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# Using Imagined Interactions to Predict Covert Narcissism

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*This research examined the association between covert narcissism and imagined interactions, a type of social cognition and intrapersonal communication using the hypersensitive narcissism scale and the Survey of Imagined Interactions. Covert narcissism defined as hypersensitivity to criticism and overcompensating with inflated self exaggeration has been ignored in communication and in psychology. A regression analysis based on 252 participants revealed support for hypotheses demonstrating associations between frequency, self-dominance, ruminating about conflict and narcissism as well as significant associations between lack of compensation, relational maintenance, and covert narcissism. Results are discussed in terms of an intrapersonal communication profile of covert narcissism.*

*Keywords: Covert Narcissism; Imagined Interactions*

Recall the classic Greek mythology of Narcissus who was a hunter renowned for his beauty resulting in pride. Yet, he disdained those who loved him. A rival, Nemesis attracted Narcissus to a pool where he saw his own reflection in the waters and fell in love with it, not realizing it was merely an image. Unable to leave the beauty of his reflection, Narcissus died. In everyday usage, *narcissism* often reflects egoism, vanity, conceit, or selfishness. The story of Narcissus represents self-absorption. Yet, a person can be so absorbed with themselves that they engage in imagined interactions in which they imagine themselves dominating the conversation to their advantage

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and they are the center of attention. The purpose of this research is to examine the association between covert narcissism and imagined interactions.

Imagined interactions (IIs) are a type of intrapersonal communication grounded in symbolic interactionism and cognitive script theory using mental imagery to envision encounters with others that serve a variety of functions (Honeycutt, 2003a, 2008). The II construct has provided a beneficial mechanism for operationalizing the study of intrapersonal communication because it offers a sound theory based on the reasons for imagining interaction with others (Honeycutt, 2008). IIs may be measured as a personality trait or contextually in various situations, contexts, or with certain people (Honeycutt, 2010).

There are multiple attributes or characteristics of imagined interactions (IIs) that need to be defined. The first attribute is *frequency*, which refers to the "activity or regularity at which IIs occur for an individual" (Honeycutt, 2010, p. 2). *Proactivity* refers to imagined interactions that occur before an anticipated encounter and are associated with the rehearsal function of IIs (Honeycutt, 2010). *Retroactive* IIs serve the function of helping people to review what occurred during an interaction. Often, these are portrayed as *flashbacks* in television dramas. Generally, this is a positive attribute, but in a certain percentage of individuals, retroactive IIs reflect rumination, and the individual persistently reflects on negative messages (causing negative affect) (Honeycutt, 2010; McCann, Honeycutt, & Keaton, 2010). The fourth attribute of IIs is *variety*, which refers to the diversity of topics and partners with which one has IIs (Honeycutt, 2010). *Discrepancy* refers to the attribute that provides for the incongruity between IIs and the actual interaction that they address (Honeycutt, 2010). In other words, discrepancy is reflected when people imagine that the outcome of an interaction is different from what actually occurs. It is important to note here that previous work has linked the lack of discrepancy and *extraversion* using the Myers-Briggs (Myers, McCaulley, Quenk, & Hammer, 1998) Inventory (Honeycutt, 2003b). Extraversion is one of the dimensions of the Big Five personality traits. Some individuals imagine that they are doing most if not all of the talking during these interactions; this is referred to as *self-dominance* (Honeycutt, 2010). *Valence*, the seventh attribute of IIs, refers to the amount and diversity of emotions that are experienced while envisioning conversation (Honeycutt, 2010). The final attribute of IIs is *specificity*, which refers to the level of detail and distinction of images contained within IIs.

There are also several functions of IIs that are connected with the use of IIs. The six functions IIs serve are: 1) *relational maintenance*, 2) *conflict-linkage*, which explains the persistence of ongoing conflict, 3) *rehearsal*, which is where an individual can rehearse plans mentally prior to activating them, 4) *self-understanding*, which explains how IIs are used to gain a deeper understanding of the individual's attitudes and beliefs, 5) *catharsis*, which acknowledges II's abilities to relieve tension and reduce uncertainty, and 6) *compensation*, which is when IIs serve as compensation for missing interactions (Honeycutt, 2010).

In the evolution of the study of imagined interactions, scholars have turned to a trait-based explanation for the occurrence and effectiveness of imagined interactions.

Honeycutt (2010) implicated biological dimensions of communication discussed earlier in the analysis of imagined interactions, specifically the conflict-linkage function of IIs. In particular, that there is "a biological and genetic component of conflict engagement that is reflected in brain activity" (p. 45). Physiological measures of couples in conflict were taken in an attempt to find the biological linkages of conflict when people think about arguments (i.e., imagined interactions). Arousal in this situation is indeed related to the fight-or-flight system (Honeycutt, 2010); the fight-or-flight system, as outlined by Gray (1991), is a part of the neurobiological system comprised of the behavioral activation system, behavioral inhibition system, and fight-or-flight system.

One of the II attributes pertaining to narcissism is self-dominance in which people concentrate on their own messages as opposed to being in a listening role and acknowledging another person's conversational input. Covert narcissism is discussed next.



## Narcissism

Narcissism is a term with a wide range of meanings, depending on whether it is used to describe a central concept of psychoanalytic theory, a mental illness, a social or cultural problem, or simply a personality trait (Campbell & Foster, 2007). Except in the sense of primary narcissism or healthy self-love, narcissism usually is used to describe some kind of problem in a person or group's relationships with self and others. In everyday communication, narcissism often means egoism, vanity, conceit, or simple selfishness. By definition, narcissism is an excessive love for one's self, feelings of superiority, and attention seeking (Vernon, Villani, Vickers, & Harris, 2008). Since imagined interactions are a form of social cognition, examining the only dimension of the dark triad linked to cognitive ability in relation to imagined interactions (a form of intrapersonal communication) should be revealing.

The dark triad consists of Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy. Machiavellians, narcissists, and psychopaths have a tendency to manipulate and exploit others to get what they desire (Lee & Ashton, 2005). Machiavellians are characterized by manipulation and exploitation of others, with a mocking disregard for morality and a focus on self-interest and deception (Jabowitz & Egan, 2006). Machiavellianism reflects a tendency to deceive and manipulate other people for gain (Anglo, 2005). The narcissistic personality is characterized by a pretentious self-concept, a sense of entitlement, lack of empathy, and consideration while the psychopath, or antisocial personality, is characterized by impulsive thrill-seeking and selfishness, insensitivity, lack of emotion, superficial charm, and remorselessness (Paulus & Williams, 2002).

Despite the similarities between these three personalities, research has revealed that they are distinct personalities (Paulhus & Williams, 2002). For example, Machiavellians are different from narcissists in that they do not make exaggerated claims about their importance and do not strive to impress others. A second example is that Machiavellians and narcissists differ from psychopaths in that these

individuals can understand the emotions of others and can express empathy for their victims (Christie & Geis, 1970).

Honeycutt, Pence, and Gearhart (in press) found relationships between antisocial traits in the form of neuroticism and lack of conscientiousness and imagined interactions. When reviewing the extant literature on antisocial, dark side attributes and imagined interactions, there is research involving imagined interactions and Machiavellianism (Allen, 1990). Additionally, and especially pertinent to the current study, Machiavellianism has been studied in relation to imagined interactions. Allen found positive correlations between Machiavellianism and having proactive and retroactive IIs involving a diverse set of interaction partners and topics. The personalities that make up Machiavellianism and narcissism share a sense of entitlement, selfishness, and an exaggerated sense of self-importance (Barlow, Qualter, & Stylianou, 2010). Ironically, one of the eight attributes of IIs is self-dominance in which individuals imagine doing most of the talking as opposed to being in a listening role while imagining conversations with others. Hence, we would expect self-dominance to be associated with self-dominated IIs. This is discussed below in terms of the second hypothesis.

Narcissism has been examined in psychoanalytic theory for over a century with relatively little examination in communication. The narcissistic personality is characterized by a pompous self-view, a sense of entitlement, lack of empathy, and egotism. A number of theorists and researchers have suggested that the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) criteria for narcissism are too narrowly drawn (and decidedly clinical) and miss the more covert, hypersensitive, and vulnerable aspects of narcissistic disturbances (Wink, 1991). Research into characteristically narcissistic attribution styles has historically been overreliant on the DSM-based measure of narcissism. However, the items on the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI) were refined to capture the less clinical aspects of narcissism, resulting in the construct's successful migration from [a] clinical to subclinical variable (Paulhus & Williams, 2002).

Wink (1991) discussed that there are indeed two components of narcissism, one of particular interest to social scientists; Grandiosity-Exhibitionism (overt) and Vulnerability-Sensitivity (covert). However, there is debate in the psychological literature about the typology of narcissism with some researchers arguing that the overt and covert distinctions are important (Brown, Budzek, & Tamborski, 2009) while others believe the distinction is inaccurate and any perpetuation of overt and covert narcissism as distinct types is inaccurate (Campbell & Miller, 2011). Therefore, keeping in mind this debate, we used a measure of covert narcissism discussed further below in order to supersede these distinctions. However, the following review acknowledges these distinctions.

Overt narcissists report higher self-esteem and higher satisfaction with life while covert narcissists report lower self-esteem and lower satisfaction with life (Rose, 2002). In spite of their differences in interpersonal style, overtly and covertly narcissistic individuals share an underlying sense of entitlement and grandiose self-relevant fantasies. The NPI and its MMPI-based alternative form have become accepted and widely used as measures of the overt type of narcissism emphasized in the American

Psychiatric Association's *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders-III* (1980) 3rd ed.; *DSM–IIIR* (1987) 3rd ed., revised and the *DSM-IV-R* (2000) 4th ed., text rev. The MMPI stands for the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory and is one of the most frequently used personality tests in mental health. The MMPI is used by trained professionals to assist in identifying personality structure and psychopathology. Within the debate on the typology of narcissism, this measure has been criticized, despite its refinement, for ignoring covert narcissism which is reflected in hypersensitivity to criticism and overcompensating with inflated self exaggeration. A secondary aim of this study became to further place covert narcissism into the social science literature.

There have been some studies emerging on covert narcissism. Hendin and Cheek (1997) reviewed various correlates of narcissism and noted that "despite its age, Murray's (1938) conception of narcissism remains a modern discourse on how an individual can be both vulnerable and self-absorbed at the same time" (p. 590), thus noting that for decades researchers have conceptualized a dualism in the trait of narcissism. Additionally, Hendin and Cheek (1997) found that covert (or hypersensitive) narcissism has a strong negative association with agreeableness ($r = -.44$) and positively associated with neuroticism ($r = .55$).

While covert narcissism has not directly been examined in relation to imagined interactions, the result on the association between Machiavellianism and imagined interactions is compelling. As noted earlier, Machiavellianism was associated with pro- and retroactive imagined interactions that serve a rehearsal function (Allen, 1990). Furthermore, results revealed that high Machs reported more unpleasant imagined interaction than low Machs. These findings suggested that high Machs spend more mental time trying to analyze problematic situations, possibly using imagined interactions to identify goal paths that allow them to achieve desired outcomes. As noted earlier, a major function of IIs is rehearsal and planning of messages. Berger (1997) discusses how planning for interactions requires the articulation of goals in order to ensure that the strategy is appropriate for that particular situation. Extrapolating the results from prior research on imagined interactions and Machiavellian we posited that, like Machiavellianism, covert narcissism will be related to the experience of imagined interactions. More specifically the following hypothesis is tested:

H1: The frequency of IIs will be associated with covert narcissism.

Since Machiavellianism and Narcissism reflects selfishness, indulgence, and self-absorption (Barlow et al., 2010), we expect that their imagined interactions are characterized by self-dominance because this attribute reflects attention paid to oneself in the speaking role as opposed to being in a listening role (other-dominance). Research suggested that a person engaging in IIs concerned with matters of conflict will likely find the self being more dominant than the II partner (Edwards, Honeycutt, & Zagacki, 1988). Therefore, the following hypotheses were tested:

H2: Covert narcissism will be associated with imagined interactions characterized by self-dominance.

H3: Covert narcissism will be associated with imagined interactions involving thought and rumination about conflict.

In order to test these hypotheses, we used a hierarchical regression analysis in which imagined interaction attributes were entered in the first block while II functions were entered in the second block.

## Method

### *Participants*

To test the imagined interaction model of covert narcissism, undergraduate students ($n = 252$) enrolled in communication courses at a large southern university filled out a variety of self-report measures while seated at a computer following IRB procedures. The average age of the participants was 21.43 and ranged from 18 to 43 ($SD = 2.58$). The sample was fairly evenly distributed (males = 48%, females = 52%). The sample was distributed among class ranks: freshman (11%), sophomore (34%), juniors (27%), and seniors (28%). The ethnic distribution was primarily Caucasian ($n = 207$, 81%) followed by African American ($n = 31$, 12%), Hispanic ($n = 8$, 3%), Asians ($n = 5$, 2%) and Native Americans ($n = 5$, 2%). All participants received credit in their communication studies courses for participation, and all data collected was completely anonymous.

### *Instrumentation*

The 10-item covert/hypersensitive narcissism scale was used to measure narcissism (Hendin & Cheek, 1997). This measure was derived from Murray's (1938) Narcissism scale by correlating the items of Murray's (1938) original Narcissism Scale with an MMPI-based composite measure of covert narcissism. Sample items include—I can become entirely absorbed in thinking about my personal affairs, my health, my cares, or my relations to others. My feelings are easily hurt by ridicule or the slighting remarks of others. Alpha for this scale was .78. The Survey of Imagined interaction was used to measure attributes and functions of imagined interaction (Honeycutt, 2010). Reliabilities were consistent: frequency ($\alpha = .90$), proactivity ($\alpha = .94$), retroactivity ($\alpha = .82$), variety ($\alpha = .74$), discrepancy ($\alpha = .77$), valence ($\alpha = .82$), specificity ($\alpha = .71$), self-dominance ($\alpha = .76$), self-understanding ($\alpha = .84$), rehearsal ($\alpha = .87$), catharsis ($\alpha = .77$), conflict-linkage ($\alpha = .78$), compensation ($\alpha = .85$), relational maintenance ($\alpha = .87$).

## Results

Table 1 presents the standardized regression coefficients. The results provide moderate support for the hypotheses that narcissism is predicted by attributes and functions of imagined interactions. Both blocks of II predictors were significant (II attribute block: $F$ (7, 244) = 6.27, $p = .000$; II function block: $F$ (13, 238) = 4.79, $p = .000$). As revealed in Table 1, there was support for the first hypothesis about covert

**Table 1** Predictors of Covert Narcissism

| Attributes | *B* | *t* |
|---|---|---|
| Frequency | .21 | 2.47** |
| Retroactivity | .03 | .36 |
| Proactivity | .06 | .78 |
| Variety | .08 | 1.06 |
| Discrepancy | .16 | 2.55** |
| Valence | −.08 | −1.12 |
| Specificity | .18 | 2.30* |
| Self-Dominance | .19 | 2.71** |
| *Functions* | | |
| Self-Understanding | −.05 | −.57 |
| Rehearsal | .02 | .20 |
| Catharsis | .07 | 1.01 |
| Conflict Linkage | .15 | 2.04* |
| Compensation | −.15 | −2.39* |
| Relational Maintenance | .17 | 2.49* |

*Note.* N = 252. Model 1: $r^2 = .15$; Adjusted $r^2 = .12$. Model 2: $r^2 = .21$; Adjusted $r^2 = .16$.
**Indicates significance at the .01 level. *Indicates significance at the .05 level.

narcissism and frequency of imagined interactions. Specially, the strongest effect on covert narcissism is frequency of imagined interactions ($B = .21$) showing that higher levels of covert narcissism can be predicted by having frequent imagined interactions. As revealed in Table 1, the second hypothesis was supported in which self-dominated imagined interactions were associated with covert narcissism. Additionally, the third hypothesis was supported in which ruminating about conflict was slightly associated with covert narcissism.

There were additional predictors of covert narcissism. Another strong, positive effect is specificity of imagined interactions ($\beta = .18$), suggesting that the more narcissistic a person is, the more detailed and specific their imagined interactions are. A third positive effect is between narcissism and relational maintenance ($\beta = .17$), which suggests that a more narcissistic individual has more imagined interactions that involve maintaining a relationship. A fourth effect reveals that narcissist's actual communication encounters are more discrepant from what they envisioned ($\beta = .16$). A negative association was found between the compensation function and covert narcissism ($\beta = -.15$).

## Discussion

Certain imagined interaction attributes and functions are associated with covert narcissism. Hence, a partial profile of a narcissistic individual in terms of intrapersonal communication emerges. Covert narcissism is associated with having a lot of imagined interactions that are discrepant from reality. Moreover, as hypothesized,

narcissists have specific IIs in which they are self-dominant; they envision themselves doing most of the talking as opposed to being in a listening role. Conflict linkage is associated with covert narcissism suggesting that narcissists are envisioning arguments and conflict scenes. This finding adds to the growing literature on taking conflict personally and imagined interactions in which Wallenfelsz and Hample (2010) found that taking conflict personally is correlated with rumination and various imagined interaction attributes. Ironically, relational maintenance was also associated with narcissism. Each of the hypotheses is discussed in turn.

In terms of the first hypothesis, the finding that the frequency of imagined interactions is positively associated with covert narcissism is interesting in terms of self-indulgence. As noted earlier, narcissism is characterized by an excessive love for one's self, feelings of superiority, and attention seeking (Vernon et al., 2008). Narcissists would therefore think more about themselves and their own behaviors more frequently than nonnarcissists, resulting in more imagined interactions. These findings fit well with earlier published findings on Machiavellianism (Allen, 1990). While the dark triad consists of three distinct personality attributes, researchers concede to some overlap (Paulhus & Williams, 2002).

We found that the more narcissistic a person, the more imagined interactions the person has that involve maintaining a relationship. There are several explanations for this finding. First, there is a tendency for dark personalities to exhibit a higher nonverbal IQ as opposed to a verbal IQ. Paulhus and Williams (2002) noted how this finding defied "the stereotype of the smooth talking manipulator but supports the notion of a complex intellectual deficit. One possibility is that the frustration arising from an inability to communicate one's ideas eventuates in more malevolent interpersonal strategies" (p. 561). This speculation is compatible with our findings that discrepancy, lack of compensatory imagined interactions, and ruminating about conflict is associated with narcissism. Perhaps, the verbal nature of imagined interactions offers some insight on the distinction between verbal and nonverbal IQ. Related to this, we found that specificity was slightly associated with covert narcissism. Recall that the specificity attribute of IIs reflects the level of detail and distinction of images contained within IIs (Honeycutt, 2003a). Specific IIs reflect enhanced visual and verbal imagery. Moreover, Honeycutt (2008) described why "the term 'imagined interaction' is strategically used of 'imaginary conversation' or 'internal dialogue' because 'interaction' is a broader term that takes into account nonverbal and verbal imagery" (p. 79). This point is compatible with Paulhus and Williams (2002) speculation about malevolent interpersonal strategies.

It can be suggested that the use of more exploitive or interpersonal strategies takes a greater amount of effort focused on the victim of such strategies; thus, while findings in the current study state that a narcissist's imagined interactions are not congruent with real-world scenarios, one can hypothesize that due to the motives of a narcissist, more time is spent focusing on how to control a relationship (albeit likely unsuccessfully). Again, recall that there was a slight association between the relational maintenance function of imagined interactions and covert narcissism. This may reflect the cultural idiom in which narcissists "want to have their cake and eat it

too.'' According to the McGraw-Hill (2002) idiom dictionary, this cliché reflects to have in one's possession something and be able to use or exploit it; to have it both ways. Therefore, the imagined interactions of some narcissists may reflect the desire to control the interaction partner. This interpretation is buttressed by the finding that self-dominance was associated with covert narcissism. Considering this, control and self-dominance, another relationship revealed in the study, seem to go hand in hand.

Since a narcissistic person is self-focused instead of other-focused, it is not surprising that the current study yielded support for the second hypothesis showing that narcissistic individuals have imagined interactions in which they are self-dominant as well as having specific images of themselves in encounters as opposed to being vague and hazy. Hence, narcissists concentrate attention on their messages rather than being in a listening role. The study of imagined interactions has a legacy in the study of intrapersonal communication and social cognition over 25 years as evidenced by the first publication (Edwards et al., 1988).

The fact that an important attribute of IIs is self-dominance immediately reflects self-centeredness which is a characteristic of narcissism. Moreover, McCann and Honeycutt (2006) discuss other-dominance in other cultures in which people imagine more of what their conversational partner is saying including Thai and Japanese participants compared to Americans. The analysis of intercultural narcissism is warranted in additional research given cultural dimension theory (e.g., masculinity-femininity, power distance, uncertainty avoidance) discussed by Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010).

Additionally, this data revealed that their actual encounters are less congruent with real life compared to those who are not narcissistic (and thus more able to accurately predict real-life scenarios). Often, discrepant IIs reflect conversations that do go as planned. Correspondingly, we did not find an association between rehearsal and covert narcissism, which could reflect the lower verbal IQ of narcissists reported by Paulhus and Williams (2002).

Narcissistic individuals likely spend less time than nonnarcissistic individuals concerning themselves with the individual personality differences of others, so the narcissistic individual is likely to not be as accurate at predicting the behaviors and responses of others. Further supporting this link is Paulhus and Williams (2002), whose study contributed to the extant literature on narcissism and self-enhancement. Narcissists have a strong self-deceptive (i.e., low insight) component to their personality; this is different from Machiavellians, who are more grounded, or reality based, in their sense of self (Paulhus & Williams, 2002). Since the narcissist does not have a firm grip on reality, it is only logical to assume that their imagining of real-life scenarios is incongruent with the actual happenings of real-life scenarios (i.e., discrepant). Since narcissists are likely to be extraverts (Miller & Campbell, 2008) it seems counterintuitive that outgoing people who have more experience with interpersonal encounters are worse at predicting future encounters. Possible explanations could be found in the content of actual interactions between narcissistic extraverts and others. If a narcissistic extravert is completely unfocused on the other during interpersonal encounters, then the frequency of the encounters will have little to do with the regard

a narcissistic extravert has toward others and facets of the other that could predict future interactions.

The third hypothesis was supported in which ruminating about conflict was associated with covert narcissism. Furthermore, as noted by Wallenfelsz and Hample (2010), it may be difficult for a person who has a tendency to take conflict personally to imagine a conflict that is not personal. Serial arguing, or the persistence of conflict within a relationship, would seem to be decidedly antisocial in nature, but that is not always the case. Previous literature on serial conflict within relationships showed that the most important feature of serial arguing is not the number of times a disagreement has occurred, but rather the degree to which partners believe that they are making progress toward resolution (Johnson & Roloff, 2000).

Relational maintenance and compensation emerged as predictors of covert narcissism. Narcissism has been widely studied as a personality disorder and is characterized by dominance, exhibitionism, and exploitation, as well as feelings of superiority and entitlement (Lee & Ashton, 2005). Relational maintenance and compensation have similar functions—relational maintenance imagined interactions can be used to keep a relationship alive in the absence of interaction (i.e., in long-distance relationships); compensation is used for the specific purpose of substituting real interaction. Relatedly, Allen (1994) found that long-distance couples had more IIs to increase self and partner understanding as well as using IIs to rehearse messages compared to non-geographically separated relationships. Allen speculated that since long-distance couples have less actual conversations, they use IIs to resolve relational issues in their mind and as a coping strategy to maintain the relationship. Hence, compensation helped to psychologically maintain the relationships during the separation.

A sense of entitlement that most narcissists have can lead to a certain obsessive quality. If a narcissist feeds off of others in order to feel superior, needing to fill voids of real interaction with imagined interactions makes sense. Narcissists need to constantly be reaffirmed because they feel entitled to that reaffirmation and need the reaffirmation to confirm their superiority.

Although narcissists reported more self-dominance in that the self talks the most in IIs (Honeycutt, Zagacki, & Edwards, 1989), we caution our readers that culture plays an important role in IIs. McCann and Honeycutt (2006) discussed how Americans are more self-dominant than participants in other cultures; particularly Thailand and Japan.

### *Limitations and Future Research*

As with any research, there are some limitations to our study. The sample was primarily composed of Caucasian college students with a median age of 20 which is common to many studies because of the convenience of accessing students for course credit. Because of our relatively homogeneous sample, as well as the absence of random sampling in the study, the results of this study cannot be generalized to the entire population. Since, most participants were Caucasian, intercultural differences are unknown.

An examination of older age cohorts using survey monkey could be worthwhile due to possible generational differences. There has been debate in the psychological literature and the popular press that self-esteem among young people has become so problematic that an epidemic of narcissism has gripped the younger generation (Twenge & Campbell, 2009) while others came to the opposite conclusion—that little evidence exists for a rise in narcissism over time (Trzesniewski & Donnellan, 2010). Concurrently, research has established a link between the number of friends you have on Facebook and the degree to which you are a ''socially disruptive'' narcissist, confirming the conclusions of many social media skeptics. People who score highly on the Narcissistic Personality Inventory questionnaire had more friends on Facebook, tagged themselves more often, changed their photos frequently, were self-promoting, and updated their newsfeeds more regularly (Carpenter, 2012).

### *Conclusion*

A profile of a narcissist emerges in terms of the attributes and functions of their IIs. A narcissist appears to have a lot of IIs that are moderately discrepant from actual interaction, somewhat specific in their imagery, and self-dominant in their IIs. Additionally, narcissism is characterized by IIs that reflect conflict, lack of compensation, and reflect relational maintenance. Given the aforementioned links to Machiavellianism in the literature review, these attributes and functions cluster to provide the appearance of concern for the relational partner. Note, they are using their IIs for compensation with the interaction partner. Future research needs to more fully explore the relational maintenance function of IIs and the association with narcissism.

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