

Development of a Narcissistic Personality Level Determination Scale for Athletes

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Abstract:

Narcissism is expressed as the admiration and devotion one feels toward their own physical and/or mental self. In other words, it's a term defined as self-love. A narcissistic personality, on the other hand, is when a person experiences a high degree of narcissistic feelings. The purpose of this study is to develop a measurement tool that measures the level of narcissistic personality in athletes.

In the scale development phase, a literature review was conducted first. In the literature review, narcissistic behaviors and examples in athletes were examined. As a result of the examination, a 28-item question pool was created.

At the scope and appearance validity stage, the opinions of a total of 3 experts, including 2 academicians and 1 linguist teacher from the field of psychosocial in sports, were taken. The item pool was presented to the experts with the symptom table form. 3 different experts were informed that 1 question needed to be changed and 2 questions needed to be removed due to similarity. The questions were revised as requested and submitted to the experts for approval. The experts found the new question pool suitable. A pilot study was conducted with a total of 12 different athletes. The athletes stated that there was no faulty question format in the scale study. Thus, the scale successfully passed the scope and appearance validity phase with 26 items after removing 2 items.

The universe of this research consisted of amateur athletes in the Beykoz district of Istanbul. The samples were determined by one of the non-probability sample selection methods, the "Purposive and Theoretical Sample Selection Technique"; Beykoz 1908 A.Ş., Kavacıkspor and Beykoz Training Dormitory, some athletes of their teams have formed. The final version of the item pool questions was prepared in 5-point Likert type and asked to the athletes of Beykoz 1908 A.Ş., Kavacıkspor and Beykoz İdman Yurdu in the sample group. After obtaining the data, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) were performed to determine construct validity and Cronbach's Alpha analyses were performed to determine internal consistency.

At the end of the study, a scale for determining the level of narcissistic personality in athletes, consisting of 20 sub-dimensions and 22 items, was developed to determine the athletes' narcissistic personality levels. When the Cronbach alpha reliability values of the scale were examined, it was found that the physical sub-dimension was .866, the cognitive sub-dimension was .622, the behavioral sub-dimension was .933, and the overall Cronbach alpha value of the scale was 0.714.

Keywords: Sport, athletes, narcissism, narcissistic personality,

INTRODUCTION

The concept of narcissism dates back to Narcissus in Greek mythology, who is mentioned for his unique handsomeness. According to the legend, Narcissus, who could not love or accept anyone else, sees his image reflected in the water of a lake and falls in love with himself. He follows the reflection of himself, whom he is in love with, for days and eventually melts away and disappears (Twenge & Campbell, 2010). However, according to Wilde, the legend doesn't end there; the lake cries after Narcissus. When asked why, it replies, "I weep for Narcissus, because when he leaned over my waters, I could see the reflection of my own beauty in the depths of his eyes" (Coelho, 2018). As in the mythological story, narcissism is the state of being in love with oneself, beyond prioritizing oneself, and using others for one's own desires (Özkan et al., 2024). Narcissism, otherwise called self-love, is the admiration and attachment to one's physical and/or mental self. Narcissism is defined in the literature in two types: normal narcissism and pathological narcissism.

Normal narcissism is the feeling that the individual can meet the expectations of their environment and adapt to other individuals (Rozenblatt, 2002). It involves a person's self-worth and self-confidence being as high as possible, and criticism or positive/negative interaction from others not negatively affecting the individual's self-confidence. Instead of feeding on the attention of the individuals around them, the person contemplates their own thoughts about themselves and satisfies their self-confidence in this way (Akhtar, 1989). Like everyone else, an individual is happy to receive feedback from others, such as appreciation, admiration, love, etc. These expectations or needs are narcissistic needs. All people need these requirements. However, these needs can often lead to a negative emotional state. Although not explicitly stated, the aim here is for the individual to receive and be accepted by the environment for the value they believe they deserve. A person spends a lot of time to meet this need and is open to exhibiting all behaviors. A person who, after this effort, fails to experience the value or acceptance they desire to see can become narcissistically depleted. This depletion can occur in daily life (Özmen, 2006).

Individuals with pathological narcissism, despite behaving as though indifferent to others' opinions, are deeply reliant on external validation and subconsciously preoccupied with the perceptions of others. This paradox reveals an underlying insecurity masked by an outward display of exaggerated confidence and self-assuredness, particularly concerning their physical appearance. A core characteristic of pathological narcissism, distinguishing it from normal narcissism, is this profound need to be fueled by external feedback. Those struggling with pathological narcissism often project their feelings of worthlessness and self-criticism onto their social environment as a coping mechanism. Consequently, they react with heightened sensitivity (aggression, excessive anger, etc.) to negative emotions, criticism, and perceived slights directed towards them (Kernberg, 1975). Pathologically narcissistic people seem to have developed a kind of defense mechanism to protect themselves from situations that they believe threaten them in some way and have entered into a personality structure in this way (Rozenblatt, 2002).

According to Kernberg (1985), normal narcissism involves libidinal investment in the self, accompanied by integrated representations of good and bad self-images. While Kohut (1971) believed in a continuum between pathological and normal narcissism, Kernberg posits numerous distinctions. A key differentiator is the presence of a specific narcissistic resistance in pathological narcissism, setting it apart from its normal counterpart. This resistance stems from pathological object relations. Further divergences include a pathological splitting and lack of integration within the ego and superego, as understood in educational psychology. In normal narcissism, object representations invested with libidinal and aggressive drives are integrated,

whereas pathological narcissism exhibits a pathological development of these internal object representations. Distinguishing pathological narcissism are excessive reactions to criticism, blame, and failure, coupled with distinct manifestations of interest in, trust of, and dependence on objects. While a child's demands in normal narcissism correlate with their needs, in pathological narcissism, these demands are excessive and insatiable. The coldness, distance, contempt, and humiliation exhibited by narcissistic patients towards others differ significantly from the self-centeredness observed in young children (Karaaziz and Atak, 2013).

Individuals displaying narcissistic traits exploit others for personal gain, possess an inflated sense of self-worth, and expect similar deference from their social circles. Despite these expectations, they lack empathy for those around them. Such behaviors are often observed in individuals occupying high-status positions, such as leaders and business executives (Sayar, 2003). Notably, the prevalence of narcissistic personality disorder is significantly higher in consumer societies compared to cooperative societies (Doğaner, 1996). Narcissistic personality disorders can be characterized by the following criteria:

- Feeling very important, exaggerating one's achievements and abilities, expecting to be recognized as a superior person without having achieved enough.
- Dwelling on power, unlimited success, intelligence, perfect love or beauty.
- Believing that they are unique and unparalleled and that only superior people can understand them or that they should be in their company.
- Desiring to be highly admired.
- Thinking that they are entitled to everything.
- Using social relationships for their own benefit.
- Using the weaknesses of others for their own wants and demands.
- Not being able to empathize.
- Having a jealous personality and believing that others are jealous of them.
- Displaying arrogant, self-righteous behavior.
- Feeling anger, shame or humiliation against criticism (Köroğlu, 1994: 248).

Such situations create difficulties among athletes. Athletes with narcissistic personality disorder are particularly unwelcome in team sports. They may also be far from performing successfully individually. Determining the narcissistic personality levels of athletes is very important for the improvement of narcissistic personality disorders. Athletes exhibiting narcissistic personality disorder, whether at normal or pathological levels, should be supported by exercise and sport psychologists. Thanks to the scale developed with this study, the narcissistic personality levels of athletes can be determined and the findings can be used in improvement studies.

METHOD

The method of this study is a "validity and reliability" study prepared using the "survey" technique from quantitative research methods.

Research Hypotheses

1. H0: The scale study to determine the level of narcissistic personality in athletes does not have valid and reliable values.
1. H1: The scale study to determine the level of narcissistic personality in athletes has valid and reliable values.

Universe and Sample

The universe of this study consists of amateur athletes in the Beykoz district of Istanbul; the sample is determined by the "Purposive (Monographic) and Theoretical Sample Selection Technique" from non-probability-based (judgmental) sampling techniques; it consists of some

athletes from Beykoz 1908 A.Ş., Kavacıkspor, and Beykoz İdman Yurdu clubs.

Study Group

The study group of this research consists of a total of 191 athletes, including some athletes from the U16/B, U17/B, U18 B, and senior category teams of Beykoz 1908 A.Ş. with 68 athletes in the football branch, some athletes from the U16 A, U17 A, U18 A, and senior category teams of Kavacıkspor with 73 athletes, and some athletes from the U17/B, U18 B and senior category teams of Beykoz İdman Yurdu with 50 athletes. The surveys were conducted with the athletes of the three sports clubs, accompanied by two coaches, before training, allowing sufficient time. The samples of the research were limited to the athletes of Beykoz 1908 A.Ş., Kavacıkspor, and Beykoz İdman Yurdu due to the time constraints of the study. It was assumed that the samples answered all the questions sincerely and honestly. The questions in the question pool prepared for the solution of the hypotheses established before the study were directed to the samples.

In the content and appearance validity phase, the opinions of a total of 3 experts, 2 academicians of psychosocial fields in sport and 1 linguist teacher, were obtained. The interviews were presented to the experts in the form of a specification table. The specification table used is shown as an example in Figure 1 below. Through the table of symptoms used by 3 different experts, we were informed that a total of 1 question should be changed and 2 questions should be removed from the scale due to similarity. The questions were revised as requested and submitted to the approval of the experts again. The experts were found the new question pool appropriate. In the pilot study phase, a total of 12 different athletes were surveyed. The athletes stated that there was no broken question pattern in the scale study. Thus, the scale successfully passed the content and appearance validity phase with 26 items after 2 items were removed from the 28-item pool.

Figure 1. Sample Symptom Table Used in the Context of Content and Appearance Validity

Scale Items	Item Suitability Degree			Description
	Not Suitable at All	Partially Suitable	Suitable	
Item 1				
Item 2				
Item 3				

Within the scope of content and appearance validity, when the experts marked the "not suitable at all" option, it means "the item should be removed from the scale". When the experts choose the "partially suitable" option, this means "the item can be used after the suggested corrections are made can be used". When the "suitable" option is marked by the experts, it means "the item can be included in the scale as it is". One of the experts participating in our study stated that 2 items in the 28-item question pool had similar meanings. The linguist expert, on the other hand, informed us that one question should be changed through the specification table. After the correction process applied in line with his suggestion, the item pool was again submitted to the experts for approval. The experts were approved the content and appearance validity of all items in the new item pool.

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Data Analysis

SPSS and AMOS programs were used to analyze the data obtained. In the findings section, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was used first. "KMO and Barlett Sphericity Tests" were used to measure the existence of a relationship between variables, which is a prerequisite for exploratory factor analysis (Tabachnick & Fidel, 2014). Due to the possibility of more than one factor in the scale, "varimax" vertical rotation was performed. While removing the scale items, a minimum difference of .10 was sought for overlapping items that loaded on two or more factors. The factor structure was established after the items M8 and M16, M18, which did not meet this

conclusion, were removed from the scale respectively. Thus, 3 items were excluded from the scale and the exploratory factor analysis was finalized. The KMO value of the scale was determined as .674 and the P value as .000. As a result of the exploratory factor analysis, 23 items were retained from the 26-item question pool. In total, the values of the scale for determining the level of narcissistic personality in athletes consisting of 23 items and 3 factors emerged.

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was then conducted to determine whether the described factor structure of the scale was confirmed. In order to decide whether an item should be removed from the scale, the criterion that the factor loading value is more than 0.45 was used (Büyüköztürk 2009). In the analysis, M13 item was removed from the scale and appropriate goodness of fit values were obtained. As a result of confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), the "Scale for Determining the Level of Narcissistic Personality in Athletes" consisting of 3 factors and 22 items emerged.

Finally, the reliability test was applied. For the factors the 3-factor structure, the cronbach alpha value was found to be (.866) for the physical sub-dimension, (.622) for the cognitive sub-dimension and (.933) for the behavioral sub-dimension. The overall cronbach alpha value of the scale was found to be (.714). Cronbach alpha reliability coefficients higher than 0.60 are interpreted as highly reliable (Kayış, 2009). At the end of the study, hypothesis H1 was accepted. Acceptable and excellent validity and reliability values were determined for the scale of determining the narcissistic personality level in athletes.

8 FINDINGS

Table 1. KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.674
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	9053,367
	df	253
	Sig.	.000

The KMO value of the scale for determining the level of narcissistic personality in athletes was found to be 0.674 ($0.674 > 0.60$). It was determined that the KMO value was greater than .60 and the Bartlett sphericity test was statistically significant at 99% confidence level ($p < 0.01$). It was seen that the sample size was adequate for factor analysis.

Table 2. Eigenvalues of Exploratory Factor Analysis

Factors	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1. factor	4,570	19,869	19,869
2. factor	3,797	16,507	36,376
3. factor	3,497	15,205	51,581

When the reliability levels of the factors were analyzed in the exploratory factor analysis findings, the items under the first factor explained 19.869% of the scale with an eigenvalue of 4.570.

When the items under the second factor are analyzed, it explains 16,507% of the scale with an eigenvalue of 3,797.

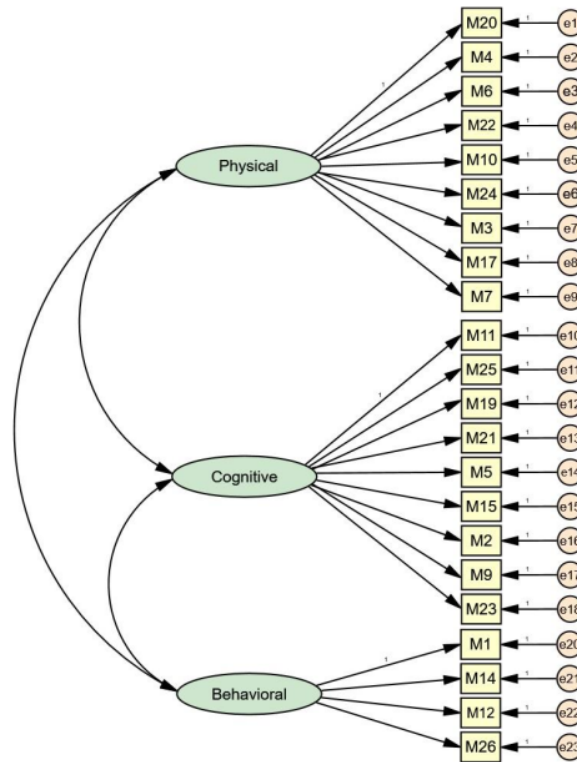
When the items under the third factor are analyzed, it explains 15.205% of the scale with an

Table 3. Exploratory Factor Analysis Factor Loadings of Items

Factor	Item	Question	Load Value.
1. Factor (Physical)	M20	There are people whose physical features are pitifully bad.	,727
	M4	With my muscle coordination, there is no skill I cannot accomplish.	,723
	M6	Thanks to my physical characteristics, I know no opponent.	,693
	M22	I am generally very well liked by people.	,687
	M10	I think I am more talented than many athletes.	,679
	M24	I think I have a physical advantage over most athletes.	,651
	M3	I learn movements that require skill more easily than other athletes.	,669
	M17	It makes me very happy to be praised for my physical features.	,666
	M7	I am always happy to hear that I am very talented.	,590
	M11	I think I am mentally superior.	,650
2. Factor (Cognitive)	M25	I have the advantage of learning quickly.	,645
	M19	People always appreciate my decisions.	,637
	M21	I have a character that solves all problems in the environments I am in.	,610
	M5	I am better at being tolerant and respectful towards others than most people.	,608
	M15	I respect my ability to think very much.	,594
	M2	Dil becerilerim sayesinde etkili iletişim kurabiliyorum.	,587
	M9	I would like to lecture most athletes about honesty.	-,563
	M23	I have a positive mood that inspires people.	-,531
	M13	My sense of feeling is very good.	,457
	M1	I don't see the subtlety in my behavior in most people.	,839
2. Factor (Behavioral)	M14	I deserve praise for my behavioral qualities.	,835
	M12	Tüm olay ve olgulara karşı davranışım takdire şayandır.	,833
	M26	Not many people are as good at generosity as I am.	,812

According to Table 3, when the items collected under the factors were examined, the first sub-dimension was named “physical”, the second sub-dimension was named “cognitive”, and the third sub-dimension was named “behavioral”, respectively. When the exploratory factor analysis data of the scale¹ for determining the narcissistic personality level in athletes were examined, it was observed that the factor load values of the items were between 0.45-0.90. These values fall within the acceptable range for factor loadings.

Table 4. Confirmatory Factor Analysis Path Diagram



In the confirmatory factor analysis applied to determine whether the factor structure defined in the exploratory factor analysis of the scale for determining the level of narcissistic personality in athletes was confirmed or not, it was understood that the factor loading value of item M13 was not suitable for the scale and disrupted the scale fit values. The related item was removed from the scale and finally the confirmatory factor analysis path diagram in Table 4 was obtained. Thus, as a result of confirmatory factor analysis, a scale for determining the level of narcissistic personality in athletes consisting of 3 factors and 16 items emerged. As such, appropriate goodness of fit values were obtained. Goodness of fit values are given in Table 5.

Table 5. Confirmatory Factor Analysis Goodness of Fit Values

X ² /sd	p	RMSEA	CFI	GFI	NFI
1.352	0,000	0,043	0,992	0,882	0,971

When the values of the fit criteria obtained from confirmatory factor analysis were examined, it was seen that the ratio of X² value to sd value was 1.352 and RMSEA value was 0.043. Other fit values were found to be within acceptable and excellent fit values.

Table 6. Cronbach Alpha Reliability Values

Sub-Dimensions	Physical	Cognitive	Behavioral	General
Values	,866	,622	,933	,714

When Table 6 was analyzed, it was determined that all items in the scale did not take a value below the expected value of 0.30 in their correlations with other items. The overall reliability of the scale is 0.714, which shows that the reliability level is at an acceptable level.

Table 7. Scale for Determining Narcissistic Personality Level in Athletes

Factor	Queue	Questions	1	2	3	4	5
Physical	1	There are people whose physical features are pitifully bad.					
Physical	2	With my muscle coordination, there is no skill I cannot accomplish.					
Physical	3	Thanks to my physical characteristics, I know no opponent.					
Physical	4	I am generally very well liked by people.					
Physical	5	I think I am more talented than many athletes.					
Physical	6	Physically, I think I have more advantages than most athletes.					
Physical	7	I learn movements that require skill more easily than other athletes.					
Physical	8	It makes me very happy to be praised for my physical features.					
Physical	9	I am always happy to hear that I am very talented.					
Cognitive	10	I think I am mentally superior.					
Cognitive	11	I have the advantage of learning quickly.					
Cognitive	12	People always appreciate my decisions.					
Cognitive	13	I have a character that solves all problems in the environments I am in.					
Cognitive	14	I am better at being tolerant and respectful towards others than most people.					
Cognitive	15	I respect my ability to think very much.					
Cognitive	16	I can communicate effectively thanks to my language skills.					
Cognitive	17	I would like to lecture most athletes about honesty.					
Cognitive	18	I have a positive mood that inspires people.					
Behavioral	19	I don't see the subtlety in my behavior in most people.					
Behavioral	20	I deserve praise for my behavioral qualities.					
Behavioral	21	My behavior towards all events and phenomena is admirable.					
Behavioral	22	Not many people are as good at generosity as I am.					

The final structure of the scale for determining the level of narcissistic personality in athletes, whose validity and reliability have been proven, is presented in Table 7. The scale was prepared in 5-point Likert type. There are no reverse structured items in the scale. The degree of agreement of the samples with the questions indicates that the higher the scores, the higher the narcissistic personality structure.

RESULTS

In the scale development phase, firstly, a literature review on narcissistic personality was conducted. Narcissistic personality behaviors in athletes were examined in the literature review. A question pool was created with a total of 28 items.

In the content validity stage, the opinions of a total of 3 experts, 2 academicians of psychosocial fields in sport and 1 linguist teacher, were obtained. The interviews were presented to the experts with a specification table form. Through the form used by 3 different experts, we were informed that 1 question should be changed and 2 questions should be removed due to similarity. The questions were corrected as requested and submitted to the experts for approval again. The experts were found the new question pool appropriate. In the pilot study, a total of 12 different athletes were surveyed. The athletes stated that there was no broken question pattern in the scale study. Thus, the scale was successfully passed with 26 items by removing 2 items at the content and appearance validity stage.

The final version of the item pool questions was prepared in 5-point Likert type and directed to Beykoz 1908 A.Ş., Kavacılar and Beykoz İdman Yurdu athletes in the sample group. After the data were obtained, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) were conducted to determine construct validity, and Cronbach Alpha analysis was conducted to determine internal reliability.

Firstly, the KMO value of the scale for determining the level of narcissistic personality in athletes was found to be 0.674 ($0.674 > 0.60$). It was determined that the KMO value was greater than .60 and the Barlett sphericity test was statistically significant at 99% confidence level ($p < 0.001$). It was seen that the sample size was adequate for factor analysis.

Exploratory factor analysis was then applied. In the exploratory factor analysis findings, when the reliability levels of the factors were analyzed, the items under the first factor explained 19.869% of the scale with an eigenvalue of 4.570. When the items under the second factor are analyzed, it explains 16.507% of the scale with an eigenvalue of 3.797. When the items under the third factor are analyzed, it explains 15.205% of the scale with an eigenvalue of 3.497.

When the items collected under the factors were examined, the first sub-dimension was named "physical", the second sub-dimension was named "cognitive" and the third sub-dimension was named "behavioral", respectively. When the exploratory factor analysis data of the scale for determining the level of narcissistic personality in athletes were examined, it was observed that the factor load values of the items were between 0.45-0.90. These values are accepted values within the limits of factor loadings.

In the confirmatory factor analysis applied to determine whether the factor structure described in the exploratory factor analysis of the scale for determining the level of narcissistic personality in athletes was confirmed or not, it was understood that the factor loading value of the M13 item was not suitable for the scale and disrupted the scale fit values. The related items were removed from the scale and finally the path diagram of the confirmatory factor analysis in Table 4 emerged. Thus, as a result of confirmatory factor analysis, a scale for determining the level of narcissistic personality in athletes consisting of 3 factors and 22 items emerged. In this form, appropriate goodness of fit values were reached. When the values of the fit criteria obtained from the confirmatory factor analysis were analyzed, it was determined that the ratio of χ^2 value to sd value was 1.352 and the RMSEA value was 0.043. CFI value was 0.992, GFI value was 0.882 and NFI value was 0.971.

Finally, cronbach alpha reliability test was applied. When Table 6. is examined, it was determined that all items in the scale did not take a value below 0.30, which is the expected value, in their correlations with other items. It is known that the overall reliability of the scale is 0.714, which is at an acceptable level. The fact that Cronbach alpha reliability coefficients are higher than 0.60 is interpreted as highly reliable (Kayış, 2009). Following these results, the factor structure and overall reliability of the scale were determined. The H0 hypothesis established at the beginning of the study was rejected and the H1 hypothesis was accepted. At the end of the study, the validity and reliability of the scale for determining the narcissistic personality level in athletes was determined and its final structure is shown in Table 7. The scale consists of 5-point Likert type, 3 factors and 22 items. There are no reverse structured items in the scale. The higher the degree of agreement of the samples with the questions and the higher their scores, the higher the narcissistic personality structure. Researchers who want to use the scale can use the scale without permission.

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