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The Mediator Role of Love Myhts between Narcissistic Personality Traits and Love Styles

Abstract

Narcissistic personality traits are associated with relationship conflicts, and the way of perceiving relationships can affect behaviors and attitudes. Therefore, the study aims to investigate the love myths mediator role between narcissistic personality traits and love styles. The research participants was determined by a simple random sampling method. The participants were 231 women and 187 men in total, 408 individuals between the ages of 18-45 (Mean=23.81, Standart Deviation=5.95) who stated that they had been at least once in a romantic relationship and who participated in the study voluntarily. Measurement tools are socio-demographic data form, Narcissistic Personality Inventory, Love Attitudes Scale (Short-Form), and Love Myths Scale. The answers to the surveys were analyzed with the SPSS 25 program. Pearson Correlation Test and PROCESS 3.5 were used. The results indicated that abuse of love and idealization of love myhts mediate between narcissistic personality traits and mania and ludus love style. The results show that when individuals whit narcissistic personality traits adopt love myhts abuse of love and idealization, they show a tendency to act like gamer, be careless, and be abusive in romantic relationships. The results of the study might help find a solution to narcissistic people's relationship conflicts, raising relationship satisfaction, and by so preventing jealousy, infidelity, and careless or manipulative, aggressive, and abusive attitudes.

Keywords: Love attitudes, Love styles, love myths, narcissistic personality disorder, narcissistic personality traits

Narsisistik Kişilik Özellikleri ve Aşk Stilleri Arasında Aşk Mitlerinin Aracı Rolü

Öz

Narsistik kişilik özellikleri, ilişki çatışmalarıyla ilişkilendirilir ve ilişkileri algılama biçimi, davranış ve tutumları etkileyebilir. Bu nedenle çalışmanın amacı, narsisistik kişilik özellikleri ile aşk stilleri arasındaki ilişkide aşk mitlerinin aracı rolünü incelemektir. Araştırmanın örneklemi basit tesadüfi örnekleme yöntemiyle belirlenmiştir. Örneklemi, romantik bir ilişki içinde olduğunu belirten ve araştırmaya gönüllü olarak katılan 18-45 yaş aralığında (Ortalama=23,81, Standart Sapma=5,95) 231 kadın, 187 erkek olmak üzere toplam 408 birey oluşturmaktadır. Ölçüm araçları; sosyo-demografik veri formu, Narsistik Kişilik Envanteri, Aşk Tutumları Ölçeği (Kısa Form) ve Aşk Mitleri Ölçeği'dir. Anketlere verilen cevaplar, SPSS 25 programı ile analiz edilmiştir. Pearson Korelasyon Testi ve PROCESS 3.5 kullanılmıştır. Sonuçlar, sevginin kötüye kullanılması ve aşkın idealleştirilmesine ilişkin aşk mitlerinin, narsisistik kişilik özellikleri ile mani ve ludus aşk tarzı arasında aracılık ettiğini göstermiştir. Sonuçlar, aşkın kötüye kullanılması ve aşk mitlerinin idealleştirilmesinin, narsisistik kişilik özelliklerine sahip kişilerde romantik ilişkilerde oyunbaz gibi davranma, dikkatsiz olma ve istismarcı olma eğilimi yarattığını göstermektedir. Araştırmanın sonuçları, narsist kişilerin ilişki çatışmalarına çözüm bulmada, ilişki doyumunu artırmada ve böylece kıskançlık, sadakatsizlik, dikkatsiz veya manipülatif, saldırgan ve istismarcı tutumların önlenmesinde yardımcı olabilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Aşk tutumları, aşk stilleri, aşk mitleri, narsisistik kişilik bozukluğu, narsisistik kişilik özellikleri

Introduction

A heightened sense of grandiosity, vanity, self-absorption, sentiments of entitlement, a lack of empathy, and a tendency to take advantage of others are all characteristics of the narcissistic personality construct (Krizan & Herlache, 2018). Although narcissism is known to be related to romantic success in short-term contexts (dating, early-stage relationships), it is also related to problems in long-term committed relationships (Wurst et al., 2017). Therefore, narcissism is mainly understood to be a predictor of relationship-damaging behaviors and thoughts (Foster & Brunell, 2018). It has been shown that narcissists in long-term romantic relationships demonstrate low levels of commitment, are susceptible to infidelity, and have a more significant number of divorces than non-narcissists (Brewer et al., 2015). Narcissism is positively and directly associated with psychological abuse within the romantic relationship (Rokach, et al., 2021). In that continuum, friends and loved ones of narcissists report significant levels of anxiety, despair, self-aggression, ill health, and somatic issues (Day et al., 2022).

Narcissistic people have deep feelings of being unique, different, and privileged from others. They believe that they are not subject to the rules that apply to ordinary people and that there are rules that show that they are privileged and special and act accordingly (Dickinson, 2023). Therefore, because of these beliefs, they become prone to creating and believing in some myths, including love myths such as the idealization and abuse of love.

According to Lee's theory (1973), there are six forms of love. He associated the three primary colors - red, yellow, and blue - which make up the other colors in the rainbow, with eros (passionate love), ludus (playful love), and storge (friendly love), respectively. Stating that the remaining types of love consist of a combination of these three main loves, Lee (1973) classified the other types of love as secondary types of love. The combination of passionate love and playful love creates possessive love (mania), the combination of friendly love and playful love creates logical love (pragma), and the combination of passionate love and friendly love creates altruistic love (agape).

Ludus and mania kind of love and possessive forms of love are more encountered in individuals with narcissistic personality traits (Dinić & Jovanović, 2021). They are less functional and are associated with unhappiness in relationships (Blanchard & Fino, 2023). Ludus love style is characterized as lasting for a short period and being polygamic. Fun is prioritized, sexuality and passion are essential, and there is nearly no binding and sentimentality. Love is often treated as a game; individuals with this type of love are self-centered (Lee, 1988). Manic love occurs when passionate love and play-like love come together. In mania, a style of love, both sexual and emotional intimacy are expected to happen quickly. It is often an obsessive love; emotionality is very intense, with emotional highs and lows in the relationship (Azureen et al., 2022). Individuals with this type of love can generally fall in love suddenly, but this love can also end suddenly. There are insecurity and jealousy (Lee, 1977). For this reason, there is an intense fear of loss. Manic love can be seen as the most pathological style (Lester & Philbrick, 1988).

Thus, the study aims to investigate the role of romantic myths on accompanying narcissistic traits and love styles. Most of the time, people are reluctant to seek treatment directly because they have narcissistic pathology. Instead, as highlighted by Ronningstam and Weinberg (2013), facing an ultimatum in a relationship over infidelity or lack of closeness makes them seek psychotherapy. Besides people with narcissistic traits at first side search for their benefits in any kind of relationship (Cohen & Faraji, 2022). Therefore, targeting relationship issues rather than targetting personality traits directly might give us a chance to establish a therapeutic bond with the individual with narcissistic traits by showing them the potential benefits of psychotherapy. The results of the study might be beneficial for psychological treatment procedures of people with narcissistic traits who are researching a solution for their romantic relationship conflicts.

Also, finding the myths that lie behind destructive romantic relationship attitudes and behaviors and transforming them into more accurate and functional beliefs can prevent romantic relationship conflicts, abuse, and violence.

Method

Participants

At first the participants consisted of 480 individuals between the ages of 18-45, determined by a simple random sampling method, who stated they had been in a romantic relationship and who participated in the study voluntarily. Due to the fact that 72 participants had reported current or prior psychiatric diagnosis they were excluded from further analysis.

231 (55.3%) females and 187 (44.7%) males participated in the study. 77 (18.4%) were high schoolers, 321 (76.8%) were undergraduates, and 20 (4.8%) were graduates. 36 (8.6%) evaluated their economic level as low, 322 (77%) evaluated their economic level as medium, and 60 (14.4%) evaluated their economic level as high. 408 (100%) participants had not received a psychiatric diagnosis before. 185 (44.3%) participants were dating, 50 (12%) participants married, 5 (1.2%) participants divorced, and 178 (42.6%) participants were not in a relationship.

Data Collecting Tools

Socio-demographic Information Form

The socio-demographic information form consists of questions to investigate gender, education status, economic status, relationship status, and previous psychiatric diagnosis.

Romantic Love Myths Questionnaire (RLMQ)

The scale developed by Lara and Gomez-Urrutia (2021) assesses the perceptions of romantic love myths among young people. The scale consists of 10 items and two dimensions: idealization (4 items) and love abuse (6 items), and is a 5-point Likert type. According to Lara and Gómez-Urrutia (2021), the idealization subscale's Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient was .73, the love abuse subscale's was .82, while the idealization subscale's McDonald omega reliability coefficient was .78. The love abuse subscale's was.88. The idealization and love abuse dimensions of the Turkish adaptation of the scale's were conducted by Esen et al. (2021) and Cronbach alpha reliability values were calculated to be.74 and.76, respectively, while the McDonald omega reliability coefficients were.76 and.77. Confirmatory factor analysis results showed that the RAMÖ Turkish form had a two-dimensional structure (idealization and abuse of love) as in the original scale. Within the scope of the reliability analysis, The findings of the study show that the RLMQ Turkish form is a valid and reliable measurement tool that can be used to determine the beliefs of individuals in emerging adulthood regarding romantic love myths (Esen et al., 2021).

The Love Attitudes Scale – Short Form (LAS)

Based on Lee's (1973) classification of love, Hendrick and Hendrick (1989) developed the scale's first version, which has 42 items. Hendrick et al. (1998) conducted studies on the scale's short form, which has 24 items. The scale measures six types of love "passionate love (eros)", "altruistic love (agape)", "possessive love (mania)", "game playing love (ludus)", "friendly love (storge)", "pragmatic love (pragma)" and there are four items (24 items in total) to measure them. As a result, six distinct points are obtained, with the lowest four points and the greatest twenty points obtained from the subscales. An increase in the score from any subscale indicates that the relevant love style is selected. The Cronbach-α coefficients of the subscales of the LAS-Short Form vary between 0.62 and 0.88. Büyükşahin and Hovardaoğlu (2004) conducted the scale's Turkish standardization, validity, and reliability assessments. Cronbach's alpha for the scale's Turkish adaptation was.70, and its two-half reliability was also found to be.70.

Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI)

The original version of the Narcissistic Personality Inventory, consisting of 220 questions, was developed by Raskin and Hall (1979). NPI-40 continued to be widely used until the 2000s. Ames et al. reorganized the NPI scale into 16 questions in 2006 (Ames et al., 2006, p.441). It is stated that NPI-16 minimizes time losses and errors caused by participants. The scale consists of 6 dimensions: Authority, Exploitiveness, exhibitionism, Superiority, Self-sufficiency, and entitlement. The scale was adapted to Turkish by Atay (2009), and the Cronbach alpha coefficient was determined to be 0.627.

Process

Permission to use the scales was obtained via e-mail from the researchers who developed the scales used in the study and conducted the validity and reliability studies of their adaptation to Turkish, and information was obtained about the scale items and scoring procedures. The study was approved by the Istanbul Aydın University Social Sciences Ethics Committee decision dated 09.07.2021, numbered 2021/08. In the prepared online forms, it was stated that the personal information of the participants would not be shared with anyone other than the researchers and that they could leave the research at any time. The scales took about 20 minutes to complete.

Statistical Analysis

Analysis of Data

The answers to surveys were analyzed with the SPSS 25 program. The suitability of the scales used in the study to normal distribution was tested. In this test phase, Kolmogorov-Smirnov test results and kurtosis and skewness coefficients of the scales were evaluated. The size of the sample has a significant impact on the outcomes of normality tests. In cases where the sample size is small, normality tests are more likely to uphold the null hypothesis. Conversely, in larger samples, even minor deviations from the normal distribution can lead the normality test to reject the null hypothesis (Öztuna et al., 2006). Since 408 participants were a large sample, it was preferred to look at the kurtosis and skewness values to determine the normal distribution. The normal distribution assumption was evaluated through kurtosis and skewness values. The fact that the kurtosis and skewness values are in the -2 +2 reference range indicates that it is in accordance with the normal distribution (Hahs-Vaughn & Lomax, 2020).

Table 1

Normality Test and Skewness and Kurtosis Values Results of Narcissistic Personality Inventory, Love Attitudes Scale, Romantic Love Myths Questionnaire

	Kurtosis	Skewness	Kolmogorov-Smirnov
Narcissistic Personality Inventory	-1.38	-0.03	0.000
Authority	-1.39	-0.48	0.000
Exploitiveness	-1.18	-0.39	0.000
Exhibitionism	-1.45	-0.10	0.000
Superiority	-1.41	0.10	0.000
Self-sufficiency	-1.41	-0.05	0.000
Entitlement	-1.65	0.12	0.000
The Love Attitudes Scale			
Eros	-0.50	-0.37	0.000

Ludus	-0.38	0.52	0.000
Storge	-0.76	0.17	0.000
Pragma	-0.41	0.23	0.000
Mania	-0.36	-0.17	0.000
Agape	-0.78	0.13	0.000
Romantic Love Myths Questionnaire			
Idealization	-0.25	-0.42	0.000
Abuse of love	-0.27	0.34	0.000

According to the reference values, the kurtosis and skewness values of the scales were suitable for normal distribution, and for this reason, parametric analysis was used. The relationships between the Narcissistic Personality Inventory, the Love Attitudes Scale, and the Love Myths Scale were investigated using Pearson Correlation analysis. PROCESS 3.5 Macro was used for mediator role analysis. For this study, all analyses were performed within a 95% confidence interval, and 0.05 was used as a reference for the p-value.

Results

Narcissistic Personality Inventory mean ($\overline{X}$=8.52, SD=4.98), Authority mean ($\overline{X}$=1.24, SD=0.83), Exploitiveness mean ($\overline{X}$=1.86, SD=1.08), Exhibitionism mean ($\overline{X}$=1.54, SD=1.16), Superiority mean ($\overline{X}$=1.44, SD=1.15), Self-sufficiency mean ($\overline{X}$=1.50, SD=1.14), Entitlement mean ($\overline{X}$=0.94, SD=0.86), Eros mean ($\overline{X}$=13.10, SD=4.06), Ludus mean ($\overline{X}$=10.56, SD=3.43), Storge mean ($\overline{X}$=11.15, SD=4.20), Agape mean ($\overline{X}$=10.59, SD=3.52), Mania mean ($\overline{X}$=11.65, SD=3.68), Agape mean ($\overline{X}$=11.53, SD=3.94), Idealization mean ($\overline{X}$=3.48, SD=0.89), Love Abuse mean ($\overline{X}$=2.63, SD=0.90).

Table 2

The Relationship between Narcissism Personality Traits, Love Styles, and Love Myths

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1-Narcissistic Personality Traits	1														
2- Authority	.78**	1													
3- Exploitiveness	.85**	.64**	1												
4- Exhibitionism	.82**	.60**	.63**	1											
5- Superiority	.82**	.55**	.61**	.62**	1										
6- Self-sufficiency	.78**	.52**	.63**	.49**	.56**	1									
7- Entitlement	.74**	.50**	.53**	.56**	.54**	.50**	1								
8-Eros	-.28**	-.20**	-.23**	-.25**	-.20**	-.17**	-.30**	1							
9-Ludus	.37**	.28**	.32**	.33**	.29**	.20**	.37**	-.32**	1						
10-Storge	-.24**	-.18**	-.20**	-.20**	-.19**	-.16**	-.23**	.57**	-.20**	1					
11-Agape	-.10*	-.07	-.09	-.15**	-.10*	.05	-.12*	.27**	-.16**	.27**	1				

12-Mania	.20**	.19**	.19**	.20**	.11*	.09	.18**	-.02	.40**	-.03	.12*	1			
13-Agape	.01	.01	.01	-.01	.02	-.01	.06	.22**	.13**	.19**	.08	.36**	1		
14-Idealization	.09	.07	.11*	.08	.05	.07	.07	.06	.22**	.02	.02	.36**	.28**	1	
15-Abuse of love	.27**	.18**	.24**	.23**	.16**	.18**	.34**	-.10	.41**	-.06	-.01	.37**	.35**	.39**	1

**p<0.01, *p<0.05 Name of the test applied: Pearson Correlation Test

The relationship between eros love style and narcissistic personality traits analysed with Pearson Correlation Test. Resuls showed that eros with narcissistic personality traits (r=-.28, p<0.01), eros with authority (r=-.20, p<0.01), eros with exploitiveness (r=-.23, p<0.01), eros with exhibitionism (r=-.25, p<0.01), eros with superiority (r=-.20, p<0.01), eros with self-sufficiency (r=-.17, p<0.01), eros with entitlement (r =-.30, p<0.01) have weak and moderate negative correlation.

The relationship between Ludus love myth and narcissistic personality traits was analyzed with Pearson Correlation Test. When the variables of narcissistic personality traits with ludus (r=.37, p<0.01), authority with ludus (r=.28, p<0.01), exploitiveness with ludus (r=.32, p<0.01), exhibitionism with ludus (r= .33, p<0.01), superiority with ludus (r=.29, p<0.01), self-sufficiency with ludus (r=.20, p<0.01), entitlement with ludus (r=.37, p <0.01) were examined, it was found to have a weak and moderate positive correlation.

The relationship between storge love style and narcissistic personality traits was analyzed with Pearson Correlation Test. Results showed that narcissistic personality traits with storge (r=-.24, p<0.01), authority with storge (r=-.18, p<0.01), exploitiveness with storge (r=-.20, p<0.01), exhibitionism with storge (r=-.20, p<0.01), superiority with storge (r=-.19, p<0.01), self-sufficiency with storge (r=-.16, p<0.01), entitlement with storge (r= -.23, p<0.01) have a weak negative correlation.

The relationship between agape love style and narcissistic personality traits was analysed with the Pearson Correlation Test. Results showed that agape with narcissistic personality traits (r=.10, p<0.05), agape with exhibitionism (r=-.15, p<0.01), agape with superiority (r=-.10, p<0.05), agape with entitlement (r=-.12, p<0.05) have a weak negative correlation.

The relationship between mania love style and narcissistic personality traits analysed with Pearson Correlation Test. Results showed that mania with narcissistic personality traits (r=.20, p<0.01), mania with authority (r=.19, p<0.01), mania with exploitiveness (r=.19, p<0.01), mania with exhibitionism (r=.20, p<0.01), mania and superiority (r=.11, p<0.05), mania and entitlement (r=.18, p<0.01) have weak positive correlation.

The relationship between idealization, love myth, and narcissistic personality traits was analyzed with the Pearson Correlation Test. Results showed that Idealization with Exploitiveness (r=.11, p<0.05), Idealization with Ludus (r=.22, p<0.01), Idealization with Mania (r=.36, p<0.01), Idealization with Agape ((r=.28, p<0.01) were examined, they were found to have a weak and moderate positive correlation.

The relationship between the abuse of love myth and narcissistic personality traits was analyzed with the Pearson Correlation Test. Results showed that narcissistic personality traits with abuse of love (r=.27, p<0.01), Authority with abuse of love (r=.18, p<0.01), exploitiveness with abuse of love (r=.24, p<0.01), abuse of love with exhibitionism (r=.23, p<0.01), superiority with abuse of love (r=.16, p<0.01), self-sufficiency with abuse of love (r=.18, p<0.01), entitlement with exploitation of love (r =.34, p<0.01), abuse of love and ludus (r=.41, p<0.01), abuse of love and mania (r=.37, p<0.01), abuse of love and agape (r=.35, p <0.01); have weak and moderate positive correlation.

Table 3

The Results Regarding the Mediating Role of Idealization in Predicting Ludus of Narcissistic Personality Traits

Model		R	R²	B	SH	β	t	p	Lower bound	Upper bound
	(Constant)	37	.14	8.38	0.31		27.09	0.000*	7.77	8.99
1	Narcissistic Personality Traits			0.26	0.03	0.37	8.15	0.000*	0.19	0.32
	(Constant)	.41	.17	6.01	0.65		9.25	0.000*	4.74	7.29
	Narcissistic Personality Traits			0.24	0.03	0.35	7.88	0.000*	0.18	0.30
2	Idealization			0.71	0.17	0.18	4.12	0.000*	0.37	1.05
	Undirect Total Effect (Mediator)			0.01	0.01				0.00	0.03

*p<0.05 Test used: PROCESS 3.5

The results of PROCESS 3.5 show that the independent variable for narcissistic personality traits in the first model explained 14% of the variance in the ludus dependent variable score. The idealization independent variable was incorporated into the model in the second stage. The idealization independent variable was observed to explain 3% of the variance in the ludus dependent variable score. According to the findings, it was determined that the independent variables narcissistic personality traits and idealization explained 17% of the variance in the score on the ludus dependent variable. With the addition of the idealization independent variable in the second stage, the beta value of the Narcissistic Personality Inventory independent variable decreased from .37 to .35. After that, 5000 resampling options and 95% confidence interval options from Bootstrapping analysis were used to control this drop in beta value, and it was found that the lower limit and upper bound did not include 0. When the results of the mediating role analysis were evaluated, it was determined that there was partial mediation.

Figure 1

Beta Coefficients for the Mediating Role of Idealization in Predicting the Ludus of Narcissism Personality Traits
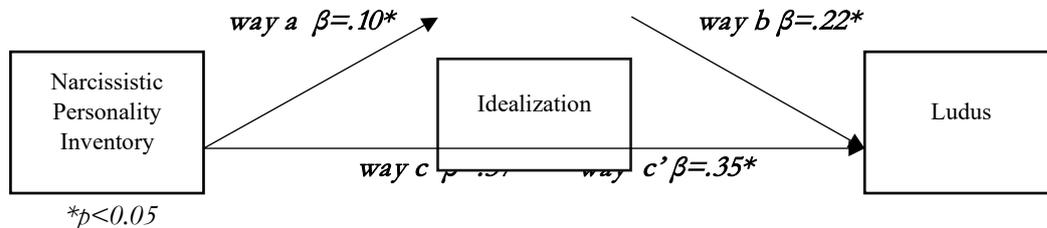

*p<0.05

Table 4

The Results Regarding the Mediating Role of Idealization in Narcissism Personality Traits Predicting Mania

Model		R	R²	B	SH	β	t	p	Lower bound	Upper bound
	(Constant)	.19	.04	10.41	0.35		29.76	0.000*	9.73	11.10
1	Narcissistic Personality Traits			0.15	0.04	0.20	4.09	0.000*	0.08	0.21
	(Constant)	.36	.15	5.65	0.70		8.04	0.000*	4.27	7.03
				0.12	0.03	0.16	3.62	0.000*	0.06	0.19
2	Narcissistic Personality Traits			1.43	0.19	0.35	7.68	0.000*	1.06	1.79
	Idealization									
	Undirect Total Effect (Mediator)			0.02	0.01				0.01	0.05

*p<0.05 Test used: PROCESS 3.5

The results of PROCESS 3.5, show that the narcissistic personality traits independent variable in the first model explained 04% of the variance in the mania dependent variable score. The idealization independent variable was incorporated into the model in the second stage. The idealization independent variable was observed to explain 11% of the variance in the mania dependent variable score. According to the findings, it was determined that the independent variables of narcissistic personality traits and idealization explained 15% of the variance in the score in the dependent variable of mania. With the addition of the idealization independent variable in the second stage, the beta value of the Narcissistic Personality Inventory independent variable decreased from .20 to .16. After that, 5000 resampling options and 95% confidence interval options from Bootstrapping analysis were used to control this drop in beta value. It was found that the lower limit and upper bound did not include 0. When the results of the mediating role analysis were evaluated, it was determined that there was partial mediation.

Figure 2

Beta Coefficients for the Mediating Role of Idealization in Narcissistic Personality Inventory's Prediction of Mania
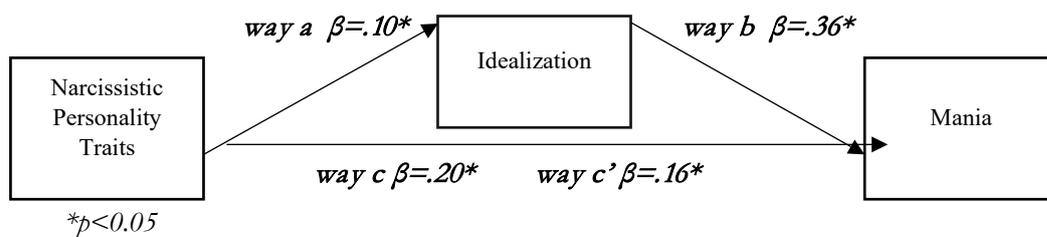

*p<0.05

Table 5

The Results Regarding the Mediating Role of Abuse of Love in Predicting Ludus of Narcissistic Personality Traits

Model		R	R²	B	SH	β	t	p	Lower bound	Upper bound
	(Constant)	.37	.14	8.38	0.31		27.09	0.000*	7.77	8.99
1	Narcissistic Personality Traits			0.26	0.03	0.37	8.15	0.000*	0.19	0.32
	(Constant)	.49	.24	5.53	0.47		11.65	0.000*	4.59	6.46
				0.19	0.03	0.28	6.27	0.000*	0.13	0.25
	Narcissistic Personality Traits			1.29	0.17	0.34	7.62	0.000*	0.96	1.63
2	Abuse of Love									
	Undirect Total Effect (Mediator)			0.06	0.02				0.04	0.09

*p<0.05 Test used: PROCESS 3.5

The results of PROCESS 3.5, show that in the first model, the narcissistic personality traits independent variable explained 14% of the variance in the ludus dependent variable score. The independent variable of abuse of love was incorporated into the model in the second stage. It was observed that the independent variable, Abuse of Love, explained 10% of the variance in the ludus dependent variable score. According to the findings, it was determined that the independent variables narcissistic personality traits and abuse of love explained 14% of the variance in the score on the ludus dependent variable. In the second stage, with the addition of the abuse of love independent variable, the beta value of the Narcissistic Personality Inventory independent variable decreased from .37 to .28. After that, 5000 resampling options and 95% confidence interval options from Bootstrapping analysis were used to control this drop in beta value, and it was found that the lower limit and upper bound did not include 0. When the results of the mediating role analysis were evaluated, it was determined that there was partial mediation.

Figure 3

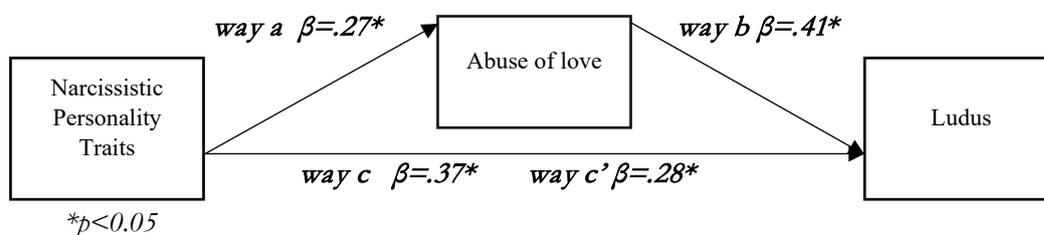*Beta Coefficients for the Mediating Role of Love Abuse in Predicting Ludus of Narcissistic Personality Inventory*

*p<0.05

Table 6

The Results Regarding the Mediating Role of Abuse of Love in Predicting Mania by Narcissistic Personality Traits
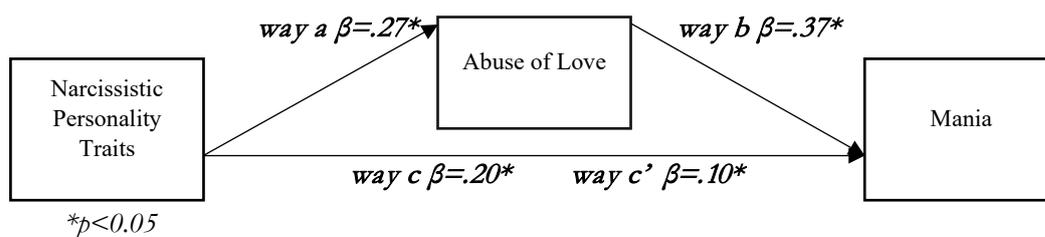
Model		R	R²	B	SH	β	t	p	Lower bound	Upper bound
1	(Constant)	.29	.04	10.41	0.35		29.76	0.000*	9.73	11.10
	Narcissistic Personality Traits			0.15	0.04	0.20	4.09	0.000*	0.08	0.21
2	(Constant)	.38	.14	7.35	0.54		13.62	0.000*	6.29	8.42
				0.08	0.03	0.10	2.20	0.028*	0.01	0.15
	Narcissistic Personality Traits			1.39	0.19	0.34	7.16	0.000*	1.01	1.77
	Abuse of love									
	Undirect Total Effect (Mediator)			0.07	0.02				0.04	0.10

*p<0.05 Test used: PROCESS 3.5

The results of PROCESS 3.5, show that the Narcissistic Personality Inventory independent variable in the first model explained 04% of the variance in the mania dependent variable score. The independent variable of abuse of love was incorporated into the model in the second stage. The independent variable, Abuse of Love, was observed to explain 10% of the variance in the score of the mania dependent variable. According to the findings, it was determined that the independent variables, Narcissistic Personality Inventory and abuse of love, explained 14% of the variance in the score in the mania dependent variable. In the second stage, with the addition of the abuse of love independent variable, the beta value of the Narcissistic Personality Inventory independent variable decreased from .20 to .10. After that, 5000 resampling options and 95% confidence interval options from Bootstrapping analysis were used to control this drop in beta value. It was found that the lower limit and upper bound did not include 0. When the results of the mediating role analysis were evaluated, it was determined that there was partial mediation.

Figure 4

Beta Coefficients Regarding the Mediating Role of Love Abuse in Predicting Mania by Narcissistic Personality Traits

*p<0.05

Discussion

The results of the study show that romantic love myths have a mediator role between narcissistic personality traits and love styles. Accordingly, it has been found that abuse of the love myth mediates between narcissistic personality traits and ludus and mania style of love. It has shown that narcissists are prone to the idealization of relationships and partners, and also, they are prone to abusive thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors (Wurst et al., 2017). Our results show that ludus and mania styles of love have the highest association with narcissistic traits among all love styles. So, the results show that they can engage in a romantic relationship, mainly in specific ways, as a player or abuser in changing degrees. They show a lack of commitment, empathy, approval seeking and vulnerability in the relationship (Altınok & Kılıç, 2020). However, they can develop some false beliefs like "love will forgive anything", "being in love is being in suffering", and "if there is no jealousy, there is no love," which forms romantic love myths of idealization and abuse of love.

The current study reveals that abuse of love myths is a mediator between narcissism and ludus, a mania kind of love. There are numerous common traits underlying narcissism and psychopathy that may cause aggression in intimate relationships, such as a lack of empathy, grandiosity, manipulation, and exploitation of others (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). The research suggests that narcissism is associated with two specific clusters of behaviors that cause interpersonal harm in romantic relationships. Our study shows that this association strengthens when one believes in the myth of abuse of love. Because people with narcissistic traits are prone to believe that they have the right to do what they want without thinking about their conclusions for the other one, their attitudes become more straight and sharp if they rationalize their attitudes with love myths, including abusive beliefs. One of the clusters is associated with the Ludus style of love and characterized as being a self-centric, careless gamer and causing indirect harm to a partner in a romantic relationship. The other cluster of behaviors that cause interpersonal harm in romantic relationships includes more directly destructive components.

The first cluster contains less care and concern for romantic partners and game-playing attitudes to get as much elation from feeling charmful and indispensable (Kamaluddin, 2022). Personality disorders are associated with causal sex and less concern and investment in romantic relationships (Jonason et al., 2019). Studies show that narcissism is associated with the Ludus style of love and the Ludus style of love is associated with infidelity (Shimberg et al., 2016; İbrahim et al., 2019; Dinić & Jovanović, 2021). However, dysfunction in people with narcissistic traits and ludus love style is not just about infidelity; more generally, it is about abusing the partner's trust in the context of one's own quest for pleasure. They do not have a sense of understanding of how their lies affect their partner, and they are constructing a romantic relationship that has been built upon mistruths and misplaced trust (Howard, 2019).

One of the most marked features of ludus and mania love and narcissism is exhibiting excessive attention and flattery, known as "love bombing" (Arabi, 2023). Love bombing is not a way to show love to the partner; it is a strategy that works like showing too much respect, love, attention, and admiration to make the partner dependent on their super-lover. Narcissistic people use love bombing to create an idealized and indispensable image of themselves in the other one's eye and to create a control mechanism for their partner (Rosalinah et al., 2023). The defeat of the love-bombed partner makes them feel successful in the love game and brings the joy of triumph. Arabi's study (2023) indicates that love bombing inducts post-traumatic stress disorder in partners of love bombers. The result of the study shows that if a partner believes in the abuse of love myths, he can cause psychological harm to his partner.

Narcissistic people and people with ludus or mania style of love myht provoke jealousy or "jealousy induction" to raise their value in the relationship by creating rivalry and believing in abuse of love kind of beliefs can escalate this tendency (Goodboy et al., 2012; Tortoriello et al., 2017; Massar et al., 2017). Jealousy induction techniques include relational distance (i.e., making plans without the partner, spending time with friends apart from the partner, being evasive about plans, phone calls, or social media), flirting facade (i.e., hiding pictures of the couple with other people to be found, spending time with others in the couple's favorite places, hiding fake numbers), and relational alternatives (i.e., talking about previous relationships, talking about how the relationship ended, etc.)(Goodboy et al., 2012).

Our results indicate that abuse of love myht moderates the relationship between narcissism and mania style of love. Individuals with narcissistic traits also engage in, with the help of abuse of love myth, manipulative, socially isolative, reactive, and proactive aggressive behaviors, and verbal abuse, which are known as narcissistic abuse syndrome, especially if there is a mania style of love (Sauls et al., 2019; Ismail et al., 2021, Green et al., 2022; Karandashev, 2022; March et al., 2023; Shousha, 2023; Coşa & Visu, 2023). They tend to show partner violence (Oliver et al., 2023; Takezawa et al., 2023). But, rationalizing the abuse in romantic relationships by abuse of love myths raises the degree and the tendency of perpetrating intimate partner violence (Villora et al., 2019; Courtain & Glowacz, 2021). Similarly, Jonason et al. (2020) found that all personality pathologies are associated with a mania style of love. In the mania style of love, people act as relationship dealbreakers by being erratic, impulsive, antagonistic, hostile in affect, and detached from others (Jonason et al., 2015; Blanchard & Fino, 2023)

Narcissistic people tend towards jealousy, especially in the present of mania style of love (Stravogiannis et al., 2018; İbrahim et al., 2019; Dinic & Jovanovic, 2021). If there is an abuse of love, myths kind of thinking, the jealousy of a narcissistic partner could turn to behavioral jealousy, so abusive behaviors and partner violence might occur (Rodriguez et al., 2015).

The results of the current study indicate that the idealization of romantic love myth mediates between narcissistic personality traits and ludus and mania style of love. People with Narcissistic personality disorder frequently exhibit an excessive feeling of self-importance, a fascination with power fantasies, and the belief that only people of great ability and high prestige can truly understand them (Cohen & Hulsey, 2022).

In their relationships, people with narcissistic personalities project their ideal selves, and in the end, they identify with these partial objects. They can admire others for their (projected) idealized features by projecting their positive aspects onto others. They rely on their associations with desirable things to develop the capacity to idealize oneself. As a result, narcissistic people can only endure relationships with people they find ideal or who share their ideals. (Egan & Kernberg, 1984). So when they find and create a perfect partner, they will show mania kind of love by having a strong desire to maintain the relationship to keep their perfect image of themselves. Cause the perfect partner of them serves as a mirror of their attractiveness and impeccability or as a potential mechanism for enhancing self-value (Feng et al., 2012).

Narcissistic people lack the ability to love, and their belief in being special brings some idealized and passionate abilities to the romantic relationship, like "real love can pass through all hardships" or "at the end of everything, love will win." Therefore narcissistic people are incapable of adopting more mature and caring love styles, making them more prone to mania or ludus (Blanchard & Fino, 2023).

When there are narcissistic personality traits, satisfaction comes from the approval of the idealized, grandiose other that he learned to be subservient to in childhood (Dickinson, 2023). However, idealization occurs because of the inability to accept someone in total with his

imperfections and is always followed by devaluation (Story et al., 2023). In the study, they conducted with the relatives of people with narcissistic personality traits, Day et al. (2022) reported that 31% of participants described their relative's behavior as fluctuating between extremes of idealization and depreciation. Usually, there was a period of mutual idealization at the start of the connection, during which their relative presented themselves as extremely attractive while also strongly idealizing participants. The participants' discourses provide valuable examples to understand the idealization period of romantic relationships and inevitably coming devaluation situations;

> Our early relationship felt like a fairy tale; I had never been adored and idealized before and was sucked in.…It was excellent at first. He presented himself as my savior. He was considerate, loving, and kind. He put much pressure on me to get married right away. He changed after we were married and had a propensity for severe rage if I did not compliment him enough. He is erratic, explosive, and has no feeling (Day et al., 2022).

Negative projections ruin all other object interactions; others can easily recognize an individual's incompetence, inadequacy, weakness, or unattractiveness. Because of this, those who suffer from narcissism refuse to acknowledge their dependence on anybody else, using others to vent their anger and repeatedly punishing the undesirable aspects of themselves that they project onto other people (Egan & Kernberg, 1984). Both object relationships involve elements of control, as relating to and maintaining the projected parts of the self involves controlling the object into which they have been projected (Spillius et al., 2011).

Results of the current study indicated that abuse of love and idealization of love myhts mediate between narcissistic personality traits and love styles (mania and ludus style of love). This study shows both love myhts have a destructive effect in romantic relationships. Besides it is stated that individuals with ludus and mania style of love have more negative emotions and more maladaptive attitudes in their romantic relationships which can cause more conflicts and less satisfaction from their romantic relationship (Karandashev, 2022). Most of the time, people are reluctant to seek treatment directly because they have narcissistic pathology. Instead, as highlighted by Ronningstam and Weinberg (2013), facing an ultimatum in a relationship over infidelity or lack of closeness makes them seek psychotherapy. Therefore, targetting relationship issues rather than targetting personality traits directly might give us a chance to establish a therapeutic bond with the individual with narcissistic traits by showing them the potential benefits of psychotherapy. Because people with narcissistic traits at first side search for their benefits in any relationship (Cohen & Faraji, 2022). The results of the study might be beneficial for psychological treatment procedures of people with narcissistic traits who are researching a solution for their romantic relationship conflicts. Also, finding the myths that lie behind destructive romantic relationship attitudes and behaviors and transforming them into more accurate and functional beliefs can prevent romantic relationship conflicts, abuse, and violence.

The study's findings may help resolve relationship issues of narcissistic individuals, increase relationship happiness, and averter their enmity, infidelity, and negligent or abusive behavior.

Considering the reciprocal nature of romantic relationships, it may be helpful to evaluate couples' love myths in future studies mutually. In the same context, a longitudinal study comparing the beginning and later stages of the relationship would be helpful to see how the couples' myths affect the process of influencing and transforming each other.

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Ek:

ETİK KURUL ONAYI

"The Mediator Role of Love Myhts Between Narcissistic Personality Traits and Love Styles" başlıklı araştırma için **Aydın Üniversitesi Senatosu Etik Komisyonunun 13.05.2022 tarihli ve E-88083623-020-50458** sayılı izni alınmıştır. Belgenin aslı, Yükseköğretim Kurulu tarafından 19.01.2021 tarihli ve 6689 sayılı Kişisel Verileri Koruma Kanunu kapsamında gizlenmiştir.