

ABSTRACT

The field of Industrial/Organizational psychology has long been concerned with the selecting the right individuals to fill the right positions within organizations. Of all the methods by which individuals are selected, the employment interview is the most common (Sears & Rowe, 2003). The present study is concerned with examining how narcissists make selection decisions, primarily through the lens of the “similar-to-me” effect (Sears & Rowe, 2003). Although this bias has only been observed through demographic similarities, the present researcher is interested in the likelihood that this effect applies to narcissists. The purpose of this study is to examine the extent to which individuals with high levels of narcissism are likely to select fellow narcissists in an employment interview.

EMPLOYMENT INTERVIEWS

Employment interviews are likely the most commonly used method for selecting applicants (Powell, Stanley, & Brown, 2018)

- Interviews are also the second-most utilized method for screening applicants (Ash, 1991)
- Interviews can be given via structured or unstructured methods
- Structured: Consists of previously designed questions that are written and given to all candidates in the same or similar setting utilizing standardized processes
- Unstructured: More ad hoc, less structured, less reliable than structured interviews (McDaniel et al., 1994)

SIMILAR-TO-ME EFFECT

- Type of bias in which individuals favor others who are similar to themselves in demographics such as age, race, or attitudes (Sears & Rowe, 2003)
- Theory of interpersonal attraction mirrors this in that similarity increases the likelihood that more favorable opinions are formed that validate one’s personal characteristics, views, or opinions (Frank & Hackman, 1975).
- The similar-to-me effect has not been applied to personality characteristics such as narcissism

NARCISSISM

- Characterized by an inflated sense of self-importance and grandiosity which is usually not supported by actual talents or accomplishments (American Psychiatric Association, 2000)
- Narcissists frequently self-promote and over-exaggerate competencies (Paulhus & Williams, 2002)
- Narcissists are immensely focused on success and power, often seeking attention and admiration from others (Morf & Rhodewalt, 2001)

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- Question 1: Are narcissists more likely to select narcissists in an interview?
- Question 2: Are other personality characteristics predictive of decisions to hire narcissists?

PARTICIPANTS

- Students enrolled full time at a 4-year public university in the southeastern United States will be recruited for participation

PROCEDURE

- Participants will be solicited using a student research pool at the university and via announcements during class, and complete all measures via an online survey

MEASURES

- The 40-item Narcissistic Personality Inventory (Raskin & Terry, 1988)
- The Grandiose Narcissism Scale which measures constructs of narcissism such as self-sufficiency, superiority, vanity, exhibitionism, entitlement, and exploitativeness
- The HEXACO-PI-R (Lee & Ashton, 2010)
- In an attempt to alleviate any carry-over effects from the personality assessment and narcissism scales, a distractor measure trivia quiz will be included prior to the final part of the study.

MEASURES (Continued)

For the final portion of the measures, participants will be given structured interviews and be asked to “hire” the best candidate for the job of Shift Supervisor at in a retail setting. The role of the participant will be as general manager for the location. There will be three “candidates” for the supervisory position, all of which are asked the same structured interview questions. The candidate responses to questions will be written and scripted to exhibit varying degrees of narcissism. Each of the three candidates that are being assessed by participants will be scripted to exhibit either a low, medium, or high narcissistic response for all of the interview questions.

ANALYSIS

A repeated measures multiple regression analysis will be performed to examine whether or not varying levels of narcissism are predictive of selection decisions in an interview setting. For each of the six facets of the HEXACO inventory, regression analyses will also be conducted to ascertain the extent to which each factor predicts decisions to hire narcissists. A Bonferroni correction will be utilized for the HEXACO measures to account for statistical validity.

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