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Relationship Between Perceived Narcissistic Personality Traits in Mothers and Level of
Differentiation of Self in Their Adult Children

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree Doctor of
Philosophy in Psychology

by

Anna Gershelis

2011

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2011

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to all children of narcissistic mothers.

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Relationship Between Perceived Narcissistic Personality Traits in Mothers and Level of
Differentiation of Self in Their Adult Children

By

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California School of Professional Psychology

At

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Los Angeles

2011

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The impact of perceived narcissistic characterological traits of mothers on the development of self-differentiation in their adult children was the focus of the presenting study. Until the present time there has been no consensus reached with respect to the etiology of narcissism, although approaches to this topic have been theoretically discussed by prominent theorists. With respect to the theory of self-differentiation there is scarce research investigating the etiology of the process of self-differentiation. The present study hypothesized that a participant's perception of his/her mother's level of narcissism may contribute to the understanding of the etiology of self-differentiation. The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of the perceived maternal narcissism on the level of self-differentiation in adult children. The study addressed five areas. First, if perceived maternal narcissism impacted the level of emotional reactivity.

Second, if perceived maternal narcissism impacted the level of I position. Third, if perceived maternal narcissism impacted the level of emotional cutoff. Forth, if perceived maternal narcissism impacted the level of fusion with others. Finally, the study addressed if perceived maternal narcissism affected the level of self-differentiation overall.

A non-random sample was composed of 79 individuals 21 years of age and older. Participants were asked to complete a paper-and-pencil questionnaire packet which included a consent form, general information questionnaire, Narcissistic Personality Inventory by Raskin (1979), and Differentiation of Self Inventory by Skowron and Friedlander (1998). The results of the study indicated that after statistical analysis none of the five hypotheses formulated by the researcher were supported. Specifically, the results of the study indicated no significant relationship between the level of perceived maternal narcissism and emotional reactivity, emotional cutoff, I position, fusion with others, and differentiation of self. Finally, assumptions and limitations of the study, as well as implications for further research were discussed.

Keywords: emotional cutoff, emotional reactivity, fusion with others, I position, perceived maternal narcissism, self-differentiation

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Narcissism is one of the personality traits that has drawn attention of researchers and theoreticians for decades. Numerous hypotheses and theories have been formulated regarding the origins of this personality characteristic; however, no consensus has been reached among the investigators of this particular trait. Narcissism is commonly associated with pathology. However, of all personality disorders included in DSM-IV-TR (American Psychological Association, 2000), narcissistic personality disorder seems to be the only one that describes a characterological trait which every individual needs to possess for healthy functioning. An optimum level of narcissism may be crucial for maintaining a solid self-concept, as well as relatively high self-esteem and confidence. On the other hand, extremely high levels of narcissism may negatively impact functioning of an individual, leaving him or her socially impaired.

According to DSM-IV-TR (APA, 2000), individuals exhibiting pathological levels of narcissism have difficulties relating to other people, communicating their needs to other people in a healthy way, and providing care to others. DSM-IV-TR (APA, 2000) further describes several diagnostic features of narcissistic personality disorder including grandiose sense of self importance, preoccupation with fantasies of unlimited success and power, expectations of recognition by others of their superiority, a requirement of excessive admiration by others, an unreasonable expectation of especially favorable treatment by others, a sense of entitlement combined with the lack of sensitivity for others, a lack of empathy for other people, excessive, sometimes crippling envy of others'

successes, and a display of snobbish, disdainful, or patronizing attitudes. In other words, narcissism can best be described as an extreme preoccupation and involvement with the self. Individuals with narcissistic personalities have difficulty attuning to the needs of others. “Those who relate to individuals with Narcissistic Personality Disorder typically find an emotional coldness and lack of reciprocal interest” (APA, 2000, p. 715).

Narcissists “appear to live on an interpersonal stage, showing exhibitionistic behavior and making demands for attention and admiration” (Otway & Vignoles, 2006, p. 104). Many theorists believe that pathological levels of grandiosity are a defense against underlying feelings of inadequacy. Hence, “they respond to self-esteem threats with feelings of rage, defiance, shame, and humiliation” (Otway & Vignoles, 2006, p. 104).

Narcissistic personality disorder derives its name from mythology. A vivid description of relational patterns between narcissists and other people is provided by the Greek story of Echo and Narcissus. The myth describes the story of Echo and Narcissus. Echo was a beautiful nymph, one who was fond of talking and who was punished for this habit by Juno. The punishment robbed Echo of her power to initiate speech; she was able only to reply when spoken to. Narcissus was a very beautiful youth with whom Echo fell in love. She followed him everywhere, longing to express her feelings to him, but had no ability to do so. Narcissus rejected Echo’s feelings without explanation and left her in the woods, where she died suffering from love for Narcissus. However, her death left Narcissus indifferent. Narcissus was equally cruel to other nymphs who fell in love with him. He was not able to return affection. One day Narcissus stopped by a clear fountain to appease his thirst. As he leaned over to drink, he saw his own reflection in the

fountain and fell in love with the image. Narcissus gazed at his own image for hours and hours. He could not tear himself away. However, each time he attempted to reach for the image, it would be destroyed by his own hand. Thus, Narcissus could only look at his reflection in the water; he could never grasp it, never preserve the image or recall it. He came to experience feelings identical to Echo's as well as the other nymphs' who had loved him and could not capture his love in return. Wanting always to be near his own reflection, Narcissus could not leave. He finally died next to the fountain, suffering of love for himself. However, his dead body was never found, but in its place a flower, purple within and surrounded with white leaves, was discovered instead. This flower bears the name and is said to preserve the memory of Narcissus ("Echo and Narcissus", 2008).

Just as Narcissus fell in love with and could not separate from his own image, individuals with pathological levels of narcissism demonstrate a destructive preoccupation with themselves. Just as Narcissus treated Echo with coldness and unresponsiveness, narcissistic individuals lack empathy or concern for those who attempt to approach them with needs or desires of their own. Individuals with prominent narcissistic characterological traits are preoccupied with themselves and lack empathy for others (APA, 2000). Narcissistic characterological traits seem to impede the process of establishing healthy bonding with others. For example, mothers with prominent narcissistic characterological traits might be likely to have difficulty bonding with their children. Since the earliest beginnings of developmental theory, the importance of the bond between mother and child has been seen as crucial to the emotional development of

her offspring (Bowlby, 1988; Harlow, 1996; Mahler, 1986; Winnicott, 1987).

Furthermore, “attachment theory explains how certain early experiences are carried into adult relationships, affecting the way we behave and get along with others” (Sable, 2000, p. 3)

Despite the proliferation of theoretical material attempting to elucidate the influence of mothers variously described as “unempathic”, narcissistic, or otherwise disturbed in their ability to attach and bond with their children, no research findings exist regarding the impact of narcissistic characterological traits in mothers on the development of their children into adulthood. Previous research findings have demonstrated that individual differences in levels of intensity of narcissism appears to have served as predictors of a considerable range of outcomes in narcissistic individuals themselves, including aggression, sexually cohesive behaviors or fantasies, racial and other prejudices, belief in the paranormal, self-enhancing choice of romantic partners, and many other forms of self enhancement (Bushman & Baumeister, 1998; Bushman, Bonacci, van Dijk, & Baumeister, 2003; Campbell, 1999; Roe & Morgan, 2002; Sedikides, Campbell, Reeder, Elliot, & Gregg, 2002; Twenge & Campbell, 2003). These findings demonstrate the impact narcissism has on emotional and psychological functioning of an individual, but there is no research demonstrating the outcome of the impact of one person’s narcissism on the emotional functioning of another. The intent of the present study was to examine the impact of one person’s perceived narcissistic characterological traits on the emotional functioning of another; it specifically addressed the impact of both perceived narcissistic characterological traits in mothers by their adult

children and measured by the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (Raskin & Hall, 1979), on the level of self-differentiation in their adult children.

Differentiation of self is a concept introduced by Murray Bowen (1978) in his family systems approach to therapy. Although many researchers have applied this concept to various treatment modalities, there is no evidence of research on the etiology of the process of differentiation. The present study hypothesized that the adult child's level of self differentiation has been impacted by his/her perception of his/her mother's level of narcissism.

Bowen's theory rests on the assumption that a healthy level of self-differentiation provides an individual with a balance between the feelings of separateness and togetherness in social functioning (Bowen, 1978). Self-differentiated individuals are capable of maintaining a stable and solid sense of self in interactions with other people (Bowen, 1978). Based upon the above, it is safe to speculate that the development of a healthy level of self-differentiation in an individual depends on the development of a strong and stable sense of self. The present study hypothesized that an individual raised by a mother whom she/he perceives as having high levels of narcissistic characterological traits would be unlikely to develop a high level of self-differentiation. Thus, the current study was intended to expand knowledge of the etiology of the process of self-differentiation, and thus contribute to further study of this process in clinical work and research. Perceived maternal narcissism of course, may be only one factor contributing to the development of the level of self-differentiation. This study focused only on this

factor, while there is likely a plethora of other factors influencing the process of self-differentiation.

Statement of the Problem

The impact of perceived narcissistic characterological traits of mothers on the development of self-differentiation in their adult children was the focus of the presenting study. Until the present time there has been no consensus reached with respect to the etiology of narcissism, although approaches to this topic have been theoretically discussed by prominent theorists, such as Freud (1957), Kernberg (1975), Kohut (1977), and others. With respect to the theory of self-differentiation, the primary proponent of which is Murray Bowen (1978), there is scarce research investigating the etiology of the process of self-differentiation. The present study hypothesized that a participant's perception of his/her mother's level of narcissism may contribute to the understanding of the etiology of self-differentiation.

The present research study was designed to investigate the relationship between perceived maternal narcissism and the level of self-differentiation formed in adult children. Higher levels of perceived maternal narcissism were proposed to have greater impact than low levels on self-differentiation in adult children. The four components of the self-differentiation construct investigated in the study were Emotional Reactivity, I Position, Emotional Cutoff, and Fusion with Others. The following research questions were posed:

1. Is there a relationship between the level of Emotional Reactivity in adult children and a perceived level of narcissistic personality traits in their mothers?

2. Is there a relationship between the level of I Position in adult children and a perceived level of narcissistic personality traits in their mothers?
3. Is there a relationship between the level of Emotional Cutoff in adult children and a perceived level of narcissistic personality traits in their mothers?
4. Is there a relationship between the level of Fusion with Others in adult children and a perceived level of narcissistic personality traits in their mothers?
5. Is there a relationship between the level of Differentiation of Self in adult children and a perceived level of narcissistic personality traits in their mothers?

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theories of Narcissism

Narcissism is often regarded as an unhealthy characteristic of an individual's personality. DSM IV-TR (APA, 2000) refers to narcissism as a pervasive pattern of grandiosity. Although extremely prominent narcissistic characterological traits are considered to be pathological, narcissism is considered to be a normally distributed personality trait (Raskin & Hall, 1979). Horton, Bleau, and Drwecki (2006) in their summary of studies on narcissism stated that "individuals high in narcissism (whether reaching pathological levels or not) believe that they are better than objective criteria suggest, aggress against those responsible for ego threat or social exclusion, and experience unstable mood and self-esteem, especially in the face of failure feedback" (p. 346). Attention needs to be paid to healthy and unhealthy aspects of narcissism. Narcissism is typically viewed exclusively as a negative characterological trait. However, narcissistic traits are necessary for healthy functioning. Horton, Bleau, and Drwecki (2006) noted that some components of narcissism are strongly linked to trait self-esteem, which is considered to be a healthy engine of narcissism. They further concluded that "narcissism with self-esteem is relatively healthy; narcissism without self-esteem is not" (Horton, Bleau, & Drwecki, 2006, p. 348). Emmons (1984, 1987) has identified 4 dimensions of narcissism: Leadership/Authority, Superiority/Arrogance, Self-Absorption/Self-Admiration, and Exploitativeness/Entitlement. The first three dimensions were positively correlated with self-esteem, and negatively correlated with

depression and anxiety (Watson & Biderman, 1993). The Exploitativeness/Entitlement dimension was found to be negatively related to forgiveness and seemed to reflect an interpersonal component of narcissism, providing some explanation for the interpersonal difficulties of narcissists (Exline, Baumeister, Bushman, Campbell, & Finkel, 2004).

The origin of work in the field of narcissism was Freud's essay *On Narcissism* (1914/1957). In this essay Freud distinguished between two types of individuals: anaclitic (attachment) and narcissistic types. He explained that the "anaclitic type" of individuals directed their love outward; initially, the love objects are parents and then substitutes for parents. In contrast, the "narcissistic type" individuals direct the love inward. Freud viewed narcissism as the result of either parental overvaluation or rejection. Freud's conjecture has bearing on the present study because he emphasizes the importance of parental influence on children's development.

Kernberg (1975), like Freud, based his writings about the etiology of narcissism on his clinical experience as a psychoanalyst. Kernberg (1975) argued that narcissism may be the result of a chronically cold parenting style wherein parental figures exhibit either indifference or aggressive attitudes toward their children. According to Kernberg (1975), this inadequate parenting style causes the narcissistic adult to search for ways to maintain an inflated self-image in later relationships as a highly pathological defense against feelings of rage and abandonment. As a result, narcissists "have a deep mistrust of others and are completely unable to depend on anybody else" (Otway & Vignoles, 2006, p. 105). Kernberg's understanding of narcissism has particular significance for the present study in that he discusses cogently the process of "internalization" as a process of

identification with parents that is crucial to the development of identity (Kernberg, 1992). In doing so he brings into discussion the idea that a narcissistic parenting style as perceived by the child may or may not have existed in reality.

Kohut (1977) has argued that narcissism is a normal aspect of infant development. According to Kohut (1977), a child's self identity develops along two primary dimensions: grandiose exhibitionism and idealization. Grandiose exhibitionism is fostered in the child by the parent. In the interaction between the child and the parent the child's normally grandiose sense of self is supported by the parent through mirroring and idealization. Kohut (1977) proposed that a maladaptive adult form of narcissism may result due to the failure of parental mirroring. Consequently, the narcissistic individual will try to meet his or her unmet mirroring needs later, in the context of his/her adult relationships. Idealization, on the other hand, is focused on parents who become child's role models and whose behavior is eventually internalized by the child (Kohut, 1977). Kohut (1977) further noted that successful development of the two dimensions is facilitated by "optimal frustrations", those in which a child is left without parental support and is forced to rely on his/her own resources. "Such "optimal frustrations" are thought to moderate the child's sense of grandiosity to realistic levels and to aid the internalization of the sense of ideal from the parent" (Horton, Bleau, Drwecki, 2006, p. 349). Again, Kohut's definitions resonate with the current study's emphasis on the adult child's perception of his parents' characteristics.

In 1981, Millon proposed a contrasting perspective to those of Kernberg and Kohut. He argued that narcissism may be a result of parental overindulgence and

excessive admiration of the child (Millon, 1981). Millon (1981) further posed that by showing unrealistic overvaluation of the child's worth, parents create an enhanced self-image within a child that cannot be sustained in the outer world. Millon (1981) proposed a social learning perspective on the development of narcissism in the child. According to his social learning perspective,

indulgent and permissive parenting leads to narcissism not because of the failure to separate intrapsychically from infantile fantasies of self or of parent, but because such parenting teaches the child that he or she is superior, that he or she is entitled to special treatment regardless of effort, behavior or performance.

(Horton, Bleau, Drwecki, 2006, p. 349)

Thus, children mimic parent's grandiosity and entitlement. Millon's theory could be related to Freud's proposal that overvaluation in the childhood may lead to adult narcissism.

More contemporary research has suggested that narcissism is best thought of as a personality process rather than a fixed individual difference (Morf & Rhodewalt, 2001). The same group of researchers proposed that underlying narcissism is a grandiose, yet vulnerable self-concept that drives narcissistic individuals to constantly seek self-affirmation (Morf & Rhodewalt, 2001). Similarly, Akhtar (1989) proposed a distinction between overt and covert features of narcissism. He suggests that overt narcissists exhibit a grandiose sense of self; however, covertly, they seem to experience symptoms of vulnerability such as self-doubt, hypersensitivity to criticism, and inability to trust or depend on others. Recent findings support the idea that although generally high in

explicit or overt self-esteem, narcissists tend to be low on implicit or covert self-esteem (Jordan, Spencer, Zanna, Hoshino-Browne, & Correll, 2003) and they respond especially negatively in situations where their self-esteem is threatened (Bushman & Bauermeister, 1998; Stucke & Sporer, 2002). Furthermore, Stucke and Sporer (2002) suggest that “people with an inflated and extremely positive self-view that is unstable and insecure at the same time might be prone to anger and aggression when their positive self-view is threatened by negative feedback” (p. 510).

Theories of Self-Differentiation

The concept of self-differentiation was developed by Murray Bowen (1978), who introduced it as a contribution to the family systems approach to psychotherapy. His approach looked at an individual within the family system and the effect the family has on an individual. Raised by the families of origin we carry the dynamics of our families within us: “Wherever we go, we carry unresolved emotional reactivity to our parents, in the form of vulnerability to repeat the same old patterns in every new relationship we enter into” (Nichols & Schwartz, 2001, pp. 137-138).

Bowen’s theory is centered around the concept of two counterbalancing life forces: togetherness and individuality (Nichols & Schwartz, 2001). Ideally an individual must possess equilibrium of these two forces. The imbalance of these forces results in “fusion”, “stuck-togetherness”, or “undifferentiation” (Nichols & Schwartz, 2001). Differentiation is a lifelong process that takes place in relationships, a process in which a person moves towards a more intentional and thoughtful way of life and less automatic way of functioning (S Regas, personal communication, March 24, 2005). The central

premise of Bowen's theory is that "unresolved emotional attachment to one's family must be resolved, rather than passively accepted or reactively rejected, before one can differentiate a mature healthy personality" (Nichols & Schwartz, 2001, p. 140). This premise is one of the bases of the present research: unresolved emotional attachment of a child to a mother must be resolved for a child to develop a balance of two forces – individuality and togetherness. To date, no studies of the relationship between perceived maternal narcissism and adulthood level of self differentiation have been conducted.

Differentiation of self is both an intrapsychic and interpersonal concept. According to Nichols and Schwartz (2001), "intrapsychic differentiation is the ability to separate feeling from thinking" (p. 140). Undifferentiated people have difficulty distinguishing thoughts from feelings. Their minds may be so flooded with feelings that their ability to think rationally is blocked. On the other hand, Nichols and Swartz (2001) note, a differentiated person "is able to balance thinking and feeling: capable of strong emotion and spontaneity, but also capable of the objectivity that comes with the ability to resist the pull of emotional impulses" (p. 140). Baum and Shnit (2005) state that "persons with high self-differentiation are able to feel and express their emotions, to contain their impulses; and to respond to stresses and crises with flexibility, self-control, and responsibility" (p. 36). The same authors further pose that "in poorly self-differentiated individuals, the fusion in feelings and thoughts leads to automatic reactions: either impulsive emotional responses or intellectual responses cut off from emotions" (p. 36).

Intrapsychic differentiation occurs in consonance with interpersonal differentiation. Because they cannot separate thinking from feeling within themselves, undifferentiated people react to the external environment by enmeshing their own thoughts and feelings with those around them. Having little or no self identity they tend to fuse with other people and assume their identity. They may cling emotionally to the ideas of another person and echo what they have heard in response to questions about what they think (Nichols & Schwartz, 2001). In contrast, differentiated people, according to Nichols and Schwartz (2001), “take definite stands on issues because they are able to think things through, decide what they believe, and then act on those beliefs. This enables them to be in intimate contact with others without being reflexively shaped by them” (p. 141). As Baum and Shnit (2005) also note, “individuals with low self-differentiation will show greater dependency than those with high self-differentiation or, alternatively, will be more inclined to withdraw and cut off from others” (p. 36).

Bowen’s concept of differentiation of self is the cornerstone of the theory developed by David Schnarch. He theorizes that a high level of differentiation is a crucial feature of healthy relationships. Schnarch (1997) writes, “differentiation is the process by which we become more uniquely ourselves by maintaining ourselves in relationship with those we love” (p. 51). Schnarch emphasizes the importance of individuality in relationships. He explains that differentiation and emotional connection are mistakenly viewed as the opposite ends of one continuum. Instead he proposed that differentiation is rather a “higher order” process that governs both individuality and emotional connection (Schnarch, 1997). On the opposite end of differentiation Schnarch

places emotional fusion. He explains that emotional fusion is “connection without individuality” (Schnarch, 1997, p. 57).

Based upon theories on the etiology of narcissism proposed by Freud (1957), Kernberg (1975), Kohut (1977), and others specifically on the concept of children’s “internalization” of their mothers’ characterological traits, the present study explored the possibility that adult children who perceive their mothers as possessing prominent narcissistic characterological traits are likely to have failed to develop high level of self differentiation.

Perceived Characteristics of Narcissistic Mothers

Numerous research studies on parenting have identified a variety of parenting dimensions which influence child development. Several of those dimensions are restrictiveness (Baldwin, 1955; Baumrind & Black, 1967), demandingness (Roe & Siegelman, 1963), overprotection (Parker, Tupling, & Brown, 1979), involvement, strictness and supervision (Baumrind, 1967), and psychological control (Barber, Olsen, & Shagle, 1994). However, to date, there are no research studies on the impact of narcissistic characterological traits on parent-child interaction.

Prominent narcissistic characterological traits of mothers appear to impact their attachment to their children profoundly. The testimonials of adult children claiming experiences of being raised by narcissistic mothers, specifically by the mothers with pathological levels of narcissism, have been collected and summarized on www.geocities.com (“Characteristics of Narcissistic Mothers”, 2008). It notes that narcissistic mothers can often be identified as exhibiting excessive denial of their

intentions or feelings. “There is always a facile excuse or an explanation. Cruelties are couched in loving terms. Aggressive and hostile acts are paraded as thoughtfulness.

Selfish manipulations are presented as gifts. Criticism and slander is slyly disguised as concern. She only wants what is best for you. She only wants to help you”

(“Characteristics of Narcissistic Mothers”, 2008, para 2). Authenticity is absent from the relationship since the mother is not capable of being honest or direct. This is confusing for the child and causes the child to adapt to mother’s nonverbal and disguised messages.

Narcissistic mothers in many ways are similar to what has been called a “schizophrenogenic mother”, whose behavior presents a “double bind” to her children, that causes a similar confusion and perhaps lack of self-differentiation (Hartwell, 1996).

According to the reports of adult children (2008), narcissistic mothers seem to constantly evaluate their children but they do so inconsistently. Authentic accomplishment may be ignored, while behaviors targeted to please the mother may be excessively praised or denigrated often without rhyme or reason. Narcissistic mothers may also denigrate their children simply by comparison with a sibling or neighbor child. The authentic accomplishments of the child may simply be ignored.

Another prominent characteristic of narcissistic mothers is the violation of boundaries. Children of these mothers often feel like extensions of their mothers. According to “Characteristics of Narcissistic Mothers” (2008), narcissistic mothers resist any autonomy on the part of the child, ridicule any independent attempts of the child, treat children as property and make decisions for the child without considering the child’s feelings, thoughts, and/or wishes. Golomb (1992) also states that narcissistic mothers

invade their children's autonomy and manipulate them to conform to their wishes. In favoring one child over another, the mother identifies with the "golden child", while the "scapegoat child" is ignored or treated poorly. Narcissistic mothers may also undermine accomplishments of their children by finding a way to take credit for themselves ("Characteristics of Narcissistic Mothers", 2008).

According to "Characteristics of Narcissistic Mothers" (2008), narcissistic mothers let their children know that they think less of them than of other people. Narcissistic mothers minimize, discount, and ignore opinions and experiences of their children. They may meet their children's independent insights with condescension, denials, and accusations ("Characteristics of Narcissistic Mothers", 2008). Narcissistic mothers seem to be incapable of loving their children because they are very self-involved. This produces an effect that Kestenberg (1989), in line with Fairbairn (1952), suggested: The child who cannot be loved loses himself.

Marilyn Charles in her paper "Stealing Beauty: An Exploration of Maternal Narcissism" (2001), also examined the effect of maternal narcissism on the creativity of the child. She focused "first on mother-child dyads in which the child's gifts are spoiled and made unusable, and then on dyads in which the mother steals the child's sense of self through her symbiotic attachment" (Charles, 2001, p. 549). Charles notes in her paper that narcissistic mothers envy their children's accomplishments and resist facilitation of their children's development. According to Charles (2001), the strong envy of mothers forced their children to recede from this maternal envy in order to survive. This configuration, in which the children development is trapped by the envy of the mother,

was also described by Melanie Klein (1928), who associated the sense of “not knowing” with early feelings of being incapable and impotent. As narcissistic mothers need so desperately to hide their “true self”, they communicate their own needs to their children and cannot tolerate the knowing of their children. Communication in such a relationship seems to go one way; specifically, the narcissistic mother communicates her needs - specifically the needs that she expects to be satisfied by her child - and fails to acknowledge and meet the needs of the child. The child in response internalizes the mother’s narcissistic needs for his or her validation and forms a sense of self which is inseparable from the mother’s. Thus, the child gets a message prohibiting him/her to know too much, too well, or to know anything other than that known and needed by the mother. As a result, “in accepting the wisdom of the mother, children negate their own lives” (Charles, 2001, p. 550). Narcissistic mothers provide their children with little opportunity to develop a differentiated sense of self separate from their own.

Narcissists in general and narcissistic mothers in particular demonstrate impaired social functioning which negatively impacts their interpersonal relationships. This impairment would most likely affect the mother-child bond. Rhodewald, Marian, and Cheney (1998) described narcissistic people as those who tend to have more negative interactions with others than people low on narcissism. Based upon this description, McCullough, Emmons, Kilpatrick, and Mooney (2003) introduced an idea that “narcissistic functioning in response to such negative interpersonal events provides a particularly useful window for observing how narcissists’ preoccupation with constructing and maintaining a grandiose self-image can influence their psychological

and social functioning” (p. 885). As was described earlier in the section on theories of narcissism, people with prominent narcissistic characterological traits exhibit higher rates of aggressive behaviors. Another study by Bushman and Baumeister (1998) provides similar evidence that narcissistic people are more likely than less narcissistic people to engage in aggressive behaviors in response to criticism.

The current study was designed to examine the impact of perceived maternal narcissism on the level of self differentiation in adult children. This idea rests on the assumption that perception of the outside world and other people has a strong impact on the formation of any individual’s self-identity. The idea of distinguishing perception from reality is critical to this research study. It is commonly believed that “reality” is the way things actually are, while “perception” is an interpretation of reality (“Yahoo!Answers”, 2011). Perception is a lens through which we look at the environment around us and make sense of it. Social psychologists identify self-schemas as core elements in the formation of sense of self. Markus and Wurf (1987) defined self-schemas as the elements of one’s self-concept, the specific beliefs by which one defines him/herself. They further mention that self-schemas are formed as a result of perception of the outside world and interpretation of events (Markus & Wurf, 1987). Thus, for the purpose of this study it is safe to assume that perception of maternal narcissism very strongly impacts development of self-differentiation. A child interprets interaction with the mother and forms his/her own self-schemas based upon those interpretations. Those self-schemas are building blocks of the child’s self-concept; therefore may impact child’s level of self-differentiation.

Further review of the literature demonstrates that rather than actual maternal narcissism, *perceived* maternal narcissism might have a more critical impact on the development of self-differentiation. Similar to these self-schemas discussed by Markus and Wurf (1987) Object Relations theory posits the development of intrapsychic structures that children internalize as a result of relational experiences with primary caregivers (Mahler, 1975). According to Mahler (1975), these internal structures in the form of self and other images, are transferred to current relationships and influence our ways of perceiving, feeling, and being in all relationships. Furthermore, the internalization of those structures happen through the process of introjection, which is an unconscious process in which the values, personality traits, and unconscious projections of early caregivers are taken in to form building blocks of a sense of self (Mahler, 1975). Thus, maternal narcissism, whether perceived or actually manifested in interactions initiated by the mother toward the child, is internalized by the child. As emphasized earlier in this section of the paper, if a narcissistic mother treats her children as an extension of herself, she prohibits individuation and/or separateness within the child who most likely will form a sense of self which is deeply inseparable from his or her mother's. This fusion and enmeshment of the child with the mother would indicate low levels of self-differentiation in the child, and, consequently, in the adult. The impact of perceived maternal narcissism on the child's level of self differentiation may have stronger influence than the actual level of maternal narcissism.

In summary, narcissistic mothers allocate effort into protecting their fragile sense of self rather than forming healthy attachments with their children. Children internalize

maternal narcissistic behavior and form intrapsychic structures based upon their experiences interacting with the mother. They bring these structures into their adulthood. The present study therefore hypothesized that these adult children will not be able to consistently maintain a sense of self-differentiation independent of their mothers. Thus, following Schnarch's theory, they may be unable to exercise individuality and thus fall into the "emotional fusion" end of the continuum.

Definition of Terms

Perceived Narcissism

Identifies an adult child's perception of maternal narcissism. This construct was measured by a single score on the Narcissistic Personality Inventory.

Emotional Reactivity

The level of emotional reaction in adult individuals to external events and/or other people. Emotional reactivity level was measured in adult children by a single score on "Emotional Reactivity Subscale" of Differentiation of Self Inventory.

I Position

The ability of an adult individual to maintain a clearly defined sense of self and thoughtfully adhere to personal convictions when pressured by others to do otherwise (Bowen, 1978). I position was measured in adult children by scores on "I position Subscale" on Differentiation of Self Inventory.

Emotional Cutoff

An adult individual's difficulty in establishing and maintaining emotional connection with others. Emotional cutoff was measured in adult children by scores on "Emotional Cutoff Subscale" of Differentiation of Self Inventory.

Fusion With Others

The difficulty of an adult individual to emotionally separate himself/herself from other people. Fusion with others was measured in adult children by scores on "Fusion With Others Subscale" of Differentiation of self Inventory.

Differentiation of Self

The degree to which one is able to balance (a) emotional and intellectual functioning and (b) intimacy and autonomy in relationships (Bowen, 1978). Differentiation of self was measured in adult children by a composite score on the Differentiation of Self Inventory.

Research Hypotheses

The proposed study examined the relationship between the degree of the level of perceived maternal narcissism and the level of self differentiation in adult children. It was hypothesized that the level of perceived maternal narcissism impacts the development of differentiation of self in their children. No findings to date focus on the

impact of *perceived* maternal narcissism on the level of adult self differentiation. The present study proposed that the severity of perceived maternal narcissism affects four components of differentiation of self, as identified by Skowron and Friedlander (1998) as well as the general level of differentiation of self. Therefore, a set of five hypotheses was proposed for the study:

Hypothesis 1: It was hypothesized that there would be a statistically significant linear relationship between the level of perceived narcissistic personality traits in mothers (measured by Narcissistic Personality Inventory) and the level of emotional reactivity in adult children (measured by Emotional Reactivity subscale on Differentiation of Self Inventory). Specifically, it was expected that as the level of perceived narcissistic personality traits in mothers increases the level of emotional reactivity in their adult children would also increase.

Hypothesis 2: It was hypothesized that there would be a statistically significant linear relationship between the level of perceived narcissistic personality traits in mothers (measured by Narcissistic Personality Inventory) and the level of I Position in adult children (measured by I Position subscale on Differentiation of Self Inventory). Specifically, it was expected that as the level of perceived narcissistic personality traits in mothers increases the level of I Position in their adult children decreases.

Hypothesis 3: It was hypothesized that there would be a statistically significant linear relationship between the level of perceived narcissistic personality traits in mothers (measured by Narcissistic Personality Inventory) and the level of emotional cutoff in adult children (measured by Emotional Cutoff subscale on Differentiation of Self

Inventory). Specifically, it was expected that as the level of perceived narcissistic personality traits in mothers increases, the level of emotional cutoff in their adult children also increases.

Hypothesis 4: It was hypothesized that there would be a statistically significant linear relationship between the level of perceived narcissistic personality traits in mothers (measured by Narcissistic Personality Inventory) and the level of Fusion with Others in adult children (measured by Fusion with Others subscale on Differentiation of Self Inventory). Specifically, it was expected that as the level of perceived narcissistic personality traits in mothers increases, the level of Fusion with Others in their adult children also increases.

Hypothesis 5: It was hypothesized that there was a statistically significant linear relationship between the level of perceived narcissistic personality traits in mothers (measured by Narcissistic Personality Inventory) and the level of self differentiation in their adult children (measured by Differentiation of Self Inventory). Specifically, it was expected that as the level of perceived narcissistic personality traits in mothers increases the level of self-differentiation in their adult children decreases.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

The purpose of the present study was to examine the impact of the degree of perceived maternal narcissism on the level of self-differentiation development in adult individuals. It was proposed that perceived narcissistic characterological traits in mothers contribute to the development of low level of self-differentiation in their adult children. For the purpose of this study the concept of self-differentiation was defined as consisting of four different components: Emotional Reactivity, I Position, Emotional Cutoff, and Fusion with Others (Skowron & Friedlander, 1998). This study proposed that despite the fact that each of those components may be affected differently by perceived maternal narcissism, the impact of the level of perceived narcissism on the level of self-differentiation would be negative: high levels of perceived narcissism in mothers would be associated with low levels of self-differentiation in their adult children. This chapter focuses on discussion of sample characteristics, design of the study, procedures, and instrumentation used for obtaining data.

Participants

This study recruited 125 adult individuals 21 years of age and older. One hundred twenty-five volunteers, males and females were asked to participate in the study. Due to non-response rate and incomplete inventories, the actual number of participants in the study was reduced to 79. The participants were recruited using a non-random sampling method to increase the likelihood of obtaining participants. Recruitment of participants

was conducted in person through informal gatherings, the researcher's network of friends, co-workers, family, acquaintances, and snowball sampling. Table 1 contains descriptive statistics for the sample characteristics. Subsequent limitations of this sampling method will be outlined in the discussion section.

The sample consisted of 31 males (39.2%) and 48 females (60.8%). Participants ranged in age from 23 to 68 years with a mean age of 42.15 years. The ethnic background of participants was 40 Caucasians (50.6%), 11 African-Americans (13.9%), 15 Hispanic/Latinos (19%), 4 Asian/Philippinos (5.1%), 1 Native American (1.3%), and 8 participants who described themselves as other (10.1%). Religious affiliation of participants was 18 Catholic (22.8%), 19 Christian (24.1%), 13 Jewish (16.5%), 2 Muslim (2.5%), 7 Atheist (8.9%), and 20 participants identified their religious affiliation as other (25%).

Number of years of education starting with elementary school ranged from 10 years to 27 years with the mean number of years of education 17.04 years. Most participants reported either being married (first marriage) 23 (29.1%) or being single (never married) 24 (30.4%). Ten participants reported being married not in the first marriage (12.7%) and 12 participants reported being divorced (15.2%). Two participants were separated (2.5%) and 3 were widowed (3.8%). One participant reported staying in domestic partnership (1.3%) and 4 participants identified their marital status as other (5.1%). Income of participants varied with the majority of participants 17 (21.5%) earning between \$60,000 and \$69,999 per year. Sixteen participants (20.3%) reported making over \$100,000 per year. Eleven (13.9%) participants reported earning between

\$50,000 and \$59,999 per year. Six participants (7.6%) reported their annual income being in each of the following categories: between \$0 and \$9,999, \$20,000 and \$29,999, or \$30,000 and \$39,999. Five participants (6.3%) reported their income being between \$40,000 and \$49,999 per year. Four participants (5.1%) stated that they were making between \$70,000 and \$79,999 per year. Three participants (3.8%) reported their annual

Table 1

Description of Sample Characteristics

Variable	n	%	Mean	Std. Dev
Gender				
Male	31	39.2		
Female	48	61.8		
Age			42.15	12.7
Ethnicity				
Caucasian	40	50.6		
African-American	11	13.9		
Hispanic/Latino	15	19		
Asian/Philippino	4	5.1		
Native American	1	1.3		
Other	8	10.3		
Religion				
Catholic	18	22.8		
Christian	19	24.1		
Jewish	13	16.5		
Muslim	2	2.5		
Atheist	7	8.9		
Other	20	25		
Education			17.04	3.7

Table 1 (*Continued*)

Variable Std. Dev	n	%	Mean
Marital Status			
Married (first marriage)	23	29.1	
Married (not first marriage)	10	12.7	
Divorced	12	15.2	
Separated	2	2.5	
Widowed	3	3.8	
Single (never married)	24	30.4	
Domestic Partnership	1	1.3	
Other	4	5.1	
Income			
\$0 to \$9,999	6	7.6	
\$10,000 to \$19,999	2	2.5	
\$20,000 to \$29,999	6	7.6	
\$30,000 to 39,999	6	7.6	
\$40,000 to 49,999	5	6.3	
\$50,000 to 59,999	11	13.9	
\$60,000 to 69,999	17	21.5	
\$70,000 to 79,999	4	5.1	
\$80,000 to 89,999	3	3.8	
\$90,000 to 99,999	3	3.8	
Over \$100,000	16	20.3	

Table 1 (*Continued*)

Variable	n	%	Mean	Std. Dev
History of Psychotherapy				
Yes	35	44.3		
No	44	55.7		
Siblings				
Yes	71	89.9		
No	8	10.1		
Family of Origin Composition				
Single Mother Family	12	15.2		
Single Father Family	1	1.3		
Two Parents Bio Family	53	67.1		
Two Parents (Adoptive)	1	1.3		
Two Parents Step Family	7	8.9		
Other	5	6.3		
Biological Mother				
Yes	78	98.7		
No	1	1.3		
Years since departure				
From mother's home			21.97	13.25

income being in the range between \$80,000 and \$89,999 and 3 participants (3.8%) reported their annual income to be between \$90,000 and \$99,999. Finally, 2 participants (2.5%) reported their annual income being between \$10,000 and \$19,999.

The majority of participants (55.7%) reported having no experience in psychotherapy treatment (N=44). However, 35 participants (44.3%) reported being in psychotherapeutic treatment at some point in their life. Out of 35 participants who reported experience in psychotherapy the length of treatment varied from a couple of months to 18 years with the mean number of years in treatment being 4.23. Furthermore, of 35 participants who reported experience in psychotherapy, the length of time since termination of treatment varies from several months to 35 years with the mean number of years being 6.03.

Seventy one participants (89.9%) reported having at least one sibling, while 8 participants (10.1%) reported being the only child. The majority of participants 53 (67.1%) reported being raised in two-parent (biological) households. Twelve participants (15.2%) were raised by single mothers. Seven participants (8.9%) reported being raised in two-parent families, but with one of the parents being a step-parent. One participant (1.3%) reported being raised by a single father and one participant (1.3%) reported being raised in an adoptive family. The remaining 5 participants (6.3%) reported being raised in the households with compositions other than those reported above. Seventy eight participants (98.7%) reported their mothers being their biological mothers and one participant (1.3%) reported his/her mother being non-biological. Range of time since participants moved out of their mothers' homes varied from 0 years (still living in the

mother's home) to 54 years, with the mean number of years being 21.97.

Design

The study used a non-experimental design. The independent variable was the score on Narcissistic Personality Inventory. The dependent variables were the scores on Emotional Reactivity, I Position, Emotional Cutoff, and Fusion with Others subscales of Differentiation of Self Inventory, as well as the general score on Differentiation of Self Inventory. Additionally, participant variables, found in the demographic questionnaire, which included gender, age, ethnicity, religious affiliation, history of psychotherapeutic treatment, length of treatment, length of time since treatment termination, level of education, marital status, socio-economic status, number of siblings, family of origin composition, and length of time since departure from mother's home were examined and controlled for to insure that confounding (extraneous effects) was minimized in the tests of the research hypotheses.

Instrumentation

This study used three instruments: a General Information Questionnaire, Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI), which is designed to measure the level of perceived narcissism, and Differentiation of Self Inventory (DSI), which is designed to measure the level of self-differentiation.

The General Information Questionnaire

The General Information Questionnaire included questions on gender, age,

ethnicity, religious affiliation, level of education, marital status, socio-economic status, history of psychotherapy treatment, length of treatment, length of time since treatment termination, number of siblings, family of origin composition, and length of time since departure from mother's home. The questionnaire contained 12 questions and took approximately 5 minutes to complete.

The Differentiation of Self Inventory (DSI)

The Differentiation of Self Inventory (Skowron & Friedlander, 1998) consisted of 43 items that measure the level of self-differentiation in adults ages 21 years old and above. Participants were asked to read a statement and to mark an answer on Likert scale varying from 1 (not at all true of me) to 6 (very true of me). Higher scores on the inventory reflect higher level of differentiation. The instrument was in a self-report paper-and-pencil format and took about 10 minutes to complete.

The Differentiation of Self Inventory was developed in response to the scarce research examining the constructs and propositions of Bowen's theory in the field of family therapy. One of the constructs proposed by Bowen was differentiation of self. To measure this construct the Differentiation of Self Inventory was created. "The DSI is a multidimensional measure of differentiation that focuses specifically on adults (age 21+), their significant relationships, and current relations with family of origin" (Skowron & Friedlander, 1998, p. 235).

To create the Differentiation of Self Inventory the authors undertook a series of studies. First, researchers generated a pool of items that exemplified the differentiation

of self using definitions, descriptions, and examples from Bowen and his successors (Skowron & Friedlander, 1998). Those items “reflected the ability to distinguish and balance (a) thinking and feeling and (b) the capacity for intimacy with autonomy from others in current important relationships as well as with parents and siblings” (Skowron & Friedlander, 1998, p. 237). As a result of this study, four subscales were developed. The first subscale Emotional Reactivity, “reflects the degree to which a person responds to environmental stimuli with emotional flooding, emotional lability, or hypersensitivity” (Jenkins et. al, 2005, p. 254). The second subscale, I Position, “reflects a clearly defined sense of self and the ability to thoughtfully adhere to one’s convictions when pressured to do otherwise” (Jenkins et. al, 2005, p. 254). The third subscale, Emotional Cutoff, “reflects feeling threatened by intimacy and feeling excessive vulnerability in relations with others; this vulnerability leads to fears of engulfment and defensive behaviors such as distancing and denial” (Jenkins et. Al, 2005, p. 254). The fourth subscale, Fusion with Others, “reflects emotional overinvolvement with others, including triangulation and overidentification with parents” (Jenkins et. Al, 2005, p. 254).

The second study was conducted for the purpose of revision of theoretical focus and item content of the original DSI since a considerable amount of variance was left unaccounted for in the first study (Skowron & Friedlander, 1998). Finally the third study was conducted for the purpose of evaluation of “the DSI’s factor structure using confirmatory factor analyses and to test theoretically predicted relations between differentiation of self, psychological symptoms, and marital satisfaction” (Skowron & Friedlander, 1998, p. 239).

The DSI correlated highly and in the expected direction with a measure of chronic anxiety and with amount and intensity of symptomatic distress, which supported initial construct validity of DSI (Skowron & Friedlander, 1998). Furthermore, across several studies, internal consistency coefficients, using Cronbach's alpha, supported moderate to high reliabilities for each of the four subscales, in particular, Emotional reactivity = 0.88, Emotional cutoff = 0.79, Fusion with others = 0.70, and I position = 0.85 (Skowron & Friedlander, 1998).

Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI)

The Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI) consists of 40 forced choice items that measure the degree of narcissism in an adult individual. This instrument was designed by Raskin and Hall (1979) in response to the inclusion of narcissistic personality disorder in DSM-III. The instrument was in a self-report paper and pencil format and took about 15 minutes to complete.

The researchers examined characteristics of narcissistic personality disorder as described by the American Psychiatric Association in DSM-III and originally designed 223 items which sampled the domain of the narcissistic personality as defined by those characteristics. Each item is a pair of statements, one narcissistic and the other is non-narcissistic. Participants are required to check one of the two statements. After item analysis only 80 items met the criterion of significance at or below the .05 level. Split-half reliability for these items was .80 (Raskin & Hall, 1979). Those 80 items were divided into two forms, Form A and Form B.

NPI is comprised of 40 pairs of sentences labeled A and B. Narcissistic statements are scored with 1 point while non-narcissitic statements are scored with 0 points. The score on NPI ranges from 0 to 1. The higher score on the NPI (for example, 0.9) is associated with higher level of perceived narcissism.

Procedures

Participants age 21 and older were recruited in person through informal gatherings, the researcher's network of friends, co-workers, family, acquaintances, and snowball sampling. Participants were asked to participate in the study completing paper-and-pencil surveys. Each participant was provided with a package including informed consent form, demographic questionnaire, Self Differentiation Inventory, and Narcissistic Personality Inventory. Thorough instructions were also included in the package. Participants were instructed to fill out inventories in the following order: demographic questionnaire, Narcissistic Personality Inventory with response set of perception of mother, and Self Differentiation Inventory. Envelopes were provided for each participant for returning all of the materials in the confidential manner. To insure confidentiality, the data did not include any personal identifying information about the participants such as names, addresses, and phone numbers. Each participant was identified by a number coding only. All of responses were strictly confidential and were reviewed by only the researcher.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The present study was conducted to assess the relationship between perceived levels of maternal narcissism on the level of self-differentiation in their adult children. Specifically, this study addressed the influence of perceived maternal narcissism on components of self-differentiation such as emotional reactivity, I position, emotional cutoff, and fusion with others, as well as on self-differentiation in general. The current study will add to current research in that it will establish whether level of self differentiation is impacted by perceived maternal narcissism. Furthermore, if level of self-differentiation is found to be impacted by perceived maternal narcissism, this study will distinguish which components of self-differentiation are impacted by perceived maternal narcissism and which components are not. The study addressed five areas. First, if perceived maternal narcissism impacts the level of emotional reactivity. Second, if perceived maternal narcissism impacts the level of I position. Third, if perceived maternal narcissism impacts the level of emotional cutoff. Forth, if perceived maternal narcissism impacts the level of fusion with others. Finally, the study addressed if perceived maternal narcissism affects the level of self-differentiation overall. Tests conducted to identify and control for confounding variables and the results of the tests of the research hypotheses will be discussed. This chapter will also discuss instances of insufficient sample size to test hypotheses. All hypotheses were tested at the $p=.05$ level of significance.

Preliminary Analysis

Six types of statistical analyses were conducted in this study. First, all items on the background information questionnaire were analyzed using univariate statistics to describe the demographic characteristics of the sample in the study. The specific items (variables) that were analyzed were gender, age, ethnicity, religious beliefs, level of education, marital status, annual income, history of psychotherapy treatment and length of treatment, length of time since termination of treatment, presence of siblings, family of origin composition, whether participant's mother was biological or not, and the length of participant's departure from the home of the mother. Variables such as age, years of education, length of therapy, length of time since termination of therapy, and length of time since departure from mother's home were analyzed using means, variances, and standard deviations. All other variables such as gender, ethnicity, marital status, annual income, history of psychotherapy treatment, presence of siblings, family of origin composition, and whether the mother was biological or not were summarized using frequencies, proportions, and modes.

Second, analyses of all variables included in the tests of the research hypotheses were completed to determine the pattern and volume of missing data. The pattern of missing data was found to be relatively random (i.e., evenly dispersed throughout the sample), and the volume of missing data was found to be relatively small (i.e., in less than 10% of the participants). The remaining participants (without missing data) were sufficient to test the research hypotheses.

Third, analyses of all variables included in the tests of the research hypotheses were completed to examine participants with outlier scores (defined as extreme scores that fell three or more standard deviations above or below the mean). The number of participants that did not have outlier scores was sufficient to test the research hypotheses, thus, participants with outlier scores were excluded from the tests of the research hypotheses.

Fourth, variables such as gender, age, ethnicity, education level, marital status, annual income, history of psychotherapy, length of psychotherapy, length of time since termination of treatment, number of siblings, family of origin composition, whether the mother was biological or not, and length of time since departure from mother's home derived from the background questionnaire and related to the dependent variables in this study (Emotional Cutoff, I Position, Fusion with Others, Emotional Reactivity, and level of Self-Differentiation) were examined using bivariate statistics. Variables such as ethnicity, marital status, family of origin composition, and religion in relation to dependent variables were examined using One-Way-ANOVA. Variables such as gender and history of psychotherapy experience in relation to dependent variables were examined by using independent t-test. Variables such as age, years of education, and length of time since departure from mother's home in relation to dependent variables were examined by using Pearson Correlation. Finally, variable income in relation to dependent variables was examined by using Spearman Correlation. Ethnicity was found to be significantly related to emotional cutoff. Income was found to be significantly related to emotional reactivity. Religion was found to be significantly related to fusion

with others. History of psychotherapy experience was found to be significantly related to both I position and fusion with others. Those variables from the background questionnaire that were found to be significantly related to the criterion variables were statistically controlled for as covariates during the tests of the hypotheses in this study. This helped to minimize spurious correlations that may confound the interpretation of the results of the tests of the research hypotheses.

Fifth, tests of the statistical assumptions (including normality and homogeneity of variance) of the variables underlying the research hypotheses were conducted. Normality was tested using Kolmogorov-Smirnov and homogeneity of variance was tested using the Levene's statistic. After the removal of outliers, normality test indicated that the data was within normal limits.

Sixth, five hypotheses in this study were tested using the following statistical procedures.

Test of Hypothesis One

Hypothesis one stated that there would be a significant linear correlation between the level of perceived narcissistic personality traits in mothers and the level of emotional reactivity in their adult children. In particular it was hypothesized that as the level of perceived narcissistic personality traits increases, the level of emotional reactivity would also increase. This hypothesis was tested with a hierarchical regression analysis. For this hypothesis, the independent variable was the level of perceived narcissistic personality traits of mothers and the dependent variable was emotional reactivity in adult children.

The independent variable was computed from composite score on Narcissistic Personality Inventory and the dependent variable was computed from composite score on the emotional reactivity subscale of Self-Differentiation Inventory. Since income (dummy coded) was related to emotional reactivity, income was entered on the first step. The independent variable was entered on the second step. Level of perceived narcissistic personality traits in mothers was found not to be related to emotional reactivity when income was controlled. Therefore this hypothesis was not supported (Table 2).

Table 2

Regression Analysis for Emotional Reactivity

	R	R Square	R Square Change	Sign of Change
<hr/>				
Step 1				
Income	.396	.157	.157	.000
Step 2				
NPI	.410	.168	.011	.322

Test of Hypothesis Two

Hypothesis two stated that there would be a significant linear correlation between the level of perceived narcissistic personality traits of mothers and the level of I position in their adult children. In particular it was hypothesized that as the level of perceived narcissistic personality traits increases, the level of I position would decrease. This hypothesis was tested with a hierarchical regression analysis. For this hypothesis, the independent variable was the level of perceived narcissistic personality traits of mothers and the dependent variable was I position in adult children. The independent variable was computed from the composite score on the Narcissistic Personality Inventory and the dependent variable was computed from composite score on the I position subscale of Self-Differentiation Inventory. Since history of psychotherapy experience (dummy coded) was related to I position, history of psychotherapy experience was entered on the first step. Level of perceived narcissistic personality traits of mothers was entered on the second step. Level of perceived narcissistic personality traits in mothers was found not to be related to I position when income was controlled. Therefore this hypothesis was not supported (Table 3).

Table 3

Regression Analysis for I Position

	R	R Square	R Square Change	Sign of Change
<hr/>				
Step 1				
History of Psychotherapy	.447	.200	.200	.000
Step 2				
NPI	.473	.223	.223	.000

Test of Hypothesis Three

Hypothesis three stated that there would be a significant linear correlation between the level of perceived narcissistic personality traits of mothers and the level of emotional cutoff in their adult children. In particular it was hypothesized that as the level of perceived narcissistic personality traits increases, the level of emotional cutoff would also increase. This hypothesis was tested by hierarchical regression analysis. For this hypothesis, the independent variable was the level of perceived narcissistic personality traits of mothers and the dependent variable was emotional cutoff in adult children. The independent variable was computed from composite score on Narcissistic Personality Inventory and the dependent variable was computed from composite score on the emotional cutoff subscale of Self-Differentiation Inventory. Since ethnicity (dummy coded) was related to emotional cutoff, ethnicity was entered on the first step. The independent variable was entered on the second step. Level of perceived narcissistic personality traits in mothers was found not to be related to emotional cutoff when ethnicity was controlled. Therefore this hypothesis was not supported (Table 4).

Table 4

Regression Analysis for Emotional Cutoff

	R	R Square	R Square Change	Sign of Change
<hr/>				
Step 1				
Ethnicity	.260	.068	.068	.021
Step 2				
NPI	.328	.107	.107	.078

Test of Hypothesis Four

Hypothesis four stated that there would a significant linear correlation between the level of perceived narcissistic personality traits of mothers and the level of fusion with others in the adult children. In particular it was hypothesized that as the level of perceived narcissistic personality traits increases, the level of fusion with others would also increase. This hypothesis was tested with hierarchical regression analysis. For this hypothesis, the independent variable was the level of perceived narcissistic personality traits of mothers and the dependent variable was fusion with others in adult children. The independent variable was computed from composite score on Narcissistic Personality Inventory and the dependent variable was computed from composite score on the fusion with others subscale of Self-Differentiation Inventory. Since history of psychotherapy experience (dummy coded) and religion (dummy coded) were related to fusion with others variable, history of psychotherapy experience was entered on the first step. Religion was entered on the second step, and independent variable was entered on the third step. Level of perceived narcissistic personality traits in mothers was found not to be related to fusion with others when history of psychotherapy experience and religion were controlled. Therefore this hypothesis was not supported (Table 5).

Table 5

Regression Analysis for Fusion With Others

	R	R Square	R Square Change	Sign of Change
<hr/>				
Step 1				
History of Psychotherapy	.318	.101	.101	.005
Step 2				
Religion	.318	.101	.101	.005
Step 3				
NPI	.420	.176	.176	.028

Test of Hypothesis Five

Hypothesis five stated that there would be a significant linear correlation between the level of perceived narcissistic personality traits of mothers and the level of self-differentiation in their adult children. In particular it was hypothesized that as the level of perceived narcissistic personality traits increases, the level of self-differentiation would decrease. This hypothesis was tested with a linear regression/correlation analysis. For this hypothesis, the independent variable was the level of perceived narcissistic personality traits of mothers and the dependent variable was level of self-differentiation in adult children. The independent variable was computed from composite score on the Narcissistic Personality Inventory and the dependent variable was computed from composite score on the entire Self-Differentiation Inventory. Level of perceived narcissistic personality traits in mothers was found not to be related to the level of differentiation of self. Therefore this hypothesis was not supported (Table 6).

Table 6

Regression Analysis for Differentiation of Self

	R	R Square	R Square Change	Sign of Change
NPI	.101	.000	.000	.930

CHAPTER V
DISCUSSION

The present study was conducted to assess the influence of perceived level of maternal narcissism on the level of self-differentiation in adult children. Specifically, this study addressed the influence of perceived maternal narcissism on components of self-differentiation such as emotional reactivity, I position, emotional cutoff, and fusion with others, as well as on self-differentiation in general. The study addressed five areas. First, if perceived maternal narcissism impacted the level of emotional reactivity. Second, if perceived maternal narcissism impacted the level of I position. Third, if perceived maternal narcissism impacted the level of emotional cutoff. Forth, if perceived maternal narcissism impacted the level of fusion with others. Finally, the study addressed if perceived maternal narcissism affected the level of self-differentiation overall. Within this chapter, the findings in regards to each hypothesis will be discussed; the implications of the results for psychological practice and recommendations for future research will be also addressed.

Hypothesis one predicted that there was a significant linear correlation between the level of perceived narcissistic personality traits in mothers and the level of emotional reactivity in their adult children. In particular it was hypothesized that as the level of perceived narcissistic personality traits increased, the level of emotional reactivity would have also increased. Results indicated that there was no significant linear correlation between the level of perceived narcissistic personality traits in mothers and the level of emotional reactivity in their adult children. The hypothesis was therefore not supported

by the study.

Hypothesis two predicted that there was a significant linear correlation between the level of perceived narcissistic personality traits of mothers and the level of I position in their adult children. In particular it was hypothesized that as the level of perceived narcissistic personality traits increased, the level of I position would have decreased. Results indicated that there was no significant linear correlation between the level of perceived narcissistic personality traits in mothers and the level of I position in their adult children. The hypothesis therefore was not supported by the study.

Hypothesis three predicted that there was a significant linear correlation between the level of perceived narcissistic personality traits of mothers and the level of emotional cutoff in their adult children. In particular it was hypothesized that as the level of perceived narcissistic personality traits increased, the level of emotional cutoff would have also increased. Results indicated that there was no significant linear correlation between the level of perceived narcissistic personality traits in mothers and the level of emotional cutoff in their adult children. The hypothesis was therefore not supported by the study.

Hypothesis four predicted that there was a significant linear correlation between the level of perceived narcissistic personality traits of mothers and the level of fusion with others in their adult children. In particular it was hypothesized that as the level of perceived narcissistic personality traits increased, the level of fusion with others would have also increased. Results indicated that there was no significant linear correlation

between the level of perceived narcissistic personality traits in mothers and the level of fusion with others in their adult children. The hypothesis was therefore not supported by the study.

Hypothesis five predicted that there was a significant linear correlation between the level of perceived narcissistic personality traits of mothers and the level of self-differentiation in their adult children. In particular it was hypothesized that as the level of perceived narcissistic personality traits increased, the level of self-differentiation would have decreased. Results of the study indicated that there was no significant linear correlation between the level of perceived narcissistic personality traits in mothers and the level of differentiation of self in their adult children. The hypothesis was therefore not supported by the study.

Additional Analyses

Interestingly, there were significant findings related to four demographic characteristics. Specifically, ethnicity was found to be significantly related to emotional cutoff. Income was found to be significantly related to emotional reactivity. Religion was found to be significantly related to fusion with others. History of psychotherapy experience was found to be significantly related to both I position and fusion with others. These four demographic characteristics were identified as confounding variables and controlled for in the test of hypotheses.

One-Way ANOVA test was conducted to examine the relationship between ethnicity and dependent variables (emotional reactivity, I position, emotional cutoff,

fusion with others, and differentiation of self). The results of the test demonstrated that possible significant relationship exists between ethnicity and emotional cutoff.

Participants' level of emotional cutoff may be affected by their belonging to certain ethnic groups. The results of the test demonstrate that level of emotional cutoff could be affected not only by the independent variable (level of perceived maternal narcissism), but by ethnicity. Further research is needed to clarify the direction of this relationship.

Spearman correlation test was conducted to examine the relationship between income and dependent variables (emotional reactivity, I position, emotional cutoff, fusion with others, and differentiation of self). The results of the test demonstrated that possible significant relationship exists between income and emotional reactivity. Participants' level of emotional reactivity may be affected by the income category to which they belong. The results of the test demonstrate that level of emotional reactivity could be affected not only by the independent variable (level of perceived maternal narcissism), but by income level. Further research is needed to clarify the direction of this relationship.

One-Way ANOVA test was conducted to examine the relationship between religion and dependent variables (emotional reactivity, I position, emotional cutoff, fusion with others, and differentiation of self). The results of the test demonstrated that possible significant relationship exists between religion and fusion with others. Participants' level of fusion with others may be affected by their belonging to certain religious groups. The results of the test demonstrate that level of fusion with others could be affected not only by the independent variable (level of perceived maternal narcissism),

but by religion. Further research is needed to clarify the direction of this relationship.

T-test test was conducted to examine the relationship between history of psychotherapy experience and dependent variables (emotional reactivity, I position, emotional cutoff, fusion with others, and differentiation of self). The results of the test demonstrated that possible significant relationship exists between history of psychotherapy experience and both fusion with others and I position. Participants' level of both fusion with others and I position may be affected by their history of psychotherapy experience. The results of the test demonstrate that level of both fusion with others and I position could be affected not only by the independent variable (level of perceived maternal narcissism), but by history of psychotherapy experience. Further research is needed to clarify the direction of this relationship.

Discussion of Findings

The purpose of the study was to investigate the impact perceived narcissistic characterological traits in mothers have on the development of self-differentiation level in their children. Research findings demonstrated that there was no impact of perceived narcissistic personality traits in mothers on the level of self differentiation in their adult children. The results of the study refuted assumptions made by the researcher that an individual raised by a mother who she/he perceives as having high levels of narcissistic characterological traits would be unlikely to develop a high level of self-differentiation. However, another assumption of the study suggested that perceived maternal narcissism may be only one factor contributing to the development of the level of self-differentiation. Thus, the results of the study did support an assumption that development

of the level of self-differentiation maybe influenced by a plethora of other factors. These factors are ethnicity, religion, income, and psychotherapy experience.

The results of the study may also put into question several ideas posed by proponents of attachment theory. Mahler (1975) in her developmental theory suggested that children internalize maternal narcissistic behavior and form intrapsychic structures based upon their experiences interacting with their mothers. They bring these structures into adulthood and have difficulty consistently maintaining a strong sense of self, independent of their mother. Since results of the study suggest that there is no significant relationship between perceived level of maternal narcissism and differentiation of self in adult children, it is safe to question whether perceived maternal narcissistic behavior in fact forms intrapsychic structures which impact the development of the sense of self. The results of the study also contrast the process of introjections related to narcissistic behavior of the mother. According to Mahler (1975), introjection is an unconscious process in which the values, personality traits, and unconscious projections of early caregivers are “taken in” to form building blocks of a sense of self. Since no significant relationship between perceived narcissistic personality traits in mothers and level of self-differentiation in their children had been found, it is safe to question whether perceived maternal narcissism constitutes a building block in sense of self formation in a child through the process of introjection.

Assumptions and Limitations of the Study

Several limitations exist within this study. One such limitation is that the participants were not randomly selected. Given that the participants were obtained by non-random sampling method, generalization to the general population is limited. Secondly, the idea of measuring the degree of perceived maternal narcissism by asking participants to answer Narcissistic Personality Inventory on behalf of their mothers may have hindered the ability to generalize results. The participants may have answered NPI on behalf of themselves rather than their mothers uncovering the illusive nature of both “perceived” and “real” narcissistic characterological traits. This possibility may deserve further exploration. Furthermore, participants may have attempted to portray their mothers more positively or more negatively than their mothers could have actually be, thereby, affecting the results of the study. Moreover, specific instructions on the Narcissistic Personality Inventory may have been misinterpreted and this misinterpretation may have impacted the results of the study. Also, given that data collection on Differentiation of Self Inventory involved self-reporting, individuals may have attempted to portray themselves more positively, thereby affecting the results of the study. Additionally, the fact that only 79 individuals were included in the sample was a limiting factor. The small sample size limited the ability to generalize results and potentially had an effect on the results of the study.

Implications and Further Research

This study was designed to expand the knowledge on the etiology of self-differentiation. Since scarce research exists in this particular area, this study was an attempt to explore whether perceived maternal narcissistic characterological traits impact the development of self-differentiation level in adult individuals. The underlying assumption for this study is rooted in the theory of infant attachment to his/her primary caregiver playing a crucial role in the emotional development of a child into adulthood (Mahler, 1986).

First, this study examined the impact of perceived narcissistic characterological traits in mothers on the emotional development of their children into adulthood. Since narcissism is characterized by excessive preoccupation with the self (APA, 2000), this prominent characterological trait is theorized to impair one's ability to form healthy attachment with one's child, which is crucial for the child's development. This study demonstrated that perceived maternal narcissistic characterological traits, as measured in this study, do not impact the level of adult children's self-differentiation.

Since differentiation of self is a building block in the formation of sense of self (Bowen, 1978) and there is no evidence of research examining the etiology of the process of self-differentiation development, it is of a paramount importance that research continues the investigation of the process. As it was mentioned earlier in the chapter, this study supported the assumption that there are a plethora of factors contributing to the development of self-differentiation level. This study was able to identify four demographic characteristics that may contribute to the development of self-differentiation

level (income, religion, ethnicity, and history of psychotherapy experience). Further examination of the nature and direction of the relationship between these four variables and the level of self-differentiation could be a focus of future research. Current research demonstrated that the above mentioned four demographic characteristics are significantly related to various components of self-differentiation, specifically, emotional cutoff, emotional reactivity, fusion with others, and I position. Future researchers may examine closer the impact of demographic characteristics on various components of differentiation of self in adult individuals. Moreover, further research can address other possible factors that maybe contributing to the formation of the level of self-differentiation. Among these factors could be trauma experienced in the past, accomplishments experienced in the past, history of mental health in the family, various psychosocial stressors an individual experienced in the past, etc. Further research could also investigate cultural differences in the formation of self-differentiation level. The effect of collectivistic culture versus individualistic culture on the development of self-differentiation level in an individual can be examined in the future research.

Since perceived maternal narcissism was measured by an instrument which was designed to measure actual narcissistic personality traits, further research could focus on examining if actual level of maternal narcissism could be related to the development of self-differentiation in an individual. For this purpose the research could be conducted using dyads (mothers and their children) to collect data. Mothers would be filling out Narcissistic Personality Inventory and children would be filling out Differentiation of Self Inventory. Furthermore, future research can also focus on examining closer the

environment in which an individual grew up. Specifically, examining presence or absence of a father can be critical for development of self-differentiation level.

Moreover, not only presence or absence of siblings can contribute to the level of self-differentiation, but also sibling position can be crucial for the development of healthy self-differentiation level.

Perhaps the most far reaching impact of the current study is that, in attempting to clarify possible contributions to healthy adulthood, it has opened up issues that bring into question some of the bedrock assumptions that underlie psychological theory and practice. Among the assumptions that have held sway since the earliest days of psychological study, the importance of the experience with one's parents as predictive of adult psychological health is brought into question by the results of the current study. Equally essential to the study is one of the fundamental philosophical issues of consciousness: how much of what we believe we perceive outside of us and how much is a product of our minds. Within this study's attempt to clarify a relationship between "perceived" and "actual" behaviors and feelings it has become clear that many future studies of the etiology of diagnoses and outcomes might benefit from further exploration of perception and reality.

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APPENDIX A

Informed Consent Form

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

I have been informed that this study involves research which will be conducted by Anna Gershelis, MSW, MA, a student of clinical psychology at Alliant International University, Los Angeles. I understand that this project is designed to study the impact of narcissism in mothers on emotional maturity of their adult children. I have been asked to participate in this study because I am an adult. I understand that my participation in this study will involve the completion of three inventories designed to measure the level of perceived narcissism and the level of self-differentiation, and to obtain demographic information. I am aware that my involvement in this study will take approximately 35 minutes of my time.

I understand that I may refuse to participate or request to withdraw my responses from this study at any time before submission of the final set of responses to be collected in this study without any penalty. I also understand that if I request to withdraw my responses after my participation in the study has been completed, that it may not be possible to remove my data from the electronic records because information linking me to my responses has been eliminated in order to protect my anonymity. I understand that my identity as a participant in this study will be kept in strict confidence and that no information that identifies me in any way will be released without my separate written approval. I am aware that all information that identifies me will be protected to the limits allowed by law. I have been informed that all individual data collected about me for the purposes of this study will be destroyed by Anna Gershelis, MSW, MA within five (5) years of the date of the signing of this document.

I have been informed that my participation in this study may make me feel uncomfortable. If such is the case, Anna Gershelis, MSW, MA, the principal investigator of this project, will be available to discuss my feelings with me and to determine if an appropriate referral for psychological help is necessary.

I am aware that although I may not directly benefit from this study, my participation in this project may benefit the general human knowledge and understanding regarding the impact of maternal narcissism on emotional maturity in adult children.

I understand that I may contact Anna Gershelis at agershelis@alliant.edu or by phone at (310) 953-7177 or her supervisor Richard Mendoza, Ph.D., at CSPP-LA at Alliant International University, 1000 South Fremont Ave. Unit 5, Alhambra, CA 91803 or by phone at (626) 284-2777 (Ext. 3046) if I have any questions about this project or my participation in this study. I understand that at the end of the study I may request a summary of results or additional information about the study from Anna Gershelis, MSW.

I request a summary of the results of this study when it is completed. I may be contacted at _____ to receive a summary of the results.

I am not interested in receiving a summary of the results of this study.

I understand that I will be signing two copies of this form. I will keep one copy and Anna Gershelis, MSW, MA will keep the second copy for her records.

I have read this form and understand what it says. I am 21 years or older and voluntarily agree to participate in this research project.

Participant's Signature

Date

Researcher's Signature

Date

APPENDIX B

General Information Questionnaire

General Information Questionnaire

The following questions are designed to obtain information about your background. Please read each question carefully and provide your response by placing an X in the spaces provided or by providing your written response to the information requested. Please answer **all** of the questions. Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.

1. What is your gender?

_____ a. Male

_____ b. Female

2. What is your age? _____ years

3. What is your Ethnicity? (Please, check only **one** response)

_____ a. Caucasian

_____ b. African-American

_____ c. Hispanic/Latino

_____ d. Asian/Philippino

_____ e. Native American

_____ f. Other (please specify):

4. What is your religion?

_____ a. Catholic

_____ b. Christian

_____ c. Jewish

_____ d. Muslim

_____ e. Atheist

_____f. Other (please specify):

5. How many years of education starting with elementary school and finishing with the highest level of education have you completed? _____ years

6. What is your current marital status? (Please, check only **one** response)

_____ a. Married (first marriage)

_____ b. Married (not first marriage)

_____ c. Divorced

_____ d. Separated

_____ e. Widowed

_____ f. Single (never married)

_____ g. Single (divorced)

_____ h. Domestic partnership

_____ i. Other (please specify): _____

7. What is your current approximate annual income including all sources?

(Please, check only **one** response)

_____ a. \$0 to \$9,999

_____ b. \$10,000 to \$19,999

_____ c. \$20,000 to \$29,999

_____ d. \$30,000 to 39,999

_____ e. \$40,000 to 49,999

_____ f. \$50,000 to 59,999

_____ g. \$60,000 to 69,999

_____ h. \$70,000 to 79,999

_____ i. \$80,000 to 89,999

_____ j. \$90,000 to 99,999

_____ k. Over \$100,000

8. Have you ever been in psychotherapy?

_____ Yes

_____ No

If "yes", please, specify:

the number of years/months in treatment _____ years _____
months

how many years/months ago treatment was terminated _____ years _____
months

9. Do you have siblings?

_____ Yes

_____ No

10. Did you grow up in a

_____ a. single mother family

_____ b. single father family

_____ c. two-parents (biological) family

_____ d. two-parents (adoptive) family

_____ e. two-parents family one of which was a step-parent

_____ f. Other (please specify): _____

11. Is your mother your biological mother?

_____ Yes

_____ No

12. How many years ago did you move out of your mother's home?

_____ years

Thank you for taking time to complete this questionnaire!

APPENDIX C

Narcissistic Personality Inventory

Narcissistic Personality Inventory

Please imagine that you are filling out this inventory on behalf of your mother. In each of the following pairs of attitudes, choose the one with which you think YOUR MOTHER (THE ONE YOU GREW UP WITH) would MOST AGREE. Mark your answer by writing EITHER A or B in the space provided. Only mark ONE ANSWER for each attitude pair, and please DO NOT skip any items.

- _____ 1. **A** I have a natural talent for influencing people.
B I am not good at influencing people.
- _____ 2. **A** Modesty doesn't become me.
B I am essentially a modest person.
- _____ 3. **A** I would do almost anything on a dare.
B I tend to be a fairly cautious person.
- _____ 4. **A** When people complement me, I sometimes get embarrassed.
B I know that I am good because everybody keeps telling me so.
- _____ 5. **A** The thought of ruling the world frightens the hell out of me.
B If I ruled the world, it would be a better place.
- _____ 6. **A** I can usually talk my way out of anything.
B I try to accept the consequences of my behavior.
- _____ 7. **A** I prefer to blend in with the crowd.
B I like to be the center of attention.
- _____ 8. **A** I will be a success.
B I am not too concerned about success.

- _____ 9. **A** I am not better or worse than most people.
B I think I am a special person.
- _____ 10. **A** I am not sure if I would make a good leader.
B I see myself as a good leader.
- _____ 11. **A** I am assertive.
B I wish I were more assertive.
- _____ 12. **A** I like having authority over other people.
B I don't mind following orders.
- _____ 13. **A** I find it easy to manipulate people.
B I don't like it when I find myself manipulating people.
- _____ 14. **A** I insist upon getting the respect that is due to me.
B I usually get the respect that I deserve.
- _____ 15. **A** I don't particularly like to show off my body.
B I like to show off my body.
- _____ 16. **A** I can read people like a book.
B People are sometimes hard to understand.
- _____ 17. **A** If I feel competent, I am willing to take responsibility for making decisions.
B I like to take responsibility for making decisions.
- _____ 18. **A** I just want to be reasonably happy.
B I want to amount to something in the eyes of the world.
- _____ 19. **A** My body is nothing special.

B I like to look at my body.

_____ 20. **A** I try not to show off.

B I will usually show off if I get the chance.

_____ 21. **A** I always know what I am doing.

B Sometimes I am not sure of what I am doing.

_____ 22. **A** I sometimes depend on people to get things done.

B I rarely depend on anyone else to get things done.

_____ 23. **A** Sometimes I tell good stories.

B Everybody likes to hear my stories.

_____ 24. **A** I expect a great deal from other people.

B I like to do things for other people.

_____ 25. **A** I will never be satisfied until I get all that I deserve.

B I take my satisfactions as they come.

_____ 26. **A** Compliments embarrass me.

B I like to be complimented.

_____ 27. **A** I have a strong will to have power.

B Power for its own sake doesn't interest me.

_____ 28. **A** I don't care about new fads and fashions.

B I like to start new fads and fashions.

- _____ 29. **A** I like to look at myself in the mirror.
B I am not particularly interested in looking at myself in the mirror.
- _____ 30. **A** I really like to be the center of attention.
B It makes me uncomfortable to be the center of attention.
- _____ 31. **A** I can live my life any way I want to.
B People can't always live their lives in terms of what they want.
- _____ 32. **A** Being an authority doesn't mean that much to me.
B People always seem to recognize my authority.
- _____ 33. **A** I would prefer to be a leader
B It makes little difference to me whether I am a leader or not.
- _____ 34. **A** I am going to be a great person.
B I hope I am going to be successful.
- _____ 35. **A** People sometimes believe what I tell them.
B I can make anybody believe anything I want them to.
- _____ 36. **A** I am a born leader.
B Leadership is a quality that takes a long time to develop.
- _____ 37. **A** I wish someone would someday write my biography.
B I don't like people to pry into my life for any reason.
- _____ 38. **A** I get upset when people don't notice how I look when I go out in

public.

B I don't mind blending into the crowd when I go out in public.

_____ 39. **A** I am more capable than other people.

B There is a lot that I can learn from other people.

_____ 40. **A** I am much like everybody else.

B I am an extraordinary person.

Thank you for taking time to complete this questionnaire!

APPENDIX D

Differentiation of Self Inventory

DIFFERENTIATION OF SELF INVENTORY

Skowron & Friedlander (1998)

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