

The Relationship Between Narcissism, Being Bullied, and Life Satisfaction

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Abstract

Previous research has shown that narcissism is characterised by an obsession with self, which is why narcissists are very sensitive to other people's opinions about them and constantly seek admiration from others. This can in turn be linked to being bullied: what happens to narcissists when they are being bullied, meaning they are deprived of their peers' admiration? In this study, two relationships were being studied: firstly, the association between narcissism and being bullied; and secondly, the relationship between the interaction of being bullied and narcissism and life satisfaction. The participants were 200 adolescents between 14 and 19 years of age. A questionnaire was used that measures narcissistic traits, life satisfaction, and being bullied. Two multiple regression analyses were conducted in order to examine the hypotheses, controlled for age and gender. No significant main association between narcissism and being bullied was found; however, a significant relationship between the interaction of being bullied and narcissism and life satisfaction was found. This effect, in contrast to the second hypothesis of this study, was found to be negative: the effect of being bullied on life satisfaction was less strong for narcissists than for non-narcissists. More research on this subject will be needed in order to be able to explain these results.

Keywords: narcissism, being bullied, life satisfaction, adolescents

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Bullying is a universal problem that affects almost thirty percent of teens and close to half of all school-aged children at least once in their lives (Baughman, Dearing, Giammarco, & Vernon, 2012; Fanti & Kimonis, 2013). Children can be involved in bullying as either a bully, a victim, or both. Bullying is generally defined as “aggressive behaviour directed toward an individual or group, which happens repeatedly and over time, where an imbalance of power is evident” (Baughman et al., 2012, p. 571). Sometimes the intent to harm a victim is also included in this definition. Bullying can have a major effect on a child’s life; both bullies and victims are, for example, at increased risk for depression and delinquent behaviour, as well as decreased academic performance (Baughman et al., 2012; Fanti & Kimonis, 2013). Also, it has been shown that being bullied is negatively correlated with life satisfaction (Moore, Huebner, & Hills, 2012).

Previous studies have linked the Dark Triad personality traits to enhanced display of bullying behaviours (Baughman et al., 2012; Kerig & Stellwagen, 2010; Linton & Power, 2013; Muris, Meesters, & Timmermans, 2013). The Dark Triad is a combination of three socially undesirable emotional traits; namely Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy. Machiavellianism is defined as “the tendency to manipulate and deceive others in social situations for personal gain” (Baughman et al., 2012, p. 572). Narcissistic people are characterised by feelings of superiority, sense of entitlement, and vanity; they often appear egocentric, but in reality, they have very low self-esteem (Pullen & Rhodes, 2008). Psychopathy refers to a tendency to be impulsive and disinhibited and to possess callous-unemotional traits, such as interpersonal coldness and a lack of empathy and guilt (Baughman et al., 2012).

Many different studies have searched for correlations between the Dark Triad personality traits and different kinds of socially undesirable behaviour, such as bullying,

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aggression, and delinquent behaviour. All three of the Dark Triad personality traits have been linked to aggression and delinquency among adolescents (Kerig & Stellwagen, 2010; Kerig & Stellwagen, 2013; Muris et al., 2013). The Dark Triad has also been shown to positively correlate with bullying; psychopathy was found to have the strongest relationship with bullying, followed by Machiavellianism and narcissism, respectively (Baughman et al., 2012; Linton & Power, 2013).

Fanti and Kimonis (2013) have shown that bullies have significantly higher narcissism scores than victims of bullying; yet Linton and Power (2013) have found that victims often share the personality traits of bullies, at least in the workplace. They have found that the majority of traits typically found in bullies (e.g., the Dark Triad personality traits and aggression; but also hostility, psychoticism, dominance and disagreeableness) were also associated with being a victim. This might be explained by the fact that victims are often also bullies, though this does not account for all cases. Another possible explanation is that some traits displayed by bullies (for example the Dark Triad personality traits) are socially undesirable and can thus elicit a bullying response from others because the persons displaying these traits do not 'fit in' (Linton & Power, 2013).

This study will investigate how one of the Dark Triad personality traits, namely narcissism, relates to being bullied in adolescents. A reason for conducting the present study is the fact that the Dark Triad in general has been studied many times before in relation to bullying; however, very few studies have examined the Dark Triad personality traits in relation to *being* bullied (Baughman et al., 2012). Therefore, it might be interesting to investigate the relationship between one of the Dark Triad personality traits, namely narcissism, and being bullied.

The focus of the present research is on narcissism, and not Machiavellianism or psychopathy, for several reasons. First, narcissism, as a part of the Dark Triad, is an

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interesting concept to investigate in relation to bullying and victimisation because it revolves around an obsession with self and self-preservation. This makes narcissists vulnerable to other people's opinions about them. Narcissists build and defend their identity by behaving in a self-oriented way. They are characterised by constantly seeking affirmation and admiration from others in order to preserve the misconception of selfhood they have (McCullough, Emmons, Kilpatrick, & Mooney, 2003; Pullen & Rhodes, 2008). Therefore, narcissists' self-image is very fragile and vulnerable to fluctuation.

Narcissistic people are generally obsessing over their self-image as well as the way they are perceived by others – they believe themselves to be important, grandiose, and unique, and they want others to view them that way as well. Because of this, they tend to take offence very easily when someone judges them in a way that is not compatible with this self-image – for example when they are evaluated negatively on a task (McCullough et al., 2003; Pullen & Rhodes, 2008). Narcissists are highly sensitive to the consequences of interpersonal events, sometimes perceiving interpersonal interaction as threatening to their self-view, even though in reality it is not. They tend to mistrust others and can react in a hostile or sometimes even aggressive way when someone interacts with them in a manner that they perceive as being threatening to their self-image (McCullough et al., 2003).

In sum, the main reason for focusing on narcissism is that, while Machiavellianists tend to be dominant and manipulative and psychopathic people are very impulsive and cold in interpersonal interactions, narcissists need other people in order to thrive. They need compliments and affirmation of their grandiosity (and sometimes even superiority, in their own eyes) in order to maintain their very fragile self-image. They are actually very insecure and have low self-esteem; therefore, they are very easily affected by other peoples' opinions of and/or behaviours towards them, and it might be interesting to investigate how narcissistic

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personality traits can relate to being bullied (Baughman et al., 2012; McCullough et al., 2003; Pullen & Rhodes, 2008).

Furthermore, it has been suggested that narcissists, more so than Machiavellianists or people with psychopathic traits, tend to be prone to victimisation in general. McCullough et al. (2003) have found that narcissists may present themselves as victims (both to themselves and to the world) of their past to make the things they accomplish seem even more special (e.g., “Look at what I was able to do, despite everything I have been through”). Narcissists even seem to go as far as to distort their own memories in an attempt to maintain their grandiose self-view. They tend to – in their minds – weaken any past event or situation that disputes their self-image; and they often twist memories in an attempt to make themselves look like victims of other people’s behaviour and gain sympathy, but especially admiration, from others (McCullough et al., 2003). Narcissistic traits include entitlement and the willingness to exploit others, which might be a reason for the high frequency of reported negative interpersonal interaction among narcissists; narcissists may be treated badly by peers in response to them treating their peers badly. There is no clear and unambiguous explanation, however, for the fact that narcissists often see themselves as victims of other people’s behaviours (McCullough et al., 2003).

In addition to the relationship between narcissism and being bullied, the present study will also investigate the relationship between being bullied, narcissism, and life satisfaction. The expectation is that the effect of being bullied on life satisfaction will be stronger for narcissists than for non-narcissists, given the fact that narcissists are so vulnerable to other people assessing them in a negative way. In the past, it has been shown that being bullied is negatively correlated with life satisfaction (Flouri & Buchanan, 2002; Moore et al., 2012; Navarro, Ruiz-Olivia, Larraña, & Yubero, 2013). The correlation between narcissism and life satisfaction has also been examined; however, different studies have found different

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relationships between these two factors (Hill & Roberts, 2012; Kopelman & Mullins, 1992; Rose, 2002). For example, Kopelman and Mullins (1992) have found that narcissism is negatively correlated with life satisfaction; people who score high on narcissism are more likely to have lower life satisfaction than people who score low on narcissistic traits. If this is the case, this study's interaction hypothesis will most likely be confirmed. In contrast, however, research conducted by Hill and Roberts (2012) has suggested a positive correlation between narcissism and life satisfaction. In their study, narcissists scored higher on life satisfaction than did non-narcissists, and this effect was found to be stronger for adolescents than for adults.

Rose (2002) solved this problem by distinguishing two types of narcissistic persons – namely overt versus covert narcissists – and stating that the effect of narcissism on life satisfaction differs for these two types: overt narcissism is positively associated with life satisfaction, happiness, and high self-esteem, whilst covert narcissism is negatively related to these constructs. This idea, however, has not yet been examined further. Because of this and the ambiguous findings regarding narcissism, being bullied, and life satisfaction, the relationship between these three constructs will also be examined in the present study.

According to Baughman et al. (2012), males tend to bully more often than females, and it has also been found that males generally score higher on the Dark Triad personality traits than females do – especially on psychopathic traits (Baughman et al., 2012). According to Pullen and Rhodes (2008), gender differences in narcissism have been found that need to be considered when studying narcissism. Most studies so far, however, have failed to take gender differences into account when researching narcissism. Because of this, gender will be included in this study as a control variable.

Research on age in relation to narcissism has shown that increasing age has been associated with decreasing narcissism, meaning that younger persons tend to be more

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narcissistic than older ones (Wilson & Sibley, 2011). Scheithauer, Hayer, Petermann, and Jugert (2006) have found similar results regarding the relationship between age and being bullied: their results showed that victimisation of bullying significantly declines with age. A study by Eslea (2001) has also shown that the amount to which children and adolescents are bullied at school differs with age; however, they found that the group of eleven- to thirteen-year-old children was most frequently being bullied. In addition, Baughman et al. (2012) and Fanti and Kimonis (2013) have found that, while bullying is a universal concept that can involve persons of all ages imaginable, most bullying behaviour is found among school-aged children (Baughman et al., 2012; Eslea, 2001; Fanti & Kimonis, 2013; Scheithauer et al., 2006; Wilson & Sibley, 2011). Since there seems to be a relationship between age and narcissism as well as between age and being bullied, age, too, will be included in the present study as a control variable. The findings mentioned above are also one of the main reasons for this study to focus on adolescents rather than adults.

Another reason for this study to focus on adolescents is because most studies about the Dark Triad so far have focused on adults, with some exceptions (Kerig & Stellwagen, 2013; Muris et al., 2013). Kerig and Stellwagen (2013) state that investigating the Dark Triad in younger people is important, because it can help better understand antisocial behaviour in young children, as well as aggressive and delinquent behaviour in adolescents. Muris et al. (2013) have examined the manifestation of Dark Triad personality traits in children; however, this study was the first to use the DD-Y scale to investigate personality traits, and this instrument has not been validated yet (Muris et al., 2013). Also, because of the relatively small amount of children and adolescents participating in this study ($N = 117$), sex and age differences in children who display Dark Triad personality traits could not be explored very thoroughly (Muris et al., 2013).

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This study will focus on examining the possible correlation between the possession of narcissistic personality traits and being bullied, as well as the effect of being bullied on life satisfaction in narcissists versus non-narcissists. Gender and age will both be taken into account. The questions we will try to answer here are the following: “Is there a correlation between narcissism and being bullied in school-aged children?”, and, “Is the effect of being bullied on life satisfaction stronger for narcissists than for non-narcissists?” The first hypothesis is that there is a positive association between narcissism and being bullied. Also, it is hypothesised that the association between being bullied and life satisfaction will be more strongly positive for narcissists than for children who do not display narcissistic traits.

Method

Participants and Procedure

202 students between 14 and 19 years of age ($M = 16.65$, $SD = 0.81$) participated in this study. Of these 202 participants, two were excluded from further analysis because they had not completed every item regarding gender, narcissism, life satisfaction, and/or being bullied. Of the remaining participants, 64 (32%) were male and 136 (68%) were female. Most of the students (99,5%) were of Belgian origin; one student (0,5%) was born in China. All participants were high school students. 70,3% of them were ASO students (Algemeen Secundair Onderwijs, or General Secondary Education); ASO is a very broad and general type of education. 11,4% were TSO students (Technisch Secundair Onderwijs, or Technical Secondary Education); TSO focuses on technical and practical matters. 17,8% were BSO students (Beroepssecundair Onderwijs, or Vocational Secondary Education), which means these students get practical and job-specific education; and of one (0,5%) of the students, the school type was unknown.

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The schools participating in this study were contacted in 2011 via e-mail and/or through face-to-face contact. Each school received a standard letter explaining the purpose of this study – examining the correlation between personality and peer relationships in adolescents – and the way in which this study was to be conducted.

After obtaining permission from the schools to participate in the study, questionnaires were spread amongst the students during class hours, with permission from the school boards. The questionnaires used were originally in English, but have been translated to Dutch by using the ‘back-translation procedure’, which means the English questionnaires were translated to Dutch, after which the Dutch questionnaires were translated back to English. This translation was then compared to the original English questionnaire.

The students who did not want to participate in the study had to fill in their name and the grade they were in, using the passive consent form that could be found on the first page of the questionnaire. Also, it was explained that the obtained data would be processed anonymously and confidentially.

Design

The present study is a cross-sectional survey research. The first hypothesis (“children who score high on narcissistic traits will report being bullied more often than children who do not score high on narcissism”) will be investigated using linear regression analysis with narcissism as independent variable and being bullied as dependent variable. The second hypothesis (“the effect of being bullied on life satisfaction is stronger for narcissists than for children who do not display narcissistic traits”) will be examined with being bullied, narcissism, and the interaction between being bullied and narcissism as independent variables; and life satisfaction as dependent variable. For both hypotheses, age and gender will be included as control variables.

Measures

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A questionnaire called “Gevoelens en gedachten over jezelf en je leeftijdsgenoten” (“Feelings and thoughts regarding yourself and your peers”) was used. This questionnaire measures several constructs, including all three Dark Triad personality traits (Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy), the Big Five personality traits, bullying, being bullied, and life satisfaction. Not all items were used in this study; only participants’ responses to items regarding constructs relevant for this study (narcissism, life satisfaction, and being bullied) were used.

Narcissism. *Dirty Dozen* (Jonason & Webster, 2010). The part of the questionnaire measuring narcissism is taken directly from the Dirty Dozen, which measures the Dark Triad personality traits, and consists of four items. Each item consists of a statement (e.g., “I want others to admire me”, “I tend to expect special favours from others”). Participants had to assess to what extent this statement described them using a 9-point Likert scale (where 1 = *disagree strongly* and 9 = *agree strongly*). The internal consistency for this construct was found to be good ($\alpha = .843$).

Life Satisfaction. *Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS)* (Diener, Emmons, Larson, & Griffin, 1985). The questionnaire contains the Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS), which consists of five items measuring life satisfaction. Again, each item consists of a statement (e.g., “In most ways my life is close to my ideal”, “I am satisfied with my life”, “If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing”), which had to be rated by the participant on a 7-point scale (from 1 = *disagree strongly* to 7 = *agree strongly*), depending on whether participants thought the statement described them or not. This construct, too, was found to have good internal consistency ($\alpha = .853$).

Being Bullied. *Klasgenoten Relatie Vragenlijst (Peer Relationship Questionnaire)* (Liebrand, IJzendoorn, & Lieshout (1991). Seven items from the questionnaire were selected to assess the extent and frequency to which participants were being bullied, both inside and

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outside of the school environment; these items originate from the Klasgenoten Relatie Vragenlijst. The chosen items consist of questions regarding being bullied (e.g., “How often have you been bullied by your peers this school year?”, “In what way are you being bullied?”). The participant then had to answer these questions by checking the box representing the answer that fit their situation best (e.g., for the question “How often have you been bullied by your peers this school year?”, the possible answers are 1 “I am not being bullied this school year”, 2 “I have only been bullied once or twice”, 3 “every now and then”, 4 “approximately once a week”, 5 “approximately two or three times a week”, 6 “approximately four or five times a week” and 7 “several times a day”). This construct was also found to have good internal consistency ($\alpha = .808$).

Since the items regarding being bullied (Liebrand et al., 1991) differ regarding the number of responses a participant could choose from (e.g., for one of the items, there were four response categories; whereas for other items, there were six or seven responses to choose from), the responses to these items have been standardised. Because the interaction between different constructs would be investigated, the responses to the items regarding narcissism (Jonason & Webster, 2010) and life satisfaction (Diener et al., 1985) were also standardised.

Statistical analysis

Missing data were removed using listwise deletion. Removing the data has been favoured over replacing them with average scores, because the sample is relatively small and replacing missing data with average scores could diminish the reliability of this analysis.

To determine whether there is an effect of narcissism on being bullied, a hierarchical regression analysis was conducted. In Model 1, being bullied was used as dependent variable and age and gender as independent variables. In Model 2, narcissism was added as independent variable.

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Age seems to be normally distributed (Figure 1) and so does narcissism (Figure 2). The data for being bullied do not seem to be normally distributed and some outliers regarding being bullied could be seen in the created histogram (Figure 3). However, since there seems to be a logical explanation for this – after all, it can be expected that there would only be a select number of cases in this sample that is being severely bullied, thus appearing on the histogram as very high scores – it was decided to conduct the multiple regression analysis despite the violation of the assumption of normal distribution.

To determine whether there is a significant interaction effect between narcissism and being bullied on life satisfaction, a hierarchical regression analysis was conducted in which especially the interaction effect was examined closely. Model 1 was built with life satisfaction as dependent variable and age and gender as independent variables. In Model 2, narcissism and being bullied were both added as independent variables; and in Model 3, the interaction between narcissism and being bullied was added as an independent variable as well. The data for life satisfaction appear to be relatively normally distributed as well; again, there seem to be some (very low) outliers. However, this, too, can be explained by the fact that it can be expected that there are a select few participants who score very low on life satisfaction (presumably the same ones who score extremely high on being bullied) (Figure 4).

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Figure 1

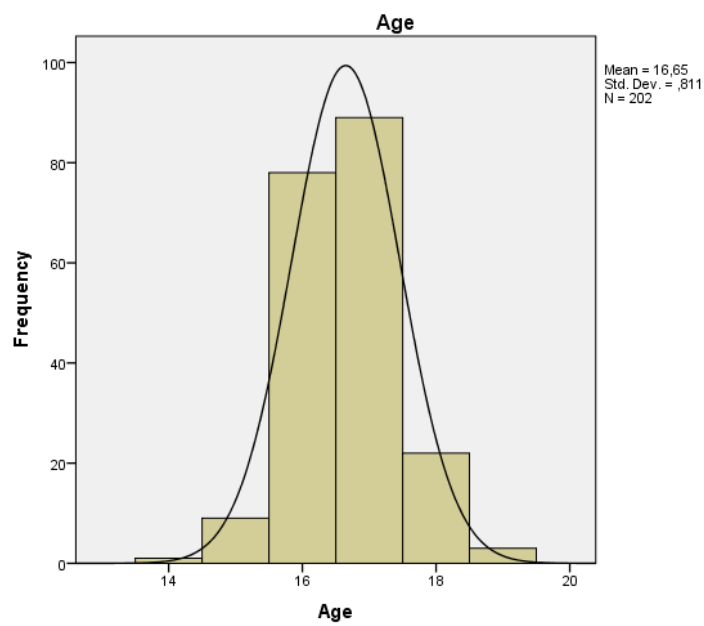
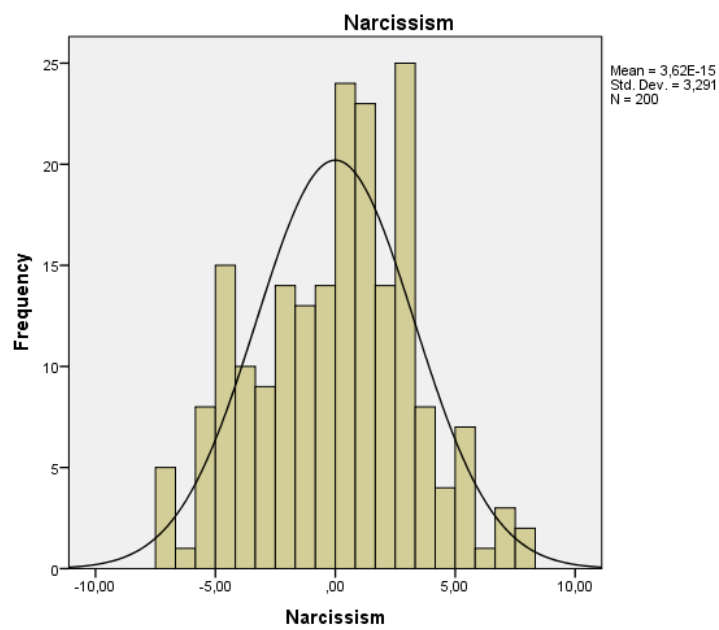


Figure 2



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Figure 3

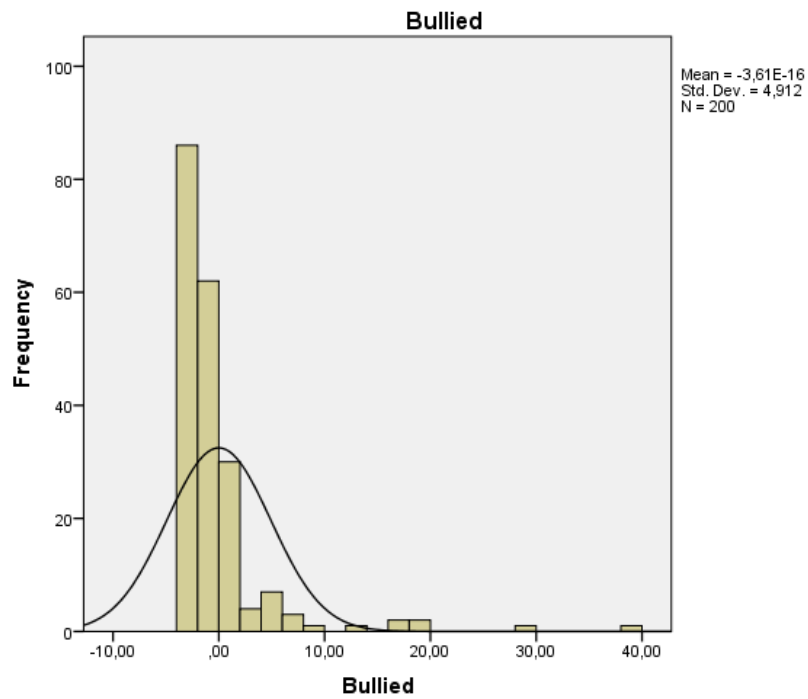
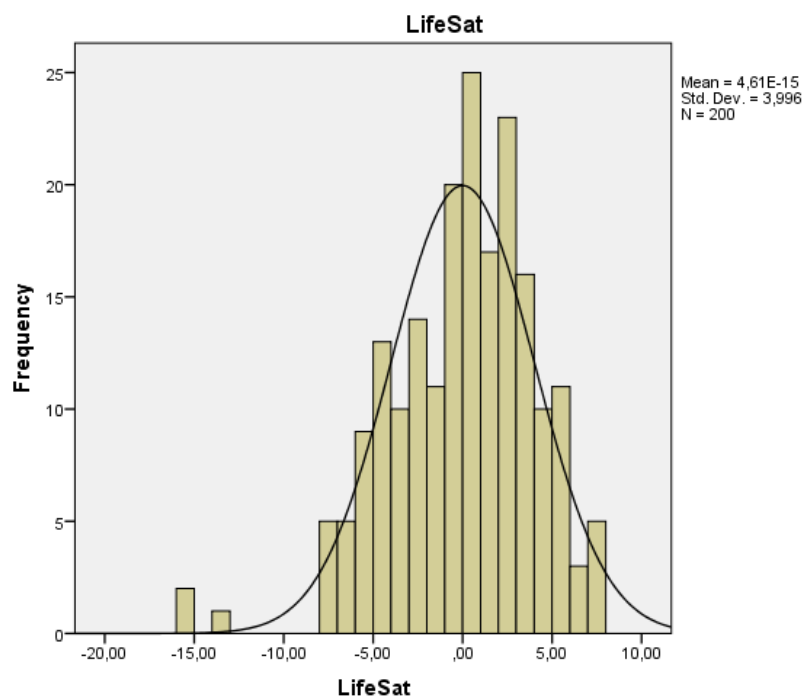


Figure 4



Results

A summary of the descriptive statistics regarding the variables used in this study can be found in Table 1. (Note that the variables have all been standardised, which is why the means of these variables equal 0.00.)

Table 1.

Descriptive statistics for Narcissism, Being Bullied, and Life Satisfaction

Variable name	Mean	Standard deviation	Range	
			Min.	Max.
Narcissism	.00	3.29	-7.24	8.15
Being Bullied	.00	4.91	-2.24	39.25
Life Satisfaction	.00	4.00	-15.02	7.44

Some differences between boys and girls regarding narcissism, being bullied, and life satisfaction could be identified. An independent samples t-test was conducted to see if any of these differences were statistically significant. Most of them were not; however, a difference between boys and girls was found regarding narcissism, with boys ($M = .63$, $SD = 2.86$) displaying significantly more narcissistic traits than girls ($M = -.29$, $SD = 3.45$) on a .05 level (two-tailed) ($t = 1.99$, $p = .049$).

Spearman correlations were calculated in order to investigate the relationships between age, gender, narcissism, being bullied, and life satisfaction. A significant correlation between being bullied and life satisfaction ($r = -.264$, $p < .01$) was found, which corresponds with the results found in several earlier-discussed studies. No other significant correlations were found. An overview of the Spearman correlations can be found in Table 2.

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Table 2.

Spearman correlations between Age, Gender, Being Bullied, Narcissism, and Life Satisfaction.

	Age	Gender	Bullied	Narcissism	Life Sat.
Age	-	.013	.060	-.038	-.046
Gender	-	-	.042	-.128	-.056
Being Bullied	-	-	-	.013	-.264**
Narcissism	-	-	-	-	-.018
Life Sat.	-	-	-	-	-

** . Correlation is significant on 0.01 level (two-tailed)

A hierarchical regression analysis was then run in order to examine the first hypothesis of this study, namely that there is a relationship between narcissism and being bullied, controlled for age and gender. No statistically significant association between age or gender and being bullied was found. Also, no effect of narcissism on being bullied was found. The predictor variables in this multiple regression analysis were not highly correlated; no multicollinearity was found ($VIF < 10$). An overview of the regression statistics can be found in Table 3.

Table 3.

Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis of Being Bullied on Age, Gender, and Narcissism (N = 200)

Variable	Model 1			Model 2		
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE(B)</i>	β	<i>B</i>	<i>SE(B)</i>	β
Age	0.33	0.43	.05	0.31	0.43	.05
Gender	0.96	0.74	.09	0.93	0.75	.09
Narcissism				-0.03	0.11	-.02
R^2		.11			.11	
F for change in R^2		1.10			0.08	

Note: Narcissism was standardised

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

A hierarchical regression analysis was then conducted to investigate the second hypothesis of this study, namely that the effect of being bullied on life satisfaction is stronger for narcissists than for non-narcissists. In Model 1, no statistically significant effect of age or gender on life satisfaction was found ($R^2 = .004$). In Model 2, narcissism and being bullied were added; both of these variables significantly added to the model ($R^2 = .097$; R^2 change = .093; $p < .01$). The effects of these variables, however, could not be interpreted due to a significant interaction-effect of narcissism and being bullied on life satisfaction, which was found in Model 3. Though significant, this interaction effect did not match the predicted outcomes; narcissism and being bullied together were found to have a negative effect on life satisfaction, whereas the prediction was for this effect to be positive. In other words, the relationship between being bullied and life satisfaction seems to be stronger for non-narcissists than for narcissists. An overview of the regression statistics can be found in Table 4.

Table 4.

*Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis of Life Satisfaction on Age, Gender, Being Bullied, Narcissism, and Being Bullied*Narcissism (N = 200)*

Variable	Model 1		Model 2			Model 3			
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE(B)</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE(B)</i>	β	<i>B</i>	<i>SE(B)</i>	β
Age	-0.22	0.35	-.05	-0.16	0.34	-.03	-0.29	0.32	-.06
Gender	-0.38	0.61	-.04	-0.23	0.59	-.023	-0.36	0.56	-.04
Narcissism				-0.09	0.08	-.07	-0.09	0.08	-.07
Bullied				-0.24	0.06	-.30	-0.29	0.05	-.36
Narcissism*							-0.08	0.02	-.33
Bullied									
<i>R</i> ²		.00			.10			.18	
<i>F</i> for change in <i>R</i> ²		0.39			10.07**			25.14**	

Note: Narcissism and bullied were standardised

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Discussion

The hypotheses of this study were “There is an effect of narcissism on being bullied” and “The effect of being bullied on life satisfaction is stronger for narcissists than for non-narcissists”. Neither of these hypotheses, however, were supported by the results found in this study. On the contrary, the effect of being bullied on life satisfaction was found to be significantly less strong for narcissists than for non-narcissists.

No relationships between age and gender and narcissism, being bullied, and life satisfaction were found. Pullen and Rhodes (2008) claim that more research regarding gender and narcissism is needed, because their research suggested there might be a relationship between these two variables. However, no significant relationship between gender and

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narcissism was found in the present study. A possible explanation is that the groups of males and females were not of equal size in this sample. Also, there were not many participants displaying narcissistic traits, making it harder to test for a possible relationship between the two aforementioned constructs.

No support was found for the hypothesis that narcissists are bullied more often than non-narcissists. This could be due to the relatively small variance of this study; there were not many participants in this sample who displayed narcissistic traits. It is possible that a significant relationship between being bullied and narcissism will be found in a larger sample. However, it is also possible that the expected relationship between narcissism and being bullied simply does not exist. This is something that future research regarding this subject could look into.

A significant result was found regarding the second hypothesis of this study; however, this effect was found to be the exact opposite of the expectation described in the hypothesis. According to the results found in this study, the effect of being bullied on life satisfaction is not stronger, but less strong for narcissists than for non-narcissists. This might be explained by the theory Rose (2002) proposed, namely that there are two different types of narcissism: overt and covert narcissism. According to Rose, overt narcissism is positively associated with life satisfaction, whereas covert narcissism is negatively related to life satisfaction. It is possible that the narcissists in the present study were mostly overt narcissists, which would explain the results found (Rose, 2002). However, this is merely a suggestion, which needs to be examined further and might be an interesting concept to investigate in future studies about this subject.

Another possible explanation for the relationship between being bullied, narcissism, and life satisfaction found in this study is that there is a lot of overlap between narcissism and the other two parts of the Dark Triad, namely Machiavellianism and psychopathy. These traits

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have not been investigated in the present study; however, the three Dark Triad personality traits have been shown to significantly correlate with one another, implying that people who display narcissistic traits could possess Machiavellistic and/or psychopathic traits as well (Baughman et al., 2012). Since Machiavellianism is linked to dominance and manipulation, and psychopathic people mostly seem to display disinhibited behaviour and callous-unemotional traits, it can be expected that people possessing these traits are not very vulnerable to victimisation. On the contrary, Machiavellianism and psychopathy have been found to strongly correlate with bullying, as opposed to being bullied (Baughman et al., 2012; Kerig & Stellwagen, 2010; Linton & Power, 2013; Muris et al, 2013). A possibility for future research regarding this subject would be to investigate the relationship between the Dark Triad in its entirety and being bullied. Such a study would be able to look at the unique variance of narcissism, controlled for the shared variance of narcissism with Machiavellianism and psychopathy, to see if the relationship between narcissism, being bullied, and life satisfaction remains the same.

The present study has several limitations to take into account. First, all data were obtained using self-report questionnaires, which means that the data are not necessarily reliable – it is possible that some of the data are based on participants answering in a socially desirable way, rather than a truthful way. Second, the present study is cross-sectional; the participants' responses to the questionnaire were only measured at one point in time. This means that it cannot be determined whether, in the case of our first hypothesis, narcissism has an effect on bullying or the other way around. It can only be concluded that a correlation exists. This is something that further research could look into. Third, there was not a lot of variance on being bullied and narcissism within the used sample. The sample consisted of 200 participants; however, of these participants, there were only a select few who met the criteria needed to investigate this study's hypotheses. There were not many participants who, for

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example, were being bullied; and there were even less participants who were being bullied and also possessed narcissistic traits. This makes it more complicated to draw conclusions from the results found in this study.

A strength of this study is the fact that control variables (namely age and gender) were taken into account when analysing the data, especially considering the fact that several studies have shown differences in age and gender regarding narcissism and being bullied (Baughman et al., 2012; Eslea, 2001; Fanti & Kimonis, 2013; Pullen & Rhodes, 2008; Scheithauer et al., 2006; Wilson & Sibley, 2011). Also, the fact that this study focuses on school-aged children rather than adults could be considered a strength. Most people who are being bullied are in this age group (Baughman et al., 2012) and there has not yet been a lot of research on narcissism in younger people; most studies so far have focused on adults (Kerig & Stellwagen, 2013; Muris et al., 2013).

In summary, neither of the hypotheses in this study have been confirmed. However, some interesting results were found regarding the relationship between narcissism and life satisfaction. These results cast some doubt on the suggestion that narcissists are always vulnerable to what people think about them. Perhaps narcissists' own strong beliefs about their importance and superiority are enough to preserve their self-image and they are not as prone to other people's opinions as is sometimes assumed (McCullough et al., 2003; Pullen & Rhodes, 2008). In some studies, it is implied that narcissists take offence very easily when other people have a negative opinion about them; however, the fact that they take offence does not necessarily mean that this has any consequences at all for their self-image (McCullough et al., 2003; Pullen & Rhodes, 2008). The results found in the present study could definitely be examined further and they provide a basis for future research on this subject.

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