

ARE NARCISSISTS MORE TOLERANT OF PEOPLE WHO  
ENGAGE IN NARCISSISTIC BEHAVIOR?

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## ABSTRACT

Previous research suggests that narcissists (vs. non-narcissists) may be more tolerant of other narcissists. However, previous research on this topic has involved methodologies that rely on trait-relevant priming rather than observations of actual behavior, thus limiting the generalizability of the findings. It remains unclear whether the narcissistic-tolerance effect holds up under more ecologically valid conditions. The current study examined whether narcissists tolerated narcissists by assessing participants' reactions to actors behaving in a narcissistic or non-narcissistic fashion. Narcissism was positively associated with liking in the narcissistic-actor condition and negatively associated with liking in the non-narcissistic-actor condition. Path modeling suggested that this interactive effect of narcissism and actor condition was mediated by perceived similarity and tendencies to selectively interpret the actor's behavior. These findings have implications for how narcissists view other narcissists and interpret social information.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

<i>a</i>	Cronbach's alpha
<i>B</i>	Unstandardized regression coefficient
$\beta$	Standardized regression coefficient
CFI	Comparative fit index
CI	Confidence interval
$\Delta R^2$	R-square change
<i>df</i>	Degrees of freedom
<i>F</i>	<i>F</i> ratio
<i>M</i>	Mean score
<i>N</i>	Number of participants
NFI	Normative fit index
<i>p</i>	Probability associated with the occurrence under the null hypothesis of a value as extreme as or more extreme than the observed value
<i>r</i>	Pearson product-moment correlation
RMSEA	Root mean squared error of approximation
<i>SD</i>	Standard deviation
<i>SE</i>	Standard error
<i>t</i>	Computed value of <i>t</i> test
$\chi^2$	Chi-square
<	Less than
>	Greater than
=	Equal to

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## INTRODUCTION

The narcissistic-tolerance theory states that narcissists<sup>1</sup> are more tolerant and fond of their narcissistic peers due to a perceived similarity; this notion has been supported in previous literature (Adams, Hart, & Burton, 2015; Hart & Adams, 2014; Wallace, Grotzinger, Howard, & Parkhill, 2015). In the current study, I broaden the scope of this theory and address methodological weaknesses associated with past tests.

Despite the apparent support in the literature for narcissistic-tolerance theory, the validity of the tests is questionable. Each prior test of the theory has examined reactions to individuals described by a narcissistic trait (e.g., *arrogant*) or a trait-relevant action (Carl *bragged* about an accomplishment). As a result, narcissistic tolerance could simply reflect narcissists' more positive evaluations of trait-relevant terms (e.g., *arrogant*, *brag*) rather than true tolerance for narcissistic behavior (Hart & Adams, 2014; Wallace et al., 2015). A more robust test of the theory would involve an assessment of participants' responses to the actual behaviors of narcissists, rather than semantically implied narcissistic tendencies. Indeed, research in the attraction domain has demonstrated that individuals engage in different interpersonal impression processes depending on whether they are presented with a target in a more abstract, hypothetical context (e.g., reading a vignette) compared to a more concrete, immediately experienced context (e.g., interacting live, face-to-face; Eastwick, Hunt, & Neff, 2013). Another validity issue stems from methods using a measure of trait narcissism and

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<sup>1</sup> I refer to individuals who score high on dimensional, sub-clinical trait measures of narcissism (typically the Narcissistic Personality Inventory; NPI; Raskin & Terry, 1988) as “narcissists” and those scoring low as “non-narcissists.” This labeling was chosen because it is conventional and concise. I am not referring to a categorical, clinical distinction.

responses to (non)narcissistic others within the same experimental session. This leaves open the possibility that relations between the measures could reflect a response bias wherein people provide consistent (narcissistic or non-narcissistic) responses (e.g., Krosnick, Judd, & Wittenbrink, 2005). Ideally, trait narcissism might be measured well in advance of impressions toward narcissistic and non-narcissistic others, which was the case in the current study.

Given these issues, the present research seeks to advance prior work in two key ways. First, in response to calls for more ecologically valid tests of narcissistic tolerance (Hart & Adams, 2014; Wallace et al., 2015), participants in the present study rated the likability of actual narcissists (instead of simply reading descriptions of narcissists, as in prior research on this theory). Specifically, participants viewed an actor that gave either highly narcissistic, moderately narcissistic, or non-narcissistic responses to interview questions. Then, participants rated how much they liked the actor. If, consistent with narcissistic-tolerance theory, narcissists are *selectively* more tolerant of others who exhibit narcissistic behavior, there should be an interaction between trait narcissism and experimental condition such that narcissists (vs. non-narcissists) like the actor more in the highly narcissistic and moderately narcissistic conditions, but less in the non-narcissistic condition. Second, to mitigate the threat of response biases, I measured trait narcissism during a pre-screening session. Hence, people would be unaware of how they completed the narcissism measure prior to participating in the current study.

I also assessed ideas concerning the mechanisms that are presumed to underlie narcissistic tolerance. For example, it has been suggested that the effects of narcissism on tolerance for others' narcissism might be driven by perceived similarity (Hart & Adams, 2014) as well as tendencies to cast others' narcissistic displays in a more favorable light (Hart & Adams, 2014; Adams et al., 2015). Research on narcissism has shown that long-term friends tend to have similar levels of narcissism, which, in turn, predicted similarities in Big Five traits

(Maaß, Lämmle, Bensch, & Ziegler, 2016). Similarity also seems to play a role in determining narcissists' selection of romantic partners. For example, narcissists tend to be more attracted to individuals with characteristics associated with elevated narcissism, such as a self-orientated, attractive, and high status others (Campbell, 1999; Moskowitz, Rieger, & Seal, 2009). Moreover, individual differences in narcissism have been found to predict a romantic partners' level of narcissism (Keller et al., 2014). More generally, when evaluating others, favorable evaluations are associated with similarities between evaluator and target narcissism (Wallace, Grotzinger, Howard, & Parkhill, 2015). As a result, it seems probable that perceived similarity plays a role in narcissistic-tolerance.

A second mechanism that may help explain narcissistic-tolerance is a tendency to selectively interpret narcissistic behavior to see it in a more positive light. For example, instead of seeing a narcissistic comment as “rude,” a narcissistic observer may see it as “upfront” or “honest.” In this way, narcissists may be able to infer relatively positive or innocent traits from narcissistic behavior that would offend others. This may be the result of motivated reasoning processes. That is, perceiving another person as similar to the self might provide motivation to selectively interpret this person's traits in a positive light (e.g., Kunda, 1990). This seems especially likely considering that narcissists are motivated to maintain a positive self-view. For instance, narcissists often self-promote and exaggerate their performance, which helps to maintain their elevated self-view (Grijalva & Zhang, 2016; Hepper, Gramzow, & Sedikides, 2010; John & Robins, 1994; Raskin, Novacek, & Hogan, 1991). Consequently, narcissists may put a positive spin on others' narcissistic actions as a means to self-enhance.

A related possibility is that when observing others' narcissistic behavior, narcissists infer the same traits as non-narcissists (e.g., narcissists and non-narcissists both see a narcissistic comment as “rude”), but they differ in how positively they evaluate that trait. In other words,

narcissists and non-narcissists may both infer a negatively-valenced trait from a narcissistic behavior, but narcissists may find that trait more positive or desirable than a non-narcissist. Indeed, Hart and Adams (2014) showed that narcissists evaluate narcissistic traits more positively and non-narcissistic traits more negatively than non-narcissists (for a similar idea, see Jones & Brunell, 2014).

But neither of these possibilities has been studied in the context of an impression formation study. As a result, I included measures of perceived similarity and two measures of selective interpretation of the actor's behavior. I anticipated that these measures – perceived similarity and both indices of selective interpretation – might be positively related. In short, it is predicted that narcissists' tolerance for other narcissists will be mediated by perceived similarity and selective interpretation of their narcissistic behavior.

## METHOD

### Participants and Design

Participants ( $N = 317$ ) were undergraduates participating in exchange for course credit. The design had three experimental conditions (highly narcissistic, moderately narcissistic, or non-narcissistic). Participants' data were removed if they: were unable to view the video clips due to technology-related issues ( $n = 38$ ), recognized the actors ( $n = 5$ ), or failed to complete the Narcissistic Personality Inventory during mass prescreening ( $n = 52$ ). Thus, the final sample consisted of 222 participants (170 females;  $M_{age} = 18.6$ ).

### Materials and Procedure

**Trait Narcissism.** Prior to the study, participants completed the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI; Raskin & Terry, 1988) in a separate, mass prescreening survey. The NPI is a measure of trait narcissism in which participants endorse responses that either do (e.g., *I know that I am good because everybody keeps telling me so.*) or do not (e.g., *When people compliment me I sometimes get embarrassed.*) reflect narcissism. After reverse-coding appropriate items, narcissistic responses were summed onto a single index of narcissism ( $\alpha = .85$ ;  $M = 15.6$ ;  $SD = 7.1$ ).

In the introduction to the online study, to conceal the true purpose, participants were told that the study aimed to explore how people form first impressions of others. Under this pretense, participants completed each of the following tasks and measures.

**Video Clips.** Participants were told they would watch recordings of another participant (from a prior study in my lab) respond to 10 interview questions. In reality, this “other participant” was an actor. Participants viewed each interview question as text on the computer

screen (e.g., “If you were given the opportunity to teach your PY 101 course, how do you think you would do?”), followed by an actor’s video response to the question.

***Crafting actors’ responses within each condition.*** Depending on the experimental condition, actors’ responses were either a highly narcissistic ( $n = 84$ ; “I’d probably do better than the other 101 teachers at this school”), moderately narcissistic ( $n = 65$ ; “I’d do better than the other students in my class, but probably not my teacher”), or non-narcissistic ( $n = 73$ ; “I don’t have a degree in psychology, so probably not too great”) response. A pilot study was conducted to select the actors’ responses to the interview questions. Participants ( $N = 287$ ) completed an online survey in which they viewed 12 interview questions, one at a time, in a random order. When each interview question was presented, participants were asked to imagine another person said one of nine randomly-selected responses to the question. Then, they were asked “If someone answered the question in this way, would you say that person was...” and rated the participant on narcissism (1 = *Not at all narcissistic*, 10 = *Extremely narcissistic*). For each interview question in the highly narcissistic and non-narcissistic conditions, the responses with the highest and lowest narcissism rating were selected, respectively. For the moderately narcissistic condition, I selected responses that had a significantly higher narcissistic rating than the non-narcissistic response and a significantly lower narcissistic rating than the highly narcissistic response. When multiple responses satisfied this criterion, the response that was rated closest to the midpoint of the narcissism scale rating was chosen. One-sample *t*-tests demonstrated that all highly narcissistic and non-narcissistic responses were significantly above and below the midpoint of the scale, respectively. Additionally, moderately narcissistic responses did not significantly differ from the midpoint, except for one item that was retained because it was within one scale point of the midpoint. Ultimately, two of the 12 interview

questions were removed because no moderately narcissistic response satisfied the aforementioned criteria<sup>2</sup>.

**Actors.** To increase the generalizability of the results, four undergraduates (two male, two female) served as the actors. To reduce the influence of actor attractiveness, I conducted a pilot test to ensure the actors were moderately attractive. In the pilot study, participants ( $N = 21$ ) rated the attractiveness of a picture of each actor, and each actor's attractiveness fell within the middle two quartiles of a 1-10 scale of attractiveness (range = 4.2 – 6.8). In the video clips, each actor provided all possible experimental responses to each of the interview questions (i.e., each actor performed all lines for the highly narcissistic, moderately narcissistic, and non-narcissistic responses). However, participants were randomly assigned to see only one actor throughout the experiment.

After participants completed the video clip task, they completed a “first impression questionnaire” containing two measures of selective processing and one measure of perceived similarity. These measures were presented in a random order. Afterward, the final measures were presented in the order they are described.

**Selective-Interpretation Indices.** In one part of this task, participants were asked to write down five trait terms that they would use to describe the actor. Following this listing task, they used a 10-point scale (1 = *Very negative*, 10 = *Very positive*) to rate how favorably they view each of these traits. A mean score was computed for the ratings of all the traits they listed ( $\alpha = .83$ ;  $M = 5.2$ ;  $SD = 2.3$ ). On this measure of “subjective trait positivity,” a higher score indicated that participants viewed the actor's traits – that they spontaneously generated – in a more positive way.

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<sup>2</sup> One moderately narcissistic response was not significantly lower than the highly narcissistic response, but it was retained because it was nearly significant ( $p = .057$ ). See Appendix B for the chosen responses and the results of this pilot study.

In the other part of this task, participants rated the actor on a series of 10-point bipolar trait scales that had a negatively valenced narcissistic trait on one end and a positively valenced narcissistic trait on the other that could, in theory, be used to describe the same behaviors (1 = *self-absorbed*, 10 = *individualistic*; 1 = *self-confident*, 10 = *arrogant* [r]; 1 = *exploitative*, 10 = *strategic*; 1 = *assertive*, 10 = *aggressive* [r]; 1 = *self-promoting*, 10 = *braggart* [r]; 1 = *upfront*, 10 = *rude* [r]). After reverse-coding the appropriate items, a mean score was computed ( $\alpha = .84$ ;  $M = 5.2$ ;  $SD = 2.0$ ) for the six items to create a single index of “valenced trait interpretation,” with a higher score indicating participants viewed the actor as possessing primarily positively valenced traits. Because the two conceptualizations of selective interpretation were highly related ( $r = .70$ ,  $p < .001$ ), I  $z$ -scored both variables and averaged them into an index of selective interpretation ( $M = -0.03$ ;  $SD = 0.93$ ).

**Perceived Similarity.** Participants used a 10-point scale (1 = *Strongly disagree*, 10 = *Strongly agree*) to rate the following three statements: *I think Casey and I are similar in a lot of ways*; *I have a completely different personality than Casey* [r]; *Casey and I probably have a lot of things in common*. After reverse scoring the appropriate item, a mean score was computed to yield a single index of perceived similarity ( $\alpha = .93$ ;  $M = 4.0$ ;  $SD = 2.3$ ).

**Liking.** Participants completed the dependent measure by rating their attitudes toward the actor using six items reflecting the likability of the actor (1 = *I disliked Casey a lot*, 10 = *I liked Casey a lot*) (e.g., *How much did you like or dislike Casey?*, *Do you have a positive or negative impression of Casey?*, etc.) A mean score was computed for the six items to create a single index of liking ( $\alpha = .96$ ;  $M = 4.2$ ;  $SD = 2.4$ ).

**Manipulation check, demographics, awareness check.** As a manipulation check, participants indicated perceived narcissism by rating whether the actor was “*narcissistic*” on a 10-point scale (1 = *Strongly disagree*, 10 = *Strongly agree*). Participants answered basic



demographic questions (e.g., age, sex) before being probed for awareness and fully debriefed. No participant indicated awareness of the hypotheses.

**Other measures included.** I included other measures in the study that were not of central interest to hypothesis testing. After the measure of liking, participants rated the physical attractiveness of the actor, completed the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSE; Rosenberg, 1965), and answered other questions about the actor to address secondary research questions.

## RESULTS

### Manipulation Checks

To make sure that narcissism varied only by experimental condition and not actor, perceived narcissism was submitted to an ANOVA with actors (four actors) and experimental condition (highly narcissistic, moderately narcissistic, non-narcissistic) as independent variables. The results revealed a significant main effect of experimental condition,  $F(2, 211) = 60.08, p < .001$ , such that perceived narcissism was lowest in the non-narcissistic ( $M = 3.4$ ) condition and highest in the highly narcissistic ( $M = 7.4$ ) condition ( $M = 6.9$  for moderately narcissistic condition). There was not a significant main effect of actor,  $F(3, 211) = 0.19, p = .91$ , or a significant interaction between actor and response condition,  $F(5, 211) = 1.08, p = .37^3$ . Post hoc comparisons of perceived narcissism by experimental condition revealed that the non-narcissistic condition significantly differed from the moderately narcissistic ( $p < .001$ ) and highly narcissistic ( $p < .001$ ) conditions. However, because the moderately narcissistic condition did not significantly differ from the highly narcissistic condition ( $p = .67$ ), these conditions were combined. As a result, all subsequent analyses examined experimental condition as non-narcissistic ( $n = 73$ ) or narcissistic ( $n = 149$ ).

### Main Hypothesis Test

Prior to all subsequent analyses, all variables were standardized and experimental condition was dummy coded (0 = non-narcissistic condition, 1 = narcissistic condition [“moderate” and “high” narcissism conditions]). To test the primary prediction that

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<sup>3</sup> Due to a programming error, one of the actors was only represented in two experimental conditions. As a result, the between groups degrees of freedom for the interaction term is five instead of six.

experimental condition and NPI would interact to predict liking, I used a regression with an interaction term (see Table 1 in Appendix B). In the regression, NPI and experimental condition were entered into Step 1, and the interaction term (NPI X condition) was entered into Step 2. The results revealed a significant interaction ( $\beta = .26, p = .011$ ) such that narcissists (vs. non-narcissists) liked the actor marginally less in the non-narcissistic condition ( $\beta = -.18, p = .086$ ), but liked the actor significantly more in the narcissistic condition ( $\beta = .14, p = .043$ ) (see Figure 1 in Appendix B)<sup>4</sup>. In line with this finding, there was also an interaction between the NPI and perceived narcissism ( $\beta = .11, p = .018$ ), such that narcissists (vs. non-narcissists) liked the actor more when the actor was high in perceived narcissism ( $\beta = .14, p = .036$ ), but liked the actor less (though non-significantly) when the actor was low in perceived narcissism ( $\beta = -.08, p = .191$ ).

### **Examining Mediation**

I was interested in whether the interactive effect of narcissism X condition on liking was mediated by perceived similarity and selective interpretation (for correlations between variables in the model, see Table 2 in Appendix B). To address my mediation hypotheses, I constructed a path model using AMOS 22. Model fit was assessed using a chi-square test, the comparative fit index (CFI), normed fit index (NFI), and the root mean squared error of approximation (RMSEA). A non-significant chi-square indicates a close fit between the implied and observed covariances. Values above .90 are usually deemed acceptable for the CFI and NFI, while values below .06 are usually deemed acceptable for the RMSEA (Hu & Bentler, 1999).

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<sup>4</sup> Exploratory analyses were conducted to determine if gender moderated this interaction. The results revealed a marginally significant three-way interaction between narcissism, experimental condition, and gender ( $\beta = -.37, p = .062$ ). Because the effect was marginal and unanticipated given prior results on narcissistic-tolerance, it may have occurred by chance.

The final model<sup>5</sup>, displayed in Figure 2, fit the data well,  $\chi^2(4) = .99, p = .91$  (CFI = .99; NFI = .99; RMSEA = .00). I allowed the NPI, experimental condition, and the interaction term to covary. The direct paths from experimental condition to similarity, selective processing and liking accounted for the fact that, generally, people perceived themselves as more similar to a non-narcissistic actor, processed the behavior of the non-narcissistic actor more positively, and rated non-narcissistic actors more positively. The direct path from narcissism to similarity accounted for the finding that narcissism was, overall, negatively associated with perceived similarity. The direct path between the interaction term and similarity accounts for the finding that the effect of narcissism on perceived similarity varied over experimental conditions. Notably, narcissism was positively related to similarity judgments in the narcissistic condition ( $\beta = .28, p < .001$ ) but negatively related to such judgments in the non-narcissistic condition ( $\beta = -.23, p = .03$ ). As anticipated, similarity was directly related to selective interpretation and liking. Also, as anticipated, selective interpretation was positively related to liking. All direct paths included in the model were significant. Important for theory testing, as anticipated, there was a significant indirect effect of the NPIxCondition interaction term on liking via similarity (95% CI: .09, .30) and liking via similarity and selective interpretation (95% CI: .07, .22). This suggests that narcissists (vs. non-narcissists) liked the actor less in the non-narcissistic condition, but liked the actor more in the narcissistic condition, and that this interaction was mediated by similarity and selective interpretation. These indirect effects were decomposed into specific indirect effects (see Table 3 in Appendix B). Particularly relevant to the current predictions, the NPIxCondition interaction had a direct effect on perceived similarity, which had a direct effect

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<sup>5</sup> I also tested models in which the order of similarity, selective interpretation, and liking were varied. I presented the current model because it best fit the data and was in line with prior theory.

on selective interpretation, which in turn had a direct effect on liking for the actor. Hence, these data supported my anticipated chain of relations.

## DISCUSSION

The present findings provide support for the theory of narcissistic tolerance. Specifically, prior work suggests that narcissists are more tolerant of others' narcissistic traits (Adams et al., 2015; Hart & Adams, 2014; Wallace et al., 2015) and behaviors (Adams et al., 2015; Wallace et al., 2015). However, these prior studies relied on semantic descriptions, and people's reactions to descriptions can often be quite different from their response to real events (Ariely & Loewenstein, 2006). In the present study, rather than describing trait or behavioral manifestations of narcissism, participants rated the likability of real people that were acting in either a narcissistic or non-narcissistic fashion. In this more ecologically valid paradigm, narcissistic tolerance still occurred – narcissism was positively related to liking narcissistic others – but it was marginally negatively related to liking non-narcissistic others. As such, the present findings speak to the generality of narcissistic-tolerance theory and suggest the tolerance is *not* confined to situations that involve semantic processing of trait terms or trait-relevant behavior.

However, it is important not to overstate the current findings. Rather than narcissists liking other narcissists, the data seem to suggest that they simply dislike their behavior *less* than non-narcissists. Consequently, this relationship may be best described as narcissism helping to foster tolerance for the narcissistic actions of others.

It could also be argued that the effect on liking was the result of the actors' increased self-confidence in the narcissistic conditions. However, this is unlikely considering that the narcissistic responses for each experimental condition were created based on a three-factor model of narcissism (Ackerman et al., 2011). That is, all actor responses related to one of the

following factors: 1) Leadership/Authority, 2) Grandiose Exhibitionism, and 3) Entitlement/Exploitativeness. As a result, it is unlikely that the experimental manipulation was only manipulating the actors' self-confidence.

The present work also provides insights regarding possible mechanisms for narcissistic tolerance. Although researchers have suggested that narcissistic tolerance is due to perceived similarity (e.g., Hart & Adams, 2014; Wallace et al., 2015), the present study was the first to test this idea directly. Consistent with the perceived similarity mechanism, narcissistic tolerance seemed to arise (in part) from perceived similarity. Presumably, upon recognizing their similarity to the narcissistic target, narcissistic participants selectively interpreted the target's traits in a more positive light, which related to increased liking for the target (as portrayed in Figure 2). This finding seems consistent with prior results suggesting that narcissists provide better treatment (i.e., less aggressive responses) to someone they perceive as more similar to themselves (Konrath, Bushman, & Campbell, 2006).

Broadly, I see this research as consistent with the idea that narcissism reflects a disagreement about (un)desirable identity images. Recently, it has been argued that narcissists behave narcissistically because they assume people tolerate common narcissistic actions (e.g., bragging; Hart, Adams, & Burton, 2016). The main finding of the present research – that narcissism was positively related to liking narcissistic others but (marginally) negatively related to liking non-narcissistic others – is consistent with this perspective on narcissism. Narcissists find narcissistic behavior more tolerable and might think others share this evaluation (Chambers & Windschitl, 2004; Ross, Green, & House, 1977). If so, they should feel less inhibited about acting narcissistically around others (e.g., self-promoting around friends).

The current findings might also relate to the issue of whether narcissism is associated with self-loathing. Although some theorists have assumed that narcissism is related to self-

loathing (Freud, 1914/1957; Kernberg, 1986; Kohut & Wolf, 1986), more recent research has called this idea into question (e.g., Bosson et al., 2008; Bosson & Weaver, 2011). The current findings – and narcissistic-tolerance theory generally – provide somewhat novel insight into this issue. In the current research, narcissistic participants reliably identified narcissistic others as more similar to themselves and this perception of similarity to the self was associated with perceiving others' behavior in a more positive light and with liking the other. If narcissists truly tended to dislike themselves or their narcissistic identity, such a pattern of findings would be unlikely.

### **Limitations and Future Directions**

As is the case with all psychological research, there were limitations to the current study. First, the sample was composed of undergraduate students, which limits the generalizability of the results to other populations. Research suggests that current college students are more narcissistic than previous generations (Twenge, Konrath, Foster, Campbell, & Bushman, 2008), so the current sample was likely more homogenous than the general population. If that is the case, the current study may underestimate the impact of narcissism on tolerating others' narcissistic behavior. Future research should recruit participants from the general population to help bolster the current findings. Second, because this study was administered online, there is no way of reducing error associated with the participants' environment. However, considering that the robustness of the results would likely be reduced by such error, the current findings may be more pronounced in a more controlled environment. Nevertheless, future research should investigate this possibility in a controlled laboratory setting where outside distractions are minimized.

Third, the sample used for the current study was primarily composed of females. Although only marginally significant, the results revealed a three-way interaction between



narcissism, experimental condition, and gender. For males and females, narcissists (vs. non-narcissists) liked the actor less in the non-narcissistic condition, but more in the narcissistic condition. This pattern was more pronounced for males (vs. females), so a gender-balanced sample would likely increase the size of this interaction effect. This effect was unanticipated because past research on narcissistic-tolerance does not suggest gender should moderate the current findings (Adams, Hart, & Burton, 2015; Hart & Adams, 2014; Wallace, Grotzinger, Howard, & Parkhill, 2015). Because of these issues, it is difficult to draw conclusions from this finding. Future research should attempt to clarify this issue with a more gender-balanced sample.

Fourth, because of the nature of my analyses, it is difficult to ascertain the temporal ordering of the processes associated with perceived similarity, selective interpretation, and liking. It is entirely possible that my model does not fully characterize the nature of these mechanisms. Because of these issues, I tested alternative models with different path orderings, but each alternative had reduced model fit relative to the model presented in the text. Another issue with this methodology is that I am unable to make any causal inferences about how narcissists arrive at a positive or negative evaluation of another person. However, previous research has established a link between perceived similarity and liking (Sprecher, 2014), as well as between similarity and selective processing (Kunda, 1990). These findings are in line with the current model, which bolsters confidence in the temporal variable orderings in the final model. As a result, despite the aforementioned shortcomings, I believe these findings are an important step in understanding how narcissists evaluate others who exhibit narcissistic behaviors.

In sum, the present research provides novel, ecologically valid evidence that narcissists are more tolerant of narcissistic others. When participants watched others behaving

narcissistically (e.g., bragging), narcissistic (vs. non-narcissistic) participants in the present study rated targets as more similar to themselves, having more positive traits, and being more likable. In addition to being theoretically significant, these findings might lend insight to informal observations of narcissistic behavior. Perhaps, the next time the reader encounters a group of apparently narcissistic individuals acting obnoxiously (e.g., bragging about their sexual conquests) but still getting along with each other, the reader will recall that evaluative positivity lays in the eye of the narcissistic beholder.

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APPENDIX A

**Question 1:** When you are working in a group, how do you compare to others in terms of leadership ability?

	<b>Narcissistic</b>	<i>p</i> -values for narcissism ratings between conditions			<i>p</i> -values for distance from midpoint
		<b>Non</b>	<b>Moderate</b>	<b>High</b>	
I don't think other people even compare to me in leadership ability	8.3	.000	.007		.000
I'm usually the leader in the group. I think people naturally follow me because I have good ideas	6.5	.000		.007	.005
I'd say average? I usually don't feel like I have more leadership experience than most other people	3.5		.000	.000	.000

**Question 2:** At school, do you generally get along with your professors and classmates?

	<b>Narcissistic</b>	<i>p</i> -values for narcissism ratings between conditions			<i>p</i> -values for distance from midpoint
		<b>Non</b>	<b>Moderate</b>	<b>High</b>	
It isn't whether or not I get along with them; it is whether they can get along with me	6.9	.000	.015		.003
As long as they are all nice to me, we usually get along fine	5.1	.013		.015	.257
I try to be pretty friendly. There's no sense in being difficult for no reason	3.4		.013	.000	.000

**Question 3:** If you were given the opportunity to teach your PY 101 course, how do you think you would do?

	<b>Narcissistic</b>	<i>p</i> -values for narcissism ratings between conditions			<i>p</i> -values for distance from midpoint
		<b>Non</b>	<b>Moderate</b>	<b>High</b>	
I'd probably be better than the other 101 teachers at this school	7.9	.000	.003		.000
I'd do better than the other students in my class, but probably not my teacher	5.7	.000		.003	.545
I don't have a degree in psychology, so probably not too great	3.2		.000	.000	.000



**Question 4:** If a teacher taught you a specific task, but you figured out a more efficient way of doing it, what would you do?

	<b>Narcissistic</b>	<i>p</i> -values for narcissism ratings between conditions			<i>p</i> -values for distance from midpoint
		<b>Non</b>	<b>Moderate</b>	<b>High</b>	
If? This always happens. Sometimes I correct the professor, but I know it's not my job to make everyone's life easier	7.8	.000	.010		.000
I would definitely bring it up after class and point out that there is a better way of doing it than what the professor is teaching	5.9	.027		.010	.427
Well, if I thought I had a better solution, I might talk to my professor after class about it to get some feedback	4.0		.027	.000	.000

**Question 5:** How do you feel when you unexpectedly become the center of attention?

	<b>Narcissistic</b>	<i>p</i> -values for narcissism ratings between conditions			<i>p</i> -values for distance from midpoint
		<b>Non</b>	<b>Moderate</b>	<b>High</b>	
What do you mean unexpectedly? I'm usually the center of attention so I'd sort of expect it	9.0	.000	.000		.000
Pretty good. I like being the center of attention; it gives me a chance to entertain people	6.1	.001		.000	.199
I don't necessarily like it, but sometimes you just have to go with it	3.8		.001	.000	.000

**Question 6:** Given your current accomplishments, would you consider yourself successful?

	<b>Narcissistic</b>	<i>p</i> -values for narcissism ratings between conditions			<i>p</i> -values for distance from midpoint
		<b>Non</b>	<b>Moderate</b>	<b>High</b>	
Definitely. I have accomplished more than what most people have accomplished in a lifetime and I've still got a wide road ahead of me	7.1	.000	.034		.001
Pretty successful for being my age, but nothing compared to what I will accomplish in the future	5.4	.003		.034	.782
I'm sure there are others more successful than me, but I'm happy with my accomplishments	3.4		.003	.000	.000

**Question 7:** What part of school is most challenging for you?

	<b>Narcissistic</b>	<i>p</i> -values for narcissism ratings between conditions			<i>p</i> -values for distance from midpoint
		<b>Non</b>	<b>Moderate</b>	<b>High</b>	
School isn't challenging for me. I really don't even need to be in college, I just need the piece of paper so I can get a job	7.9	.000	.000		.000
Time management is the most challenging for me, but I'm good at everything else	5.3	.009		.000	.526
I think the most challenging part of school is just learning how to juggle everything at once. There is no one thing in particular; it's all of it together	3.4		.009	.000	.000

**Question 8:** Would you say that you're a people-person?

	<b>Narcissistic</b>	<i>p</i> -values for narcissism ratings between conditions			<i>p</i> -values for distance from midpoint
		<b>Non</b>	<b>Moderate</b>	<b>High</b>	
I'd say so. When people don't like me, it's usually because they're insecure with themselves	7.6	.000	.001		.000
People seem to like me, so I'd say I'm a people person	5.5	.004		.001	.939
Sometimes. I mean, I can make friends, but I doubt I'd be good in sales	3.5		.004	.000	.000

**Question 9:** Do you enjoy helping other people?

	<b>Narcissistic</b>	<i>p</i> -values for narcissism ratings between conditions			<i>p</i> -values for distance from midpoint
		<b>Non</b>	<b>Moderate</b>	<b>High</b>	
I guess if they're going to do something for me in return. Why should I spend my time on someone else if I'm not getting anything out of it?	7.7	.000	.001		.000
Yeah, you never know when you'll need to ask them for help	5.1	.049		.001	.434
Yeah, if someone genuinely needs help, I'm glad to help them. I think people should be there for each other	3.0		.049	.000	.000

**Question 10:** Has there ever been a time in your life when you feel you were wronged? If so, when?

	<b>Narcissistic</b>	<i>p</i> -values for narcissism ratings between conditions			<i>p</i> -values for distance from midpoint
		<b>Non</b>	<b>Moderate</b>	<b>High</b>	
Yeah, someone stole my parking spot the other day. They pulled in before I could, but I know I saw that spot first. What a jerk	6.7	.000	.036		.000
Yeah. I can't think of any specific examples, but it bothers me when people refuse to admit they are in the wrong	5.1	.057		.036	.276
I guess I feel wronged when someone cuts me off in traffic. I think you just have to let it go though	3.5		.057	.000	.000

APPENDIX B

Figure 1. The Interaction of Narcissism and Experimental Condition on Liking (z-scored)

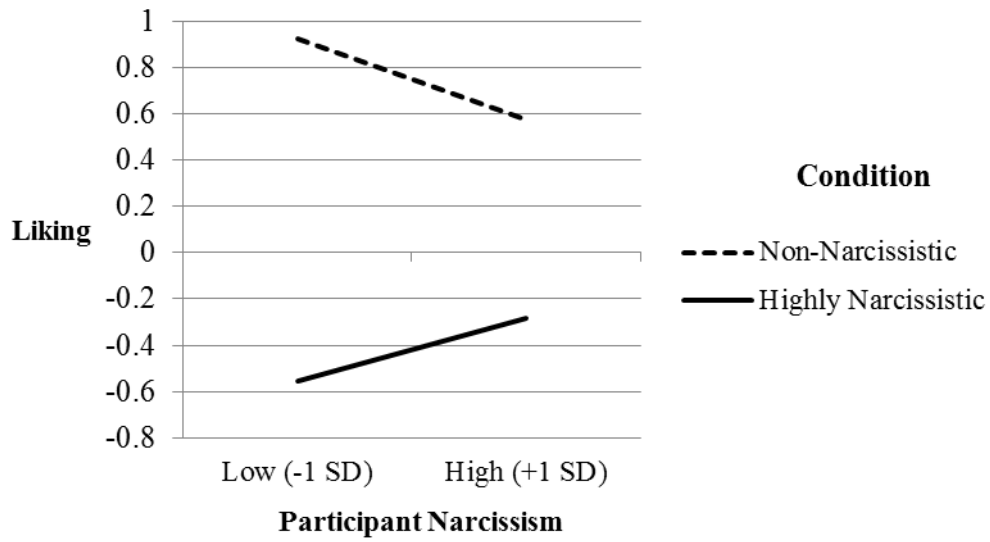
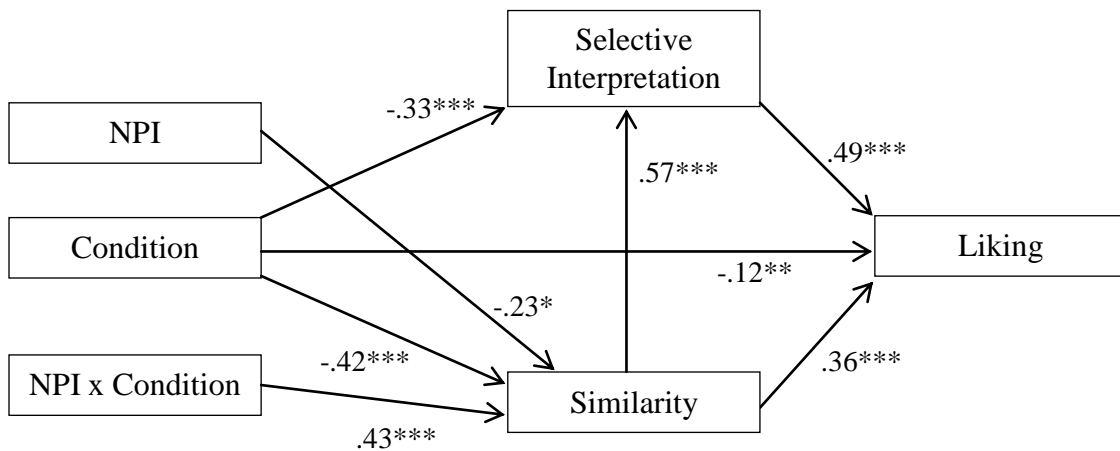


Figure 2: Path Model with Standardized Regression Weights



Note.  $*** p < .001$ ;  $** p < .01$ ;  $* p < .05$

Table 1: Hierarchical Regression of Liking on Narcissism and Experimental Condition

Variable	B	SE(B)	$\beta$	$\Delta R^2$
Step 1				.30**
NPI	0.04	.06	.04	
Experimental Condition	-1.17	.12	-.55**	
Step 2				.02*
NPI	-0.18	.10	-.18	
Experimental Condition	-1.17	.12	-.55**	
NPI x Condition	0.31	.12	.26*	

Note. \*\* $p < .001$ ; \* $p < .05$

Table 2: Correlations Among Variables

	1	2	3
1. Narcissism			
2. Liking	.03		
3. Selective Interpretation	.05	.81**	
4. Similarity	.12	.76*	.71**

Note. \*\*  $p < .001$ .

Table 3: Indirect Effects of Narcissism and Condition

Indirect Path	Estimate	SE	95% CI	
NPIxCondition → Similarity → Selective Interpretation → Liking	.14**	.04	.07	.22
NPIxCondition → Similarity → Liking	.18**	.06	.09	.30
Condition → Similarity → Selective Interpretation → Liking	-.25**	.05	-.35	-.16
Condition → Selective Interpretation → Liking	-.35**	.06	-.47	-.23
Condition → Similarity → Liking	-.32**	.07	-.48	-.20
NPI → Similarity → Selective Interpretation → Liking	-.06*	.03	-.12	.00
NPI → Similarity → Liking	-.08*	.04	-.17	-.01

Note. \*\*  $p < .001$ ; \*  $p < .05$