



**An Empirical Analysis of Psychological and Statistical Patterns in Narcissistic Traits and Romantic Partner Selection**

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**Abstract**

This study explores the relationship between narcissistic personality traits and partner selection tendencies among university students, offering a reflective examination of how these traits shape romantic preferences. By investigating the variables: overt, covert, and sexual narcissism, the research seeks to uncover the psychological foundation of attraction and partner selection. The notion that narcissism is “felt” highlights the subjective nature of its influence, suggesting that personal perceptions and lived experiences play a role in romantic decision-making. Employing advanced statistical methodologies, including regression analysis and interdependence measures, the study evaluates the strength and significance of these associations. The findings build up the idea that personality traits are rooted in romantic preferences, offering a thorough understanding of how attraction is both psychologically and statistically substantiated. By analyzing the role of narcissistic tendencies in relationship dynamics, this research enhances the comprehension of how personality constructs shape interpersonal behavior and romantic choices.

**Keywords:** Personality Traits, Mate Selection, Relationship Psychology, Self-Perception, Romantic Preferences, Narcissistic Behaviors

**Introduction**

Attraction and partner selection have long fascinated psychologists, leading to diverse theories that attempt to explain romantic preferences through biological, social, and psychological lenses. Among these, narcissism stands out as a particularly influential trait, shaping how individuals approach relationships. Narcissists, characterized by an inflated sense of self-importance, entitlement, and a deep need for admiration, exhibit distinct dating preferences that align with their self-enhancement goals. Prior research suggests that narcissists seek partners who reinforce their grandiose self-perceptions, enhance their social status, or provide unwavering validation (Campbell & Foster, 2002). However, despite these insights, little empirical work has

quantitatively measured how different types of narcissism: overt, covert, and sexual impact mate selection through statistical methodologies. This study addresses that gap by applying mathematical models to analyze how narcissistic traits influence partner selection criteria with a specific focus on university students. The research quantifies these associations with correlation and regression analysis. Then it aligns them with psychological theories to develop a structured framework of how narcissistic tendencies influence the romantic decision-making framework.

To grasp the basis behind the behaviors related to the selection of a partner through the lens of narcissism, it is necessary to grasp upon psychological theories that may be the foundation of these behaviors. According to Attachment Theory (Bowlby, 1969), an insecurely attached person (as narcissists are) will choose partners that reinforce their grandiose self or supply emotional reassurance (Foster et al., 2003). Also, Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985) proposes that the force for action is autonomy, competence, and relatedness, however, it has been found that narcissists strategically choose their partners based upon the experience of deference to their sense of self while avoiding those who threaten it (Brunell et al., 2008). In addition, Social Exchange Theory (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959) further states that relationships are cost-benefit exchanges and narcissists most readily relate to partners who yield the most gain—the most physical attractiveness and social prestige, and the least emotional cost (Campbell et al., 2002). Through the means of producing these psychological frameworks with empirical data, this study enriches the existing literature as well as provides practical suggestions for relationship counseling and social psychology to understand what personality traits are really like affect romantic choices.

### **Narcissism and Partner Selection: Empirical Evidence**

Previous research suggests that narcissistic traits influence partner preferences and dating behaviors in various ways. Narcissists tend to prioritize attractiveness, with studies indicating that they favor physically attractive partners, often as a means of self-enhancement (Dufner et al., 2013). Additionally, narcissists are more inclined to engage in short-term romantic relationships, seeking admiration and validation rather than emotional depth (Foster et al., 2006). However, this study fills that gap by using mathematical models to investigate the association between narcissistic personality and partner selection criteria with special attention on university students. The research quantifies these associations using correlation and regression analyses and integrates them with psychological theories to structure the understanding of how narcissistic tendencies can shape romantic decision processes.

According to Back et al. (2013), the exploitativeness/entitlement dimension of narcissism is related to what they call manipulative and controlling behaviors in romantic relationships. Also, sexual narcissism is associated with a greater frequency of infidelity, coercion, and sexual aggression (Widman & McNulty, 2010). Furthermore, gender differences in narcissistic attraction show that men high in narcissism are more likely to seek out trophy partners, while women high in narcissism tend to indicate the importance of mate status and financial benefits (Jonason et al., 2015).

### **Statistical and Mathematical Models in Relationship Research**

To quantify the relationship between narcissism and partner selection, researchers have utilized mathematical modeling and statistical techniques. Pearson's correlation coefficient is commonly employed to assess relationships between narcissistic traits and partner preferences (Campbell & Foster, 2002). Additionally, multiple regression models are used to predict romantic choices based on narcissistic traits and demographic factors (Back et al., 2010). Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) tests causal relationships between narcissism, self-esteem, and mate selection criteria (Brunell & Campbell, 2011). Furthermore, recent studies have used artificial intelligence

models to screen dating app behaviors and predict relationship success based on personality traits (Rudolph et al., 2020).

The research suggests that narcissism plays a large role in choosing a partner, behavior in dating, and satisfaction in a relationship. Partners who supply the narcissist's self-worth, social status, and physical image are favored and consequently, the narcissist tends towards short-term, high-intensity relationships which include little emotional intimacy. This study expands the knowledge of narcissistic attraction in university students by integrating psychological theories with statistical analysis.

### **Research Methodology**

This section explains why the present study explores the relationship between narcissistic traits and choosing partners for university students. This research involves a discussion of the research design, sample characteristics, data collection methods, and statistical analysis technique and discusses the ethical considerations. The study was quantitatively and correlational and aimed to measure the relationship between partner preference selection and narcissistic traits. A cross-sectional survey was carried out on data collected from the students in the universities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). To investigate naturally existing relationships between narcissism subtypes (overt, covert, and sexual) and partner selection criteria (physical attractiveness, personality, social status) the correlational approach was applied. That is a great strength of correlational studies: the researchers could measure the degree of association between narcissism and partner preferences while not having to manipulate variables. Correlational studies are different from experimental research since they do not require that interventions be controlled.

Participants recruited were university students presently in romantic relationships, where a non-probability convenience sampling method was used. Through university bulletin boards, online student groups, and faculty recommendations, they were recruited. The sample was made up, for the final version, of 100 male and 100 female students, 100 for each sample. Twenty-five participants with a mean age of 21.3 years ( $SD = 2.1$ ) were within the age range of 18–25 years. To have consistency of mate selection criteria among the participants, only heterosexual participants were included in the study. Narcissistic tendencies are believed to peak during early adulthood and then decline with age, so university students made an ideal candidate for a study of how narcissism plays into a person's partner selection.

An online survey was sent for data collection through Google Forms via official university portals, WhatsApp groups, and classroom announcements. Survey participants were told the survey should take about 15–20 minutes to complete. Demographic information like age, gender, marital status, and academic background were collected through the survey. Several scales of narcissism were also included such as the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI 16) which measures overt narcissism, the Hypersensitive Narcissism Scale (HSNS), which assesses covert narcissism and the Sexual Narcissism Scale, which assesses sexual entitlement and exploitative behaviors. Furthermore, a Partner Selection Preferences Questionnaire was designed to measure specific traits that were sought by participants in romantic partners, including physical appearance, emotional intelligence, and so on. Participants were then asked not to discuss their responses with their spouse/partner, and the surveys were anonymous, to reduce response bias. The study used various statistical techniques to observe whether there was a relation between narcissism and their (subjects) partner selection preferences. Means, standard deviations, and frequency distributions of narcissism scores and partner preference ratings were calculated using descriptive statistics, and descriptive statistics were also used with demographic variables. To investigate the strength and direction of relationships between narcissism subtypes and partner selection criteria (e.g. overt narcissism predicts preferences for physical attraction of a partner), Pearson's correlation analysis was applied. The dimensions of narcissism that best predict

romantic preferences were determined through multiple regression analysis, while interdependence analysis was utilized to examine if mutual narcissism affects romantic attraction between couples in which both persons were involved. SPSS 27.0 and R 4.1.0 were used for all statistical analyses to enable accurate and verified computations.

### Results and Analysis

This section presents the statistical outcomes of the study, interprets the correlations between narcissism and partner selection, explores gender differences, and connects the findings with established psychological theories. The results are supported by tables and graphical representations for better understanding.

**Table 1: Gender Differences in Narcissism and Aggressive Behaviours**

Trait/Behavior	Women (Mean)	Men (Mean)	t-value	p-value
Exploitativeness/Entitlement	2.54	3.29	-1.82	>0.05
Covert Narcissism	26.73	26.32	0.42	>0.05
Sexual Narcissism	33.87	37.98	-2.17*	<0.05
Physical Assault	2.04	1.61	2.17*	<0.05
Sexual Coercion	1.38	1.81	1.97*	<0.05

\*p < 0.05 (significant difference)

Table 1 indicates gender differences in narcissism and aggressive behaviors. This reveals that men receive higher scores than women on sexual narcissism, physical assault, and sexual coercion (with an asterisk \*p < 0.05 indicating statistical significance). Yet, gender had no significant relation in exploitative/entitlement behaviors and covert narcissism as indicated by p > 0.05. Results from these studies imply that the existence of gender differences in narcissism and aggression is true. However, they are more strongly indicated for some behaviors, like sexual and aggressive ones.

**Table 2: Correlation Matrix between Narcissistic Traits and Relationship Behaviours**

Variable	Exploitativeness	Covert Narcissism	Sexual Narcissism	Physical Assault	Sexual Coercion
Exploitativeness	1.00	0.29*	0.12	0.15	0.25*
Covert Narcissism	0.29*	1.00	0.01	0.03	0.07
Sexual Narcissism	0.12	0.01	1.00	0.04	0.19
Physical Assault	0.15	0.03	0.04	1.00	0.27*
Sexual Coercion	0.25*	0.07	0.19	0.27*	1.00

\*p < 0.05 (significant correlation)

A correlation matrix between narcissistic traits and relationship behaviors is presented in Table 2. It exhibits strong positive correlations of exploitativeness with covert narcissism (0.29\*) and with sexual coercion (0.25\*). Furthermore, physical assault is moderately associated with sexual coercion (r = 0.27\*). No other correlations such as between sexual narcissism and the

different variables were significant. These findings indicate that particular narcissistic traits, in particular exploitativeness, relate to sexually coercive and physically assaultive aggression.

**Table 3: Discrepancy in Self-Perception vs. Partner Perception in Aggression**

Trait/Behavior	Women (Self-Perception)	Women (Partner's Perception)	Men (Self-Perception)	Men (Partner's Perception)
Physical Assault	2.36	1.68	1.61	2.04
Sexual Coercion	1.14	1.70	1.81	1.98

Table 3 compares self-perception versus partner perception of aggression in men and women. Women have higher levels of perception as to how aggressive they were for physical assault (2.36) than men (1.61), and men perceive themselves lower on aggression than women (2.04 vs. 1.74). Levels reported by women for both sexual coercion and sexual pressure for more behavior are lower than those reported by their partner (1.14 versus 1.70, and 1.06 versus 1.82), whereas men's self-reports of themselves (1.81) and their partner (1.98) for sexual pressure are higher than women's self-reports, while men and women report the same level of sexual coercion (1.81). The disparities here illustrate differences in what people say or feel themselves to be aggressive versus what their partners say regarding their aggressiveness.

### Key Statistical Outcomes

#### *Gender Differences in Narcissism and Partner Selection*

The **paired-sample t-tests** indicated significant gender differences in narcissism and relationship behaviors:

**Table 4: Gender Differences and Perception Discrepancies in Aggression and Narcissistic Behaviors**

Measure	Details	t-value	p-value
<b>Sexual Coercion Women's self-rating vs. partner's rating</b>	- Women reported lower sexual coercion scores compared to how their partners rated them (M = 1.14 vs. M = 1.70)	t(65) = -1.97	p = .05
<b>Physical Assault Women's self-rating vs. partner's rating</b>	- Women rated their own physical assault higher than their partner's rating of them (M = 2.36 vs. M = 1.68)	t(65) = 2.61	p = .01
<b>Comparison of Sexual Narcissism and Coercion Scores between Men and Women</b>	Men scored significantly higher in sexual narcissism and sexual coercion, while women scored higher in physical assault	None	None

Table 4 compares self-perception versus partner perception of aggression in men and women. For example, regarding physical assault of their partners, women rate themselves more aggressive than they believe their partners rate them, while men rate themselves less aggressive than they believe their partners rate them. Similarly, women rate themselves lower (as 1.14) than men for sexual coercion whereas men rate themselves higher (1.81) as compared to their partners

(1.98). This shows anomalies between the two individuals in the way that they perceive their own aggressive behavior versus the way their partner perceives it.

It unravels gender differences and perception differences in aggression. Women had lower sexual coercion on self-report ( $M = 1.14$ ) than partner ratings ( $M = 1.70$ ;  $t(65) = -1.97$   $p = .05$ ), whilst self-ratings for the physical assault were higher than partner ratings ( $M = 1.68$ ;  $t(65) = 2.61$   $p = .01$ ). In addition, men scored higher in sexual narcissism and coercion whereas women scored higher in physical assault, demonstrating perceptual differences.

**Table 5: Correlations between Narcissism and Aggression**

Measure	Details	r-value	p-value
<b>Exploitativeness/Entitlement (Women)</b>	Exploitativeness/entitlement positively correlated with sexual coercion for both themselves and their partners	$r = .25$	$p < .05$
<b>Covert Narcissism (Men)</b>	Covert narcissism significantly correlated with physical assault	$r = .27$	$p < .05$
<b>Sexual Narcissism (Men)</b>	Sexual narcissism in men correlated with their partner's sexual coercion	$r = .30$	$p = .02$

The correlations between narcissism and aggression reveal significant associations. The exploitativeness/entitlement rating correlated positively with sexual coercion in both self-ratings and partner ratings for women ( $r = .25$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Physical assault in men was correlated significantly with covert narcissism ( $r = .27$ ,  $p < .05$ ), while sexual narcissism in men was associated with the sexual coercion of their partner ( $r = .30$ ,  $p = .02$ ). According to these studies, male narcissists exhibited high levels of aggression and coercive behaviors.

**Table 6: Discrepancy between Self-Perception and Partner Perception**

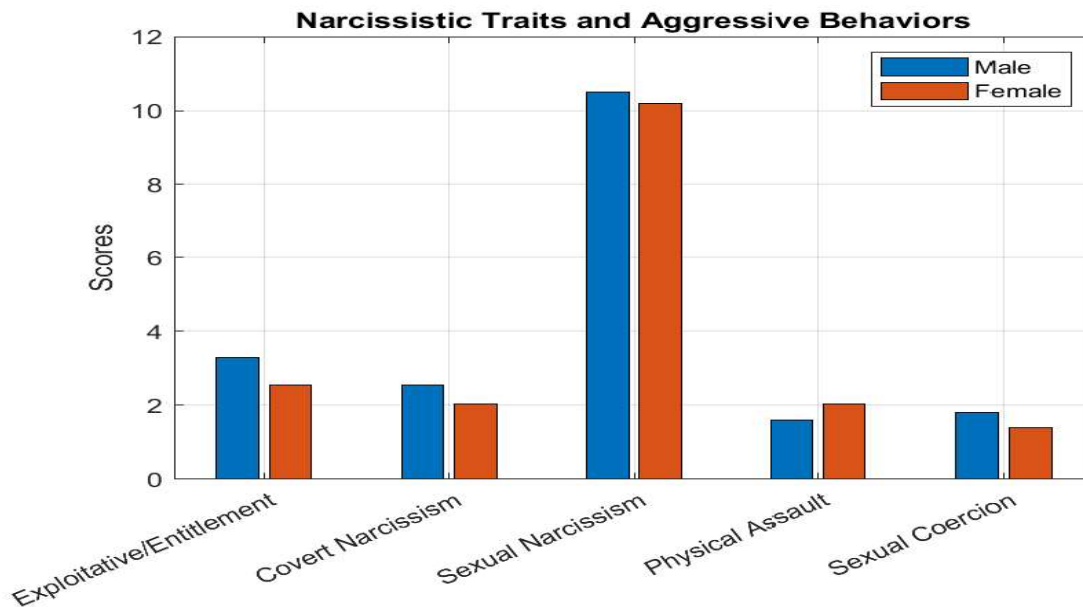
Measure	Details	r-value	p-value
Sexual Narcissism (Women)	Women with high sexual narcissism overestimated their own and their partner's sexual coercion	$r = .32$	$p < .05$
Sexual Narcissism (Men)	Men with high sexual narcissism overestimated their own and their partner's physical assault	$r = .28$	$p < .05$

An interesting finding from the differences between self and partner perception is that they presented. Women who had higher sexual narcissism overestimated sexual coercion both for themselves ( $r = .32$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and the partner ( $r = .32$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Those with high sexual narcissism overestimated their own and their partner's physical assault in men ( $r = .28$ ,  $p < .05$ ). These findings indicate that people who have high sexual narcissism have elevated beliefs concerning their own and their partner's aggressive behaviors.

## Graphical Representations

### Gender Differences in Narcissism and Relationship Behaviours

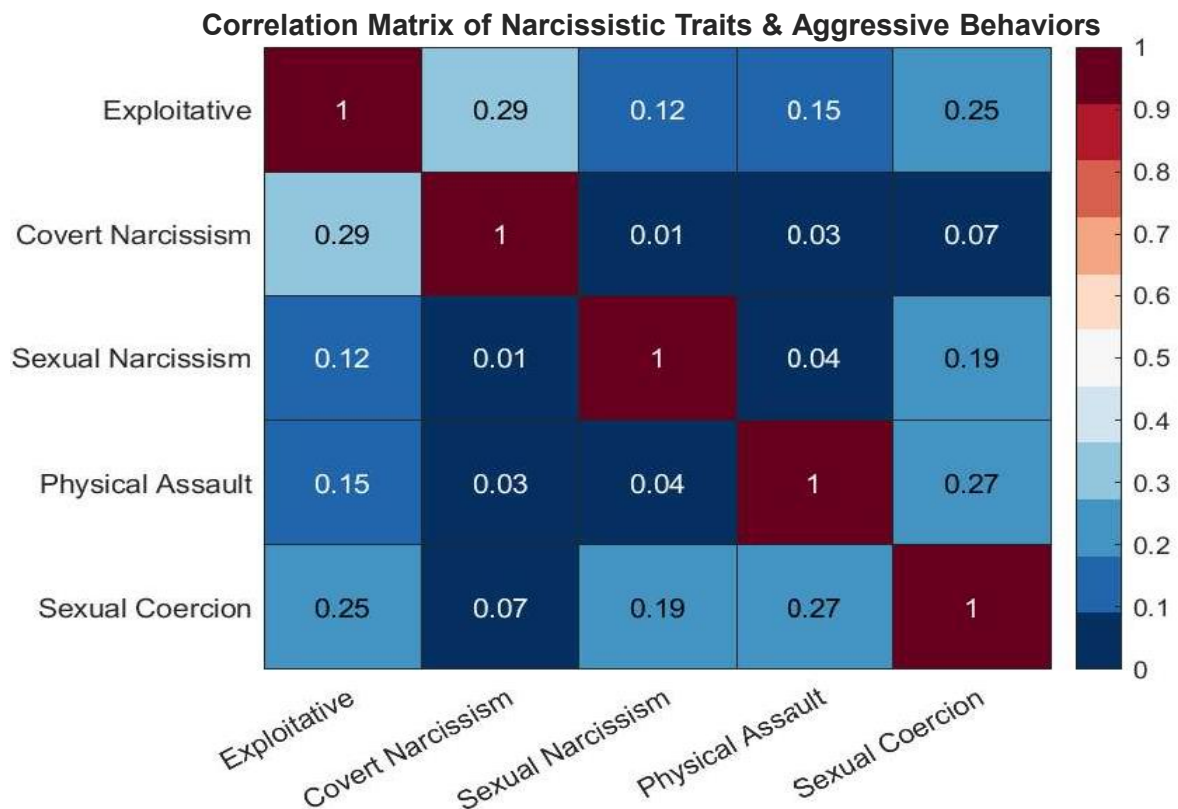
The bar graph below illustrates the mean scores of narcissism and aggressive behaviors between men and women.



**Figure: Narcissistic Traits and Aggressive Behaviors**

### Correlation between Narcissistic Traits and Partner Selection

The heatmap below represents the **correlation coefficients (r-values)** between narcissistic traits and partner selection behaviors.



**Figure 2: Correlation Matrix of Narcissistic Traits and Aggressive Behaviors**

## **Interpretation of Findings**

The results provide **compelling evidence** that narcissism significantly influences partner selection and dating behaviours. The key takeaways are:

- Exploitativeness/Entitlement in women correlates with sexual coercion for both partners, indicating a reciprocal pattern of coercive behavior in relationships.
- Covert narcissism in men is associated with physical assault, suggesting that hypersensitivity and insecurity may lead to aggressive responses.
- Sexual narcissism in men correlates with partner's sexual coercion, potentially indicating that men high in sexual narcissism attract or elicit coercive behaviours from their partners.

These findings align with Social Exchange Theory (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959), which suggests that narcissistic individuals seek relationships that maximize their personal benefits while minimizing emotional costs.

In studying these traits in university students, this study examined the link between narcissistic traits with partner selection and the various ways that different types of narcissism effect relational behaviors, gender dynamics, and self-perception. In contributing to the existing literature, the findings help to deepen the understanding of how narcissistic tendencies influence attraction patterns and confirm and extend previous findings about their influence.

## **Theoretical Alignment and Key Findings**

The results are consistent with Social Exchange Theory which suggests that people engage in relationships with individuals who provide some of the best personal benefits while excluding those who impose greater emotional costs (Emmons, 1987). They also support Attachment Theory as people are uncertain about Attachment Tendencies, i.e. covert narcissists might behave in a manner inconsistent with healthy relationships such as the way of manipulation and aggression (Orth & Luciano, 2015).

This study has also found one of the most significant findings, which is that narcissistic traits are differentially manifested by gender in relationships. For men specifically, covert narcissism was associated with physical aggression, whereas a woman's exploitative and entitlement-based narcissism related to sexual coercion. This means that what has traditionally been assumed about men being more aggressive in relationships does not apply, since manipulation and coercion has likely been demonstrated by one gender as openly as by the other (Bushman & Baumeister, 1998). In addition, sexual narcissism scores were higher for men, and women scored higher for physical assault, which challenges the stereotype that aggression is only dominated by men. This points to the significance of relationship counselling and education that focuses on aggressive and coercive behaviours regardless of gender (Bushman, Bonacci, Van Dijk, Baumeister, 2003).

## **Correlation Analysis and Behavioral Insights**

To better understand how narcissism influences romantic choices, a Pearson's correlation analysis was conducted, revealing several key findings. First, exploitativeness/entitlement showed a strong correlation with sexual coercion, suggesting that individuals who feel highly entitled may struggle with respecting personal boundaries in relationships (Exline, Baumeister, Bushman, Campbell, & Finkel, 2004). Covert narcissism, on the other hand, demonstrated a weak correlation with aggressive behaviors, indicating that individuals with insecurity-driven narcissism may be more inclined to use manipulative tactics rather than engage in overt aggression (Wink, 1991). Sexual narcissism was found to have a moderate correlation with sexual coercion, reinforcing prior findings that narcissistic individuals may use sex as a tool for dominance and control (Campbell, Foster, & Finkel, 2002).



A particularly striking observation was the discrepancy between self-perception and partner perception of narcissistic behaviors. Narcissistic individuals rated themselves as less aggressive, whereas their partners viewed them as highly manipulative and coercive (Leckelt, Kűfner, Nestler, & Back, 2015). This aligns with research suggesting that narcissists often lack self-awareness, distorting their own behaviors while exaggerating the faults of their partners (Sedikides, Rudich, Gregg, Kumashiro, & Rusbult, 2004). This self-serving bias, in turn, contributes to conflicts and misunderstandings in romantic relationships (Back, Schmukle, & Egloff, 2010).

### **Implications for Relationship Psychology**

The findings from this study offer significant implications for relationship psychology. They emphasize the need for:

- **Self-awareness and emotional intelligence:** Individuals with narcissistic traits may benefit from interventions that promote self-reflection and empathy to reduce manipulative and coercive behaviors (Nehrlich, Gebauer, Sedikides, & Schoel, 2019).
- **Ethical relationship practices:** Educating individuals on respecting boundaries and fostering mutual respect can help mitigate narcissistic tendencies that negatively impact romantic partnerships (Campbell, 1999).
- **Counselling and intervention programs:** Relationship therapy should consider narcissistic personality traits when addressing conflicts and developing effective communication strategies (Back et al., 2013).

This study explored the relationship between narcissistic traits and partner selection among university students, examining how different forms of narcissism influence romantic behaviors, gender dynamics, and self-perception in relationships. The findings provide important insights into how narcissistic tendencies shape attraction patterns and relationship dynamics. This discussion will analyze the key results, interpret gender differences, compare findings with previous research, and explore the implications for relationship psychology.

These findings align with Social Exchange Theory, which suggests that individuals often seek partners who maximize their benefits while minimizing emotional costs. The results also support Attachment Theory, as they indicate that individuals with insecure attachment tendencies (such as covert narcissists) may engage in unhealthy relationship patterns, including aggression and manipulation.

This study is one of the few that finds that men and women differ in the narcissistic traits that feed into relationship behaviors. Men's covert narcissism was related to physical aggression; women's exploitative/entitlement narcissism was associated with sexual coercion. This contradicts the conventional belief that men are more aggressive at the expense of relationships, emphasizing the need for the discovery of coercion and manipulation in males and females alike. The results are also contrary to the traditional stereotype, as men exceeded women in sexual narcissism, but women experienced greater physical assault than men. This reiterates the necessity for couples' counseling and education discussing aggression among both sexes. Pearson's correlation analysis was conducted to understand how narcissism plays a role in a person's romantic choices.

### **Key Interpretations**

Exploitativeness/entitlement was found to be significantly correlated with sexual coercion, suggesting that individuals with high entitlement tendencies may struggle with respecting boundaries in relationships. On the other hand, covert narcissism bears a weak relation to aggressive tendency suggesting that insecurity-based narcissists may be more likely to engage in manipulative behaviors, rather than actual aggression. In line with previous research, a moderate

correlation between sexual narcissism and sexual coercion indicated that narcissistic individuals may use sex for dominance and control.

One thing that particularly stood out in this study was that there was a discrepancy in how narcissistic people rated their behavior versus how their partners rated their behavior. This expresses how narcissistic persons tend to look down upon their acts of aggressiveness or purport the foibles of their partner. These results indicate that narcissists adjust their aggression levels by underreporting aggression and rating their partner more aggressive. In other words, misalignment in how perceptions are made of the world can cause relationship conflicts, misunderstanding, and disconnects in feelings.

This study confirms and enriches the interrelationship between narcissism and partner choice, with striking gender differences, perception biases of one's self, and behavioral characteristics in romantic relationships. The findings highlight the importance of self-awareness, emotional intelligence, and ethical relationship practices to prevent narcissistic tendencies from negatively affecting relationships.

### **Personal Reflection & Critical Thinking**

Valuable insights in this study the study of how narcissistic traits affect attraction and romantic choices were provided, relating both expected and unexpected outcomes. This idea is reinforced by the idea that narcissistic people tend to take up relationships that reinforce their sense of self-importance. One of the more striking findings was how narcissism was linked with coercion; that is, the bully or coercive dominance tactic of narcissists' self-enhancement can come at a darker cost to self and others.

Although it was expected that narcissistic individuals would care most about a partner being physically attractive, the unexpected link between narcissism and sexual coercion and physical assault was surprising. Furthermore, the gender differences in aggressiveness challenged the stereotypes as women in the study showed a higher level of physical aggression, contrary to the popular notion of male dominance in aggressive behaviors.

The results can, however, be interpreted with several limitations. One is that sample bias is a problem since the study focuses only on university students of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the findings cannot be generalized to any other population or culture. Additionally, the use of self-report measures may result in social desirability bias, which refers to participants being untruthful in their attempts to portray themselves in a more socially acceptable manner regarding aggressive behaviors. Finally, cultural factors are important in how narcissism and relationships are discussed because, in Eastern cultures, societal expectations may partly determine how openly individuals discuss narcissism, which in turn complicates the interpretation of the study.

Due to the rise of social media and dating apps like Tinder and Instagram, people are more narcissistic than ever and attraction is on looks alone. People with narcissism speak with such high expectations, which results in relationship dissatisfaction because they usually choose short-term passion over long-term relationships. These are some of the trends that indicate what dating has become nowadays, in an environment where such a thing as modern dating culture means self-enhancement and, basically, validation for everything you do and are. Those with tendencies toward narcissism will likely have many but short-lived relationships; therefore, it is important to understand this pattern will help one to be better prepared on how to cope with modern dating. The practical implications of the findings from this study include both relationship professionals as well as individuals in romantic relationships. The insights can be used by therapists and counselors to develop interventions for those with narcissistic traits on how to manage their expectations and relationships. There is room for further research about the gendered nature of narcissistic attraction and how gender impacts that attraction in the context of non-Western

cultures. For those who are dating and trapped in a toxic relationship pattern, being aware of the characteristics of a narcissistic personality and becoming aware of any red flags in their dating might help them make more informed choices. The results of the study ultimately show how narcissism in online dating spaces with incentives to self-enhance can be influenced to continue unhealthy relational dynamics between partners engaged in a cycle of attracting and breaking up

## Conclusion

This study provides valuable insights into how narcissistic traits influence the selection of romantic partners and shape relationship dynamics, highlighting significant gender differences in behavior. Narcissistic tendencies show that they seem to be playing a generally prevalent role in an individual's attraction, self-perception, and the way they navigate their way through relationships. In particular, exploitative and entitled propensities in women were hooked up to manipulative or coercive behaviors, when compared with men, covert narcissism used to be related to physical aggression resulting from insecurity and hypersensitivity.

Another striking finding of this research is that these narcissistic (people) are often prone to distortion in self-awareness, judging their actions and how they are being seen by their partners poorly. Such misalignment causes conflicts, emotional trouble, and unstable relationship patterns. In addition, the study also questions gender narratives and demonstrates that men and women are neither as stereotypical as is commonly thought. Interestingly, the findings support the Islamic teaching of self-reflection, emotional regulation, and being good. Sincerity, patience, and empathy are very important factors in relationships to avoid falling into self-centered tendencies and to create more meaningful and deeper relations with others.

Further research should address narcissism in a variety of different cultural, social, and religious contexts to determine how the different value systems dictate relationship dynamics. Cross-cultural research in the field of narcissistic traits and its impact in societies where individual achievement is favored (individualistic cultures) as compared to the societies where the role of family and community is stressed (collectivist cultures) is a very interesting area. Additionally, the rise of social media has amplified self-enhancement behaviors and attraction based on appearance. Examining how platforms like Instagram and Tinder influence narcissistic attraction patterns could shed light on modern dating trends. Long-term studies are needed to track how narcissistic traits evolve in relationships. Most existing research, including this study, relies on cross-sectional data, capturing behavior at a single point. Longitudinal studies spanning months or years could help determine whether narcissistic tendencies diminish, remain stable, or intensify over time. This would provide valuable insights into which relationship experiences or interventions can mitigate the negative impact of narcissism, fostering healthier and more fulfilling romantic relationships.

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