

IEBMC 2019
9th International Economics and Business Management Conference

NARCISSISM BEHAVIOUR AND ACCOUNTING
UNDERGRADUATE PERFORMANCE IN HIGHER LEARNING
INSTITUTION

Zaifudin Bin Zainol (a)*

*Corresponding author

(a) Universiti Tenaga Nasional, Sultan Haji Ahmad Shah Campus, Muadzam Shah, Pahang, Malaysia,
Zaifudin@uniten.edu.my

Abstract

Narcissism personality is a person thinking they are better than other and prior study conducted found it has significant correlation with student education performance. Individual with narcissistic personality tend to have strong entitlement, authority, self-admiration and superiority. This personality has both cognitive and motivational elements. The student with narcissistic behaviour tend to always improve themselves. There were lack of studies in examining narcissistic personality in Malaysia. The objective of this study is to determine the relationship between narcissistic personalities among accounting undergraduate in Malaysia. This study intend to examine if the non-pathological narcissistic personality are related to the individual performance. The primary data on Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI) test were collected from 35 accounting students. The test used was adequate to Malaysia context. Dependent variable in this study is student cumulative grade point average (CGPA) and independent variable are narcissistic personality elements. This study found significant relationship between NPI and accounting undergraduate academic performance. This study may be useful to the educator and higher learning institution in determining the accounting student narcissistic behaviour and their education performance. There are greater needs of attention paid to phenomenon of narcissistic personality traits among undergraduates because negative traits can be harmful to them. Self-esteem can lead to the negative result in the long term.

2357-1330 © 2020 Published by European Publisher.

Keywords: Narcissism, narcissistic personality index, higher learning institution.



1. Introduction

Since 1800, personality disorder become one of the main attention in western studies greater attention need to be on personality disorder of student in university. Narcissism personality is a person thinking they are better than other and prior study conducted found it has significant correlation with student education performance. The trend shows that narcissism is varies over the generation (Dworkis, 2013). Hudson (2012) mentioned that most of the future leaders are from student from good academic background, thus narcissistic not only affecting individual performance but also affecting the whole society. Campbell et al. (2011) also highlighted that narcissism personality might have importance influence on behaviour in the workplace. Individual with narcissistic personality tend to have strong entitlement, authority, self-admiration and superiority. This personality has both cognitive and motivational elements. The student with narcissistic behaviour tend to always improve themselves. There were lack of studies in examining narcissistic personality in Malaysia. This study intend to examine if the non-pathological narcissistic personality are related to the individual performance. The primary data on Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI) test were collected from 35 accounting students. The test used was adequate to Malaysia context. Dependent variable in this study is student cumulative grade point average (CGPA) and independent variable are narcissistic personality elements.

1.1. Narcissistic personality and academic performance

Study on narcissistic behaviour and student performance were firstly conducted by Vigilante (1983) that focus on 169 social work students found that narcissistic personality can be used as predictor for student academic performance. This study using questionnaire as a survey instrument. Study done by Papageorgiou et al. (2018) found that student with subclinical narcissistic personality tend to performed better in academic. It show that student with narcissistic trait are having good mental toughness which able to endure the academic progress and always tried to perform better than others. This study conclude that narcissistic personality and mental toughness is one of the non-cognitive components in determining student performance in school.

Another study by de Lima et al. (2017) that used 106 Brazilian accounting student found that the higher narcissistic behaviour, it can lead to the higher academic performance of the students. This study collect the data on narcissistic behaviour by using Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI), contain seven characteristic of narcissistic personality namely authority, self-sufficiency, vanity, superiority, exhibitionism, exploitativeness and entitlement. Wallace and Baumeister (2002) mentioned that high self-sufficiency and sel-eficacy can lead to the better student achievement. Study done by Avelino and de Lima (2017) that also focusing on accounting student academic performance found moderate relationship between narcissistic personality and student performance.

Similar study conducted by Aldin et al. (2011) on Master of Accounting students in Iran found that there is significant correlation between individual personality and their academic performance. Meanwhile, study done by Caixeta (2011) towards undergraduate on private institution found there is significant correlation between student psychological sufferings with their academic performance. Caixeta (2011) mentioned that student that have low narcissistic personality tend not to perform better.

This study is using NPI score as determinants of narcissism behaviour and accounting undergraduates as a sample. This is similar to the study done by de Lima et al. (2017) and Wallace & Baumeister (2002) and it is different from prior study that using other measurement as determinants such as Dark Triads for narcissism behaviour and most of the prior study are focusing on working employee in an organisation rather than student as a sample. It is important to have more study conducted on student because in the future, they will become a leader and their narcissistic behaviour will influence the society.

1.2. Significance of the study

This study may be useful to the educator and higher learning institution in determining the accounting student narcissistic behaviour and their education performance. There are greater needs of attention paid to phenomenon of narcissistic personality traits among undergraduates because negative traits can be harmful to them. Self-esteem can lead to the negative result in the long term. For researcher, this study will help them to uncover the critical area on narcissism behaviour among accounting undergraduate in Malaysia that difficult for them to explore. Thus, a possibility of new and upcoming research might achieved.

2. Problem Statement

In the accounting field the study on narcissistic behaviour were focusing on the narcissism among accounting managers such as accounting executives and chief executive officer with an accounting background the impact of the behaviour on firm performance and financial reporting disclosure (Dworkis, 2013; Hales et al. 2012). Meanwhile there is a little study that focus on accounting student and their narcissistic personality especially in Malaysia. This lead to incomplete research on this theme with the absence of accounting student and this also mention by Menon and Sharland (2011) that narcissistic personality shall be determine not just on their working life, but also on academic experience.

3. Research Questions

The research question for this study are as follows:

- 1) What are the extent of Narcissistic Personality Inventory Score for undergraduate in higher learning institution?
- 2) Is there any significant relationship between narcissistic personality with undergraduate academic performance?

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to determine the extent of Narcissistic Personality Inventory Score among accounting undergraduate in higher leaning institution, the other purpose for this study is to determine the relationship between narcissistic behaviour with the accounting undergraduate academic performance.

5. Research Methods

In this section, this study will describe the types of research and collection procedure, population and sample for this study as well as measurement for each variables.

5.1. Type of research and data collection procedure

The type of this study is descriptive analysis. The data source for this study is primary data. Questionnaire were chosen as the data collection method because this study involves a sample of students from higher learning institution. It is quite difficult to use method such as interview when a large number of students are involved. This questionnaire were distribute through electronic questionnaire which is google form. In this research, the target population is the undergraduate students higher learning institution which is Universiti Tenaga Nasional (UNITEN). The final sample for this study is 35 accounting undergraduates. the response rate of 35% from the total population of 98 students, deemed suitable for this study (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Sampling techniques that were used in this study is simple random sampling technique.

5.2. Measurement of variables

The data for demographic collected were focusing on gender, age and leadership experience. Dummy variable were used on gender where 0 is for female and 1 for male. Dummy variable also used in leadership experience where 0 if the sample did not have any experience and 1 if they hold position as leader in club or society. Age were grouped into 18-19 years old, 20-21 years old, 22-23 years old and 24 years old and above. Dependent variable for this study is student academic performance, which is cumulative grade point average (CGPA), and it is categorised to 2.75-2.99, 3.00-3.45 and 3.50-4.00. Independent variable for this study is Narcissistic Personality Inventory Score with a total score of 40 points. It contains all characteristic of narcissistic behaviour which is authority, self-sufficiency, vanity, superiority, exhibitionism, exploitativeness and entitlement. This variable is also used by the prior study done by Gabriel et al. (1994), John and Robins (1994), Farwell and Wohlwend-Lloyd (1998), Wallace and Baumeister (2002), Hudson (2012) and de Lima et al. (2017).

6. Findings

This study will begin with demographic analysis and further explain the findings on narcissistic behaviour influencing student performance.

6.1. Demographic analysis

Table 01. Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Female	29	82.9	82.9	82.9
	Male	6	17.1	17.1	100.0
	Total	35	100.0	100.0	

Table 02. Age

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18-19 years old	3	8.6	8.6	8.6
	20-21 years old	22	62.9	62.9	71.4
	22-23 years old	8	22.9	22.9	94.3
	24 years old and above	2	5.7	5.7	100.0
	Total	35	100.0	100.0	

Based on Table 01, the total final sample for this study is 35 samples consisting of accounting undergraduate at private institution. Based on Table 02, the gender are breakdown into 17.1% male and remaining 82.9% were female respondent showing that majority of the samples are female. Based on the Table 02, majority of the samples are the group age between 20-21 years old, 22.9% are between 22-23 years old, 8.6% from 18-19 years old and 5.7% are from the group age of 24 years old and above. Majority are from the age group 20-21 years old because of the sample taken are focusing on second and third year accounting students.

Table 03. Leadership Experience

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	12	34.3	34.3	34.3
	Yes	23	65.7	65.7	100.0
	Total	35	100.0	100.0	

Table 04. CGPA

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	2.75-2.99	12	34.3	34.3	34.3
	3.00-3.49	16	45.7	45.7	80.0
	3.50-4.00	7	20.0	20.0	100.0
	Total	35	100.0	100.0	

Based on the Table 03, 65.7% of the samples are having leadership experience meanwhile 34.3% do not have leadership experience. It shows that majority of the sample have experience or currently holding leadership position in club or society at their university. Table 04 shows that 45.7% students are currently having a CGPA between 3.00-3.49, 34.3% are between 2.75-2.99 and remaining 20% are 3.50-4.00. It is surprising that none of the sample obtaining CGPA 2.74 and below and it is found that most of the student are having good academic results.

6.2. Narcissistic Personality Inventory score

Table 05. Narcissistic Personality Inventory Score

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Authority	35	0	8	3.60	1.897
Self-Sufficiency	35	0	5	2.54	1.336
Superiority	35	0	5	2.06	1.697
Exhibitionism	35	0	7	2.14	1.611
Exploitativenenss	35	0	4	1.63	1.285

Vanity	35	0	3	1.77	.973
Entitlement	35	0	5	2.74	1.521
Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI)	35	3	32	13.94	6.462

Table 05 shows the findings on narcissistic personality inventory score of 35 samples. Narcissistic personality inventory are contains 7 elements of narcissism behaviour namely authority, self-sufficiency, superiority, exhibitionism, exploitativeness, vanity and entitlement. The total score for this test is 40. From the Table 05, it show the highest average score for the elements are authority with 3.60 (standard deviation=1.897). Authority is the trait that the person belief they can influence other people and drive other people to do task or work. The lowest average score are exploitativeness with only 1.63 (standard deviation=1.285) showing that there are small sample that a like to become a centre of attention and always try to create a new trend, styles and cultures among other people. The total average score for this study is 13.94 with the highest score for individual is 32 and the lowest individual score is only 3.

6.3. Reliability analysis

Table 06. Reliability Test

	Cronbach's Alpha
Authority	.750
Self-Sufficiency	.777
Superiority	.769
Exhibitionism	.767
Exploitativenenss	.795
Vanity	.798
Entitlement	.779
Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI)	.836

Table 06 shows the reliability test result and it is found that cronbach's alpha for all elements are above 0.75 showing that all the question are valid and appropriate to used in this study. The questions in this questionnaire all reliably measure the same latent variable.

6.4. Regression Analysis

Table 07. Regression Analysis

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.892 ^a	.795	.789	.337

a. Predictors: (Constant), Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI)

The regression analysis shown in Table 07 was carried out to find out the impact of accounting undergraduate narcissistic behavior over their academic performance. R² values of 0.795 indicate that narcissistic behavior contributing to the academic performance by 79.5%, while 20.5% can be attributed by other factors that are not included in this study. This shows that impact of narcissistic behavior towards academic performance are rather high.

Table 08. Co-efficient of Narcissistic Personality Inventory

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.446	.137		3.256	.003
	Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI)	.101	.009	.892	11.330	.000

a. Dependent Variable: CGPA

Table 08 deals with co-efficient analysis shows the beta value of narcissistic personality inventory. The t-values for NPI are significant hence it is found that there are significant relationship between narcissistic behaviour with accounting undergraduates academic performance. This result is supported with findings from Papageorgiou et al. (2018), de Lima et al. (2017), Wallace and Baumeister (2002) and Caixeta (2011) that found narcissistic personality person tend to perform better than other, especially on academic matters.

7. Conclusion

Our results indicate that majority of the respondent have experience or currently holding leadership position in club or society at their university and most of them are having good academic results. This study also indicate that impact of narcissistic behavior towards academic performance are rather high. There are significant relationship between narcissistic behaviour with accounting undergraduates academic performance. This result similar to the prior study indicating that narcissistic personality person tend to perform better than other, especially on academic matters.

7.1. Limitation of the study

This study having limited number of samples which only consisting of 35 accounting undergraduates, ignoring the other programme such as finance, computer science and engineering. This study also only focus in one institution and these factors might lead to bias in the findings.

7.2. Recommendation for future research

Future research can be focusing on increasing the number of sample size and having a diverse programme as a sample. The comparison between the countries also can used as future research to get more result that is accurate on influence of narcissistic behaviour over student academic performance.

References

- Aldin, M. M., Nayebzadeh, S., & Heirany, F. (2011). The Relationship between Background Variables and the Educational Performance (Case Study: Accounting MA Students). *International Proceedings of Economics Development & Research*, 13. <http://www.ipedr.com/vol13/9-T00014.pdf>
- Avelino, B. C., & de Lima, G. A. S. F. (2017). Narcissism and Academic Dishonesty. *Accounting Universe Journal*, 13(3), 70-89.
- Caixeta, S. P. (2011). *Psychic suffering in university students: an exploratory study* (Master Thesis). Catholic University of Brasilia, Brazil.

- Campbell, W. K., Hoffman, B. J., Campbell, S. M., & Marchisio, G. (2011). Narcissism in organizational contexts. *Human Resource Management Review*, 21(4), 268-284. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.hrmr.2010.10.007>
- de Lima, G. A. S. F., Avelino, B. C., & Cunha, J. V. A. (2017). Narcissism: are accounting students using their personality traits to perform better? *Journal of Accounting and Organizations*, 11(31), 58-74. <https://doi.org/10.11606/rco.v11i31.137775>
- Dworkis, K. K. (2013). The interactive effects of incentive threshold and narcissism on managerial decision-making (Doctoral Dissertation). Los Angeles, CA: University of Southern California.
- Farwell, L., & Wohlwend-Lloyd, R. (1998). Narcissistic processes: Optimistic expectations, favorable self-evaluations, and self-enhancing attributions. *Journal of personality*, 66(1), 65-83. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-6494.00003>
- Gabriel, M. T., Critelli, J. W., & Ee, J. S. (1994). Narcissistic illusions in self-evaluations of intelligence and attractiveness. *Journal of personality*, 62(1), 143-155. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6494.1994.tb00798.x>
- Hales, J., Hobson, J. L., & Resutek, R. J. (2012). The dark side of socially mediated rewards: How narcissism and social status affect managerial reporting. Available at SSRN 2021889.
- Hudson, E. J. (2012). Understanding and Exploring Narcissism: Impact on Students and College Campuses. CMC Senior Theses.
- John, O. P., & Robins, R. W. (1994). Accuracy and bias in self-perception: individual differences in self-enhancement and the role of narcissism. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 66(1), 206-219. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.66.1.206>
- Menon, M. K., & Sharland, A. (2011). Narcissism, exploitative attitudes, and academic dishonesty: An exploratory investigation of reality versus myth. *Journal of Education for Business*, 86(1), 50-55. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08832321003774772>
- Papageorgiou, K. A., Malanchini, M., Denovan, A., Clough, P. J., Shakeshaft, N., Schofield, K., & Kovas, Y. (2018). Longitudinal associations between narcissism, mental toughness and school achievement. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 131, 105-110. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2018.04.024>
- Sekaran, U., & Bougie, R. (2016). *Research methods for business: A skill building approach*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Vigilante, F. W. (1983). Students' Narcissism and Academic Performance. *Social Casework*, 64(10), 602-608. <https://doi.org/10.1177/104438948306401004>
- Wallace, H. M., & Baumeister, R. F. (2002). The Performance of Narcissists Rises and Falls with Perceived Opportunity for Glory. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 82(5), 819. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.82.5.819>