The [Identifying Information Removed] Narcissus Index

The following proposal will discuss a hypothetical psychological test, the [Identifying Information Removed] Narcissus Index (MNI), created to measure the existence of narcissism within organizational leaders. The term narcissism is derived from the fictitious Greek figure, Narcissus, who fell in love with his own reflection seen in a pool of water (Miller, Nicols, Clark, Daniels, & Grant, 2018). For the purposes of this proposal, narcissism is defined as having a grandiose sense of self-importance, characterized by desires of limitless success and power, oversensitivity to criticism, the need for extreme admiration, feelings of entitlement, exploitative tendencies, as well as exhibition of envious and arrogant behaviors or attitudes towards others (Afek, 2019; Shulman & Ferguson, 1988). The definition as well as associated characteristics of this construct is derived in part from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Health Disorders third edition, from the section relevant to the narcissistic personality disorder, as well as the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (Schulman & Ferguson, 1988).

The purpose of creating the MNI is to measure narcissism within organizational leaders in an effort to better understand whether or not this construct significantly contributes to organizational concerns such as high turnover rates, employee stress and job burnout. Additionally, it will be used in recruiting processes in hiring or promoting new organizational leadership. A key factor in the construction of the MNI was to draw a distinction between narcissism in the positive sense and that which leads to maladaptive behaviors. Leaders who are toxically narcissistic exhibit the characteristics discussed previously which can often result in suppressing the intellectual abilities and enrichment of their subordinates (Wang, Zhang, Ding, & Cheng, 2018). When workers are not comfortable collaborating with their superiors, this may

foster an environment of rigidity which in turn has negative implications for the organization as a whole. Moreover, leaders who are overtly narcissistic tend to lack the ability to share a socialized vision of organizational success; rather their tendency to fulfill self-interests can potentially hinder organizational accomplishments (Owens, Wallace, & Waldman, 2015).

Background

There has been much debate surrounding the construct of narcissism and whether or not it should be considered a negative psychological trait. Some professionals suggest that narcissism is essential to successful job performance; yet others argue that it can cause workplace deviance (Judge, LePine, & Rich, 2006). Several studies were done in the past to determine if narcissism is effective in leader success. One such study was conducted by Deluga (1997) on American presidents' narcissistic behaviors. The study suggested that narcissism actually has desirable features and is a component of charismatic leadership (Deluga, 1997). Additionally, Franklin Roosevelt was cited in the research as an impactful and effective president who was charismatic and exhibited narcissism (Deluga, 1997). Contrarily, Liu, Chiang, Xu, Fehr, and Wang (2017) conducted a study to examine how narcissistic leaders deal with perceived unfairness; the results indicated that these leaders exhibit self-oriented behaviors when they sense unfairness against themselves, in turn causing downstream negative implications for their followers such as decreased pro-social behaviors (Liu et al., 2017).

There is a need to establish this specific test given the contradictory research findings thus far about narcissism and how it does or does not contribute to effective leadership. Additionally, many researchers have called into the question, the reliability and validity of the most widely used test for narcissism, the NPI, because it tends to only measure for one facet of narcissism which is normal or adaptive narcissism (Schoenleber, Roche, Wetzel, Pincus, &

Roberts, 2015). Also, despite the NPI being the most prominent scale used to assess narcissism, its structure does not account for vulnerable narcissism; a type of narcissism with masked qualities that are often associated with some other aspect of personality (Glover, Miller, Lynam, Crego, & Widiger, 2012).

The MNI will be different and better than existing tests related to narcissism in that it will be able to identify a threshold level of narcissistic attitudes and behaviors, which if exceeded will indicate that a person is at a toxic level of narcissism. Therefore, the MNI will not just designate whether or not an individual is narcissistic because narcissism is sometimes considered intuitive to leader success. Instead it will help in identifying individuals who have healthy levels of narcissism conducive for leadership positions as well as those who possess this trait at levels that may pose detrimental effects to their work environment.

Conceptualization

The test-users for the MNI are potential candidates for employment into leadership roles as well as existing leaders in organizational settings that are plagued by increased turnover rates, and high levels of work-related stress and burnout. The content of the MNI contains a combination of statements relating to leader personality characteristics, narcissistic behaviors, and views on organizational culture. The reason the test needs to cover this content relates to the circumstances for which it will be used. The MNI can be used for recruiting and promotion purposes by identifying individuals who may be predisposed to exhibiting toxic narcissistic behaviors in leadership roles. Furthermore, the test can also be used to assess the levels of narcissism among organizational leaders and managers to identify whether or not leaders contribute to poor workplace outcomes. The content of the MNI will not only identify positive leader qualities, it will also provide helpful information relating to the extent of narcissism that

exists among leaders and how these leaders view organizational culture; primarily if they share a

collectivist or individualist mindset. The test itself is not specific to any particular culture;

however, in understanding how the test taker views organizational culture, assessors will be able

to draw valuable conclusions regarding the other portions of the test such as leadership and

narcissistic characteristics. This information will prove valuable for various decision making

processes as well as for evaluative reasoning associated with various work-related concerns.

Test Construction

Given that the test is meant to measure the strength of a certain trait, it will be constructed

using a survey format. The range of content will cover qualities of narcissism,

charismatic/transformational leadership style, and organizational culture. The test responses will

be a series of statements relating to each facet of the test. The portion of the test containing the

statements about narcissism will be designed using the method of paired comparisons (Cohen &

Swerdlik, 2018). The test takers will be given two related statements for which they must

compare and select the one that resonates with them the most (Cohen & Swerdlik, 2018). The

sections relating to charismatic/transformational leadership and organizational culture will

include statements for which test takers will utilize a rating scale to judge the extent to which

they identify with the given statements. The items will be developed using a selected-response

format where test takers will be instructed to choose the best or more appropriate response from

a set (Cohen & Swerdlik, 2018). The test will be scored using a cumulative model; each

statement will be given a numerical value, the summation of which will yield an overall score

(Cohen & Swerdlik, 2018). The higher the score, the higher the individual displays the trait being

assessed (Cohen & Swerdlik, 2018). The test will be standardized by creating specific

administration and scoring procedures (Cohen & Swerdlik, 2018). There will be no specialized

training for test users; administrators will simply instruct respondents on how to complete the

test and be present to facilitate the process and attend to any questions or concerns. The test

administration procedures will promote uniformity; administrators will be instructed to maintain

a controlled physical environment with minimal distractions (Cohen & Swerdlik, 2018).

Furthermore, administrators should have full knowledge of the test items in order to clarify the

meaning of statements if need be.

Test Content

A test developer must make several critical considerations when creating a new test

(Cohen & Swerdlik, 2018). Some questions to ask oneself should be related to what the test is

designed to measure, what the objective of the test is, whether or not there is a current need for

the test, who the test users are, who the test takers are, what the appropriate content should be

and how the test will be administered (Cohen & Swerdlik, 2019). Additional considerations to be

made related to culture are to ensure that all test takers are proficient in the language of the test

and if not, the necessary accommodations must be made. Furthermore, the statements used to

assess the specific measured trait should be understood cross-culturally, staying cognizant of

cultural assumptions, and equivalence issues related to language translations (Cohen & Swerdlik,

2018).

The items used to construct the MNI are strategically selected from three existing tests

related to narcissism, transformational/charismatic leadership and organizational culture. To

measure narcissism, items from the Narcissistic Personality Inventory are used (Miller et al.,

2014). Items from the Transformational/Charismatic Leadership Survey are used to assess

specific leader qualities (Clark, 2011). Finally, items from the Culture Orientation Scale are used

to measure organizational culture (Triandis & Gelfland, 1998). Sample items related to each fact of the test are as follows:

Narcissism

Directions: for each pair of items, select one that you most identify with.

- I believe it is necessary to gain the respect that I am owed.

- I usually get the respect I deserve.

- I like to have command over other people to show them the right direction.

- I can be both a leader and a follower.

- If I feel competent I am willing to take charge of making decisions.

- I like to be in charge of making all decisions.

Charismatic Leadership

Directions: Use a scale of 1 to 4 to rate your level of proficiency; 1 being the least and 4 being the most comfortable and proficient.

- I enjoy helping employees with their self-development.
- I have an ever expanding network of colleagues and employees who trust and rely upon me.
- Employees listen to my ideas and concerns because they trust me rather than fear me.

Organizational Culture

Directions: Use a 9-point scale to rate the following statements. 1= never or definitely no and 9 = always or definitely yes.

- I mostly rely on myself rather than depending on others to get things done.

- When another person does better than me, I get tense and bothered.

- I feel good when I can cooperate and collaborate with my colleagues and employees.

- It is important for me to respect the decisions and autonomy of the groups of people I lead.

Scope of Test

The MNI will be used to measure the level of narcissistic qualities within potential and current organizational leaders. Along with narcissism, the MNI will also reveal whether or not the test takers possess characteristics of charismatic/transformational leadership. Additionally, the test will also give insight to how the test taker views organizational culture; that is, whether they have a collectivist or individualistic perspective. The results of the MNI pose many potential benefits for organizations. First, if the business is looking to promote a candidate to a leadership role, the MNI will provide valuable information relating to the narcissistic qualities the candidate possesses. The MNI will reveal if the test taker has toxic amounts of narcissistic qualities, thereby aiding in the decision making process. However, if the MNI reveals that the test taker does in fact exude narcissism but also has a favorable amount of charismatic/transformational leadership qualities, this person may prove to be a viable candidate for promotion. Additionally, the portion of the test related to organizational culture will further reveal how the test taker views leadership which can be compared to the organization's vision of effective leadership. Secondly, the MNI can be used to assess current leadership in organizations stricken with high turnover rates or excess stress and burnout. When used in this setting, the MNI can yield telling results on whether

or not leadership is a contributing factor for the negative outcomes the organization is experiencing. If leadership is shown to exhibit toxic levels of narcissism, the proper measures can be taken to remedy this problem and hopefully turn the overall morale around.

The potential harm of the test comes with its usage for recruiting and promotional purposes. Some may argue that the existence of narcissism is a quality that leaders should have and if this test is interpreted inappropriately, or without an additional screening measure such as a face to face interview, it may inhibit an otherwise capable individual's opportunity for hire or promotion. Also, to be ethically responsible, test administrators should fully disclose the purpose of the test; however, in doing so, may lead to the possibility of the test takers falsifying information to achieve a desired score.

The MNI will be interpreted using computer-scorable items in an effort to greatly reduce error variance (Cohen & Swerdlik, 2018). Each statement on the MNI will be assigned a numerical score, the higher the number, the greater the exhibition of the characteristic by the test taker. The scores for each section will be summed and interpreted using a cut score method (Cohen & Swerdlik, 2018). For the section on narcissism, the individual will fall into one of three categories; little to no display of narcissism, moderate displays of narcissism, toxic displays or narcissism. A similar set up will be used to delineate charismatic/transformational leadership qualities. Finally, the organizational culture section will simply reveal whether or not the test taker resonates with a collectivist or individualistic view of organizational culture.

Establishing Reliability

I will establish reliability for the MNI by using the test-retest method. This method involves administration of the MNI to a group of individuals on two separate occasions (Cohen & Swerdlik, 2018). The goal of this method is to achieve consistency. The reason this method is

appropriate is because of its effectiveness in measuring constructs that are unwavering through

time; in this case, personality traits, such as narcissism (Cohen & Swerdlik, 2018). However, it is

important that there not be a significant time lapse in the administration sessions, as

environmental influences can affect the test outcomes (Cohen & Swerdlik, 2018).

Establishing Validity

I will establish validity using content validity. In order to establish a proper scale of

narcissism, I must include other factors that directly affect narcissistic qualities; in this case the

MNI will shed light on charismatic/transformational leadership as well as views on organizational

culture. Ideally, the test will be reviewed by professionals in the field of personality assessment

whom are versed in narcissistic qualities (Cohen & Swerdlik, 2018). The expert panel will help

determine whether or not the statements used are pertinent, helpful or irrelevant to the trait being

measured (Cohen & Swerdlik, 2018).

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