narcissism and outcomes. More specifically, grandiose narcissism (CEO) exhibited a nil linear relationship with firm innovation and CEO humility (Zhang et al., 2017). Moreover, narcissism was shown to exhibit a nil linear relationship with organizational citizenship behaviours or OCB (Judge et al., 2006), job satisfaction (Bruk-Lee et al., 2009), and job performance (O'Boyle et al., 2012). Finally, grandiose narcissism was shown to exhibit a nil linear relationship with social rejection, while vulnerable narcissism was shown to exhibit a nil linear relationship with achievement and failure (Jauk & Kaufman, 2018).

Empirical evidence has supported the notion of a curvilinear narcissism–leadership effectiveness relationship, as moderate levels of narcissism lead to leadership effectiveness, while low/high levels of narcissism result in leadership 'malfunction' (Grijalva et al., 2015). Recently, Uppal (2020) has provided evidence of a curvilinear CEO narcissism–firm performance relationship, while Schmid et al. (2021) have confirmed the curvilinear (team) leader narcissism–team performance relationship.

Extant research has not yet investigated the curvilinear relationship between the three facets of narcissism (as depicted by the TriMN) and outcomes. Consequently, this thesis contributes to research by providing fresh data on still unexplored construct relationships and emerging narcissism models.

The curvilinear relationship may eventually provide a ray of hope that leader narcissism is not wholly deleterious for teams and followers, but can be a potentially beneficial personality trait, in moderation (Grijalva et al., 2015) and while in check.

7.3.5.4 Conflict-Prone Antagonism

Although extant research has shown that the antagonistic narcissistic rivalry is negatively related (r=−.21* to −.35*) to trust in the leader (Kwiatkowska et al., 2019), which is in alignment with my own findings, it is important to note that this relationship has 'worsened' during the pandemic (r=−.41**). What are the factors, pertinent to the pandemic, that contributed to this?

Empirical evidence has shown that antagonistic narcissistic rivalry predicted lower likelihood of enactment of COVID-19 prevention behaviours, a greater endorsement of unfounded health beliefs (Zemojtel-Piotrowska et al., 2024), less social-distancing, less proactive health behaviours like mask wearing, and greater conflict with others (Grubbs et al., 2022); in other words, these leaders did not adhere to nationally introduced prevention health protocols (i.e. they refused to vaccinate or wear a mask, continued shaking hands, and kept close physical proximity with others), while promoting and reinforcing, through their daily communication, conspiracy theories regarding the pandemic.

Moreover, grandiose narcissists (including narcissistic rivalry), characterized by feelings of superiority and beliefs of inferiority of others (Grapsas et al., 2020), justified the non-use of face masks with arguments of depersonalization, irresponsibility, and rationalization, which threatened their own health and that of others. These leaders tended to use masks less and disregard social distancing during the COVID-19 pandemic (Grubbs et al., 2022), due to their tendency towards self-promotion (Carpenter, 2012) and status seeking (Grapsas et al., 2020); thus, they may have refused to wear masks as they perceived them as aesthetically jarring (Chavez-Ventura et al., 2022), again showing no empathy or compassion for others.

I can argue that these careless and irresponsible practices, devoid of care and compassion, blatantly violating protocols and putting human lives in peril, not only generated conflict as suggested above but also adversely affected the trust component of the leader–follower relationship, rendering them insensitive, not to be trusted, and potentially dangerous for public health.

As leaders high on narcissistic rivalry, are hostile or even aggressive toward other people, and they generally perceive others as a threat (Back et al., 2013), it is assumed that they feel more lonely and that this feeling of loneliness is affected by a lower level of social support (Gasiorowska et al., 2021). This social isolation and resultant withdrawal nurtures a 'vicious circle', where greater isolation leads to greater hostility, which leads to greater isolation. Trust, a concept nurtured by frequent proximal productive human encounters, is bound to be adversely affected by the hostility and aggression of an increasingly isolated leader.

But leaders high on narcissistic rivalry are indeed unrepentant disbelievers. Empirical evidence during the pandemic has shown that narcissistic rivalry is negatively related to perceived susceptibility (of being infected with the disease) and negatively related to the likelihood of contacting the disease compared with peers (Venema & Pfattheicher, 2021). Despite the grave loss of life surrounding these leaders, it has been shown that narcissistic rivalry is negatively related to being worried about the pandemic (Venema & Pfattheicher, 2021). This not only adversely affected trust in the leader but also destroyed leader credibility and reliability and cast serious doubts on the suitability of these individuals for leadership roles.

My empirical evidence contributes to theory and are compatible with findings and insights outlined above. I can finally argue that the aggressive and antagonistic narcissistic rivalry behaviours, often misinterpreted as leader authority and dynamism may be 'forgiven' or somewhat tolerated by followers under normal conditions; in a different, dramatically perilous context affecting follower perceptions and leadership outcomes (Johns, 2006), these behaviours were frowned upon and not tolerated; these behaviours can also act as an accelerant, rapidly destroying a fragile and deteriorating leader–follower relationship, rendered more fragile by the pandemic.

The introduction of unknown, not adequately prepared or tested working arrangements (e.g. working from home), the dramatic rise in follower stress due to job insecurity and massive loss of human life, was bound to increase job burnout and encourage a distant attitude

towards work (Kniffin, 2021), eventually ruining teams and threatening organizational sustainability.

7.3.6 Implications for Future Research

7.3.6.1 Narcissistic Admiration

As the curvilinear narcissism–outcome relationship is increasingly supported by an emerging body of empirical research, the research community can greatly benefit by further investigating, using the lens of curvilinearity, the relationship of narcissistic admiration with variables (e.g. trust in the leader, team psychological safety, team climate for innovation) used in this study. It would be interesting to observe whether a curvilinear relationship can be validated for different outcomes; this could also create more research opportunities investigating a set of differential curvilinear relationships of narcissistic admiration with outcomes.

Possible questions for future research endeavours may include:

(a) Do moderate levels of leader narcissistic admiration ensure a climate conducive to innovation?

(b) Do low levels of leader narcissistic admiration enable leadership effectiveness and drive individual work engagement?

(c) What is the (curvilinear?) relationship of narcissistic admiration with other outcomes, still unexplored, including but not restricted to, employee voice, employee empowerment, follower stress/well-being, follower irritation, supervisor-targeted counterproductive work behaviours (CWB), employee depression and follower career satisfaction?

7.3.6.2 Narcissistic Rivalry

As the (negative) linear narcissistic rivalry–outcome relationship is increasingly validated by growing research (Gauglitz et al., 2022; Helfrich & Dietl, 2019; Kwiatkowska et al., 2019; Mao et al., 2019; Rogoza et al., 2018; Szymczak et al., 2022; Wu et al., 2002) and supported by findings of this thesis, the research community can greatly benefit by further

investigating, using the same lens of linearity, the relationship of narcissistic rivalry with other important outcomes including, but not restricted to, employee voice, employee empowerment, employee innovative behaviour, follower stress/well-being, follower irritation), supervisor-targeted CWB, employee depression and follower career satisfaction.

7.3.6.3 Vulnerable Narcissism

As the (negative) linear vulnerable narcissism–outcomes relationship is being further explored and validated by a renewed interest and fresh empirical data, the research community can benefit by further investigating (using the lens of linearity) the relationship of vulnerable narcissism with other important outcomes including, but not restricted to, employee voice, employee empowerment, employee innovative behaviour, follower stress/well-being, follower irritation), supervisor-targeted CWB, employee depression, employee vulnerable narcissism, knowledge hiding, exploratory/exploitative learning and follower career satisfaction.

7.3.6.4 Vulnerable Narcissism Leadership Behaviours (VNLB)

The seminal work of Schyns et al. (2023) has, for the first time, unveiled the 'covert' and mysterious nature of vulnerable narcissism by articulating (and measuring) key daily leader behavioural manifestations associated with this facet.

As vulnerable narcissists become more 'transparent' and better understood, it would be a unique opportunity for the research community to utilize the concept (i.e. VNLB) and associated measure (Schyns et al., 2023) and investigate the relationship of these leader behaviours (i.e. VNLB) with outcomes utilized in this study or with any outcomes suggested in previous sections. Thus, researchers will be in a better position to pinpoint specific behaviours that are 'higher contributors' or more 'responsible' for the deleterious nature and the adverse impact of vulnerable narcissism on teams and organizational outcomes.

Given the development of this construct (i.e. VNLB) and its new measure, researchers, building on the work of Uppal (2020), who investigated the CEO narcissism–firm

performance relationship, could similarly explore the relationship of CEO VNLB's on firm performance, using objective performance criteria (e.g. return on assets), suggested by Uppal (2020).

7.3.7 Narcissism and Mediators

7.3.7.1 The Mediated Narcissism–Outcomes Relationship

The second research question, guiding this discussion, is:

> RQ2: To what extent do mediating mechanisms at (a) the individual level, namely trust in the leader, and (b) the team level, namely psychological safety, and climate for work group innovation, explain these relationships?

Numerous mediators were investigated by various empirical studies in extant research, potentially mediating the relationship of leader narcissism (see Table 2-4) and narcissistic admiration/rivalry (see Table 2-5), and with outcomes associated with my study (see Table 2-6). I can observe (see Table 2-4) that only the mediator 'leader trustworthiness' (Hamstra et al., 2021), which is not equivalent but an antecedent of my mediator 'trust in the leader', was explored/tested as mediating the leader narcissism–employee silence relationship. For predictors narcissistic admiration and narcissistic rivalry (see Table 2-5), psychological empowerment (Helfrich & Dietl, 2019), a prerequisite of my mediator 'team psychological safety', was tested for mediating the narcissism–employee voice relationship. In addition, trust was tested as a mediator of the narcissistic admiration and narcissistic rivalry pathways with outcome leadership effectiveness (Lynch et al., 2022). For outcomes 'team performance' and 'work engagement' (see Table 2-6), no mediator associated with my hypothesized model and hypotheses was tested.

Overall, I can conclude that my mediation findings can only be situated within a rather small, restricted, and indirectly linked, body of extant research. No empirical evidence exists, to my knowledge, testing mediator 'climate for work group innovation'.

Of the mediation relationships tested, mediator trust in the leader, associated with predictor vulnerable narcissism and now attracting substantial interest from the research community,

proved to be fragile and susceptible during the pandemic, and outcome team performance, fundamental to organizational performance, is the most interesting and should be re-tested in future research under 'business as usual' conditions.

In addition, as vulnerable narcissism is no longer 'covert', as it has been described by its daily behavioural manifestations (VNLB; Schyns et al., 2023), research effort could be invested in testing the VNLB's trust in the leader–team performance mediated relationship. In addition, the same mediated relationship can be further explored by replacing mediator trust in the leader with other useful mediators including but not restricted to abusive supervision intent, supervisory monitoring variability, perceived organizational support and follower irritation and emotional exhaustion.

Given the conditions of the pandemic and the grave loss of life, I can conclude that leader narcissism was reduced in significance and impact (especially narcissistic admiration, which was rendered out of time and place), sidelined for bigger challenges facing teams, and defused or negated by forces at work during the pandemic. Nonsignificant mediation findings are likely testament to the above argument as leader narcissism during the pandemic was not relevant for the proposed mediators and outcomes; it is apparent that the author of this work, in proposing the hypothesized model, was still 'trapped' in a 'business as usual' thinking mode, proposing well established relationships supported by extant research carried out under 'normal' conditions.

As suggested above, other mediators, besides trust, climate, and safety, should be employed in future research to better understand the differential and distinct relationships between (leader) narcissism (narcissistic admiration, narcissistic rivalry, and vulnerable narcissism) and team performance/individual work engagement; these mediators can include, although not restricted to (a) abusive supervision intent, (b) supervisory monitoring variability, (c) perceived organizational support, (d) leader self-identity, (e) respect for the leader, (f) motivation to lead, and (g) follower irritation and emotional exhaustion.

7.3.7.2 - Theoretical Implications (Mediation)

Nonsignificant findings may reflect the fact that leader narcissism is not relevant for these mediators and outcomes. My findings contribute to theory by suggesting that the external effect of predictor leader narcissism (distal cause) is not transferred to organizational outcomes through some intervening mechanisms (proximal cause), at least not with the set of mediators included in this research. It may also suggest that the narcissism–outcome relationship is moderated (and not mediated) by these designated variables. In other words, the narcissism–outcome relationship is stronger when the designated variables are present at specific levels (low, moderate, high).

For example, I can speculate (since there are no empirical or conceptual evidence that show that moderation occurs for the narcissism–outcomes relationships) that the narcissistic rivalry–work engagement relationship is moderated by trust in the leader, in other words, the negative narcissistic rivalry–work engagement relationship is stronger when trust in the leader is low, compared when trust in the leader is high.

When trust in the leader is low and thus leader actions are questioned and doubted, and the leader–follower relationship is already fragile, then antagonistic, hostile and aggressive behaviours of leaders, high on narcissistic rivalry, can have a more devastating (more negative) effect on engagement. It should be stressed that this is purely speculative as there is no evidence in extant research to corroborate this assertion.

These findings contradict research insights often found in leadership studies, which assume that leaders have a stronger effect on followers, rather than vice versa. Regretfully, my mediation empirical findings do not add to extant research or shed any light on the look, promised by mediation, inside the ‘black box’ of leadership revealing how the external effect of leadership is internalized. In addition, my mediation results do not allow interesting associations to be deconstructed into components that reveal possible causal mechanisms (Shrout & Bolger, 2002).

7.3.7.3 Mediation - Implications for Future Research

There are several more relevant mediating processes that need to be explored in the future, thankfully under more stable and secure 'business as usual' conditions. I can argue that not only will these mediators prove useful and clearly exhibit and highlight the role of leader narcissism in the organizational life but will also shed light on the differential relationship of each facet of narcissism as depicted by the TriMN (i.e. narcissistic admiration, narcissistic rivalry, vulnerable narcissism). Mediators that could be investigated include (a) abusive supervision, (b) leader (self) identity, (c) motivation to lead, and (d) respect for the leader. These mediating processes are more relevant than others because they can be directly attributed to the leader and his/her psychological make up.

7.3.7.3.1 Abusive Supervision

Abusive supervision is defined as the "sustained display of hostile verbal and nonverbal behaviours, excluding physical contact" (Tepper, 2000, p. 178). Extant research has shown, drawing on the threatened egotism model (Baumeister et al., 1996), that leader narcissism is positively related to proactive (when narcissists try to obtain status) and reactive (when narcissists are provoked) aggression, as well as direct (when recipient of aggression is present), indirect (when recipient of aggression is not present), physical and verbal aggression and bullying (Kjaervik & Bushman, 2021),

There is no evidence, to my knowledge, of a relationship of the more open and tolerant narcissistic admiration 'pathway' and aggression. In contrast, narcissistic rivalry is positively related to abusive supervision (Gauglitz et al., 2022); similarly vulnerable narcissism is positively related to abusive supervision (Braun et al., 2019) and aggression towards followers (Zhang & Zhu, 2021).

Moreover, not often explored in research as a mediator, 'organizational aggression' partially mediates the leader narcissism relationship with workplace deviance (Al Hasnawi & Abbas, 2021). Finally, workplace bullying (a form of aggression) fully mediates the leader narcissism relationship with employee depression (Tokarev et al., 2017). This potential

mediator is unexplored and merits more focus in the future. It would be interesting to observe the differing nature of the relationship of each facet of narcissism with outcomes team performance and work engagement, as mediated by the various forms of aggression (Kjaervik & Bushman, 2021) described above.

7.3.7.3.2 Leader Self-Identity

Leader self-identity, a construct potentially moderating the narcissism–outcome relationships, is defined as the extent to which "individuals see themselves and/or identify as leaders" (Hiller, 2005, p. 8). Individuals with a strong leader self-identity (as with leaders high on narcissistic admiration), undertake leadership roles and duties, are willing to be engaged in leadership development activities, endorse organization-defined leadership behaviours, are more effective as leaders (Hiller, 2005), and ultimately drive team performance (Cojuharenco & Peralta, 2016). Although research on leader identity is growing, there is little empirical evidence on its moderating effects on the relationship of each facet of leader narcissism with outcomes team performance and work engagement. It would be interesting for researchers in the future to further explore and better understand how different levels of leader self-identity affect the narcissism–outcomes relationships. Some key questions that could potentially guide future research include: Does leader (self) identity moderate the narcissism–outcome relationships? In other words, is the narcissistic admiration–outcomes relationship stronger with a strong self-identity, i.e. when the individual sees himself/herself as a leader? Is this relationship 'weakened' with a weak leader self-identity and an avoidance to lead (Schyns et al., 2022), often encountered with vulnerable narcissists? Similarly, is the narcissistic rivalry–outcomes relationship less negative (stronger) with a strong leader (self) identity and more negative (weaker) when leader self-identity is weaker?

How can organizations moderate and eventually offset the negative effect of leaders, high on vulnerable narcissism, on outcomes, say team performance? Can this negative relationship described above become less negative when these hypersensitive leaders,

motivated by being unique and special, are encouraged to fit in or shift from an individual level of identity (Schyns et al., 2023), driven by self-interest, autonomy, and independence, to a more collective level of identity (Schyns et al., 2023) that values interdependence, collaboration, and striving for the welfare of the group?

7.3.7.3.3 Motivation to Lead

Motivation to lead is defined as "[…] individual differences construct that affects a leader['s] […] decision to assume leadership training, roles and responsibilities" (Chan & Drasgow, 2001, p. 482). Individuals with a stronger motivation to lead (MTL) exhibit stronger leader self-identity, like to lead others, willingly gravitate towards leadership roles (Chan & Drasgow, 2011), and exhibit high levels of leadership potential (Hiller, 2005). Although research on motivation to lead is growing, there is little empirical evidence on its mediating effects on the relationship of each facet of leader narcissism with outcomes team performance and work engagement. Research can benefit in the future by investigating the (different) mediating effects of affective/identity MTL, non-calculative MTL and social-normative MTL (Chan & Drasgow, 2011) on the narcissism–outcome relationships.

7.3.7.3.4 Respect for the Leader

Resect for the leader is an important prerequisite for leadership success. I can argue that respect for the leader reinforces trust and enables the formulation of enduring trusting leader–follower relationships, ensures/reinforces the credibility enjoyed by the leader, and improves the quality of the leader–follower exchange (LMX). Leaders cannot be effective without followers who are open, or 'vulnerable', to their influence (van Quaquebeke et al., 2011).

Although research on respect is growing, there is little empirical evidence on its mediating effects on the relationship of each facet of leader narcissism with outcomes team performance and work engagement. Research can benefit in the future by investigating the mediating effects of respect of the leader on the narcissism–outcome relationships. Do

leaders, high on narcissistic admiration, who are more admired and respected by their followers, achieve higher levels of team performance and individual work engagement? Do antagonistic leaders, high on narcissistic rivalry, who are not respected by followers due to their aggressive demeanour and externally directed anger, adversely influence team performance and individual work engagement? Do depressive leaders, high on vulnerable narcissism, possibly loathed by their followers due to their neurotic demeanour and vindictiveness, destroy team performance and individual work engagement?

7.4 Theoretical Contributions (Thesis)

7.4.1 The 'Destructive' Power of Vulnerable Narcissism

Vulnerable narcissism, the clinical, neurotic dimension of narcissism remained relatively unnoticed in organizational research until highlighted by the unified trifurcated model of narcissism proposing 'bright' (admiration), 'dark' (rivalry), and 'blue' (vulnerable) variants of narcissism (Miller et al., 2021; Rogoza, Kwiatkowska, et al., 2018; Sedikides, 2021). Empirical data from the main study have shown that vulnerable narcissism is indeed relevant and very much active in the organizational domain, and if left unchecked can attack and destroy team performance (the cornerstone of organizational performance) and lead to team mental health impairment (Schyns et al., 2023). This realization is an important contribution to extant research as the research community, customarily ignoring vulnerable narcissism (Wirtz & Rigotti, 2020) and rejecting it as irrelevant in the work context, is now further energized by increased calls to investigate the full impact of the 'clinical' variant of narcissism in the organizational domain.

7.4.2 Leader Narcissism and Uncertainty

Although in times of uncertainty followers are drawn to narcissistic leaders (threat-rigidity theory), high on admiration, these leaders are not necessarily more effective in leading teams under uncertainty, as leadership emergence is not equivalent and does not necessarily result in leadership effectiveness.

In a context imposed by the pandemic, it is safe to argue that followers would gravitate to a confident and assured leader who will not only provide an anchor but will also serve as a source of psychological comfort, provide guidance and direction, reinstate order and project a sense of clarity and certainty (Nevicka et al., 2013). Moreover, they argue that:

> "a person who projects a sense of confidence, strength, and decisiveness in the face of uncertainty will likely be preferred as a leader in an uncertain context. According to implicit leadership theory, such a context would shape an ideal leader prototype" (Nevicka et al., 2013, p. 371).

Reinstating order and bringing about clarity for followers under duress can be achieved by relying on a leader, compatible with the context-based, implicit prototypical leader profile, who is perceived to be capable of reducing uncertainty; consequently, it can be expected that agentic leaders (e.g. high on narcissistic admiration) are preferred as they are perceived as more capable of coping with the crisis.

The above argument is also supported by extant research. Nevicka et al. (2013) have shown in studies with student populations that context determines how narcissists are perceived as leaders, with a specific contextual factor (i.e. uncertainty) increasing the preference for narcissists as leaders. Interestingly, in these studies individuals have chosen narcissists as leaders in times of uncertainty, despite of an awareness of their negative features such as arrogance and exploitativeness. In other words, the 'toxic' characteristics of narcissism, in a context demanding strength and toughness, can be tolerated by followers, in favour of the perceived ability of narcissists to bring about safety, clarity, and cope with uncertainty (Nevicka et al., 2013).

Similarly, narcissists are likely to be drawn to highly volatile and unpredictable contexts, such as that offered by the pandemic, which can magnify the glory of their success and provide the essential 'stage to shine' (Nevicka et al., 2013).

Why then is this seemingly 'perfect match' of leaders, high on narcissistic admiration, preferred in highly unpredictable and uncertain contexts, not replicated in my research?

I will provide some possible explanations drawing on the social identity and self-categorization theories.

Enhanced emphasis on the self-concept and a renewed interest in identity has been influenced by the development of social identity theory and self-categorization theory (Hogg & Terry, 2000). Hogg and Terry (2000) posit that social identity processes are motivated by subjective uncertainty reduction and that a prototype-based de-personalization lies at the heart of social identity processes.

Social identity is typified by belonging to certain social groups together with some emotional and value significance that can define one's place in society (Tajfel, 1974). This concept of social identity has been extended to develop a social identity model of leadership (Hogg & Terry, 2000).

Self-categorization theory specifies social categorization as the cognitive basis of group behaviour (i.e. followers), which in turn accentuates the perceived similarity of the target (i.e. leaders) to the relevant prototype. Leaders are no longer represented as unique individuals but, in a de-personalization process, as embodiments of the relevant prototype (Hogg & Terry, 2000). The person who occupies the contextually most prototypical position embodies the behaviours that others conform to and, thus, appears to exercise influence over other group members (Hogg & Terry, 2000).

During the pandemic, was the person who occupied the contextually most prototypical position, the strong, callous but toxic agentic narcissist (high on admiration), or were these toxic characteristics incompatible or in contrast with a different, emerging context-sensitive prototype?

Despite being presented with a systemic shock (such as C19), leaders must not only continue to project vision but also must adapt their styles (Kniffin et at., 2021) in response to that shock by enhancing leader communication, encouraging feedback, enhancing team development, and enabling (leader–follower) emotional connections and bonding (Kniffin et at., 2021).

Current and potential leaders need to build new skills to function effectively in new work settings. I suggest that this newly created context may demand a more caring, supportive, and communal leadership outlook, rather than self-serving aggrandizement (typical of narcissistic admiration), callous, conflict-prone demeanour (typical of narcissistic rivalry), or neuroticism (typical of vulnerable narcissism).

I argue that the dramatically changing context imposed by the pandemic, where human life was endangered, also caused a paradigm shift in the contextually most prototypical position – from the strong, confident, and tough agentic to a more humane, caring, and communal requirement.

Finally, it can be suggested, that although a confident, competent, and charismatic individual, high on narcissistic admiration, may emerge as a leader and undertake leadership roles to 'save the day', this leader may be utterly incapable of adopting or developing those unique skills, rare attitudes, and cognitive processes essential in coping with this unique and unprecedented crisis, including caring for others, listening with empathy, asking for feedback, providing psychological safety, comfort and consolation, amidst the global desolation. This is supported by my research data, as narcissistic admiration exhibits no significant relationships with covariates team psychological safety, climate for work group innovation, trust in the leader, and outcomes team performance and individual work engagement, for the main empirical study, or the new set of variables, namely leader self-identity, affective motivation to lead, and respect for the leader, for the exploratory analysis. Insights from my research have further reinforced the notion that leadership emergence is not synonymous with, nor necessarily leads to, leadership effectiveness.

7.5 Practical Implications for Organizations

Consequently, what are the practical implications for organizations that are required to cope with vulnerable narcissists in leadership roles? In addition, what are effective systems and

procedures that organizations should put in place to offset the deleterious effects of these neurotic and dangerous leaders on organizational life and key organizational outcomes?

7.5.1 Coping with Vulnerable Narcissism – Enhancing Leader Collective Identity

The negative relationship of vulnerable narcissism and team performance was highlighted by the main study; it is somewhat unrealistic to believe that these neurotic, depression-prone (Rogoza, Zemojtel-Piotrowska et al., 2016) leaders can easily re-invent themselves through coaching or mentoring, eventually creating teams that constitute wonderful sites of learning (Hackman et al., 2002), where feelings of belongingness and security prevail in an environment fostering learning (Hackman et al., 2002).

How can organizations moderate and eventually offset the negative effect of leaders, high on vulnerable narcissism, on team performance? Can this negative relationship described above become less negative when these hypersensitive, but equally self-centred and self-promoting leaders, with inflated self-views and who are motivated by being unique and special, are encouraged to fit in or shift from an individual level of identity (Schyns et al., 2023), driven by self-interest, autonomy, and independence, to a more collective level of identity (Schyns et al., 2023) that values interdependence, collaboration, and striving for the welfare of the group?

As identity is contextually and situationally cued and thus open to change and development (Schyns et al., 2023), these leaders, by reinforcing their collective identity, can hopefully, albeit gradually, start thinking, behaving, and acting like leaders, with a greater clarity and understanding of their role and its impact on the 'greater good'. It is no wonder that, in contrast with novice leaders, who are prone to be high on individual identity, more experienced leaders rely more on their collective identify (Schyns et al., 2023) for leadership effectiveness and organizational success.

Reinforcing their collective identity can 'spark' leadership behaviours at team level – as these leaders are attracted by the notion that the team is regarded as an extension of the narcissistic self (Schyns et al., 2023) – that will encourage collaboration and synergies,

enable greater interpersonal understanding, promote tolerance, open feedback, and error learning, eventually 'softening' the negative vulnerable narcissism–team performance relationship.

Consequently, in practice, how can these independent leaders, high on individual identity and driven by self-interest, enhance their collective identity and start to see themselves as part of that collective? Traditional leadership development programs, focusing on the role and process of leadership (with an idealised view that leadership is all about success through people) may not be effective enough. These programs must be supplemented by other, more 'surgical' interventions, like team simulations and survival challenges, where these leaders, high on individual identity and driven by self-interest, are 'embedded' in interdisciplinary teams (of other leaders) and are thus required to 'sacrifice' their personal interests for team survival. In addition, *group-based pride* (Hou et al., 2021), an emotion generated from acknowledging the positive aspects of being part of a team (e.g. values and team accomplishments), can be effectively deployed to enable the essential 'paradigm shift' from an individual to a collective level of identity.

Moreover, these leaders can be urged to employ *storytelling* to articulate and promote team/organizational values and, through this narrative, reinforce their own collective identity. In addition, performance management systems can be installed that evaluate competencies supporting a collective identity, including intra-team and inter-team collaboration, inter-disciplinary synergies, and team spirit. Lastly, executive remuneration systems and financial incentive schemes can be realigned to reward team performance rather than individual performance.

Although individual identity is important for a leader, this should not supersede the collective identity and the notion of the 'greater good'. It would be a considerable 'hazard' for organizations to either heavily invest in leadership development programs or *excessively* reinforce the leader self-identity for individuals high on vulnerable narcissism, as this may be detrimental for team performance; in effect, this will reinforce their inherent self-

centredness and self-promotion, encourage further independence and increased autonomy, and amplify their psychopathology.

This potential 'hazard' is best illustrated by moderation model 15 (vulnerable narcissism/ affective motivation to lead/team performance), which has explicitly shown that the vulnerable narcissism–team performance relationship is more negative (i.e. further weakened) when motivation to lead of these neurotic and insecure leaders is high, rather than low. As their eagerness, motivation, and confidence to lead and (clumsily) undertake leadership roles increases, their toxic characteristics (e.g. neuroticism, depression, aggression) are ultimately exposed, demotivating and alienating team members, threatening interpersonal relationships, and eventually destroying team performance.

7.5.2 Curtailing Vulnerable Narcissism

Protective measures, 'checks and balances', and systematic evaluation and scrutiny of their performance can protect organizations from the negative effects of leaders, high on vulnerable narcissism. These protective measures can be taken *proactively*, i.e. before the narcissist enters the organization, *reactively*, i.e. when the narcissist is identified within the organization, or *remedially*, i.e. when the organization plans for an exit.

Measures should be proactively taken at the recruitment/selection stage to prevent the vulnerable narcissist-candidate from 'slipping through the cracks' and eventually being hired by the organization. During the selection stage, organizations are strongly advised to be vigilant during personal interviews (Fatfouta, 2019) to identify the 'clinical' signs and symptoms of vulnerable narcissism, described in detail in previous chapters. Instead of solely relying on personal interviews (where the narcissist, a master of disguise, can manipulate impressions) for selection decisions, organizations should employ an array of multi-source selection processes utilizing objective measures, including but not restricted to psychometric testing, personality inventories (with special attention on 'red-flagging' personality dimensions linked with vulnerable narcissism), assessment centres, job simulations, and even specific narcissism measures that can identify vulnerable narcissism;

job screening should also be improved by focusing on prior job history, checking references and talking to former employers, colleagues, direct reports, and customers (Fatfouta, 2019). As explained above, telephone and online interviews should be avoided as these covert candidates tend to hide or 'camouflage' their deficiencies, neuroticism, and pathology. Measures should be reactively taken once the vulnerable narcissist is identified among the working population; measures can include processes, interventions, or mechanisms that objectively 'red flag', 'downsize', or negate the adverse effect of vulnerable narcissists.

Vulnerable narcissism is positively associated with workplace incivility (Moon & Morais, 2022), defined as deviant behaviours of low intensity with an ambiguous intention to harm others (Andersson & Pearson, 1999) and characterized by rudeness, discourteousness, and a display of lack of respect for others (Andersson & Pearson, 1999), which are common behavioural manifestations of vulnerable narcissism.

Workplace incivility has been identified as an "influential cause that negatively affects work related outcomes (e.g. job performance, job satisfaction, work disengagement) and leads to adverse nonwork-related outcomes (e.g. stress, emotional exhaustion, work-life imbalance)" (Moon & Morais, 2022, p. 3).

Organizational interventions to curb workplace incivility, often exhibited by vulnerable narcissists, can range from stressing the important role of norms for respect in the workplace, to effective personal coaching and development to provide an impetus to vulnerable narcissists to always act in a professional and civil manner (Moon & Morais, 2022). Organizational mechanisms to curb workplace incivility can also include creating 'shadowing' mechanisms or setting up mentoring programs where vulnerable narcissists are 'attached' to charismatic and ethical senior leaders (Walsh et al., 2018).

7.5.3 Interventions and Leader Development Programs

Moreover, because vulnerable narcissism is characterized by feelings of helplessness, anxiety, and depression (Pincus & Roche, 2018), emotional intelligence training can help these narcissists (given that vulnerable narcissism is negatively associated with emotional

intelligence) to improve their personal emotional outlook, boost their self-esteem in the organization, manage their emotional responses when threatened, and thus alleviate feelings of aggression and depression (Moon & Morais, 2022).

These programs can only be effective when leaders high on vulnerable narcissism are encouraged to develop self-insight and realize/accept the need for change (indeed a Herculean task) and voluntarily participate. These interventions can be effective when dealing with narcissism as a learned behaviour (and not a psychopathology). Reinforcing self-esteem, showing respect, acknowledging the need for recognition, and showing empathy to gain trust (DeVries, 2014) could enable the emotional intelligence training process. These programs can be facilitated by consultants skilled in providing a complex mix of (controlled) confrontation, coaching, and support (Lubit, 2004)

Organizations should also be alert to any evidence of continuing poor performance of a team, which could be a sign or a consequence of a team leader high on vulnerable narcissism. The executive team, in collaboration with HR, should also monitor and identify non-performance signs and symptoms within the team, including high absenteeism, low morale, elevated levels of stress, lack of engagement, lack of trust and lack of respect for the leader, and increased interpersonal conflict. An analysis of causes must be undertaken, supplemented by objective feedback collected from superiors, colleagues, and staff working for these 'red-flagged' narcissistic leaders.

Finally, organizations should create and put in place a system of leadership 'checks and balances' (De Vries, 2006). Performance, for all leadership positions, where narcissists often lurk, should be evaluated using objective and agreed indicators based on a multi-source performance management system, through a 360-degree scheme (collecting feedback for the narcissist from internal sources, including superiors, peers, and direct reports) or even a 720-degree scheme (including additional feedback from external sources, including customers, business partners, associates, and consultants). It is useful to note that when narcissists are faced with 360-degree schemes (where follower feedback is included), they tend to be 'exposed' as they are likely to reveal their narcissistic

tendencies and toxic behaviours when dealing with direct reports, rather than containing them, as when dealing with superiors (Lubit, 2004).

7.5.4 Educating the Organization

HR professionals within the organization should be vigilant and educated on the personality pathology, traits, and covert behavioural manifestations of vulnerable narcissism and effective coping strategies (Fatfouta, 2019). They should ensure that progression to leadership roles is slow, well tested, and properly validated, without any sudden leaps in power or authority.

Organizations should also be educated to identify toxic behaviours by giving voice, appropriate channels of communication (e.g. whistle blowing procedures), and protection, to affected individuals or teams (Tavanti, 2011). Organizations should balance the 'power equation' by establishing clear lines of (leader) accountability, encouraging and empowering employees to participate in decision making, thus diluting the power accumulated by the neurotic vulnerable narcissistic leader (De Vries, 2006).

7.5.5 Confronting the Vulnerable Narcissist

If everything fails, and before the organization is planning for exit as a remedy, it should confront the (vulnerable) narcissistic leader (particularly if he/she is easily replaceable) and provide clear, objective, evidenced-based, multi-source feedback, illustrating the problem and demanding a well-defined behavioural change. Should the decision to replace the narcissistic leader be necessary, after the breakdown of all actions, swift measures should be taken to plan for exit. This should not be taken lightly, given the vindictive nature of vulnerable narcissism (Pincus et al., 2014) and possible legal repercussions.

7.5.6 Fostering a Non-Conducive Environment (for Vulnerable Narcissism)

Overall, organizations should foster an environment that is not conducive to narcissism in general, and vulnerable narcissism in particular, by (a) employing robust and objective selection processes (Lubit, 2002), (b) enhancing cultures that promote teamwork,

collaboration, sharing, and empathy, (c) establishing objective and valid performance measurement systems to evaluate performance based on clear, agreed, and measurable indicators, and (d) creating and supporting work processes that promote clarity, transparency, accountability, and integrity (Lubit, 2002). Finally, organizations should build ethical cultures and climates, support ethics-based discussions, reward leaders who serve as ethical role models, and reinforce personal initiative, self-efficacy, and autonomy, through focused development initiatives (Thoroughgood et al., 2012).

7.6 Limitations

7.6.1 The Empirical Examination of Leadership

As expected, this study suffers from limitations often inherent in applied organizational research. These limitations include: (a) the ability to test causality, (b) lack of random assignment of participants by the organization, which reduces internal validity, (c) lack of external validity as research findings cannot necessarily be generalized to a broader array of populations and settings, (d) 'spillovers', as respondents have the tendency to talk to each other about the study or the items and consequently 'shaping' their responses (Rietzschel et al., 2017), (e) 'noise' reducing memory sensitivity as respondents are prone to endorse behaviours that seem familiar but may not have actually happened (Hansbrough et al., 2015) or appear compatible with the privately-held leader prototype, (f) the inability of respondents to encode leadership behaviours as they are more interested in other social categories (e.g. integrity), and (g) biases that affect ratings positively (e.g. respondent agreeableness, extraversion, attachment, and need for leadership) or negatively (e.g. respondent negative emotionality, mood, and personality) (Hansbrough et al., 2015).

7.6.2 Follower Ratings

As followers are 'co-producers' of leadership (Hansbrough et al., 2015), one major limitation of this work is the inherent bias of follower ratings of leaders. Interestingly, Hansbrough et

al. (2015) found that a 62% of variance in subordinate ratings (of leaders) on the human dimension (e.g. motivating, listening) is associated with bias.

An accurate measurement of leader behaviours depends on the follower's 'memory sensitivity', i.e. the ability of a follower to distinguish between those behaviours that occurred and those that did not (Hansbrough et al., 2015). Follower ratings are biased as they are prone to endorse behaviours that seem familiar but may not have happened (Hansbrough et al., 2015). Follower ratings are also biased as they are affected by implicit leadership theories (leader prototype), whereby followers report behaviours that seem compatible with a leader prototype but may not have happened (Hansbrough et al., 2015). As this is a complex sense-making process, followers may not encode behaviours that are relevant to leadership, as they may be more interested in other social categories, e.g. warmth, integrity, trustworthiness (Hansbrough et al., 2015). Finally, follower ratings are influenced by affect (like/dislike of leader by followers), as affect (emotion) produces rapid positive or negative reactions respectively (Hansbrough et al., 2015).

7.6.3 Team Performance Ratings (by Leaders)

Another limitation of this work is that team performance is assessed by the team leader and not by the team members. This may offer another explanation for the negative vulnerable narcissism–team performance relationship, as it can be suggested that these neurotic and defensive leaders, tormented by a weak and fragile self-esteem, 'level down' their teams in terms of assessing performance. 'Levelling down' their teams and team performance will reinforce a distorted sense of superiority for these leaders high on vulnerable narcissism, and help ease their feelings of inferiority, and inadequacy.

7.6.4 Follower Needs/Motives

Needs and motives of followers may also shape their perceptions and consequently ratings of leader behaviours. During the pandemic, where organizations and humans alike were placed on an enforced 'survival mode', I can safely argue that follower needs and motives,

including need for security, belongingness, attachment, and the need for leadership (Hansbrough et al., 2015), resulted in positive biases on follower ratings on leaders. Finally, Hansbrough et al. (2015, p. 230) posit that "follower ratings of leader behaviour represent the end of a highly integrative sense-making process. As such, the product may bear little resemblance to actual leader behaviours".

7.6.5 Leader Distance

Contextual factors, i.e. the conditions under which the rating process occurs (e.g. the pandemic), such as leader distance (including physical, social, and psychological distance) and national culture, "may impact the leader behaviours that are considered salient and are recalled as well as prompt the use of categorization-based processes" (Hansbrough et al., 2015, p. 227).

I posit that leaders in the participating organization, while responsible for many geographically dispersed, complex mega stores in duress and remotely managing operations from different temporary locations, coupled with limited interaction with staff, may have enhanced follower perception of these leaders being 'distant', 'detached' and 'absent'. Followers were thus unable to witness leadership behaviours from up close, via frequent daily interactions, resulting in negative biases and less accurate ratings (Hansbrough et al., 2015).

7.6.6 Supervisory Monitoring Variability

The nature of the pandemic has also contributed to biased results and added to limitations; during this health crisis, drastically different work arrangements were devised by Greek enterprises and enforced overnight, without adequate thinking or preparation. The participating organization was no exception, as remote and hybrid modes of work were readily adopted, coupled with close daily monitoring of staff performance. It is safe to argue that due to the severity of the situation, individuals in leadership positions, unaware or in doubt of the best way of leading in these unfamiliar conditions and aiming to minimize risk,

opted for the ‘safe route’ i.e. excessively monitoring subordinate performance, which, given their inexperience in handling similar situations, was inevitably inconsistent and erratic, thus adding to the confusion and uncertainty.

Integrating the uncertainty management theory (Lind & Van den Bos, 2002) with the theory of the dynamic leader (McClean et al., 2019), and coining the term ‘supervisor monitoring variability’, Zheng et al. (2023) have shown that high supervisor monitoring variability (i.e. high monitoring of subordinate performance on some days and low monitoring on other days) makes followers experience uncertainty as they are unable to predict when and to what extent the supervisor will monitor their performance.

Uncertainty, in turn, activates fairness judgments and supervisor monitoring is perceived as injustice (Zheng et al., 2023), adversely affecting follower ‘daily felt trust’ (Zheng et al., 2023); in turn, the feeling of not being trusted adversely affects follower well-being, including daily vigour and daily exhaustion (Zheng et al., 2023), again resulting in negative biases on leader ratings by followers.

7.6.7 Effect of National Culture

National culture is another important contextual factor that can bias follower ratings as some leader attributes are culturally contingent (e.g. avoiding risk is a common reaction of Greek managers in a crisis). Hansbrough et al. (2015) argue that culture compatibility may inflate ratings (positive bias) of leader behaviours as raters endorse culturally compatible behaviours, regardless of whether these occurred or not (Hansbrough et al., 2015).

7.6.8 Self-Reporting Biases

The use of self-ratings of leadership alone is problematic (Harris & Schaubroeck, 1988). Individuals in leadership roles do not appear to be good judges of how they are seen and rated by followers (Tsui & Ohlott, 1988). Several studies have suggested that individuals in leadership roles inflate their own ratings relative to others (Mabe & West, 1982), this often

being an indicator of lack of self-awareness (Fleenor et al., 2010), without this necessarily meaning that ratings by followers are 'true scores' (Yammarino & Atwater, 1997).

As the primary concern in self–other agreement research is the level of congruence (Fleenor et al., 2010), a limitation of my research is the absence of ratings by others (followers) regarding leader narcissism; thus, the level of congruence and levels of self-awareness were not assessed.

Finally, there are a number of additional factors that may have inflated narcissism self-ratings for the participating organization, including (1) *gender* – the majority of leaders were male – male participants often 'over-rate' their leadership abilities and effectiveness (Fleenor et al., 2010), (2) *level of education* – the majority of leaders in the empirical study do not hold advanced degrees and have progressed into management mainly through accumulating experience – participants with a lower level of education have lower levels of analytic and cognitive abilities to process self-relevant information (Ostroff et al., 2004), and (3) *type of setting* – this was a survey within an internal development program – participants in a developmental setting tend to over-rate their abilities (Heidemeier & Moser, 2009), hide or 'downside' potential weaknesses.

7.6.9 Cross Sectional Vs Longitudinal

My research has been cross-sectional in nature and included assessment at one point in time (coinciding with the pandemic), investigating the relationships between leader narcissism and outcomes. Thus, conclusions relevant with causality, were limited. Relationships between narcissism and organizational outcomes were explored under unique conditions, not representative of stable 'business as usual' circumstances and measurements were taken as a time-specific 'snapshot' of the organization. This could have been remedied by adhering to a longitudinal study testing the above relationships at different points in time, yielding more useful results in exploring the effect of leader narcissism on team outcomes over time; this was not allowed by the organization itself. I posit that a longitudinal study could have produced insights of a different nature and even

reveal a more active and detrimental nature of grandiose narcissism (admiration), like its vulnerable counterpart.

7.6.10 Personal Data Protection

Finally, the 'participating' organization, citing the Personal Data Protection Act (Law 4624/2019 of the Hellenic Republic), was reluctant to provide full demographic information for the sample. The incomplete demographic definition of the sample makes generalization of results and conclusions non-reproducible in terms of other comparable populations or settings.

7.7 Recommendations for Future Research

Recommendations for future research are provided regarding narcissism in the work domain in general, and vulnerable narcissism at work.

7.7.1 Narcissism and Alternative Work Arrangements

The dramatic impact of C19 on organizations across the globe enforced the adoption of alternative work arrangements (e.g. working from home, virtual teamwork, remote management) and social distancing, adversely affecting the health and well-being of workers (Kniffin et al., 2021).

Future research could investigate whether the differential relationship of leader narcissism (as depicted by the trifurcated model) with outcomes at the team level (e.g. team performance) is moderated by alternative work arrangements, including virtual, proximal, and hybrid work. It would be equally interesting to investigate the differential impact of leader narcissism (trifurcated) not only on outcomes at the team level but also on health and well-being of workers, as moderated by voluntary and mandatory working from home (Kniffin et al., 2021).

7.7.2 Narcissism and Supervisor Monitoring Variability

Although remote working has become a new norm in organizations, favoured by many employees as it offers improved levels of productivity, quality of life, and a lower cost of living (Pelta, 2021), “little is known about how supervisors' monitoring affects their relationships with subordinates in remote work settings” (Zheng et al., 2023, p. 1); even less is known about how the level of ‘supervisor monitoring variability’, defined “as the between-person differences in the variability of supervisors' monitoring behaviour of subordinates over multiple days” (Zheng et al., 2023, p. 2) affects ‘felt trust’, or the extent to which subordinates feel trusted by their managers, this affecting vigour, daily exhaustion, and ultimately team performance.

Future research could also focus on investigating how the leader narcissism (trifurcated) relationship with team performance is moderated with high (meaning that supervisor monitoring is high on some days and low on others) or low (meaning that supervisor monitoring remains at relatively stable low levels across time) levels of 'supervisor monitoring variability’ (Zheng et al., 2023). In addition, as ‘vigour’ is a dimension of work engagement (Schaufeli et al., 2006) and ‘felt trust’ erodes vigour and leads to exhaustion (Zheng et al., 2023), future research could explore how the relationship of leader narcissism on team performance, as mediated by engagement, is moderated by the level of ‘supervisor monitoring variability’ (i.e. high/low).

7.7.3 Narcissism and Leader Distance

Although the notion that close relationships between leaders and followers foster better organizational outcomes is integral to leadership research, researchers have recently begun to explicitly examine distance (Popper, 2013). Leader distance includes (a) physical distance, (b) interaction frequency, (c) social distance, and (d) psychological distance (Popper, 2013) and is impacted by emotions, social information, and biases or attributions (Hansbrough et al., 2015).

The research domain can benefit from insights on the relationship of leader narcissism (trifurcated) and team performance as moderated by each of the four dimensions of leader distance, outlined above.

7.7.4 Narcissism and National Culture

Individualism is defined as “a situation in which people are supposed to look after themselves and their immediate family only” (Hofstede & Bond, 1984, p. 419). Collectivism is defined as “a situation in which people belong to in-groups or ‘collectivities’ which are supposed to look after them in exchange for loyalty” (Hofstede & Bond, 1984, p. 419).
My research work was carried out in Greece, a ‘collectivistic’ culture according to culture characteristics proposed by Hofstede and Bond (1984) and scores depicted on www.clearlyculture.com.
Would the leader narcissism (trifurcated) relationship with team performance, measured in a collectivistic culture, which may potentially curtail narcissism, foster consensus, and compliance to strong organizational norms, be remarkably different if this effort is replicated in a highly individualistic culture that contrastingly encourages, promotes, and rewards narcissism, particularly the agentic admiration?

7.7.5 Vulnerable Narcissism Leadership Behaviours (VNLB)

As leader vulnerable narcissism may cause follower irritation due to its antagonistic and neurotic nature, manifested by an array of specific behaviours or VNLB (Schyns et al., 2023), and thus interest shown by the research community is rising on unveiling the covert nature of vulnerable narcissism, it is recommended that future research examines the above relationship in different follower characteristics, industries, countries/cultures, under alternative working arrangements, and in more stable conditions, rather than turbulent circumstances imposed by the pandemic (Schyns et al., 2023).
It would be also interesting to see whether the adverse impact of VNLB on follower irritation can be reduced or ‘softened’ once followers, now working under more stable conditions are

given the time for sense-making and the development of effective coping mechanisms (Schyns et al., 2023).

7.7.6 Vulnerable Narcissism and Team Performance

The empirical study has shown that vulnerable narcissism is negatively related to team performance. There is little evidence as to whether a vulnerable narcissist in a leadership role can improve team performance through development interventions, (e.g. coaching, leadership development, mentoring). In addition, there is virtually no evidence suggesting that this leader is coachable at all. Future research could investigate whether the relationship of vulnerable narcissism with team performance can be improved (i.e. become less negative or even positive) when this leader is coached, trained, or mentored.

7.7.7 Vulnerable Narcissism and Abusive Supervision

Abusive supervision is defined as the "sustained display of hostile verbal and nonverbal behaviours, excluding physical contact" (Tepper, 2000, p. 178).

Braun et al. (2019) have found that vulnerable narcissism was the only narcissism dimension (from the trifurcated model discussed) that predicted abusive supervision intent, through internal attributions and shame in response to failure.

Future research could investigate whether the relationship between vulnerable narcissism and abusive supervision intent is moderated by variables utilized in the exploratory analysis, namely leader self-identity and affective motivation to lead, both essential prerequisites of leadership effectiveness.

Future research could also benefit from ascertaining whether a vulnerable narcissistic leader with a stronger leader self-identity and a renewed motivation to lead could curtail his/her tendency to be abusive to followers.

Moreover, future research could investigate whether developmental interventions, mentioned in previous sections, moderate the relationship between leader vulnerable narcissism and abusive supervision intent. Future research could investigate whether

longer-term change programs for these leaders (e.g. identity training) would be more impactful than momentary activation (e.g. feedback) or short-term initiatives (e.g. coaching) in terms of curtailing the tendency to aggress towards employees.

Vulnerable narcissism is often interpreted as clinical due to its intra- and inter-personally malevolent correlates; it is deemed irrelevant in the organizational domain (Rogoza, Kwiatkowska, et al., 2018) and thus is largely ignored (Wirtz & Rigotti, 2020). This research has clearly shown that vulnerable narcissism is not only very relevant and active in the organizational domain and should not be ignored, but also exhibits adverse effects on team performance.

Lastly, it is imperative that the research community should invest more effort in enhancing its understanding on the role and machinations of vulnerable narcissism in the organizational domain.

7.8 Conclusions

It has been a real challenge to decipher the complex and paradoxical nature of narcissism, which resembles the tale of 'Dr Jekyll and Mr. Hyde' (Fatfouta, 2019). Treating narcissism as a distinct personality trait and investigating its impact in the organizational domain, using the trifurcated model as the overarching framework, (including narcissistic admiration, narcissistic rivalry, and vulnerable narcissism), I have come to realize that the most dangerous 'enemy' (active and very much 'alive' in organizational life) is not the 'overt' agentic narcissistic admiration, with its visionary rhetoric and grandiose fantasies, or the aggressive, conflict-prone narcissistic rivalry striving for supremacy, but vulnerable narcissism, the 'covert', more 'stealthy' variant of narcissism.

This so-called 'clinical' dimension of narcissism, often neglected in leadership research, is very much business-relevant as it can silently and destructively erode team performance (as empirical results have shown); leaders high on vulnerable narcissism, stirring follower irritation and resorting to abusive supervision, can adversely influence the very fabric of the

team, by ‘attacking’ follower affectivity and follower commitment, threatening follower well-being, and leaving mentally and psychologically impaired teams in their wake.

This research has also challenged the assumption that a strong leader self-identity coupled with high levels of affective motivation to lead, constitute enabling and adequate conditions to ensure high levels of leadership effectiveness. I am now convinced that these two important conditions are both a ‘curse’ and a ‘blessing’.

I posit that these two conditions (i.e. leader self-identity and affective motivation to lead) if left unchecked in the hands of self-centred, callous, malevolent, and toxic leaders with a distorted psychological makeup, can become deleterious weapons that may lead to perpetual conflict, relationship dissolution, mental impairment, and ultimately the destruction of the team, the most critical cell in organizational life.

In stark contrast, if these conditions (i.e. leader self-identity and affective motivation to lead) are entrusted in the hands of caring, supportive, and benevolent leaders, these prerequisites can become important boosters of follower engagement, collaboration, and well-being, ensuring a healthy and a thriving team environment, a condition essential for sustainable growth and organizational and business success.

Moreover, I have come to accept the fact that leadership research, in general, is not an exact science or a flawless process. In the pilot studies and the main empirical study (including the supplemental exploratory analysis), I have used followers as my lens or ‘looking glass’. Could results have been quite different if another, less biased, ‘lens of investigation’ was adopted?

This research has also helped me to revisit some of the underlying assumptions on which the theory and methodology of leadership research are grounded (Lord et al., 2017). Are naïve observers (e.g. direct reports) the appropriate source of constructs and data for leadership theories, or should researchers focus on other more behaviourally sensitive, and thus more observant, role ‘stakeholders’ (e.g. the immediate supervisor or members of a proximal project group)? In addition, are leadership processes noticed, remembered, and understood by these naïve observers as they occur (Lord et al., 2017), or are they

‘recreated’ at a later stage and consequently misconstrued and misinterpreted, offering a false or misleading view?

This work has equally validated my initial caution, supported by extant research, that follower ratings of narcissistic behaviours (e.g. assessing complex and covert behaviours encountered in, say, vulnerable narcissism) exhibited by a leader, “represent the end of a highly integrative sensemaking process. As such, the ‘end product’, may bear little resemblance to actual leader behaviours” (Hansborough et al., 2015, p.230).

This research work has also taught me to avoid reaching absolute or premature conclusions, even if data seems to support these conclusions. I have initially approached leader narcissism with a yes/no premise (i.e. narcissism *is* good or *is* bad for organizations), under the restricted thinking of a purely linear narcissism–outcome relationship.

Some wiser questions, investigating a *curvilinear* relationship of narcissism and outcomes (Krijalva et al., 2015), could have been asked – what is the optimum level of leader narcissism that can drive team performance and maximize leadership effectiveness? Or alternatively, what is the ‘red flag’ level of leader narcissism that leads to leadership malfunction (Krijalva et al., 2015)?

Finally, at the personal level, I have come to fully realize the perils of doctoral research, which perpetually demands patience, persistence, self-discipline, tons of commitment and laser-sharp focus.

7.9 Summary

In this final chapter, I have presented, adhering to and under the auspices of the trifurcated model of narcissism (depicting the narcissistic admiration, narcissistic rivalry, vulnerable narcissism factors), key findings, interpretations and conclusions regarding proposed relationships between predictor narcissism and proposed variables acting as mediators and outcomes.

Moreover, I have outlined theoretical contributions to extant research and provided practical implications for organizations and guidelines for professionals in the organizational health

and leadership development domains. Lastly, I have presented limitations to this research endeavour and offered ideas for future research.

I sincerely hope that I have shed some light on the paradoxical world of narcissism as embedded and manifested in leadership roles in the organization domain.

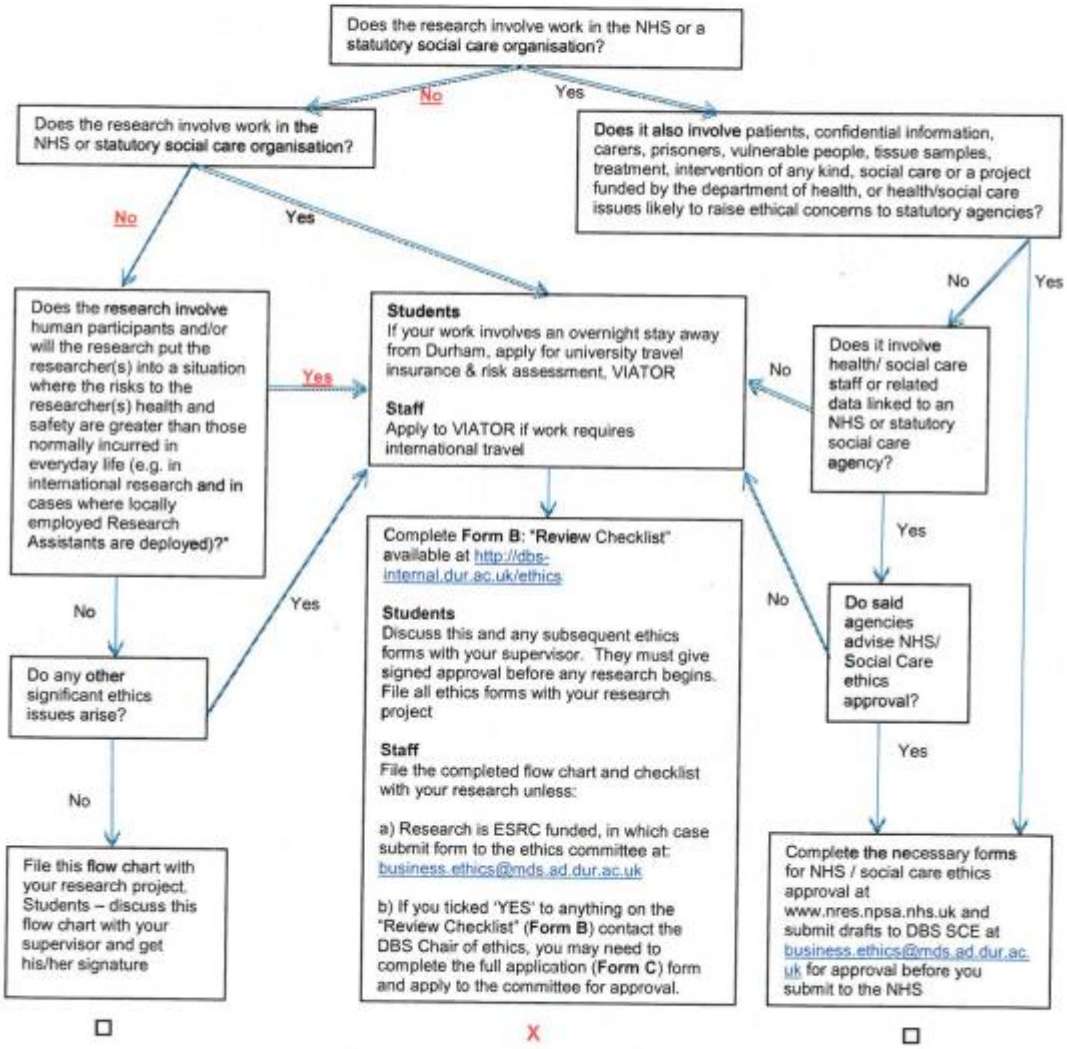
APPENDIX 1 - ETHICS CLEARANCE FORM

Durham University Business School

BETTER BUSINESS THINKING

ETHICS FORM 'A' – Process flow chart for students & staff

Title of Project: **Leaders' Grandiose and Vulnerable Narcissism: An empirical study of the impact on individual and team outcomes**
Name of Principal Researcher or Student: **Louis Neophytou**



☐ X ☐

Tick one box only

Signature of Principal Researcher or Supervisor:

Signed: S Brain Date: 25/10/2017

Durham University
Business School

ETHICS **FORM B**: REVIEW CHECKLIST

"DUBS SCE" refers to Durham University Business School's Sub-Committee for Ethics throughout.

This checklist should be completed for every research project that involves human participants. It should also be completed for all ESRC funded research, once funding has been obtained. It is used for approval or to identify whether a full application for ethics approval needs to be submitted.

Before completing this form, please refer to the University's "Ensuring Sound Conduct in Research" available at http://dbs-internal.dur.ac.uk/ethics/default.aspx – all researchers should read Sections A, B and F; Principal Investigators should also read Section D. The researcher and, where the researcher is a student, the student and supervisor are responsible for exercising appropriate professional judgement in this review.

This checklist must be completed before potential participants are approached to take part in any research.

Section I: Project Details

1. Project title: **Leaders' Grandiose and Vulnerable Narcissism: An Empirical Study of the impact on team and individual outcomes**

2. Start date: 1 November 2017..... Expected End date: in 2021.....

Section II: Applicant Details

3. Name of researcher (applicant)
   Or student: **Louis Neophytou**

4. Status (please delete those which are not applicable)

   Postgraduate Research Student

5. Email address
   (staff only): .....

6. Contact address: 16, Mavromichalis Street, 14562 Kifissia, Athens GREECE

7. Telephone number:0030-6988 894 884

Section III: For Students Only

8. Programme title: **DBA**
9. Mode

   Part Time

10. Supervisor's name: **Prof Susanne Braun**

11. Aims and Objectives: Please state the aims/objectives of the project

To establish whether and to what extend leaders' pathological narcissistic tendencies, behaviours, acts and practices, by leaders in "A" Positions/Roles, have an adverse and measurable impact on team (team effectiveness and intra-team trust) and individual (engagement, respect for the leader) outcomes, within the private sector, in high discretion industries, in crisis stricken Greece

12. Methodology: Please describe in brief the methodology of the research project

Triangulation of empirical research methods: Identification of ongoing working teams; measurement instruments to assess leader narcissism and related variables; interviews with selected team members of the managers/executives (in target group). Pre-testing of the assessment in a sample of approx. 30 employees, full survey with approx. 50 managers and 4-5 associated team members each.

13. Will data be collected from participants who have not consented to take part in the study e.g. images taken from the internet; participants covertly or overtly viewed in social places? If yes, please give further details. **NO**

*Does the research take place in a public or private space (be it virtual / physical)? Please explain: -

Explain whether the research is overt or covert: -

Explain how you will verify participants' identities: -

†Explain how informed consent will be obtained: -

*Ethical guidelines (BPS, 2005) note that, *unless consent has been sought, observation of public behaviour takes place only where people would reasonably expect to be observed by strangers.*

†It is advised that interactive spaces such as chat rooms and synchronous and asynchronous forums be treated as private spaces requiring declaration of a research interest and consent.

Additional guidance on internet research can be obtained at:
http://www.bps.org.uk/sites/default/files/documents/conducting_research_on_the_internet-guidelines_for_ethical_practice_in_psychological_research_online.pdf

14. Risk assessment: If the research will put the researcher(s) into a situation where risks to the researcher(s)' health and safety are greater than those normally incurred in everyday life, please indicate what the risks are and how they will be mitigated. (Please note that this also includes risks to the researcher(s)' health and safety in cases of international research and in cases where locally employed Research Assistants are deployed).

Research which will take place outside the UK requires specific comment. (Note that research outside the UK is not automatically covered by the University's insurance. See the DUBS intranet site (http://dbs-internal.dur.ac.uk/ethics/default.aspx) for further details).

No risks involved than those normally incurred in everyday life.

For student research the supervisor should tick the following, as appropriate. The study should not begin until all appropriate boxes are ticked:

☒ The topic merits further research

☒ The participant information sheet or leaflet is appropriate (where applicable)

☒ The procedures for recruitment and obtaining informed consent are appropriate (where applicable)

Comments from supervisor:

Ethical implications of the research have been discussed.

Section IV: Research Checklist

Research that may need to be reviewed by NHS NRES Committee or an external Ethics Committee (if yes, please give brief details as an annex)

	YES	NO
1 Will the study involve recruitment of patients or staff through the NHS or the use of NHS data or premises and / or equipment?[1]	☐	☒
2 Does the study involve participants age 16 or over who are unable to give informed consent? (e.g. people with learning disabilities: see Mental Capacity Act (MCA) 2005).	☐	☒

Footnotes

[1] Research in the NHS may be classified as "service evaluation" and, if so, does not require NHS research ethics approval. In such cases, prior written confirmation that the research is considered to be service evaluation is required from the appropriate authority, and on receipt of this the "No" box may be ticked and this form used for ethics approval. Advice and assistance is available from business.ethics@mds.ad.dur.ac.uk

Please note: - That with regard to 1 and 2 on the previous page, all research that falls under the auspices of MCA must be reviewed by NHS NRES.

Research that may need a full review by Durham University Business School Sub –Committee for Ethics (DBS SCE)

3	Does the study involve other vulnerable groups: children, those with cognitive impairment, or those in unequal relationship e.g. your own students? [2]	☐	x
4	Will the study require the co-operation of a gatekeeper for initial access to the groups or individuals to be recruited? (e.g. students at school, members of a self-help group, residents of a Nursing home) [3]	☐	x
5	Will it be necessary for participants to take part in the study without their knowledge and consent at the time? (e.g. deception, covert observation of people in non-public places)	☐	x
6	Will the study involve discussion of sensitive topics? (e.g. sexual activity, drug use)	☐	x
7	Are drugs, placebos or other substances (e.g. food substances, vitamins) to be administered to the study participants or will the study involve invasive, intrusive or potentially harmful procedures of any kind?	☐	x

Research that may need a full review by Durham University Business School Sub –
Committee for Ethics (DBS SCE) (continued)

8	Will tissue samples (including blood) be obtained from participants?	☐	x
9	Is pain or more than mild discomfort likely to result from the study?	☐	x

Footnotes

[1] Research in the NHS may be classified as "service evaluation" and, if so, does not require NHS research ethics approval. In such cases, prior written confirmation that the research is considered to be service evaluation is required from the appropriate authority, and on receipt of this the "No" box may be ticked and this form used for ethics approval. Advice and assistance is available from business.ethics@mds.ad.dur.ac.uk

[2] Vulnerable persons are defined for these purposes as those who are legally incompetent to give informed consent (i.e. those under the age of 16, although it is also good practice to obtain permission from all participants under the age of 18 together with the assent of their parents or guardians), or those with a mental illness or intellectual disability sufficient to prevent them from giving informed consent), or those who are physically incapable of giving informed consent, or in situations where participants may be under some degree of influence (e.g. your own students or those recruited via a gatekeeper - see footnote 3). Where students are perfectly able to choose to be involved and to give informed consent then, so long as there is no impact on assessment, the "No" box may be ticked.

[3] This applies only where the recruitment of participants is via a gatekeeper, thus giving rise to particular ethical issues in relation to willing participation and influence on informed consent decisions particularly for vulnerable individuals. It does *not* relate to situations where contact with individuals is established via a manager but participants are willing and able to give informed consent. In such cases, the answer to this question should be "No."

		YES	NO
10	Could the study induce psychological stress or anxiety or cause harm or negative consequences beyond the risks encountered in normal life?	☐	☒
11	Will the study involve prolonged or repetitive testing?	☐	☒
12	Will the research involve administrative or secure data that requires permission from the appropriate authorities before use?	☐	☒
13	Does the research involve members of the public in a research capacity (participant research)?	☐	☒
14	Will the research involve respondents to the internet or other visual / vocal methods where methods are covert, intrude into privacy without consent, or require observational methods in spaces where people would not reasonably expect to be observed by strangers?[4]	☐	☒
15	Will the research involve the sharing of data or confidential information beyond the initial consent given?	☐	☒
16	Will financial inducements (other than reasonable expenses and compensation for time) be offered to participants? [5]	☐	☒

Section V: What to do next

If you have answered '**No**' to all of the questions:
Undergraduate and Postgraduate taught students should discuss this with their supervisor, obtain his or her signature and submit it with their business project or dissertation.
DBA / MPhil / PhD students should discuss this with their supervisor, obtain his or her signature and submit it as part of the transfer / 9 month review process and with their thesis.
Work that is submitted without the appropriate ethics form may be returned un-assessed.
Members of staff should retain a copy for their records, but may submit the form for approval by DUBS SCE if they require approval from funding bodies such as ESRC. *In such cases, the letter of invitation to participate, Participant Information Sheet, Consent Form and, where appropriate, the access agreement should also be submitted with this form.*
Please note that DBS SCE may request sight of any form for monitoring or audit purposes.

If you have answered '**Yes**' to any of the questions in Section IV, you will need to describe more fully how you plan to deal with the ethical issues raised by your research. This does not mean that you cannot do the research, only that your proposal will need to be approved by the DUBS SCE.

Contact the Chair of the DUBS SCE in the first instance to discuss how to proceed. You may need to submit your plans for addressing the ethical issues raised by your proposal using the ethics approval application form REAF, which should be sent to the committee at **business.ethics@mds.ad.dur.ac.uk**.

(Continued overleaf)

Footnotes

[4] This does not include surveys using the internet providing that the respondent is identifiable only at their own discretion.

[5] In experiments in economics and psychology in particular it is common to pay participants. Provided such payments are within the normal parameters of the discipline, the answer to this question should be "No."

(Form REAF can be obtained from the School Intranet site at http://dbs-internal.dur.ac.uk/Pages/Default.aspx or using the student / visitor access:-

http://dbs-internal.dur.ac.uk/ethics

Username: **dubs\ethicsvisitors**
Password: **durham**

If you answered 'yes' to Questions 1 or 2 in Section IV, you will also have to submit an application to the appropriate external health authority ethics committee, but only **after** you have received approval from the DUBS SCE. In such circumstances complete the appropriate **external** paperwork and submit this for review by the DUBS SCE to business.ethics@mds.ad.dur.ac.uk.

Please note that whatever answers you have given above, it is your responsibility to follow the University's "Ensuring Sound Conduct in Research" and any relevant academic or professional guidelines in the conduct of your study. **This includes providing appropriate participant information sheets and consent forms, abiding by the Data Protection Act and ensuring confidentiality in the storage and use of data.**

Any significant change in research question, design or conduct over the course of the research project should result in a review of research ethics issues using the "Process Flow Chart for Students and Staff Undertaking Research" and completing a new version of this checklist if necessary.

Declaration

Signed
(staff only, students insert anonymous code): .....

Date: 22.10.2017

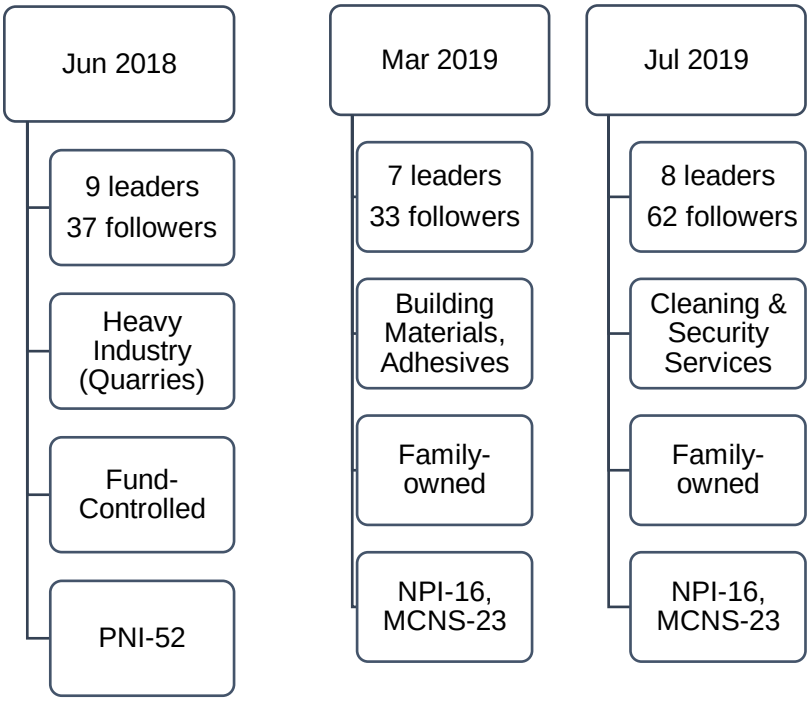
Student ID: 000736509

Signed: S. Brain

Date: ...25/10/2017.....

Supervisor or module leader (where appropriate)

APPENDIX 2 – PILOT STUDIES



PNI=Pathological Narcissistic Inventory (Pincus et al., 2009); NPI= Narcissistic Personality Inventory (Ames, Rose, & Anderson, 2006); MCNS= Maladaptive Covert Narcissistic Scale (Hendin & Cheek, 2013); Numbers next to abbreviated measure employed represent number of items.

APPENDIX 3 – LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS (Main Empirical Study)

23 July 2020

Dear Associates,

Under the auspices of the **#Leaders@Tomorrow** initiative, and particularly on its impact on the effectiveness of Leaders (i.e. Area Managers), we have chosen to assess and depict the current levels of leadership effectiveness, by carrying out two separate surveys to identify progress but also identify additional development opportunities, during the pandemic. The first survey is a self-reporting measure to be completed by Leaders and the second survey is to be completed by Followers (i.e. Store Managers) who report to these Leaders. These surveys evaluate leadership attitudes, skills and behaviours as linked with a series of important organizational outcomes at the individual and team levels.

In parallel with the above effort, the recent pandemic has offered a unique opportunity not only to assess our real capabilities under these unprecedented conditions but also to evaluate how our leadership capabilities and processes reflect and influence key operational dimensions essential for survival during the COVID-19 crisis.

More specifically, we will investigate how our leadership influences important outcomes, including trust in the leader and work engagement at the individual level and team performance, team psychological safety, and climate for work group innovation at the team level. The surveys will also include special items, constituting a supplementary (exploratory) analysis, concerning the impact of our leadership on additional outcomes essential for operational continuity and success during the pandemic (e.g. role clarity).

The surveys will be carried out, by Mr Louis Neophytou, during the period Sept-Oct 2020. Results will be processed, analysed, and subsequently (anonymously) presented to management in Nov 2020. Self-reporting surveys will be eponymously completed (to facilitate personal development) by each leader and anonymously by their followers to encourage authentic responses and safeguard the confidentiality of data. To generate a complete diagnostic picture, 100% response is required. Surveys which are not fully completed will not be considered. Eventually, recommendations will be provided to the management team, for action, based on insights and findings.

Leaders should complete the self-reporting Survey A (90 items); their followers should complete Survey B (65 items). All items are in Greek. Questionnaires will be sent electronically to Leaders and through the internal post (in sealed envelopes) to Followers (as some managers in smaller stores do not have access to a personal email address). Completed surveys should be returned, as instructed, by 30.10.2020, at the latest.

If you have any questions, please contact the Learning & Development Team at (GR.mail.HQ.HR.PE).

Thank you,

The Learning & Development Team

APPENDIX 4 – SURVEYS (Questionnaires)

Survey A– to be completed by leaders (self-reporting)

PREDICTORS

Leader (Grandiose) Narcissism – Admiration/Rivalry (18 items)

Please indicate the degree of your agreement for the statements shown below, regarding attitudes, behaviours, and actions you exhibit. Indicate your response (using the scales given below) by inserting the corresponding number in the last column provided.

1: strongly disagree, 2: disagree, 3: neutral, 4: agree, 5: strongly disagree

1.	I am great	
2.	I will someday be famous	
3.	I deserve to be seen as a great personality	
4.	I show others how special I am	
5.	I enjoy my successes very much	
6.	Being a very special person gives me a lot of strength	
7.	Most of the time I can draw people's attention to myself in conversations	
8.	I manage to be the centre of attention with my outstanding contributions	
9.	Mostly, I am very adept at dealing with other people	
10.	I react annoyed if another person steals the show from me	
11.	I often get annoyed when I am criticized	
12.	I can barely stand it if another person is at the centre of events	
13.	I secretly take pleasure in the failure of my rivals	
14.	I want my rivals to fail	
15.	I enjoy it when another person is inferior to me	
16.	Most people won't achieve anything	
17.	Other people are worth nothing	
18.	Most people are somehow losers	

Leader Vulnerable Narcissism – (23 items)

Please indicate the degree of your agreement for the statements shown below, regarding attitudes, behaviours, and actions you exhibit. Indicate your response (using the scales given below) by inserting the corresponding number in the last column provided.

1: strongly disagree, 2: disagree, 3: neutral, 4: agree, 5: strongly disagree

1.	I can become entirely absorbed in thinking about my personal affairs, my health, my cares, or my relations to others	
2.	My feelings are easily hurt by ridicule or by the slighting remarks of others	
3.	When I enter a room, I often become self-conscious and feel that the eyes of others are upon me	
4.	I dislike sharing the credit of achievement with others.	
5.	I feel that I have enough on my hands without worrying about other people's troubles	
6.	I feel that I am temperamentally different from most people	
7.	I often interpret the remarks of others in a personal way	
8.	I easily become wrapped up in my own interests and forget the existence of others	
9.	I dislike being with a group unless I know that I am appreciated by at least one of those present	
10.	I am secretly annoyed when other people come to me with their troubles, asking me for my sympathy	
11.	I am jealous of good-looking people	
12.	I tend to feel humiliated when criticized	
13.	I wonder why other people aren't more appreciative of my good qualities	
14.	I see other people as being either great or terrible.	
15.	I sometimes have fantasies about being violent without knowing why	
16.	I am especially sensitive to success and failure	
17.	I have problems that nobody else understands	
18.	I try to avoid rejection at all costs	
19.	My secret thoughts, feelings, and actions would horrify some of my friends	
20.	I tend to become involved in relationships in which I alternately adore and despise the other person	
21.	Even when I am in a group of friends, I often feel very alone and uneasy	
22.	I resent others who have what I lack	
23.	Defeat or disappointment usually shame or anger me, but I try not to show it	

OUTCOME

Team Performance – Leader Assessed (4 items)

Please indicate the degree of your agreement for the statements shown below, regarding attitudes, behaviours, and actions you exhibit. Indicate your response (using the scales given below) by inserting the corresponding number in the last column provided.

1: Very False to 7: Very True

1.	This team meets or exceeds its customers' expectations	
2.	This team does superb job	
3.	Critical quality errors occur infrequently in this team's work	
4.	This team keeps getting better and better	

Survey B – to be completed by followers (for leaders)

MEDIATORS

Trust in the Leader (11 items)

Please indicate the degree of your agreement for the statements shown below, regarding attitudes, behaviours and actions exhibited by your leader. Indicate your response (using the scales given below) by inserting the corresponding number in the last column provided.

1: disagree very strongly, 2: strongly disagree, 3: disagree, 4: neither disagree nor agree, 5: agree, 6: strongly agree, 7: disagree very strongly.

1.	We have a sharing relationship. We can both freely share our ideas, feelings, and hopes	
2.	I can talk freely to this individual about difficulties I am having at work and know that (s)he will want to listen	
3.	We would both feel a sense of loss if one of us was transferred and we could no longer work together	
4.	If I shared my problems with this person, I know he/she would respond constructively and caringly	
5.	I would have to say that we have both made considerable emotional investments in our working relationship	
6.	This person approaches his/her job with professionalism and dedication	
7.	Given this person's track record, I see no reason to doubt his/her competence and preparation for the job	
8.	I can rely on this person not to make my job more difficult by careless work	
9.	Most people, even those who aren't close friends of this individual, trust and respect him/her as a coworker	
10.	Other work associates of mine who must interact with this individual consider him/her to be trustworthy	
11.	If people knew more about this individual and his/her background, they would not be concerned or monitor his/her performance more closely	

Team Psychological Safety (7 items)

Please indicate the degree of your agreement for the statements shown below, regarding attitudes, behaviours and actions exhibited by your leader. Indicate your response (using the scales given below) by inserting the corresponding number in the last column provided.

1: strongly disagree, 2: disagree, 3: neutral, 4: agree, 5: strongly disagree

1.	If you make a mistake on this team, it is often held against you	
2.	Members of this team can bring up problems and tough issues	
3.	People on this team sometimes reject others for being different	
4.	It is safe to take a risk on this team	
5.	It is difficult to ask other members of this team for help	
6.	No one on this team would deliberately act in a way that undermines my efforts	
7.	Working with members of this team, my skills and talents are valued and utilized	

Climate for Work Group Innovation (14 items)

Please indicate the degree of your agreement for the statements shown below, regarding attitudes, behaviours and actions exhibited by your leader. Indicate your response (using the scales given below) by inserting the corresponding number in the last column provided.

1: strongly disagree, 2: disagree, 3: neutral, 4: agree, 5: strongly disagree

1.	I agree with team objectives	
2.	I think the team objectives are clearly understood by team members	
3.	I think the team objectives are achievable	
4.	I think the team objectives are worthwhile for the organization	
5.	We have a “we are in it together” attitude	
6.	People keep each other informed about work related issues in the team	
7.	People feel understood and accepted by each other	
8.	There are real attempts to share information throughout the team	
9.	Team members question the basis of what the team is doing	
10.	The team critically appraises potential weaknesses in what it is doing to achieve the best possible outcome	
11.	Members of the team build on each other’s ideas to achieve the best possible outcome	
12.	People in this team are always searching for fresh ways of looking at problems	
13.	In this team, we take the time needed to develop new ideas	
14.	People in the team cooperate to help develop and apply new ideas	

OUTCOME

Work Engagement (17 items)

Please indicate the degree of your agreement for the statements shown below, regarding attitudes, behaviours and actions exhibited by your leader. Indicate your response (using the scales given below) by inserting the corresponding number in the last column provided.

0: never, 1: almost never, 2: sometimes, 3: regularly, 4: often, 5: very often, 6: always.

1.	At my work, I feel bursting with energy	
2.	I find the work I do full of meaning and purpose	
3.	Time flies when I am working	
4.	At my job, I feel strong and vigorous	
5.	I am enthusiastic about my job	
6.	When I am working, I forget everything else around me	
7.	My job inspires me	
8.	When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work	
9.	I feel happy when I am working intensely	
10.	I am proud of the work that I do	
11.	I am immersed in my work	
12.	I can continue working for very long periods of time	
13.	To me, my job is challenging	
14.	I get carried away when I am working	
15.	At my job, I am very resilient, mentally	
16.	It is difficult to detach myself from my job	
17.	At my work, I always persevere, even when things do not go well	

APPENDIX 5 – SAMPLE M*plus* SYNTAX (Mediation)

Mediation Model 3a (VULN/PSY/TP)

Vulnerable Narcissism/Team Psychological Safety/Team Performance)

```
DATA:
                  FILE = 'C:\MEANS_010822.dat';
                VARIABLE:
                  NAMES = LEADER FOLL NADM NRIV VULN TRT ENG PSY CL
TP;
                  USEVARIABLES = VULN PSY TP;
                  MISSING = ALL (-1;
                  WITHIN = ;
                  BETWEEN = VULN TP;
                  CLUSTER=LEADER;

                 ANALYSIS:

                  TYPE = TWOLEVEL RANDOM;
                  ESTIMATOR IS ML;
                 MODEL:
                  %WITHIN%

                  %BETWEEN%
                  PSY TP;
                  TP ON PSY;
                  VULN PSY TP;

                  PSY ON VULN(a);
                  TP ON PSY(b);
                  TP ON VULN;

                  MODEL CONSTRAINT:
                  NEW(indb);
                  indb=a*b;

               OUTPUT: CINTERVAL;
```

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