



## Narcissism, Life Satisfaction, and Harmony: The Mediating Role of Self-Esteem and Self-Compassion

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### ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** The present study aims to investigate the relationships between the two distinct faces of narcissism (admiration and rivalry), the two faces of self-perception (self-esteem and self-compassion) and the two faces of one's evaluation of life (life satisfaction and harmony in life).

**Research Methods:** The sample of this study consists of university students (N = 381). In this study, Narcissistic Admiration and Rivalry Questionnaire, Self-compassion Scale, Self-esteem Scale, Satisfaction with Life Scale, Life Harmony in Life Scale was employed as data collection tools. The relationship between variables was investigated using Structural Equation Modeling.

**Results:** The structural equation modeling used in this study revealed that self-esteem mediated the relationship between narcissistic admiration, harmony in life, and life satisfaction whereas self-compassion

mediated the link between narcissistic rivalry, harmony in life, and life satisfaction.

**Implications for Research and Practice:** Based on the results of this research, it is suggested that additional empirical and longitudinal studies should be conducted. as In this context, individual and group counseling practices aimed at developing self-compassion and self-esteem, increasing life harmony and life satisfaction can be organized.

**Conclusion:** In light of the results obtained in this study, we argue that high levels of narcissistic admiration accompanied by self-esteem may lead to increased harmony in life and life satisfaction. As narcissistic rivalry increases, self-compassion, harmony in life, and life satisfaction decrease. Lower self-compassion may explain the tendency of people higher in narcissistic rivalry to report less harmony in their life and lower life satisfaction.

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## Introduction

One of the most important focal points of the efforts to understand human beings is self-concept. Self-concept can be described as the way that one perceives himself and one's beliefs about himself. Self-concept can simply be framed as mental schemes. Self-evaluation is expressed as the answer to the question: "What do I feel about who I am?" (Campbell & Lavelle, 2013). Answers to this question exhibit an enormous range of feelings, including glorious, confident, and compassionate. The grandiose representation of the self is called narcissism. Because of the individual and social consequences of narcissism, narcissism can often be perceived as an insult. However, it is emphasized that narcissism has short-term positive results (Back et al., 2013; Miller & Campbell, 2011). There is no single way of perceiving the self, and narcissism has no single aspect. It may be useful to investigate how the positive consequences of narcissism occur. At this point, self-esteem may be playing a key role. On the other hand, narcissism has an evil face (Lange, Crusius & Hagemeyer, 2015). How narcissism negatively affects psychological well-being is another subject of the study. Lack of self-compassion may also play an important role in this regard. This study aims to investigate the relationship between (i) narcissism, self-compassion, and self-esteem, all of which manifest different ways of self-perception, and (ii) harmony in life and life satisfaction, which are different manifestations of one's perception of life.

### *Different Ways of Self-perceptions: Self-esteem, Narcissism, and Self-compassion*

While one's knowledge about himself forms an individual's self-concept, how one feels about himself constitutes an expression of self-esteem. In this context, self-esteem emerges as a result of one's self-evaluation (Campbell & Lavelle, 2013). One's experiences and his way of evaluating these experiences are what shapes this perception (Myers & Myers, 1992; Shavelson, Hubner & Stanton, 1976). In the literature, emotional evaluations about one's self are generally defined as self-esteem (Coopersmith, 1967; Rosenberg, 1965). High self-esteem is an individual's positive evaluation of himself, whereas this evaluation is either vague or negative in low self-esteem. People follow various strategies to achieve and maintain the desired level of high self-esteem (Zeigler-Hill, 2013).

People with high self-esteem and high narcissism share positive perceptions of their self, which include loving and admiring themselves. Narcissists can be said to have an extremely positive or inflated self-concept (Campbell, Rudich, & Sedikides, 2002). Associated with high self-esteem, narcissism is generally expressed as an excessive perception of the self and hypersensitivity to feedback received from others (Barry, Loflin & Doucette, 2015). Narcissism is not always pathological, and the features of normal and non-pathological narcissism may be connected to self-esteem (Miller & Campbell, 2011). In studies investigating the link between narcissism and self-esteem, two studies that are found to be positively related (see Bosson et al., 2008; Bosson & Weaver, 2011).

Research shows that it can be more useful to evaluate narcissism as a two-component model. One of the common two-component conceptualization is the

Grandiose and Vulnerable Narcissism model (Back, 2018; Back et al., 2013; Bosson & Weaver, 2011). Grandiose narcissism includes greatness, arrogance, aggression, dominance, exhibitionism, extraversion, and high self-confidence, whereas vulnerable narcissism reflects the characteristics of introversion, hostility, and low self-esteem (Miller & Campbell, 2011; Wink, 1991). The Narcissistic Admiration and Rivalry Model deployed in this study describes two different positively-related dimensions of grandiose narcissism. Narcissists use two different social strategies to protect their main objective, that is, the glorified self. One strategy is to make themselves known to ensure social admiration, whereas the other is to defend themselves to prevent social failure. The self-regulating processes of grandiose narcissism may be explained by admiration (narcissism's assertive aspect), which directs through one's desire for self-enhancement, and by rivalry (narcissism's antagonistic aspect), which is based in narcissistic self-protection. Although these two strategies follow different emotional-motivational, cognitive, and behavioral paths, both are positively related to each other, as they contribute to maintaining the primary goal, namely the glorified self. In this context, narcissistic admiration is the bright face of narcissism, whereas narcissistic rivalry represents its dark face (Back, 2018; Back et al., 2013; Leckelt et al., 2018).

There is no single way of perceiving the self positively. In contrast to self-esteem and narcissism, self-compassion offers an alternative way of perceiving the self and derives its origin from Buddhist psychology. Self-compassion is defined as self-judgment against self-consciousness following a person's encounter with pain, as the feeling of loneliness against a common shared feeling that all people live after experiencing a pain, by the interaction of extreme dilemmas of identity with each other, against the conscious awareness of what is happening (Neff, Whittaker & Karl, 2017). Self-compassion, similar to self-esteem, is an approach that involves self-acceptance rather than self-evaluation (Neff 2003, 2016). Studies show that not only is self-compassion more stable than self-esteem it is also more strongly related to psychological health. In this context, although self-compassion and self-esteem are interrelated, they are, in fact, different concepts entirely (Neff, 2011). In this regard, narcissistic rivalry employing self-defence as a self-regulatory mechanism of narcissism (Alicke & Sedikides, 2011; Back, 2018; Back et al., 2013) may exhibit a negative relationship with self-compassion. Moreover, narcissistic admiration employing self-enhancement as a self-regulatory mechanism of narcissism (Alicke & Sedikides, 2011; Back, 2018; Back et al., 2013) may exhibit a positive relationship with self-esteem.

#### *Different Ways of Well-being: Life Satisfaction and Harmony in Life*

Studies in psychology generally describe happiness as subjective well-being. According to the cognitive component of this approach, life satisfaction is inclusive of a person's positive evaluation of his life (Diener, 1984; Diener, Suh, Lucas & Smith, 1999). On the other hand, since intercultural studies indicate that the meaning of happiness may differ from culture to culture, the cognitive component of happiness may not always equate to life satisfaction. In Western cultures, a high level of

happiness, self-esteem, and autonomy are sought, whereas in Eastern cultures, dialectical happiness where good and evil coexist, social harmony, and being connected with others are regarded as important (Uchida & Ogihara, 2012).

Although several studies show that people are in a relationship with others and nature, evaluating the cognitive component of happiness solely on the individual level is, from time to time, deemed as incomplete (Kjell, 2011). On that note, harmony in life, which can be expressed as an alternative to life satisfaction, includes the sense of internally felt self-acceptance, inner peace, and balance. Harmony in life includes one's perception of harmony and balance in his life and a sense of being in harmony with the greater world. Harmony in life is regarded as an indicator of sustainable well-being (Kjell, Daukantaitė, Hefferon & Sikström, 2016).

### *The Present Study*

Regarding the subject matter of the present student, various studies found that while narcissistic admiration was positively related to self-esteem, narcissistic rivalry showed a negative relationship with self-esteem (Back, 2018; Back et al., 2013; Leckelt et al., 2018). However, there are studies in which narcissistic rivalry does not correlate with self-esteem also exist (Geukes et al., 2017). In one study, the narcissistic rivalry was found to be unassociated with optimal self-esteem, whereas narcissistic admiration was a positive predictor of optimal self-esteem (Rogoza, Žemojtel-Piotrowska, Kwiatkowska, & Kwiatkowska, 2018). Based on these studies, narcissistic admiration may be positively related to self-esteem, and that narcissistic rivalry may be entirely unrelated to self-esteem.

Studies investigating the relationship between self-compassion and psychological health have consistently emphasized that self-compassion increases such characteristics as life satisfaction and happiness while reducing depression and anxiety (Neff, 2016; Neff et al., 2007; Deniz & Sümer, 2010; Deniz, Arslan, Ozyesil & Izmirlı, 2012; Zessin, Dickhauser & Garbade, 2015). While narcissism is generally positively related to self-esteem, it is often found to be unrelated to self-compassion (Neff, 2011; Neff & Vonk, 2009). While self-compassion is unrelated to grandiose narcissism, it can show negative relationships with vulnerable narcissism (Barry et al., 2015) and pathological narcissism (Barnett & Flores, 2016). Self-compassion is positively related to self-esteem and life satisfaction (Deniz, Kesici & Sümer, 2008). Based on these studies, narcissistic rivalry may be negatively associated with self-compassion and that narcissistic-admiration may be unrelated to self-compassion.

Narcissistic admiration was negatively correlated with emotional instability and positively correlated with extroversion, openness to experience, and self-esteem. On the other hand, narcissistic rivalry was negatively associated with extraversion, mildness, responsibility, self-esteem, empathy, forgiveness, and gratitude and, on the other, positively correlated with emotional instability, revenge, interpersonal insecurity, impulsivity, and anger (Back et al., 2013; Leckelt et al., 2018). These studies reveal that admiration is an adaptive and that rivalry a maladaptive aspect of narcissism. In the previous studies, overt narcissism, which bears similarity to narcissistic admiration, was found to be positively associated with life satisfaction.

Covert narcissism, similar to the narcissistic rivalry, is negatively related to life satisfaction. Overt and covert narcissism have been shown to predict life satisfaction through self-esteem (Rose, 2002). Similarly, Sedikides, Rudich, Gregg, Kumashiro and Rusbult (2004) have revealed that narcissism is positively related to well-being and negatively related to depression and anxiety. In addition, the relation between narcissism and well-being is fully mediated by self-esteem. Also, Grove, Smith, Girard and Wright (2018) have found that life satisfaction, psychological well-being, and positive affect are positively correlated with narcissistic admiration and negatively correlated with narcissistic rivalry. In this regard, two hypotheses have been established: (1) Self-esteem plays a mediating role in the relationship between narcissistic admiration and harmony in life and life satisfaction. (2) Self-compassion plays a mediating role in the relationship between narcissistic rivalry and harmony in life and life satisfaction.

Understanding the self is one of the most fundamental topics of psychology research. Explaining how different ways of the self is effect well-being can provide useful information to researchers and practitioners. Examining these relationships can provide us with vital information to understand these personality dynamics.

## Method

### *Research Design*

In this study, the relational descriptive model was used to investigate the relationship between narcissism, self-compassion, and self-esteem, life satisfaction and harmony in life. The relationships were examined using structural equation modeling.

### *Research Sample*

The sample of this research consisted of 381 voluntary university students in Istanbul, Turkey. Of the total, 310 (77.9%) were female and 71 (17.8%) male students. The study group was reached by convenience sampling. Participants' ages ranged from 21 to 24, with their average age being 23.1 (SD = 1.01). The participants were attending from the Faculty of Education. Of the total, 28 (7.3%) of them were juniors, 196 (51.4%) of them were seniors and 145 (38.1%) of them were graduate students. Of the total, 148 (39.3%) of them were first child, 117 (31%) of them were middle child, and 112 (29.7%) of them were the last child.

### *Research Instruments and Procedures*

*Narcissistic Admiration and Rivalry Questionnaire:* The questionnaire was developed by Back et al. (2013). The questionnaire measures grandiose narcissism through the dimensions of admiration and rivalry. The scale consists of 18 items (e.g., I deserve to be seen as a great personality). Having a two-dimensional structure, the scale is scored using a 6-point Likert type (1= not agree at all to 6 = agree completely). Possible scores of the scale ranged from 9 to 54 for admiration and

rivalry subscales. The questionnaire adapted to Turkish by Demirci and Eksi (2017). The factor structure of the questionnaire was found to be at an acceptable fit as a result of the confirmatory factor analysis. The internal consistency coefficient of the scale was found to be .83 for admiration and .82 for rivalry.

*Self-compassion Scale:* The scale developed by Neff (2003) consists of six subscales and 26 items. Raes, Pommier, Neff, and Van Gucht (2011) developed a Short Self-Compassion Scale consisting of 12 items (e.g., When I fail at something important to me, I become consumed by feelings of inadequacy). The scale is scored using a 5-point Likert type (1 = almost never to 5 = almost always) that could be used as a total score. The possible score of the scale ranged from 12 to 60. The scale was adapted to Turkish by Akca (2014). The test-retest correlation coefficient of the scale was found .75.

*Self-esteem Scale:* The scale was developed by Rosenberg (1965) and adapted to Turkish by Cuhadaroglu (1986). Having a one-dimensional structure, the scale consisted of 10 items (e.g., I take a positive attitude toward myself). The scale is scored using a 4-point Likert type (1 = very true to 4 = so wrong). The possible score of the scale ranged from 4 to 40. The scale was adapted to Turkish by Cuhadaroglu (1986). The test-retest correlation coefficient of the scale was found .75.

*Satisfaction with Life Scale:* The scale was developed by Diener, Emmons, Larsen and Griffin (1985). The scale consists of five items (e.g., In most ways, my life is close to my ideal). The scale has a one-dimensional structure and consists of five 7-point Likert type (1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree). The possible score of the scale ranged from 5 to 35. The scale was adapted to Turkish by Durak, Senol-Durak, and Gencoz (2010). In the confirmatory factor analysis of the Turkish versions of the scale, the one-dimensional structure was found to be an acceptable fit. The item-total test correlations for the items of the measure were found to vary between .55 and .63. Internal consistency of the scale was found .81.

*Harmony in Life Scale:* The scale composed of five 7-point Likert type items and one dimension, the Harmony in Life Scale was developed by Kjell et al. (2016). The scale has a one-dimensional structure and consists of five items (e.g., Most aspects of my life are in balance). The scale is scored using a 7-point Likert type (1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree). The possible score of the scale ranged from 5 to 35. The scale adapted to Turkish by Satici and Tekin (2017). The confirmatory factor analysis revealed that the one-dimensional structure of the scale gave an acceptable fit. Internal consistency of the scale was found .78, and test-retest reliability was found .89.

### Data Analysis

The data obtained in the study were collected in a classroom environment at the university. Before the practice began, the purpose of this research and the importance of both privacy and sincere answers were explained to the participants. The application of the measuring tools took approximately 15-20 minutes. In our application of structural equation modeling, we established a measurement model in which all variables are included before developing the model describing the relationship between variables. When the measurement model showed a good fit, we tested the structural equation model. We then used item parceling to decrease the number of observed variables and to control for measurement errors (Little,

Cunningham, Shahar & Widaman, 2002; Nasser-Abu Alhija & Wisenbaker, 2006). Five-item parcels for self-esteem and six-item parcels for self-compassion were formed as a result. According to Kline's (2015) recommendation,  $\chi^2/df$  ratio, SRMR, RMSEA, CFI, and TLI were calculated in order to present the adequacy of the structural models. To support the significance of the indirect effects of the variables included in SEM, a 95% confidence interval was selected, and the Bootstrap analysis was applied through 5000 re-sampling (Hayes, 2013).

## Results

### *Correlation Matrix and Descriptive Findings*

The descriptive statistics and correlations between scales, sub-scales, and parcels are shown in Table 1. These relationships formed the basis for the establishment of structural equation modeling.

**Table 1**

*Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Analysis of Variables*

|                     | 1     | 2      | 3     | 4     | 5     | 6     |
|---------------------|-------|--------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1 Admiration        | 1     |        |       |       |       |       |
| 2 Rivalry           | .32** | 1      |       |       |       |       |
| 3 Self-compassion   | .06   | -.24** | 1     |       |       |       |
| 4 Self-esteem       | .36** | -.08   | .40** | 1     |       |       |
| 5 Harmony in Life   | .28** | -.17** | .35** | .45** | 1     |       |
| 6 Life Satisfaction | .16** | -.18** | .30** | .42** | .53** | 1     |
| Mean                | 3.51  | 2.11   | 3.04  | 30.11 | 23.85 | 20.69 |
| SD                  | 0.90  | 0.80   | 0.60  | 5.64  | 6.49  | 6.58  |
| <i>a</i>            | .82   | .80    | .77   | .85   | .88   | .85   |

Note. \*\*  $p < 0.01$ ; \*  $p < 0.05$ .

### *Measurement Models*

Based on the theoretical background and the relations between variables, we tested the following two distinct structural models: (Model 1) The mediating role of self-esteem in the relationship between narcissistic admiration and harmony in life and life satisfaction. (Model 2) The mediating role of self-compassion in the relationship between narcissistic rivalry and harmony in life and life satisfaction. Both Measurement Model 1 and Model 2 consist of four latent variables and 15 observed variables. All the variables in the measurement model were found to be in a significant relationship with each other.

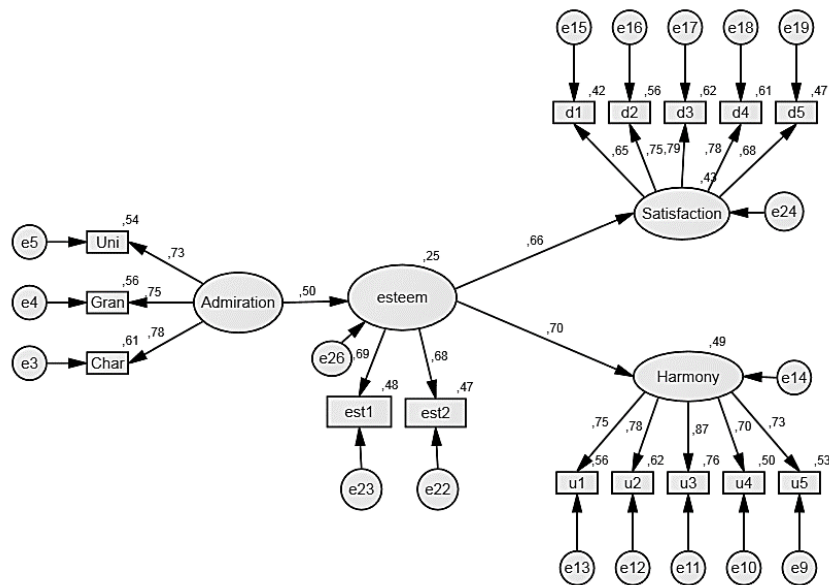
The factor loadings of the observed variables, which are explained by latent variables, range between .65 and .79 for Model 1. The model 1 ( $\chi^2 (84, N = 381) = 190.570$ ,  $\chi^2 / sd = 2.27$ ,  $p < .001$ ; CFI = .96; TLI = .95; SRMR = .048; RMSEA = .056 CI [.046 -

.067]) showed acceptable fit. These values indicate that the structural equation modeling can be established.

The factor loadings of the observed variables, which are explained by latent variables, range between .52 and .79 for Model 2. The model 2 ( $\chi^2(84, N = 381) = 217.27$ ,  $\chi^2 / sd = 2.58$ ,  $p < .001$ ; CFI = .94; TLI = .93; SRMR = .051; RMSEA = .063 CI [.053 - .074]) showed acceptable fit. These values indicate that the structural equation modeling can be established.

### The Mediating Role of Self-Esteem

In Model 1, narcissistic admiration predicts harmony in life and life satisfaction through self-esteem. The mediation model shows acceptable fit:  $\chi^2(87, N = 381) = 229.878$ ,  $\chi^2 / sd = 2.64$ ,  $p < .001$ ; CFI = .95; TLI = .94; SRMR = .068; RMSEA = .064 CI (.054 - .074). Standardized path coefficients between the variables can be seen in Figure 1 for Model 1.



**Figure 1.** Standardized Paths coefficients for Model I. Note.  $N=381$ ; Char Charmingness; Gran Grandiosity; Uni Striving for Uniqueness; est1 and est2 Parcels of Self-esteem

According to the SEM result for Model 1, narcissistic admiration predicts self-esteem ( $\beta = .50$ ,  $p < .001$ , 95% CI = .38, .61), self-esteem predicts harmony in life ( $\beta = .70$ ,  $p < .001$ , 95% CI = .58, .81) and life satisfaction ( $\beta = .66$ ,  $p < .001$ , 95% CI = .55, .75). In addition, narcissistic admiration was found to indirectly predict harmony in life ( $\beta = .35$ ,  $p < .001$ , 95% CI = .26, .45) and life satisfaction ( $\beta = .33$ ,  $p < .001$ , 95% CI = .25, .42) through self-esteem. The findings concerning the standardized path coefficients for the Model 1 are shown in Table 2. The results of bootstrapping analyses conducted via 5,000 re-sampling to crosscheck significance of the indirect effects of the Model 1 revealed that the zero is not included in the lower and upper bounds of the 95% confidence intervals.



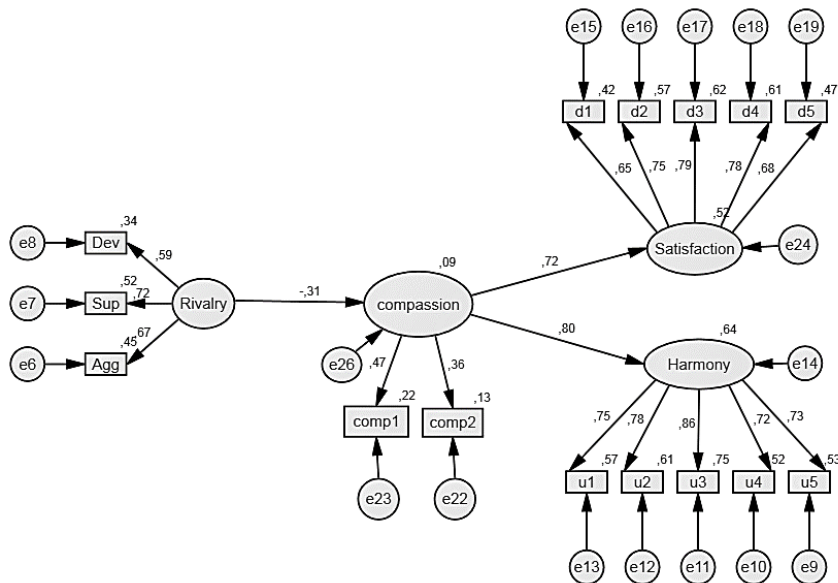
**Table 2**

*Standardized Effects and 95% CI*

| Direct Link                                  | Estimated | 95% CI |       |
|--|-----------|--------|-------|
|  |           | Lower  | Upper |
| Admiration → Self-esteem                     | .50       | .38    | .61   |
| Self-esteem → Harmony in Life                | .70       | .58    | .81   |
| Self-esteem → Life-Satisfaction              | .66       | .55    | .75   |
| Indirect Link                                |           |        |       |
| Admiration → Self-esteem → Harmony in Life   | .35       | .26    | .45   |
| Admiration → Self-esteem → Life-Satisfaction | .33       | .25    | .42   |

*The Mediating Role of Self-Compassion*

In Model 2, narcissistic rivalry predicts harmony in life and life satisfaction through self-compassion. The mediation model shows acceptable fit:  $\chi^2 (87, N = 381) = 242.147$ ,  $\chi^2 / sd = 2.78$ ,  $p < .001$ ; CFI = .93; TLI = .92; SRMR = .056; RMSEA = .067 CI (.057 - .077). Standardized path coefficients between the variables can be seen in Figure 2 for Model 2.



**Figure 2.** Standardized Paths Coefficients for Model II. Note. N=381; *Uni* Striving for Uniqueness; *Agg* Aggressiveness; *Sup* Striving for Supremacy; *Dev* Devaluation; *comp1* and *comp2* Parcels of Self-compassion.

Model 2 illustrates that narcissistic rivalry negatively predicted self-compassion ( $\beta = -.31, p < .001, 95\% \text{ CI} = -.45, -.15$ ) and that self-compassion predicts harmony in life ( $\beta = .80, p < .001, 95\% \text{ CI} = .69, .91$ ) and life satisfaction ( $\beta = .72, p < .001, 95\% \text{ CI} = .61, .82$ ). Furthermore, narcissistic rivalry indirectly predict harmony in life ( $\beta = -.24, p < .001, 95\% \text{ CI} = -.35, -.13$ ) and life satisfaction ( $\beta = -.22, p < .001, 95\% \text{ CI} = -.33, -.10$ ) through self-compassion. The findings concerning the standardized path coefficients for Model 2 are shown in Table 3. The results of bootstrapping analyses conducted via 5,000 re-sampling to crosscheck significance of the indirect effects of the Model 1 revealed that the zero is not included in the lower and upper bounds of the 95% confidence intervals.

**Table 3***Standardized Effects and 95% CI*

| Direct Link                                   | Estimated | 95% CI |       |
|---|-----------|--------|-------|
|   |           | Lower  | Upper |
| Rivalry → Self-compassion                     | -.31      | -.45   | -.15  |
| Self-compassion → Harmony in Life             | .80       | .69    | .91   |
| Self-compassion → Life-Satisfaction           | .72       | .61    | .82   |
| Indirect Link                                 |           |        |       |
| Rivalry → Self-compassion → Harmony in Life   | -.24      | -.35,  | -.13  |
| Rivalry → Self-compassion → Life-Satisfaction | -.22      | -.33,  | -.10  |

### Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations

In this study, positive relationships were, not surprisingly, found in the relationships between narcissistic admiration, self-esteem, harmony in life, and life satisfaction. Additionally, the relationships between narcissistic rivalry and self-compassion, harmony in life, and life satisfaction were found to have negative correlations. Significant positive correlations were found between self-compassion and harmony in life and life satisfaction. In the structural equation modeling, the two hypotheses [i.e., (1) Self-esteem plays a mediating role in the relationship between admiration and harmony and satisfaction. (2) Self-compassion played a mediating role in the relationship between rivalry and harmony and satisfaction hypotheses] were confirmed. The increase in narcissistic admiration increased self-esteem. As self-esteem increased, harmony in life and life satisfaction also showed an increase. Higher self-esteem statistically explains the tendency of people higher in narcissistic admiration to report more harmony in life and life satisfaction. Moreover, as narcissistic rivalry increases, harmony in life and life satisfaction decreased, while self-compassion reduced the adverse effects of narcissistic rivalry in this relationship. Lower self-compassion statistically explains the tendency of people higher in narcissistic rivalry to report less harmony in their life and lower life satisfaction.

Previous studies have also investigated the role of self-esteem in the relationship between narcissism and well-being. In this study, narcissism was measured using the

narcissistic admiration model. In addition to life satisfaction, harmony in life is also included while measuring well-being. In previous studies, self-esteem plays a fully mediating role between non-pathological narcissism and well-being (Rose, 2002; Sedikides et al., 2004; Zuckerman & O'Loughlin, 2009). Moreover, life satisfaction, psychological well-being, and positive affect positively correlated with narcissistic admiration and negatively correlated with narcissistic rivalry (Grove et al., 2018). Also, Demirci and Ekşi (2017) found that admiration positively predicted happiness and that rivalry negatively predicted happiness. Narcissistic admiration provides personal and social adjustment/advantage while narcissistic rivalry leads to personal and social maladjustment/conflict (Back, 2018; Back et al., 2013; Leckelt et al., 2018). Basing our conclusions on the self-concordance model (Sheldon & Elliot 1999), we assert that narcissism may increase life satisfaction and happiness as it allows people not only to choose goals consistent with their own self but also to perceive themselves as successful in achieving their goals (Rose & Campbell, 2004). It can be said that a person's positive perception of his self leads him to obtain satisfaction from life and increases his functionality in different contexts (Diener & Diener, 2009).

Self-enhancement (i.e., an increase in positive self-esteem) and self-protection (i.e., a protective measure against negative self-perception) are considered basic assumptions in personality research (Alicke & Sedikides, 2011; Back et al., 2013). Narcissistic admiration contributes to the success of social relationships using striving for uniqueness, grandiose fantasies and charmingness to achieve self-enhancement. These processes provide positive social results, such as social status, success, praise, being elected as a leader, obtaining social resources, attracting charm, and social interest (Back, 2018; Back et al., 2013). This contributes to an increase in self-esteem and, therefore, to life satisfaction and harmony in life.

The mediating role of self-compassion in the link between rivalry and life satisfaction/harmony in life has yet to be investigated in the literature. The narcissistic rivalry may culminate in social conflict as a result of an individual's use of self-protection, his struggle for superiority, his devaluation of others, and acts of aggression. These processes lead to such negative social results as rejection, violation of relations, unpopularity, criticism, and untrustworthiness (Back, 2018; Back et al., 2013), causing the person not to be satisfied with his life and to feel a lack of harmony with those around him. Self-compassion comes into play at this point and reduces the negative effects of narcissistic rivalry on both harmony in life and life satisfaction. In other words, people feeding narcissistic rivalries are less satisfied with life and experience less harmony in life because of their lower self-compassion. Concerning self-compassion and harmony in life, in accordance with social mentality theory (Gilbert, 2005), whereas narcissistic rivalry activates the Threat and Protection system, self-compassion activates the Satisfaction, Calmness and Trust system by neutralizing the Threat and Protection system. Self-compassion thus contributes to an individual's ability to lead a harmonious life.

Our research reveals that narcissistic admiration is positively related to self-esteem and not related to self-compassion. Contrary to this, the literature does support the notion that narcissistic rivalry is negatively related to self-compassion and not related to self-esteem. While narcissistic admiration is a predictor of high and stable self-esteem, the narcissistic rivalry is a predictor of vulnerable and

variable self-esteem (Geukes et al., 2017). It is emphasized that self-compassion is a protective factor against the negative effects of low self-esteem (Marshall et al., 2015). While self-compassion assumes a protective role against anxiety in a situation when the self of an individual is threatened, self-esteem does not assume this role (Neff et al., 2017). In addition, self-compassion is more strongly related to psychological health than to self-esteem (Neff 2003; Neff, 2011; Neff & Vonk, 2009). The psychopathologic characteristics of rivalry may explain the mediating role of self-compassion between rivalry and well-being.

This research has several limitations. Since the study group is composed of university students, these relationships can be tested in different samples in subsequent studies to generalize the results. Another limitation is that the data were collected solely through self-report measurement tools. Regarding the current study's variables, further studies on and observations of peer and family assessments may contribute to reaching more objective findings. Finally, conducting empirical and longitudinal studies on the variables used in this study, instead of cross-sectional patterns, may provide causal evidence.

Based on the results of this research, it is suggested that future researchers conduct studies seeking to increase self-compassion to reduce the adverse effects of narcissistic rivalry on life satisfaction and harmony in life. To balance the positive impacts of narcissistic admiration on harmony in life and life satisfaction, it is recommended that self-esteem development studies should be conducted. In this context, individual and group counseling practices aimed to develop self-compassion and self-esteem, reducing adverse effects of narcissism, and increasing life harmony and life satisfaction can be organized using the findings of the present study as a basis. We anticipate that the results of this and other such research will contribute to the literature of personality psychology and positive psychology.

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### Narsisizm, Yaşam Doyumu ve Yaşam Uyumu: Öz-saygı ve Öz-anlayışın Aracı Rolü

#### Atf:

- Demirci, I., Eksi, H., & Eksi, F. (2019). Narcissism, life satisfaction, and harmony: The mediating role of self-esteem and self-compassion. *Eurasian Journal of Educational Research, 84*, 159–176, DOI: 10.14689/ejer.2019.84.8



## Özet

*Problem Durumu:* İnsanı anlama çabalarının en önemli odak noktalarından biri benlik kavramıdır. Kişinin kendisi hakkındaki bilgisi benlik kavramını oluştururken kişinin kendisi hakkında ne hissettiği öz-saygıyı ifade etmektedir. Ancak benliği olumlu algılamının tek bir yolu yoktur. Literatürde kişinin kendisi hakkındaki duygusal değerlendirmeleri genellikle öz-saygı olarak tanımlanmaktadır. Yüksek öz-saygı ve narsisizm özelliklerine sahip insanlar kendilerini beğenmeleri ve sevmeleri gibi benlikleriyle ilgili olumlu algıları paylaşmaktadırlar. Narsistlerin son derece olumlu veya şişirilmiş bir benlik kavramına sahip olduğu söylenebilir. Bu çalışmada kullanılan narsistik hayranlık ve rekabet modeli büyüklenmeci narsisizmin birbiriyle pozitif ilişkili ancak birbirinden iki farklı boyutu açıklamaktadır. Benlik kavramıyla ilişkili olan bir diğer kavram ise öz-saygının alternatifi ve narsisizmin antidotu olarak ifade edilebilecek öz-anlayış kavramıdır. Öz-anlayış, öz-saygıda olduğu gibi benliğin değerlendirilmesi yerine benliğin kendi içinde kabul edilmesi içeren bir yaklaşımdır. Öz-anlayış kendini kabul ve farkındalık içeren bir bakış açısını yansıtmaktadır. İyi oluşun ise insanın ulaşmak istediği en temel hedeflerden biri olduğu söylenebilir. Psikoloji araştırmalarında mutluluk genel olarak öznel iyi oluş kavramıyla ifade edilmektedir. Öznel iyi oluşun bilişsel boyutu olan yaşam doyumu kavramı kişinin yaşamındaki beklentilerin ne derece karşılandığını ifade etmektedir. Öte yandan mutluluğun bilişsel bileşeni her zaman yaşam doyumunu ifade etmeyebilir. Çünkü kültürlerarası çalışmalar mutluluğun anlamının kültürden kültüre farklılık gösterebileceğini ifade etmektedir. Bu bağlamda yaşam doyumu kavramının alternatifi olarak ifade edilebilecek olan yaşam uyumu kavramı içsel olarak hissedilen kendini kabul, iç barış ve denge hissini içermektedir. Araştırmalar benlik algılamının ve iyi oluşun farklı yolları olduğunu göstermiştir. Araştırmada bu farklı yollar arasındaki ilişkilerin belirlenmesi kişilik dinamiklerinin anlaşılması açısından önemli bilgiler sağlayabilir.

*Araştırmanın Amacı:* Bu çalışmada benliğin farklı algılanma biçimleri olarak ifade edilebilecek olan narsisizm, öz-anlayış ve öz-saygı kavramları ile yaşamı farklı algılama biçimleri olarak ifade edilebilecek olan yaşam uyumu ve yaşam doyumu kavramları arasındaki ilişkilerin incelenmesi amaçlanmıştır. Narsistik hayranlığın öz-saygı, yaşam uyumu ve yaşam doyumu ile pozitif ilişkili olacağı, narsistik rekabetin ise öz-anlayış, yaşam uyumu ve yaşam doyumu ile negatif ilişkili olacağı beklenmektedir. Bu araştırmanın amacı narsistik hayranlık ve narsistik rekabet ile yaşam uyumu ve yaşam doyumu arasındaki ilişkide öz-saygı ve öz-anlayışın aracı rolünü incelemektedir.

*Araştırmanın Yöntemi:* Araştırmanın örneklemini 381 katılımcıdan oluşmaktadır. Katılımcıların 310'u (%77,9) kadın, 71'i (%17,8) erkektir. Katılımcıların yaş ortalamaları 23,1 olarak hesaplanmıştır. Araştırmada veri toplama araçları olarak Narsistik Hayranlık ve Rekabet Ölçeği (Narcissistic Admiration and Rivalry Questionnaire), Öz-anlayış Ölçeği (Self-compassion Scale), Benlik Saygısı Ölçeği (Self-esteem Scale), Yaşam Doyumu Ölçeği (Satisfaction with Life Scale), Yaşam Uyumu Ölçeği (Harmony in Life Scale) kullanılmıştır. Narsisizm, öz-anlayış ve öz-saygı ile yaşam doyumu ve yaşam uyumu arasındaki ilişkiler yapısal eşitlik modeli (structural equation modeling) ile incelenmiştir. Yapısal eşitlik modelinde değişkenler arasındaki ilişkileri açıklayan model kurulmadan önce bütün

değişkenlerin içinde olduğu ölçme modeli kurulmuştur. Ölçme modelinin iyi uyum verdiği görüldüğünde yapısal eşitlik modelinin test edilmesine geçilmiştir. YEM’de yer alan değişkenlere ait dolaylı etkilerin anlamlılığına desteklemek amacıyla %95 güven aralığı seçilerek 5000 yeniden örnekleme yoluyla Bootstrap Analizi uygulanmıştır.

*Araştırmanın Bulguları:* Yapısal eşitlik modeli narsistik hayranlık ile yaşam uyumu ve yaşam doyumu arasındaki ilişkiye öz-saygının ve narsistik rekabet ile yaşam uyumu ve yaşam doyumu arasındaki ilişkiye öz-anlayışın aracılık ettiğini göstermiştir. Bu çalışmada narsistik hayranlık ile yaşam uyumu ve yaşam doyumu arasındaki ilişkide öz-saygının aracı rolü; narsistik rekabet ile yaşam uyumu ve yaşam doyumu arasındaki ilişkide öz-anlayışın aracı rolü incelenmiştir. Analiz sonuçlarına göre beklendiği gibi narsistik hayranlık, öz-saygı, yaşam uyumu ve yaşam doyumu arasındaki ilişkilerde anlamlı düzeyde pozitif ilişkiler bulunmuştur. Ayrıca narsistik rekabet ile öz-anlayış, yaşam uyumu ve yaşam doyumu arasında negatif yönde; öz-anlayış, yaşam uyumu ve yaşam doyumu arasındaki ilişkilerde pozitif yönde anlamlı ilişkiler bulunmuştur. Kurulan yapısal eşitlik modelinde narsistik hayranlık ile yaşam uyumu ve yaşam doyumu arasındaki ilişkide öz-saygı; narsistik rekabet ile yaşam uyumu ve yaşam doyumu arasındaki ilişkide öz-anlayış aracı rol üstlenmektedir. Daha önceki çalışmalarda araştırma bulgularını destekleyecek bulgulara rastlanmıştır.

*Araştırmanın Sonuçları ve Önerileri:* Araştırma bulguları kişilik psikolojisi ve pozitif psikoloji bulguları bağlamında tartışılmıştır. Sonuçların narsisizmin, olumlu benlik algısının ve yaşamı algılama biçimlerinin ikişer yüzlü doğasının anlaşılmasına katkı sağlayacağı düşünülmektedir. Bu araştırmanın sonuçlarından hareketle narsistik rekabetin yaşam uyumunu ve yaşam doyumunu üzerindeki olumsuz etkilerini azaltmak için öz-anlayış düzeylerini arttıracak çalışmaların yapılması önerilmektedir. Narsistik hayranlığın yaşam uyumu ve yaşam doyumu üzerindeki olumlu etkisini dengelemek için ise öz-saygıyı geliştirici çalışmaların yapılması önerilmektedir. Bu bağlamda bulgulardan yola çıkarak narsisizmin olumsuz etkilerini azaltabilmeyi ve yaşam uyumu ve yaşam doyumunu arttırabilmeyi hedefleyen öz-anlayış ve öz-saygı özelliklerini geliştirmeye dayalı bireysel ve grupla psikolojik danışma uygulamaları düzenlenebilir. Araştırmanın sonuçlarının kişilik psikolojisi ve pozitif psikoloji literatürüne katkı sağlayacağı öngörülmektedir.

*Anahtar Kelimeler:* Narsistik hayranlık ve rekabet, öz-saygı, öz-anlayış, yaşam doyumu, yaşam uyumu, pozitif psikoloji