
Do Narcissistic Traits Influence How Millennials Lead?

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Abstract

Narcissism, which falls within the dark triad concept, is a personality trait that is of great importance in the field of organizational psychology. It can have both positive and negative effects on workplaces, especially for those in leadership positions. The existing evidence suggests an upward trajectory of narcissistic characteristics among persons from the millennial cohort. As millennials take on more significant roles in the workforce and leadership positions within teams, practitioners must gain a deeper grasp of their characteristics. This study examined the impact of narcissism on the development and effectiveness of leadership in a student group. A method of total population sampling was used, involving 112 respondents who met the predetermined criteria for participation. The survey data, which include the NPI-40, GLL, leadership effectiveness questionnaire, and interviews, reveal a positive correlation between narcissism and the development of leadership. The conclusion is substantiated by a t-statistic value of 3.901, which is above the crucial value of 1.96. However, the analysis indicated that there was not a significant association between narcissism and leadership effectiveness among the participants in the study. The finding is supported by the t-statistic value of 0.604, which falls below the critical threshold of 1.96.

Keywords

Millennials; team; organization; narcissism; leadership emergence; leadership effectiveness; leadership

Introduction

Generation Y, known as the millennial generation, encompasses persons who were born during the period characterized by the rise of digital technology. Hence, this generation plays a pivotal role in shaping the future of the workforce. According to a report by PWC in 2014, it is projected that by the year 2020, millennials will make up around 50% of the global workforce. In Indonesia, a similar trend is observed, wherein the millennial demographic is projected to constitute 23.8% of the total population by the year 2020, as reported by the Indonesian Central Statistics Agency (BPS, 2021). The increasing presence of millennials in professional settings indicates a

corresponding trend toward millennials assuming leadership positions. The anticipated outcomes of their leadership are likely to vary due to their distinctive attributes compared to preceding generations. The studies conducted by Ng and Johnson (2015) and Lyons and Kuron (2014) have reached the consensus that there is a discernible shift in personality traits over different generations. According to Smith and Nichols (2015), millennials exhibit positive attributes such as technological proficiency, self-assurance, and a commitment to embracing diversity. Conversely, Ng and Johnson (2015) argue that this generation also displays undesirable traits such as heightened individualism, self-centeredness, and narcissism.

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Several studies have been conducted on the topic of leadership and millennials, including those by Tripathi, Panday, and Kaur (2019), Cortellazzo, Bruni, and Zampieri (2019), Dasborough et al. (2021), Farhan and Serpa (2021), and Putriastuti and Stasi (2019). Furthermore, there is a limited body of research examining the association between narcissism and the millennial generation (Artar, 2019; Brailoyskaia & Bierhoff, 2020). Hence, the primary objective of this research is to examine the potential impact of narcissistic behavior on the leadership style exhibited by individuals belonging to the millennial generation.

Literature Review

Narcissism stands out as a frequently cited distinction within the literature (Twenge et al., 2014; Lyons & Kuron, 2014). It is imperative to acknowledge that the usage of the term 'narcissism' in this context pertains to a subclinical perspective within the field of organizational psychology, as opposed to its clinical connotation as a mental disorder. This implies that each person possesses varying degrees of narcissism. The phenomenon of the millennial trend coincides with the increasing prominence of narcissism as a subject of scholarly investigation (Grijalva & Harms, 2014). As of 26 August 2018, Fatfouta (2018) reported that the keyword combination of narcissism and leadership yielded over 40,000 relevant articles indexed on Google Scholar. According to a study conducted by Twenge et al (2014), there has been a 30% increase in narcissism among those belonging to the millennial generation. According to SYZGY Worldwide (2016), a renowned worldwide digital marketing company, empirical evidence suggests that millennials exhibit a 16% higher degree of narcissism compared to the preceding generation. On the other hand, leadership plays a crucial role inside a company, particularly when it comes to making decisions that promote long-term sustainability. The potential impact of millennials' comparatively elevated levels of narcissism concerning previous generations on their leadership style is likely to be distinct as they assume positions of authority in the workforce, particularly given the contemporary emphasis on collaborative work teams rather than individual efforts. (Acton, 2019; Heerwagen, 2016; Felty et al., 2015). The prominence of the leadership issue is evident, namely about leadership emergence and leadership effectiveness. Previous research has demonstrated that narcissism exerts an influence on

multiple variables (Ong et al., 2016; Grijalva et al., 2015).

Due to the aforementioned incidents, the present study centers its attention on three phenomena that exert an impact on contemporary organizations. The phenomena under examination encompass the prevalence of the millennial cohort within workplaces and organizations, particularly in positions of leadership, as well as the elevated levels of narcissism observed among millennials. Additionally, the contentious effects of narcissism on leadership are also being explored. All of these phenomena collectively contribute to the emergence of an issue, which is subsequently examined and discussed in detail within the context of this study. A preliminary assessment was undertaken on a sample of 112 members belonging to student organizations, to obtain insights into their levels of narcissism and identify any potential issues about leadership. Based on the findings from an open questionnaire and subsequent follow-up interviews conducted with participants, a consistent response emerged across all respondents. Specifically, they collectively identified a particular personality feature as the primary factor contributing to challenges in leadership. The study focused on examining the variance between initial impressions and the actual leadership performance exhibited by the selected leader. The association between narcissism and leadership has been established since Freud's research in the 1950s (Braun, 2017).

To achieve the research aims, this study necessitates an examination of teams led by individuals belonging to the millennial generation. The sample size should be sufficiently large to enable statistical analysis, thereby unveiling the observed trend. In addition, the study necessitates participants who meet the specific requirements relevant to the research setting, while also adhering to budgetary and temporal constraints. The present study necessitates participants who belong to the millennial generation, are presently engaged in team-based work with predetermined tasks, have leadership positions (ideally within small teams), and have not undergone any formal leadership training. Finding businesses that meet these needs, such as being able to deliver responses within a 3-4 month timeframe and conducting interviews for more comprehensive insights into statistical data, is a challenging task.

When considering the acquisition of primary data, it became challenging to locate previous research about the correlation between millennials' narcissism and leadership, particularly those conducted in Asia or specifically in Indonesia. Although the concept of narcissism has been in use for a considerable period, its association with the millennial generation and the comprehensive examination of its consequences in the modern day remain insufficiently explored. The publications lack publicly available information regarding the resources and methods for integrating technologies to conduct meta-analytical investigations as direct replications of previous research. Consequently, a mixed-methods approach will be employed, utilizing both quantitative and qualitative data-gathering techniques. This will involve the distribution of online surveys as well as conducting direct interviews.

Research Methods

The present study utilized a mixed method research design, which enables researchers to integrate both quantitative and qualitative methodologies in various aspects of the research process, such as data collecting, question formulation, data analysis, research methodology, and drawing inferences (Ivankova, 2015:3). This study utilized a quantitative research approach, employing survey research methodology to gather data from a specified group of participants to assess their ideas, emotions, and behaviors. This study employs a qualitative method by utilizing interviews as a means to gather reliable explanations for the subsequent findings. Both strategies are required to mutually enhance one another. Butler (2014) asserts that the present study aligns with the characteristics of confirmatory research. The objective of this study is to evaluate predetermined hypotheses and a predetermined research model that draws upon multiple ideas. Currently, this research is categorized as a deductive study, wherein theoretical frameworks and hypotheses serve as its foundation and are subsequently tested against empirical evidence.

This study focused on examining the individual level of analysis within a team framework. The focus of this study is on the 112 active members of the student organization from certain selected college. These members are classed as millennials, with ages ranging from 19 to 22 years old. Among these individuals, there are around 38 leaders who oversee 38 work teams. The research total

population will encompass all leaders under observation. The respondents for this study were selected from student groups to gain a deeper knowledge of the qualities of millennial recruits, as perceived by employers and practitioners in different organizations.

The aim of this study is to examine the influence of narcissism on the leadership dynamics within teams composed of individuals from the millennial generation. Hence, it is argued that teams without leadership training may be more desirable in order to prevent the potential homogeneity that can arise from such training (Kwok et al., 2016). According to Kwok et al (2016), the development of leadership role identity can be influenced by an individual's previous experiences in leadership and their motivation to assume leadership positions. Therefore, the selected sample is seen more suitable for addressing the study inquiries due to the comparatively lower level of leadership experience among young individuals involved in student organizations, as opposed to adult professionals in the workforce. The purpose of these criteria is to validate and reinforce established theoretical frameworks presented in prior scholarly publications within a more specific and differentiated context. The collecting of data in student organizations is heavily dependent on the participation of the organization's effective leader, given that these organizations lack regular working hours and a designated workplace. Attaining such conditions proves to be challenging in alternative organizational contexts. Hence, the population selected for this study was the Student Committee of selected college, as they shown the capacity to meet the specified criteria.

Judgment sampling, also referred to as purposive sampling, is deemed appropriate for this research as it serves a specific purpose. This non-probability sampling method involves selecting respondents based on predetermined criteria that are essential for obtaining pertinent responses (Showkat & Parveen, 2017). Etikan (2016) asserts that the purposive sampling method is employed to specifically target individuals possessing specific qualities that align with the objectives of the study. This approach is chosen to obtain distinct and comprehensive information that is pertinent to the research.

Total population sampling was employed as the sample technique, encompassing all sorts of purposive sampling, in accordance with the

aforementioned criteria and conditions of the respondents. This approach entails conducting a comprehensive analysis of the entire population. Therefore, the total number of participants in the study was 112, which were further categorized into 38 leaders and their respective teams. Laerd Dissertation (2012) states that entire population sampling is employed for selecting units that possess distinct and exceptional traits. The salient attributes may encompass certain qualities, expertise, competencies, prior experience, and familiarity with a given occurrence. Despite its limited usage in research studies, there exist instances where complete population sampling has been employed as a research approach. In the present study, the focus is on leadership within an organizational setting. Specifically, the study examines a select group of leaders, comprising approximately 10 individuals, who share a similar context to the current research. Furthermore, to examine leadership inside teams, the participants need to be placed in a scenario where they collectively engage in a predetermined objective. Organizations serve as the most suitable subject of analysis for this study. Therefore, employing complete population sampling is an appropriate approach for this research endeavor.

In this particular instance, the utilization of literature research as a means of secondary data collecting holds significant importance in the process of concept development for the research endeavor. It serves to integrate existing knowledge pertaining to the chosen issue, discover any gaps in the current understanding, and ascertain the

potential contribution of the study towards enhancing comprehension in the field. According to Winchester (2016), internet information sources, such as Google, are considered valid resources for journals and other publications. In addition to scholarly journals, this analysis also incorporated theoretical frameworks from relevant academic texts. Questionnaires and a subsequent interview were employed for the purpose of gathering primary data. This approach can be beneficial in enhancing the comprehension of ambiguous responses to inquiries and providing elucidation on the statistical information. Semi-structured interview questions are employed in order to offer researchers flexibility in engaging in conversational dialogue and the ability to go further into the subject matter for enhanced comprehension. In relation to the subject of narcissism, the presence of anonymity can potentially foster an environment that encourages respondents to provide candid evaluations of their leader. The questionnaire includes age and gender as variables, as it is necessary for researchers to verify that the responses are obtained from individuals belonging to the millennial generation, and to collect data on gender distribution.

The factors in this study were assessed through the utilization of three questionnaires: the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI), the General Leadership Impression (GLI), and Lowder's Five Dimensions of Leadership Effectiveness. The research model is elucidated by the subsequent figures.

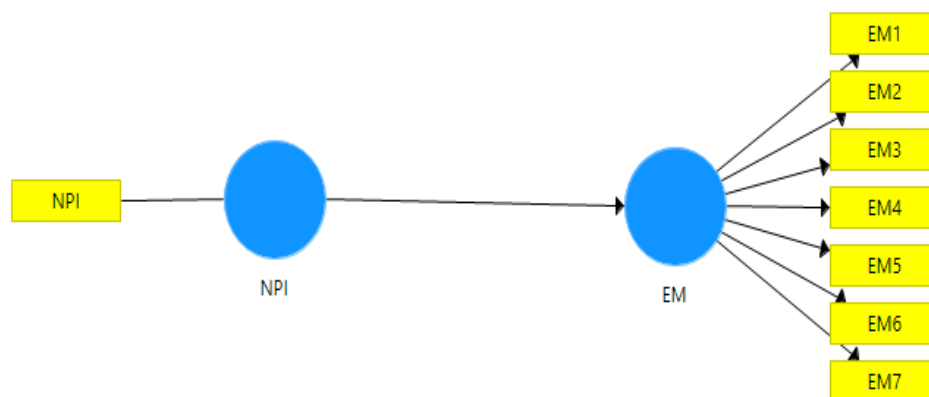


Figure 1. Leadership Emergence Model

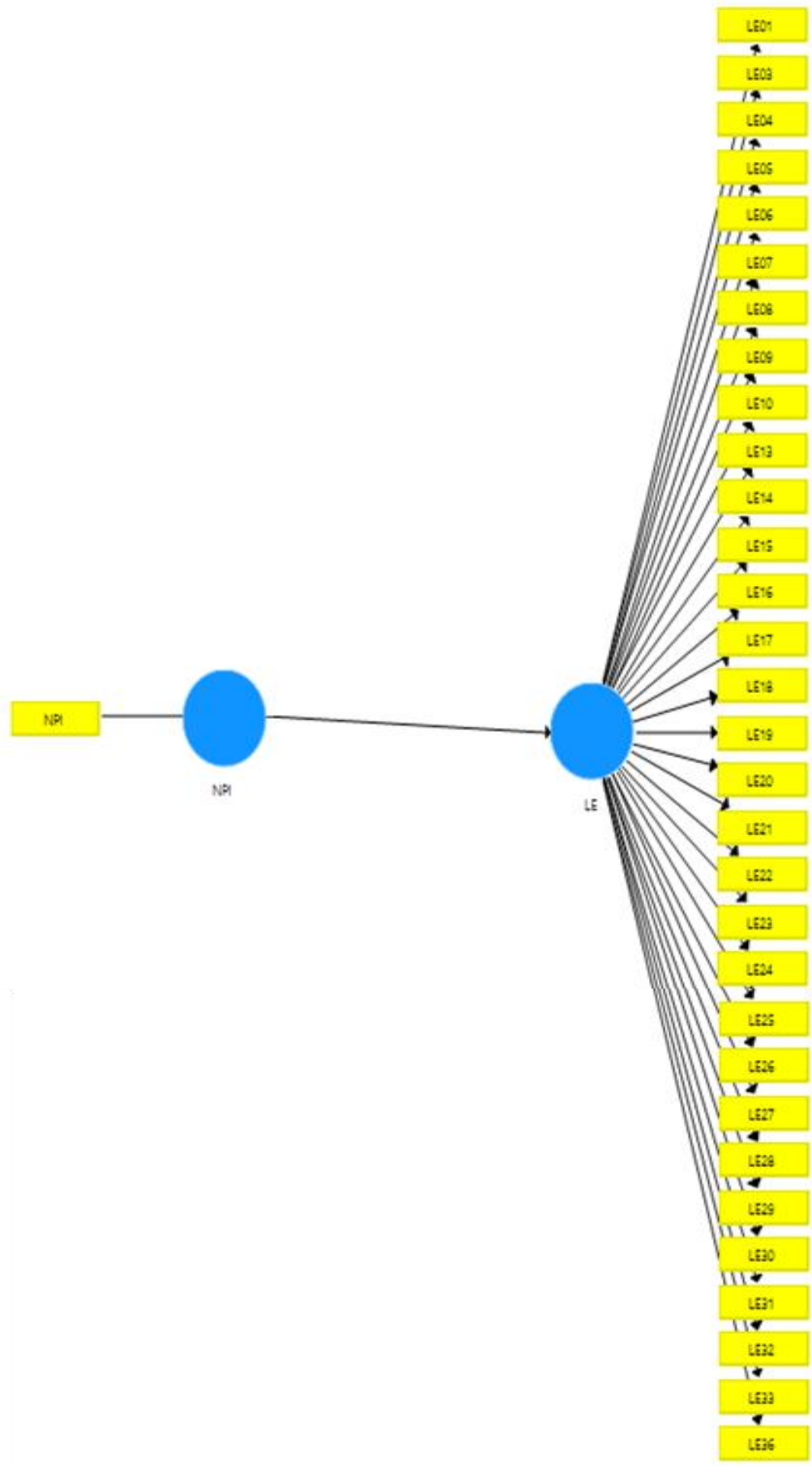


Figure 2. Leadership Effectiveness Model

PLS-SEM was used to analyze data in this study. In research procedures, participants were given preset group tasks and guided by appointed leaders

for a certain time. The research required participants to complete questionnaires and group-based assignments throughout their time in the

organization. The three questionnaires were distributed over three months. The NPI Test was created to measure leaders' narcissism. Participants were given the GLI Test to examine their leadership perception. A leadership effectiveness questionnaire was then provided to evaluate the leader. Then, the data was analyzed to determine the relationship between narcissism and leadership formation and effectiveness, allowing for research results. Due to time and budget restrictions, online questionnaires are the best data collection method for our research.

Result and Discussion

Respondent Profile Based on Gender and Age

The research necessitates the inclusion of teams composed of individuals belonging to the millennial generation as the sample population. To fulfill the requirements, a survey was undertaken to identify a student organization comprising individuals belonging to the millennial generation who had the willingness and ability to actively engage and furnish the necessary data for the aim of the research. The research study involved a sample size of 112 participants that were actively affiliated with the organization. The individuals have been organized into multiple teams, each with 38 leaders who are responsible for their respective teams. The participants subsequently assessed their leaders by completing distributed questionnaires, while the leaders were required to complete an online Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI) test and submit their responses through a structured questionnaire. The response rate is 100% as a result of the organization's commitment to meeting the data collection obligation from the outset.

One of the inquiries posed pertains to the gender of the respondent, with the intention of mitigating the potential for gender-related biases in the collected data. Among the entire sample population, 63 individuals identify as male, while the remaining participants identify as female. The observed disparity in the number of male and female responses does not exhibit statistical significance, indicating a rather balanced distribution in terms of gender. Among the 38 leaders in the population, the gender distribution reveals that there are 21 males and 17 females, resulting in a gender ratio.

The research necessitates the inclusion of teams comprised of individuals belonging to the millennial generation as the respondents. To satisfy these conditions, all participants must be classified

as individuals belonging to the millennial generation, encompassing a 100% representation of those born between the years 1986 and 2000. Based on the empirical data, it is evident that within the observed population of 112 individuals, the majority, comprising 63%, are 19 years old. Additionally, 33% of the population falls within the 20-year-old age group, while the remaining 4% are situated within the 21-year-old category. A sample of 38 leaders was selected from the population, with an age range of 19 to 21 years old. In the sample, 45% of the participants are 19 years old, 47% are 20 years old, and the remaining 8% are 21 years old.

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics play a crucial role in elucidating the overall characteristics of collected data, providing a thorough summary that enhances readers' comprehension. The descriptive statistic was computed using SmartPLS 3.0 software, in conjunction with hypothesis testing. The analysis encompasses measures of data dispersion, such as the highest and minimum values, standard deviation, and range of the data. Additionally, it examines central tendency through the mean and median.

The descriptive statistical calculation reveals that all respondents completed the survey questions properly, resulting in a response rate of 100 percent. Regarding central tendency, the mean value of the NPI scale indication for leaders is 15.974, with a complete score range of 0 to 40. The average of the replies obtained from the 5-point Likert Scale varies between 3.323 and 3.954. Finally, with regards to the dispersion of responses for the Non-Player Interaction (NPI), the highest recorded value is 27, while the lowest recorded value is 1, resulting in a data range of 26. In the context of the 5-point Likert Scale answer, it is observed that the response dispersion has a range of 3.33, with the smallest value being 1.670 and the greatest value being 5. In contrast, the standard deviation, which serves as a measure of the dispersion of the responses, varies among different indicators. Specifically, the NPI scale has a standard deviation of 5.034, whereas the remaining indicators range between 0.532 and 0.691.

Inferential Statistics

Inferential statistics facilitate researchers in making inferences about the characteristics of the research subject. When conducting hypothesis testing, it is commonly recommended to use a 95% confidence

level and a significance level (alpha) of 5% or 0.05 to minimize the likelihood of making a Type I error.

Measurement Model Evaluation (Outer Model)

The initial step involved the assessment of the outer model. This step entails assessing the reliability and validity of the model through measurement. The reliability of the study was assessed by examining the values of Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability. The validity examination encompasses both convergent and discriminant validity assessments. The study assessed the convergent validity by examining the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and Loading Factor. Specifically, the association between the square root of AVE and the latent constructs was analyzed. Additionally, the discriminant validity was evaluated by observing the Cross Loading values.

Based on the principle of convergent validity, it is generally recommended that the loading factor should exceed 0.60 in the context of exploratory research and 0.70 in the context of confirmatory research. In both confirmatory and exploratory research, it is expected that the standard value for AVE should exceed 0.50. Consequently, the loading factors of each variable on leadership emergence and leadership effectiveness have met the required criteria.

The indicator "likelihood of being re-elected" exhibits the lowest score, measuring at 0.913, while the NPI is the indication with the highest loading factor. The explanation for this phenomenon can be attributed to the utilization of the NPI as a unidimensional measure within the scope of this particular study. Each variable exhibits an Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value that surpasses the threshold of 0.60, indicating a substantial deviation from the conventional rule of thumb. Hence, drawing from the obtained findings, it can be inferred that the variables and indicators within the research model about narcissism and leadership emergence exhibit convergent validity.

Moving on to the subsequent phase, it is observed that the indicator "delegation of authority" exhibits the lowest value of 0.758 when considering the outer loadings of all factors associated with leadership effectiveness. Similar to the model of narcissism and leadership development, all variables exhibit an average variance extracted (AVE) value over 0.60, indicating a considerable deviation from the commonly accepted rule of

thumb. Hence, it can be inferred that the research framework examining the relationship between narcissism and leadership effectiveness has convergent validity. Nevertheless, it is imperative to acknowledge that certain indications have been excluded from the outcome. In contrast, all of the aforementioned signs about personal ethical systems, including confidence in others, empathy towards others, emphasis on environmental concerns, engagement in community activities, and commitment to environmental stewardship, are all lacking. These objects possess loading factor values that fail to adhere to the established rule of thumb, rendering them invalid. The research model currently consists of 31 remaining indicators, as the statistical analysis was conducted following the removal of faulty indicators. This phase was undertaken to optimize the algorithm's performance by eliminating invalid elements that may impede its functionality and enhance the overall outcome.

Following the assessment of convergent validity, an examination of discriminant validity was conducted. Initially, an examination was conducted to determine the correlation between the square root of AVE and the other latent components. Based on the heuristic principle, it is recommended that the magnitude of this construct exceeds that of other latent constructs. The findings reveal that both leadership emergence and leadership effectiveness demonstrate discriminant validity since each variable in the research model meets the criteria for discriminant validity. Furthermore, it is observed that the square root of the average of each variable is higher than the square root of the average of the other variables that are connected. To assess the discriminant validity, it is beneficial to evaluate the cross-loading values of each indicator. The findings reveal that all items demonstrate values that exceed the commonly accepted threshold of 0.70. Hence, it can be deduced that every variable and indicator inside the research model has been successful through the discriminant validity assessment. Meanwhile, the determination of composite reliability and Cronbach Alpha for all variables yielded values over 0.70, so affirming the dependability of each variable examined inside the model.

Structural Model Evaluation (Inner Model)

The evaluation of the inner model involved the examination of the R-square value, which is a measure of goodness-of-fit, as well as the t-statistics. This study examines the potential

association between exogenous latent variables and endogenous latent variables. The purpose of this stage is to make predictions about the relationship between variables prior to doing hypothesis testing.

Regression Analysis

The rule of thumb for Structural Model Evaluation of R-square is 0.19, 0.33, and 0.67 which showed weak, moderate, and strong models respectively.

Based on the table 1, the R-square is 0.350. It implies that the Leadership Emergence variable can be explained by the Narcissism variable at 35% while 65% were explained by other variables other than the study. Using Chin (1998) as a benchmark, the model is considered to have a moderately significant level.

Based on the table 2, the R-square is 0.041. It implies that Leadership Effectiveness variable can be explained by Narcissism variable at 1.3% while 95.9% were explained by other variable other than the study. Using Chin (1998) as benchmark, the model is considered to have no association between the variables.

Hypotheses Testing

The concluding examination is the process of conducting Hypothesis Testing. As previously mentioned, the process of hypothesis testing

involves conducting a t-test to assess the significance of the t-value. When doing the t-test, a significance level of 5 percent or 0.05 was used, indicating that the t-value should exceed 1.96. The relationship between the exogenous and endogenous variables can be observed by examining the value of the original sample.

H₁: Narcissism positively influence leadership emergence

Hypotheses 1 (H₁) concerns about the influence of narcissism towards leadership emergence in which regards as positive. Based on the results above, the parameter coefficient is 0.591 meaning that Narcissism has positive influence towards Leadership Emergence. Higher Narcissism showed higher points of Leadership Emergence with t-statistics value of 3.901 which passed the 1.96 marks also. Therefore, the hypotheses “H₁” is accepted.

H₂: Narcissism negatively influence leadership effectiveness

Hypotheses 2 (H₂) concerns about the influence of narcissism towards leadership effectiveness in which is regarded as negative. Based on the results above, the t-statistics value is 0.604 which is lower than 1.96. Therefore, the hypothesis is rejected because narcissism does not have any significant effect on leadership effectiveness

Table 1. R-Square Value of Leadership Emergence

R Square Matrix	R Square	R Square Adjusted
EM	0.350	0.331

Table 2. R-Square Value of Leadership Effectiveness

R Square Matrix	R Square	R Square Adjusted
LE	0.041	0.014

Table 3. The Result of Hypotheses Testing

	Original Sample	T-Statistics	P-Values	Outcome
NPI → EM	0.591	1.167	0.000	Accepted
NPI → LE	0.202	0.604	0.273	Rejected

Conclusion

Based on the findings derived from the data analysis described in the preceding section, a number of key observations have been deduced. This research investigates the potential impact of narcissistic behavior on the leadership style of the millennial generation. The following conclusions are drawn in response to the problem statements previously outlined:

1. The phenomenon of narcissism exerts a favorable impact on the emergence of leadership.
2. There exists an absence of a substantial association between Narcissism and Leadership Effectiveness.

Limitations

The observations in this study pertain to teams composed of individuals belonging to the millennial generation. In this particular situation, the initial hypothesis is deemed valid, even when considering millennial teams, without any notable disparities from past studies. Although the second hypothesis has been invalidated, this outcome suggests that there may exist additional factors influencing the association between Narcissism and Leadership Effectiveness within the context of this study's observation criteria (specifically, millennial teams and Asian culture). Furthermore, it highlights the necessity for future research to investigate other variables that may contribute to this relationship.

Recommendation

Based on the aforementioned research findings, scholars have put up several recommendations.

Further investigation is warranted to examine the correlation between narcissism and leadership effectiveness in future research endeavors. Previous studies have demonstrated the intricate nature of this relationship. One potential avenue for exploration is the utilization of a curvilinear framework, as supported by the findings of Grijalva et al. (2015).

Researchers that possess greater time and financial resources may contemplate employing meta-analytic research techniques to explore the idea of narcissism and leadership among Indonesian respondents. Additionally, they may also consider undertaking longitudinal studies to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of this phenomenon.

Additional investigation could explore alternative choices of leadership-related factors. The available choices encompass examining the correlation between narcissism and the organizational climate, specifically focusing on the distinction between organizations that prioritize collaboration against those that foster competitiveness. Additionally, the hierarchical position of leaders within the organization, categorized as low level, medium level, or higher level, can be explored.

Additionally, it is advised to carefully consider the choice of respondent. This study provides an analysis of the correlation between narcissism and leadership within the context of millennial teams. The selection of the millennial generation as the focal point is predicated upon the recognition of a notable generational transition occurring within Indonesian work environments. Therefore, it is imperative to conduct further research on the early members of Generation Z, as they are increasingly becoming significant in employment environments due to their unique defining traits.

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