

Describing Pathological Narcissism in Terms of the Cloninger's Psychobiological Model of Temperament and Character

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Introduction: Pathological narcissism has been a subject of scientific debates in recent years, with a growing recognition of two phenotypic forms, *grandiosity* and *vulnerability*. Because of the lack of consensus on the nature of grandiose and vulnerable narcissism, one way to develop a cohesive literature on pathological narcissism is to investigate it using dimensional models of general personality.

Objectives: The goal of the present study was to investigate similarities and differences in the relations of narcissistic grandiosity and vulnerability within the Cloninger's Psychobiological model of temperament and character.

Methods: A sample of 801 Hungarian adults (72% female; mean age 23.85 years), mostly graduate students, was gathered using a convenience sampling method. The participants completed the Pathological Narcissism Inventory (PNI) and the Temperament and Character Inventory – 60 (TCI-60).

Results: Narcissistic vulnerability exhibited positive correlations with temperament dimensions Harm avoidance and Novelty seeking and a negative correlation with Reward Dependence, whereas narcissistic grandiosity was positively correlated with Novelty seeking and Persistence. Both features of narcissism had negative correlations with character dimensions Cooperativeness and Self-directedness. However, hierarchical regression analyses demonstrated unique negative associations between narcissistic vulnerability and the abovementioned character dimensions, whereas their relations with grandiosity were non-significant.

Conclusions: There are various differences in the relations between grandiose and vulnerable narcissism and the seven dimensions of temperament and character. Given that the Cloninger's model delineates both the core features and distinguishing features of personality disorders, our findings might facilitate more nuanced understanding of pathological narcissism and its more valid diagnostic classifications.