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Narcissism, span of supervision, and outcomes in a municipality context

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Abstract

Purpose: To enhance the understanding of the complex interplay between leaders and followers we examined the link between narcissistic leadership and two follower outcomes; loyalty and job satisfaction in a Norwegian municipality context. We further investigate whether span of supervision can moderate the hypothesized negative relationship between leader narcissism and the follower outcomes and function as a buffer.

Design: The present study relied on cross-sectional research design where 224 respondents from various municipalities answered electronic questionnaires. Data was collected separately from leaders and followers.

Findings: Our findings revealed negative correlations between narcissistic leadership and both job satisfaction and loyalty. However, the HML analysis did not find support for moderating effects of span of supervision.

Implications: First, our results show that higher levels of leader narcissism result in lower levels of loyalty and job satisfaction in a Norwegian Municipality setting. Second, consistent with Affective Events Theory our data imply a process where a negative work event in terms of narcissistic leadership, results in affective responses in terms of lower scores on loyalty and job satisfaction.

Value: To our knowledge, this is the first study connecting narcissistic leaders to decreased loyalty and job satisfaction in a municipality context. Thus, our results imply that municipalities are yet another arena where narcissists can unfold, despite the prevalent focus on the private business sector. Second, this is the first study connecting lower levels of loyalty to higher of narcissism, adding knowledge about the detrimental effects narcissistic leaders can have for the associated employees.

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Introduction

In extant research, leadership has mostly been portrayed as a positive concept (e.g. Kelloway, Mullen and Francis, 2006). A common topic within leadership research concerns qualities that the leader ought to possess to be an effective leader (Chamorro-Premuzic, 2016). Thus, some researchers claim that the definition of leadership only implicates its positivity and therefore unfairly ignore the concept of destructive leadership (e.g. Kelloway, Mullen & Francis, 2006; Bass & Avolio, 1990). However, in recent years, the concept of destructive leadership and leaders who possess negative traits has gotten increased attention due to the damage such leaders can have in an organization (e.g. Einarsen, Aasland & Skogstad, 2007). Destructive leadership has usually been characterized by three specific types (also called the dark triad) – narcissism, psychopathy, and Machiavellianism (e.g. Jonason, Slomski & Partyka, 2012, Furnham, 2010). Out of these three, narcissism has gathered a lot of attention for its many discussions regarding narcissistic leadership (e.g. Rosenthal & Pittinsky, 2006; Campbell, Hoffman, Campbell & Marchisio, 2011; Maccoby, 2000).

In the current study, we investigate the link between narcissistic leadership and two follower outcomes; loyalty and job satisfaction. We will further analyse these follower outcomes in a Norwegian municipality context. According to Affective Events Theory, different types of work events create affective responses (Weiss & Cropanzano 1996). In comparison with our thesis, we argue that narcissistic leadership is to be counted as a negative work event that will further influence levels of follower loyalty and job satisfaction negatively. This theoretical framework will be explained in depth in further paragraphs.

We further explore whether span of supervision can moderate the hypothesized negative relationship between leader narcissism and the follower outcomes. We argue that narcissistic leaders will have employees that score lower on both loyalty and job satisfaction, but that this can be moderated by span of supervision through a buffering effect. The idea is that followers that are not working as closely with their leader, i.e. the leader has wider span of supervision, will be somewhat protected from the negative outcomes.

The intended contribution of our study is threefold. First, we look at narcissism in a municipality context. This will extend previous research that put narcissism mostly in private sector organizations (e.g. Hochwarter & Thompson,

2012; Owens, Wallace & Waldman, 2015). Research has shown that the environmental differences between public and private sector include both market forces and legislation issues. This will further affect how leaders lead in different sectors (Hooijberg & Choi, 2001). Thus, investigating narcissistic leadership in a public-sector context will give us the opportunity to observe potential similar patterns compared to the private sector. Moreover, it is of interest to see if municipalities are an arena where narcissistic leaders can unfold, and if followers in municipalities react similarly to narcissistic leadership in the public sector. Some research has suggested that certain traits that narcissists usually possess, such as boldness and dominance, are more valued in private sector organizations (Furnham, 2010). This might have underestimated the possibilities that narcissistic leadership can occur in public sector organizations as well. By expanding the knowledge in which contexts narcissists operate, one can also work further towards protecting organizations from the possible detrimental effects such leaders can have. In addition, municipalities are especially important in Norway since the public sector stands for 50% of the country's GDP (The Economist, 2013). Considering that the trait narcissism can be counted as normally distributed in the population (Foster and Campbell, 2007) it is likely that leaders with such traits will exist in this sector as well, further supporting its importance.

Second, as noted by Campbell et al. (2011), one way to respond to the inconsistencies in the field, is to search for situational moderators that can play a part in the relationship between narcissistic leadership and various follower outcomes. More specifically, this gap emphasizes the need for identifying how certain variables can change the relationships/associations between leaders with narcissistic traits and certain follower outcomes. We intend to contribute by introducing a seemingly unexplored moderator in the narcissistic leader - follower relation, which we further argue will function as a buffer against the detrimental effects narcissistic leaders can have. By doing so, we wish to contribute to the field by revealing potential means of handling narcissistic leaders and unsatisfied employees; i.e. utilizing the knowledge on moderating effects of span of supervision when assigning employees to leaders.

Third, even though research has shown that leaders tend to act as if they are entitled to loyalty from their followers (Resick, Whitman, Weingarden & Hiller, 2009), no research, to our knowledge, has looked at the concrete

relationship between narcissistic leadership and decreased or increased loyalty towards the leader. Research has shown that employee loyalty is crucial for workforce well-being and organizational success (Seifert, Brockner, Bianchi & Moon, 2016; Eskildsen & Nussler, 2000). Therefore, disloyal employees will become less motivated and their suboptimal work performance can hurt the bottom line of the organization (e.g. Sverke and Hellgren, 2001; Matzler and Renzl, 2006; Costen and Salazar, 2011; as cited in Tseng & Wu, 2017). Furthermore, loyal employees often have a strong desire to maintain a member of the organization (Becker, Randall & Riegel, 1995). If loyalty decreases, that desire will arguably also decrease, leading to higher levels of turnover. Therefore, lower levels of loyalty can have serious consequences, both for the individual's themselves, but also for the organization as an entity. By looking at how narcissistic leadership can affect employee loyalty we are able to add knowledge to the dyadic connections between follower and leader, and on the outcomes of narcissistic leadership.

In the following paragraphs, we will introduce the topic of our thesis further by presenting our theoretical framework and other important constructs. First, we will go through our core concepts and explain the construct of narcissism in depth.

Core concepts and definitions

Narcissism

In social personality literature, narcissism has been recognized as a trait that is normally distributed in the population (Foster and Campbell, 2007). On the other hand, the clinical psychology and the psychiatric literature has defined narcissism as a disorder where many specific traits are present and the narcissism tend to cause distress and impairment for the individual (Campbell et al, 2011). Due to low prevalence of narcissistic personality disorder, larger prevalence of individuals with narcissistic traits, as well as restricted medical data, we will focus on trait narcissism (e.g. Stinson, Dawson, Goldstein, Chou, Huang, Smith and Grand, 2008 in Campbell et al, 2011). We will use the terms narcissism and trait narcissism interchangeably, however, the scope of this study understands narcissism as a trait.

Chatterjee and Hambrick (2007) discuss three possible reasons for the lack of research on narcissistic leaders and trait narcissism. First, influenced by the connection to Greek mythology, there might be a belief that narcissism is not established in psychological science, and therefore might not be deemed important. Second, organizational researchers might be discouraged by the difficulties of gathering data or measuring narcissism. Third, researchers might not believe narcissism has much of theoretical and practical importance - they may see it as purely incidental. Still, the research on leaders with narcissistic traits in organizational contexts has revealed interesting results, as we will present in the following paragraphs.

Narcissism in organizational contexts

Many definitions of narcissism in organizational contexts have been composed. Every researcher chooses to add something of their own to the definition, but they essentially all arrive at the same conclusion. We will present two of the most cited definitions to establish what narcissism and narcissistic leadership entail. Campbell et al (2011, p. 269) proposed the following definition in their research;

(...) Narcissism is a relatively stable individual difference consisting of grandiosity, self-love and inflated self-views. It is useful to think of narcissism as containing three components: the self, interpersonal relationships and self-regulatory strategies. First, the narcissistic self is characterized by positivity, specialness and uniqueness, vanity, a sense of entitlement and a desire for power and esteem. Second, narcissistic relationships contain low levels of empathy and emotional intimacy. Third, there are narcissistic strategies for maintaining inflated self-views. For example, narcissists seek out opportunities for attention and admiration, brag, steal credit from others, and play games in relationships (Campbell et al, 2011, p. 269)

Thus, according to Campbell et al (2011), narcissism is a complex trait that can manifest itself in different ways and lead to some numerous different outcomes when viewed in organizational contexts. Another definition is proposed by Rosenthal and Pittinsky (2006, p. 629). They define narcissistic leadership as

something that (...)” occurs when leaders’ actions are principally motivated by their own egomaniacal needs and beliefs, superseding the needs and interests of the constituents and institutions they lead”. Their definition makes an important distinction between a narcissistic leader and narcissistic leadership which stands in contrast to Campbell et al.’s (2011) definition above. They suggest that the trait narcissism is not a prerequisite for narcissistic leadership or behaviour. People low on narcissistic traits can engage in narcissistic behaviours, just as people possessing trait narcissism can take part in non-narcissistic behaviour. Therefore, we will use Rosenthal and Pittinsky’s definition as a basis for our understanding of narcissism.

In sum, narcissism has shown to have close ties with leadership where a growing body of research has identified the negative consequences of leader’s narcissistic behaviours (Judge, Piccolo & Kosalka, 2009). However, it has still not been completely clarified if the narcissistic leader hinders or benefits the organization, since many researchers mention both upsides and downsides, with the latter more extensively discussed (Rosenthal & Pittinsky, 2006; Maccoby, 2000; Kets De Vries, 2004). Some research has shown narcissism as less effective (Blair, Hoffmann & Helland, 2008), while others have found no link between leader narcissism and effectiveness at all (Judge, LePine & Rich, 2006). Furthermore, Watts, Lilienfeld, Smith, Miller, Campbell, Waldman & Faschingbauer (2013) did a study on the effects of narcissism in US presidents on their leadership. Their findings showed that narcissism can be linked to positive elements of leadership, such as persuasiveness, but also negative elements such as ethical indiscretions. On the other hand, Chatterjee & Hambrick (2007) argue that narcissistic CEOs are more likely to engage in extreme behaviour, which can cause fluctuating performance of their organizations. They also tend to use their organizations as tools for their own personal needs (Thompson, 1967; as cited in Chatterjee & Hambrick, 2007). Therefore, the question of whether narcissistic leadership is positive or negative for the organization is not straightforward, and research has shown examples of both positive and negative sides of having narcissistic individuals in leadership positions. Still, even though narcissists have been shown to be effective in certain work contexts, they can still have detrimental effects on the people working with, or for them (e.g. Rosenthal &

Pittinsky, 2006). Therefore, we argue that it is important to find ways to protect the employees from the destructiveness of having such leaders.

Additionally, most of the research tends to focus on analysing the leader without accounting for their followers. For example, Kets De Vries and Miller (1997) discuss several types of narcissistic leaders (e.g. reactive, self-deceptive, and constructive). Campbell et al. (2011) discuss narcissistic leaders and the changes in their performance. Maccoby (2000) discusses the differences between productive and unproductive narcissistic leaders, without delving into the extreme pathology of those conditions, and Grijalva, Harms, Newman, Gaddis and Farley's (2015) meta-analysis focuses mainly on leadership effectiveness. As stated, what these examples have in common is a focus on the leader him/herself which leaves out how they affect the people around them.

The lack of research on the effects of narcissistic leaders on their followers has inspired us to look more closely at that relationship, rather than gather more data on the leader solely. Although leaders have a lot of power in organizations, such as strategizing and decision making, employees are also the vital parts of any organization. Not only do we want to uncover the detrimental effects narcissistic leaders can have on their followers, but also see if we can find a potential buffer to these effects.

Theoretical framework

Having clarified the theory on narcissism and its role in organizations, the next step is to explain the theory and dynamics of the model which we base our research and variables on.

Weiss and Cropanzano developed a framework in 1996 named the Affective Events Theory. This theory illustrates how certain organizational events create affective responses from the employees. These affective responses will further accumulate into affective aspects of work attitudes through judgmental evaluations and finally behavioural outcomes. More specifically, when things happen to employees at work, they will react with affect to this event, in this case, either by feeling less satisfied with their job, or less loyal towards their leader. One can further consider the judgmental evaluations and the behavioural outcomes that this event eventually creates, though this is not a part of the scope of this study. We believe that this framework is applicable to our theoretical

model. Based on the theory we know about the behavioural tendencies of narcissistic leaders, such as using both the organization and the people in it for their own need, manipulative behaviour and tendency for arrogant attitudes (Rosenthal & Pittinsky, 2006), we argue that having a narcissistic leader will be a negative organizational event for the employees attached to that leader. This negative event will further lead to certain affective responses; and in our case we investigate job satisfaction and loyalty as these responses.

In addition, the choice of exploring a moderator was firstly based on the idea that certain variables could buffer or protect against the negative associations narcissism can have on follower outcomes. We asked ourselves if it was possible that distance between leader and follower could protect against the leaders' negative behaviours, such as lack of empathy, distaste for mentoring and manipulative behaviour (Rosenthal & Pittinsky, 2006). Considering that, we argue that span of supervision will moderate the relation between the narcissistic leadership event and the negative affective reactions. Span of supervision is related to how close the leader and follower are, where wider spans of supervision can implicate less contact between follower and leader (Antonakis & Atwater, 2002). Therefore, we wanted to see if span of supervision could function as a buffer, where we might see less negative associations between leader narcissism and follower outcomes when span of supervision is wider. In the next paragraphs, we will go more in depth on the theory revolving our outcome variables, before presenting our constructs and hypotheses.

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is a widely studied concept in organizational science, and like many other constructs in organizational psychology, it does not have one unified definition. According to Zhu (2012), the concept of job satisfaction dates to 1931 where Fisher and Hanna defined it as a non-regulatory mood (Fisher & Hanna, 1931 in Zhu, 2012). Later, Locke (1976) defined job satisfaction as a positive affective state which grows from evaluative aspects of one's work. In 1985, Organ and Near introduced the difference between the affective and cognitive perspective of job satisfaction. The affective based definition of job satisfaction is an overall positive affective evaluation of the job. More specifically, this definition tackles whether the job stimulates pleasant or

unpleasant emotions. When using this definition, the feelings and emotions of the employees are being measured, where positive feelings indicate higher degrees of job satisfaction. For the scope of this study, we understand job satisfaction as an affective response, where the negative event of having a narcissistic leader will accumulate into lower levels of job satisfaction.

In many articles regarding narcissism and job satisfaction, the focus tends to be on narcissistic individuals and their *own* sense of job satisfaction, rather than the job satisfaction of the people around them (E.g. Kopelman & Mullins, 1992; Soyer, Rovenpor, Kopelman, Mullins & Watson, 2001). Furthermore, Leary, Green, Denson, Schoenfeld, Henley & Langford (2013) found that narcissistic, grandiose behaviour did not produce a negative relationship with job satisfaction. However, their study lacked evidence for external validity, thus making it difficult to generalize. The fluctuating results regarding the positivity or negativity of narcissistic leadership regarding job satisfaction can be explained by looking at the emergence of narcissistic leaders. Maccoby (2000) explains that organizations choose narcissistic leaders in the age of innovation, dynamics and crisis because narcissists thrive in that chaos. Therefore, in times of chaos, narcissistic leaders might attract more favourable evaluations than in steadier times. Rosenthal and Pittinsky (2006) add that narcissists' confidence and dominance can in some cases inspire and attract followers. Thus, it is probable that certain distinctions must be made when conducting research on leader narcissism, such as the difference between the emergence of the narcissistic leader and long-term narcissistic leaders. On the long term, narcissistic leaders often use manipulation techniques and are often willing to take credit from others. That kind of behaviour might entice detrimental outcomes for the subordinates directly affected by it, resulting in lower job satisfaction (Campbell, Reeder, Sedikides & Elliot, 2000; Kets de Vries & Miller, 1997).

Loyalty

Even though narcissistic leaders might seem attractive and create followers who are passionately devoted to them, that devotion can also inhibit rationality from subordinates, creating insecurities and dependencies rather than loyalty (Yukl, 1999). Loyalty can be defined as an emotional state that can have further implications on the decision about leaving or remaining in the organization (Allen

& Grisaffe, 2001; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990). It can further be conceptualized as a sort of commitment or allegiance towards a leader. For the scope of the study we understand loyalty as an emotional response, since we do not measure behavioural consequences.

Narcissistic leaders tend to act as if they are entitled to the loyalty of their followers (Resick et al, 2009). Therefore, it is probable that some employees might act loyal towards the leader to avoid repercussions, but not actually feel loyal. Since narcissistic leaders actively use different manipulation techniques their true nature will, presumably, not stay hidden for too long (Kets de Vries & Miller, 1997). Once uncovered, the loyalty and esteem of their subordinates may disrupt soon (Hogan, 1994; Hogan & Hogan, 2001; as cited in Paunonen, Lönnqvist, Verkasalo, Leikas, & Nissinen, 2006).

In sum, we argue that these variables function together in a theoretical framework where the negative event (leader narcissism) relates to negative affective reactions in terms of lower levels of job satisfaction and loyalty. However, these affective reactions might be moderated by span of supervision. We will present our constructs and our hypotheses in the following paragraph.

Constructs and hypotheses

As described earlier, narcissistic leaders are known for their use of many manipulation techniques, such as impression management, and willingness to take credit from others (Campbell et al. 2000; Kets de Vries & Miller, 1997). Such behaviour might entice detrimental outcomes for the employees that are directly affected by it, and in result, generate low satisfaction (Campbell et al. 2000; Kets de Vries & Miller. 1997). As discussed in previous paragraphs, narcissism has been linked to various deviance and unethical, exploitative behaviour. Those can be cheating, lack of integrity and even white-collar crime (Blair, Hoffman & Helland, 2008; O'Boyle, Ernest, Donelson, Forsynth, Banks & McDaniel, 2012). When employees perceive such unethical behaviour, it can lead to more strain on the employee, depression, low commitment and finally lower levels of job satisfaction (Gino, Ayal & Ariely, 2012). In addition, many studies have found negative relationships between destructive leadership and job satisfaction, and research has shown that destructive leadership correlate with narcissism (Rosenthal & Pittinsky, 2006; Maccoby, 2000). Schyns and Schilling (2013)

argue that supervisors and managers play an important and significant part of any employee's work-life. Therefore, they have huge influence in making a job either very pleasant or unpleasant. Thus, leaders with destructive traits such as narcissism can influence the degree of well-being. These theoretical considerations, combined with the negative traits that narcissism has shown to have, make us confident that we will find negative associations with leader narcissism and job satisfaction. Even though one can argue that this relation seems to be quite established, no one has looked at this correlation in a municipality context. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: Leader narcissism and follower job satisfaction will be negatively associated.

As previously discussed, narcissistic leaders tend to act as if they are entitled to loyalty of their followers (Resick et al, 2009). They use different manipulation techniques to do so, and at first, their employees might even be attracted to them. However, when their true nature gets uncovered, loyalty might decrease soon. To our knowledge, negative correlations between narcissism and loyalty have not been directly studied in research settings. Research has shown that narcissistic leadership can destruct subordinate trust (Benson & Hogan, 2008). Trust in managers strongly influences employee loyalty (Matzler & Renz, 2006) which further supports the idea that decreased loyalty is yet another result from having leaders with narcissistic traits. Moreover, research has shown that positive relations between leaders and followers are grounded in actions such as feedback, coaching and information sharing (Goleman, 1998; Goleman, 2000; Robbins, 2001). Based on what we know about narcissistic behaviours, it seems likely that we will see negative associations with employee loyalty, as that also depends on having a positive relationship with the leader. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2: Leader narcissism and follower loyalty will be negatively associated.

As previously described, we argue that span of supervision functions as a moderator between leader narcissism and follower outcomes. More specifically, we investigate whether it is plausible that span of supervision will function as a buffer against the negative associations between leader narcissism and follower job satisfaction and loyalty. We predict that when span of supervision is wide, that might buffer against the detrimental effects leader narcissism have on job satisfaction and loyalty. On the other hand, when the span of supervision is narrow the leader and the follower will be “forced” to have more direct contact, thus leaving the negative associations between leader narcissism and the outcome variables more pronounced. This is a buffering hypothesis (Hoffman, Strang, Kuhnert, Campbell, Kennedy & LoPilato, 2013).

Greenberg and Baron (2011) define span of supervision as “the number of subordinates in an organization who are supervised by a manager” (Greenberg & Baron, 2011 pp. 550). Span of supervision can also be connected to different kinds of organizational hierarchies. Narrow spans of supervision are likely to have taller hierarchy structures, compared to wider spans of supervision, where the structure is flatter with less clear authority figures (Greenberg & Baron, 2011).

Napier and Ferris (1993) propose that it is theoretically possible that span of supervision could affect the degree of interaction between leaders and followers. Furthermore, Judge and Ferris (1993) argue that a wider span of supervision will be associated with less leader-follower contact, because it will be more difficult for the leader to spend time with their followers. According to Bass (1999), leaders who supervise a great number of followers might be obliged to use less active forms of leaderships compared to e.g. transformational leadership and constructive transactional leadership. In addition, followers that are distant from their leaders will have less information about them, and might be prone to attributions and assumptions (Shamir, 1995). Moreover, Schriesheim, Castro and Yammarino (2000) argue that span of supervision can moderate relations between the leaders and followers, and various outcome variables. They elaborate the idea about span by adding that, in general, supervisors of large work groups can be expected to have certain constraints in their time and vice versa. Because of this, the connection and interaction between the subordinates and supervisors will be more limited. While this is arguably negative when the leader is of the transformational kind, we argue that when the leader possesses high levels of trait

narcissism this might be positive in terms of avoiding or reducing negative follower outcomes.

Furthermore, as narcissistic individuals can leave attractive first impressions, the followers might end up idealizing them in the beginning. However, as Shamir (1995) discussed: “(...) the idealized image (...) also requires a distance to have an effect. Closer examinations of the leader’s vision are likely to reveal flaws and inconsistencies, ruining its inspirational and motivational effects. Therefore, it is plausible to argue that when followers are not closely attached to their leader, the detrimental effects would be weaker. This was also suggested by Howell, Bowen, Dorfman, Kerr & Podsakoff (1997) who argued that leader distance could be considered as a neutralizer that could reduce certain effects that leader behaviours have on others.

We argue that the negative effects between narcissism and our two outcome variables will be mitigated by span of supervision through a buffering effect. In cases where a narcissistic leader is in charge, it might be healthier for the employees to have less contact with them. Antonakis & Atwater (2002) emphasize that larger spans of supervision will lead to a larger social distance between leader and follower, thus leading to less individualized attention. More specifically, when the leader has less possibility to give the individual attention, the leader might also lose the opportunity to act manipulative and in other ways affect the employee in negative ways. Because of this, it seems likely that the detrimental outcomes that can arise from having to close contact with a narcissistic leader can be mitigated. Additionally, as discussed previously, followers might end up idealizing distant leaders (Shamir, 1995), resulting in better job satisfaction.

Furthermore, following the same logic, it seems likely that the negative effects from leader narcissism and follower loyalty may be postponed. Shamir (1995) argues that leaders that are more distant will attract attributions of exceptional qualities from their followers because of various techniques (e.g. great visions, rhetoric, articulation). We have already mentioned how narcissistic leaders can be great visionaries and attract large number of followers (Maccoby, 2000). Therefore, if they can maintain distance, their followers might idealize them because of their first impressions. This type of idealization is called attributed charisma (Antonakis & Atwater, 2002). Furthermore, because they are

more idealized, those leaders will be trusted unconditionally (Shamir, 1995). This type of trust is called distant trust (Antonakis & Atwater, 2002). Therefore, we argue that narcissistic leaders with wide span of supervision (distant leaders) will retain the loyalty of their followers more than they would if they were close to them. Therefore, we propose the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 3: The negative relationship between narcissism and job satisfaction is attenuated by wider span of supervision.

Hypothesis 4: The negative relationship between narcissism and loyalty is attenuated by wider span of supervision.

Theoretical model

Based on our hypotheses, we argue that leader narcissism will have a negative association with our two outcome variables; job satisfaction and loyalty, but that these associations can be moderated by span of supervision through a buffering effect. Our theoretical model explaining the relationships is shown in Figure 1.

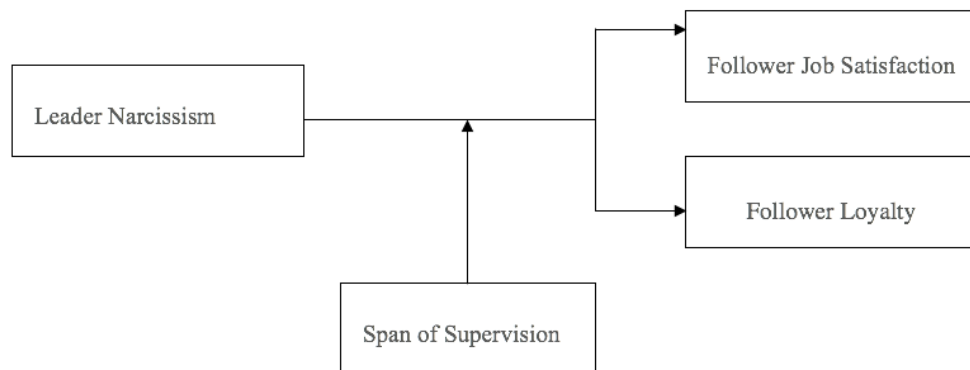


Figure 1. Proposed theoretical model

Method

Based on our theoretical model, purpose and intentions of the study, we have chosen to use a cross sectional research design. This design entails collection of data on more than one case at a single point in time (Bryman & Bell, 2015). In our case, we gathered data on multiple variables (leader narcissism, follower

loyalty, follower job satisfaction and span of supervision). By gathering data this way, it is possible to investigate two or more variables and possible patterns of associations among them. The advantage of a design like this, is that it enables us to investigate possible relationships between variables and how they may vary together. However, because the data is collected at a single point in time and none of the variables are manipulated, we cannot draw any inferences with regards to causality. Even though this leads to low internal validity, using cross sectional research design can give strong external validity if random samples are used. Furthermore, studies using cross-sectional methods often have high potential for replication as they often give clear guidelines on how the study was performed (Bryman & Bell, 2015).

Moreover, to investigate the associations in our model, we have chosen to gather our data in a municipality setting. This is a complex setting considering that Norway consists of over 300 municipalities with numerous of different occupations tied to it. Therefore, we won't be able to generalize on a large scale, since we have gathered access to only three different municipalities. Furthermore, gaining access to municipalities has been a challenge on the grounds of many leadership positions, and in general complex structures. That means that we had to go through numerous of people before getting the approval to collect data. Still, municipalities are a fruitful arena to gather data on narcissism, considering most research on leader narcissism has been performed in private sector as mentioned previously (e.g. Yildiz & Oncer, 2012; Owens, Waldman & Wallace, 2015; Hochwarter & Thompson, 2012). It is questionable if there are significant differences between public and private sectors, therefore looking at narcissism in this context might be helpful to further add knowledge to the field of narcissistic leadership and the dyadic connections to followers.

Participants

Participants were recruited from municipalities spread across Norway. We approached both large and small municipalities through e-mails but also used personal connections to establish contact with municipal leaders. Thus, according to Bryman and Bell (2015) our type of sampling is arguably in the non-probability sample spectrum, since the people who answered the emails, and who were contacted in the first place, were not entirely random. This was because we had

limited access to send emails to each municipality in Norway. In the end, we had a sample of 38 leaders and 212 subordinates spread across three different municipalities in Norway to answer questionnaires; one for the leader and one for the associated follower(s). In this sample, we had 148 females and 78 males, with age spreading from 19 to 68. Thus, we had a slightly skewed sample in terms of gender.

Pilot testing

Before we started the procedure of collecting the data, we decided to pilot test our study to test the instruments we had chosen to use before presenting it to the survey population. By doing so, we could make changes in the methodology before implementing it to our sample, enhancing the chances of getting the expected results. As Emory and Cooper (1991) explain, by pre-testing questionnaires before the actual data collection, we can detect possible shortcomings in the design and the administration of the questionnaire itself. Our pre-testing was done in three separate stages. First, we tested the translation of the questionnaires and carefully read through each question, making sure they were understandable and similar in the way they were written. Secondly, the layout of the questionnaire was viewed to ensure that everything looked tidy and presentable. Finally, we tested the distribution by sending it to ourselves first, to check that the links were working properly and that it was easy for the participants to follow through with the survey.

Data collection

The data was collected through electronic questionnaires made in Confirmit software. By using electronic questionnaires, we could easily send out the link to the participants, and were also able to collect the data quickly, compared to if we sent it out on paper. As Bryman and Bell (2015) describe, such web-surveys has the advantage of being easier to customize, as well as being automatically downloaded into a database, making the coding process easier later. Moreover, the survey was a self-report questionnaire. This is helpful considering narcissism is a sensitive construct, where participants might be more inclined to answer in a socially desirable way with a researcher present (Bryman & Bell, 2015). By having them answer the questions in private, that bias might be reduced. Still, self-report questionnaires might generate a greater risk of missing

data as well as lower response rates, but that will be discussed later (Bryman & Bell, 2015).

Considering that we needed leaders and their *associated* followers, we gathered email addresses for both so that each participant received a unique link to the questionnaires. Once they clicked the link they were further redirected to a website for completion of the questionnaire. The participants were coded beforehand so we knew which follower belonged to which leader.

Prior to the distribution of the e-mails and the links, each participant received a cover letter with information regarding both the purpose of the study, confidentiality, the approximate time it would take to finish the survey and finally contact information if they had any questions.

All 38 leaders replied to the study, whereas only 186 out of 212 followers have done so. The response rate for followers is therefore 87.74%. After having sent out the questionnaires five times, we had to draw a line to continue with our analysis. We will discuss downsides of a small sample in our strengths and limitations section.

Instruments

The instruments for our variables were originally written in English. Even though Norwegian respondents generally know English well, the questionnaires were converted to Norwegian through a translation-back conversion process. By having the questionnaires translated into Norwegian we can avoid misunderstandings and assure similarity in the way respondents acquire meaning to the item (Brislin, Lonner, & Thorndike, 1973; Cavusgil & Das, 1997).

Measures

Narcissism was measured with a sixteen-item scale adapted from the 40 item Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI-40) from Raskin and Terry (1988). The NPI-40 is the most widespread measure of narcissism. However, because of its length, it can be impractical in settings where time pressure is of concern (Ames, Rose & Anderson, 2006). We wanted as many people as possible to answer our questionnaire, and in order to avoid quitters we chose the shorter version of the NPI-40, the NPI-16. This version was developed by Ames, Rose and Anderson in 2006. They presented notable face, internal, discriminant and predictive validity for the shortened version. The NPI-40 has previously gathered

criticism for being difficult to interpret because of its many subscales (Brown, Budzek & Tamborski, 2009). By using a shorter scale, we hope to make interpretation easier and more straightforward. Cronbach's alpha has been shown to be at the acceptable level (.72) (Brown, Budzek & Tamborski, 2009). Leaders were asked to rate expressions on a scale from 1 = 'strongly disagree' to 7 = 'strongly agree'. Sample items include: "I think I am a special person"; "I know that I am good because everybody keeps telling me so"; anchors: 1 = 'strongly disagree', 7 = 'strongly agree'.

Job satisfaction was measured using a three-item scale adopted from the Michigan Organizational Assessment Questionnaire (MOAQ) developed from Cammann, Fichman and Klesh (1983). This questionnaire has been shown to have acceptable levels of reliability (.84), in addition to acceptable face and construct validity (Bowling & Hammond, 2008). Thus, this scale seems to be a good measurement of overall job satisfaction. In addition, the strengths of this measure are its length – with only 3 questions, and that they include face valid measures of the affective component of job satisfaction (Bowling & Hammond, 2008). This is especially important since we argue throughout the paper that job satisfaction can be counted as an affective response. The responses were rated on a 7-point scale: 1 = 'Strongly disagree', 2 = 'Disagree somewhat', 3 = 'Slightly disagree', 4 = 'Neither agree nor disagree', 5 = 'Slightly agree', 6 = 'Agree somewhat', 7 = 'Strongly agree'. Sample items include: "In general, I like working here" and "All in all, I am satisfied with my job".

Loyalty was measured using a six-item scale by Podsakoff et al. (1990). This scale uses three questions tackling trust towards the leader with questions such as "I feel quite confident that my leader will always treat me fairly" and three questions that are explicitly about loyalty towards the leader e.g. "I feel a strong sense of loyalty towards my leader". The participants are asked to rate each saying that describes the leader the best ranging on a scale from 1 = 'Strongly disagree', to 7 = 'Strongly Agree'. Sample items include: "I feel quite confident that my leader will always treat me fairly" and "I feel a strong sense of loyalty towards my leader". In addition, this scale has also shown high levels of Cronbach's alpha in previous research (0.95), which is why we chose this measurement of loyalty towards leader (Goodwin, Whittington, Murray & Nichols, 2011).

Finally, to measure span of supervision leaders will report how many followers they are responsible for, and followers will report the number of colleagues in their work group.

In order to exclude the influence of other potential variables on the relations between the independent and dependent variables, we also measured certain control variables. These were gender, age and the amount of years of completed education. Gender has been shown to have a small, but significant effect on narcissism (Grijalva et al, 2015), so we wanted to control for this alternative explanation when investigating the associations in our model. The same applies for age and years with finished education, we wanted to control for these variables to make sure that they did not play a part in our hypothesized model.

Ethical perspectives

Just as many other variables that tap into personality, narcissism is arguably a very sensitive construct as it is negatively attributed by a lot of people. Thus, one important ethical consideration in our study is confidentiality and anonymity. According to Bryman and Bell (2015), these issues are connected to the question of privacy, where it is of utmost importance that the information about the participants should be kept confidential, and one should always consider whether it is necessary to record any personal information about them. To battle these issues, we made sure that the answers recorded by the participants were kept 100% confidential and there was no way to trace the answers back to them. Even though we had to know which employees were connected to each leader, we analysed the results as one big group and coded each participant so that no identification was possible. Information about confidentiality was communicated to all participants before the questionnaire was sent out. In addition, it was also made possible to contact us if the respondents had any questions. Because of this, we can assume that the ethical issues were accounted for in this study.

Results

To see if the questionnaires we used produced stable and consistent results, we have performed reliability statistics (Table 1.). To be proven reliable, Cronbach's Alpha must be at least 0.70 (Bryman & Bell, 2015). The narcissism

questionnaire scored 0.929 on Cronbach's Alpha scale; job satisfaction questionnaire scored 0.790; and lastly, loyalty questionnaire scored 0.945. Therefore, all the questionnaires we have used have passed the reliability test.

Table 1. Reliability

Reliability (Cronbach's Alpha scale)	
Narcissism	,929
Job satisfaction	,790
Loyalty	,945

A high degree of reliability was also found using an Interclass Correlation Coefficient analysis (ICC), as shown in table 2. This type of analysis provides measures of the reliability of clusters – data that has been collected as groups or sorted into groups. More specifically, ICC estimates the similarity between the quantities. Values closer to 1 indicate high levels of reliability (Koch, 1982). The average value of ICC was .945 with a 95% confidence interval from .933 to .956 = 18.299, $p < 0.0001$. Thus, we also see high levels of reliability from this analysis.

Table 2. Interclass Correlation Coefficient

	Intraclass Correlation ^b	95% Confidence Interval		F Test with True Value 0			
		Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Value	df1	df2	Sig
Single Measures	,742 ^a	,699	,784	18,299	208	1040	0,000
Average Measures	,945 ^c	,933	,956	18,299	208	1040	0,000

In addition, we have also performed a Confirmatory Factor Analysis ("CFA"). The purpose of such analysis is to compare the estimated population matrix to the observed covariance matrix to investigate how well our predicted interrelations between the variables match the observed data. The goal is to minimize the differences between the observed and estimated covariance matrices (Schreiber, Stage, Barlow & King, 2006). The results of CFA for job satisfaction and loyalty displayed statistically significant factor loadings, with a mean standardized loading of 71.22 and 79.10 respectively. Considering that most of the

loadings should be at least 0.60, and ideally 0.70 or above (Chin, 1998), we conclude that convergent validity was supported. However, the results for narcissism showed factor loadings of 48.41, indicating that there might be a problem with the convergent validity. Still, all our factor loadings proved to be statistically significant. Moreover, the results from our CFA showed the following results: $\chi^2[321] = 1920 < .01$; RMSEA = 0.213; CFI = 0.505; TLI = 0.459; SRMR = 0.124. All correlations were found to be significant at a significance level of 0.05. Since we were looking for RMSEA value of .08 or less, these results indicate that the model is not a very good fit (Norr, Albanese, Oglesby, Allan & Schmidt, 2015). In addition, CFI and TLI values should also be closer to 1 to indicate a better fit (Hair, Black & Babin, 2014). However, this is likely to be connected to the very small sample, since we had only 38 leader responses, while the optimal sample would be at least 100. As Schreiber et al, (2006) explain, sample size is important because it relates to the stability of the parameter estimates. Moreover, within the CFA, increased numbers of latent variables, combined with several indicators will increase the minimum sample size Schreiber et al, (2006). According to Wolf, Harrington, Clark and Miller (2013), a one factor model with four indicators will require a sample of 190, 90 and 60 participants. Considering our model was more complex, we would arguably have needed a much larger sample to perform a proper CFA.

Descriptive statistics (Table 3.) show that our sample consisted of 38 leaders who answered the NPI-16 questionnaire, along with one span of supervision question and basic demographics such as gender and age. Out of 38 leaders, 36.8% were males and 63.2% females. The average age of leaders was 50, with standard deviation of 8.213. Additionally, there were 212 followers included in our study, but only 186 responses were valid. 34% of followers were males and 66% were females. The average age of followers was 44.46 with standard deviation of 10.877. The average score on leader narcissism was 2.79, with the minimum score of 1.22, and maximum score of 4.67. Further, the average score on job satisfaction was 6.15, with the minimum score of 1.67 and maximum of 7. Finally, the average score on loyalty was 5.73, with the minimum score of 1 and maximum of 7. We can also see the average span of supervision is 23.30 with the standard deviation of 17.208. This indicates that in general we have work groups with quite a wide span of supervision.

Table 3. Mean, Standard deviations and Correlations

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Leaders' age	50,18	8,213							
2. Gender	,630	,483	,017						
3. Span of supervision	19,740	13,994	,099	,219**					
4. Followers' age	44,460	10,877	,175*	-,052	-,265**				
5. Narcissism	2,624	,858	-	-,325**	,065	-,068			
6. Job satisfaction	6,151	1,134	,079	,084	-,135	,205**	-,165*		
7. Loyalty	5,735	1,512	,086	,100	-,128	,018	-,149*	,539**	

*p < ,05; ** p < ,01

Furthermore, to examine correlations among the variables in our model, and to see if our proposed moderator has taken any effect on the model, we needed to perform hierarchical linear modelling analysis. To do so, we had to find standardized Z scores. Z-scores will help us compare results from all the questionnaires we have used for this study. We used the Z-scores to examine significant correlations between leader narcissism with follower job satisfaction and follower loyalty, as well as check for demographic indicators to be sure our results are controlled for. We also examined potential correlations between span of supervision with follower job satisfaction, and loyalty, as well as the moderating effects of span of supervision on the mentioned relationship.

In Table 4 we can see that among the demographic indicators, age has statistical significance over job satisfaction and a positive correlation through all the models. That tells us the followers' job satisfaction grows with their age, regardless of the presence of leader narcissism or different accounts of span of supervision. In model 2 we tested the impact of span of supervision on job satisfaction and found no statistical significance ($p=.257$). In model 3 we tested the impact of leader narcissism on follower job satisfaction and, as expected, found significant negative correlation to support the claim ($p=.022$; $\beta=-.180$) and with that we found support for hypothesis 1. Finally, in model 4, we tested the potential moderating effect of span of supervision and found no statistical evidence to support this claim ($p=.262$). Therefore, we did not find evidence to support hypothesis 3.

Table 5 follows the same logics. We found significant negative correlation between leader narcissism and follower loyalty ($p=.006$; $\beta=-.221$), but no moderating effects of span of supervision ($p=.741$). Therefore, hypothesis 2 was supported, while hypothesis 4 was not.

In conclusion, hypotheses 1 and 2 were supported, while hypotheses 3 and 4 were not. A general discussion of these results, in addition to potential explanations and implications will be discussed further.

Table 4. Hierarchical linear modelling analysis to test the moderating effects

Model		Coefficients ^a		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		Unstandardized Coefficients				
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	5,450	,480		11,343	,000
	Completed years of education	-,021	,023	-,072	-,939	,349
	Age	,021	,007	,227	2,889	,004
	Gender	,312	,172	,139	1,808	,073
	How long have you worked with the same leader?	-3,608E-5	,002	-,002	-,022	,983
2	(Constant)	5,558	,489		11,358	,000
	Completed years of education	-,022	,023	-,074	-,967	,335
	Age	,019	,007	,204	2,521	,013
	Gender	,310	,172	,138	1,802	,073
	How long have you worked with the same leader?	,000	,002	-,007	-,086	,932
	Zscore: How many people do you supervise? (Span of supervision)	-,094	,082	-,090	-1,137	,257
3	(Constant)	5,787	,493		11,744	,000
	Completed years of education	-,033	,023	-,111	-1,441	,152
	Age	,018	,007	,198	2,470	,015
	Gender	,306	,170	,136	1,800	,074
	How long have you worked with the same leader?	-,001	,002	-,030	-,385	,701
	Zscore: How many people do you supervise? (Span of supervision)	-,092	,081	-,089	-1,136	,258
	Zscore (Narcissism)	-,195	,084	-,180	-2,320	,022
4	(Constant)	5,757	,493		11,673	,000
	Completed years of education	-,032	,023	-,106	-1,375	,171
	Age	,018	,007	,196	2,450	,015
	Gender	,329	,171	,146	1,923	,056
	How long have you worked with the same leader?	-,001	,002	-,029	-,377	,707
	Zscore: How many people do you supervise? (Span of supervision)	-,020	,103	-,020	-,198	,843
	Zscore(Narcissism)	-,191	,084	-,177	-2,274	,024
	Z_work_x_narcissm	-,098	,087	-,110	-1,125	,262

a. Dependent Variable: Job Satisfaction

Table 5. Hierarchical linear modelling analysis to test the moderating effects

Model		Coefficients ^a		Standardized		t	Sig.
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Coefficients			
		B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	6,433	,666			9,660	,000
	Completed years of education	-,025	,032	-,061		-,779	,437
	Age	,002	,010	,013		,158	,875
	Gender	-,257	,239	-,085		-1,075	,284
	How long have you worked with the same leader?	-,002	,002	-,085		-1,052	,295
2	(Constant)	6,641	,676			9,829	,000
	Completed years of education	-,026	,031	-,064		-,821	,413
	Age	-,002	,010	-,020		-,238	,812
	Gender	-,259	,238	-,086		-1,091	,277
	How long have you worked with the same leader?	-,003	,002	-,092		-1,144	,254
	Zscore: How many people do you supervise? (Span of supervision)	-,180	,114	-,128		-1,586	,115
3	(Constant)	7,020	,675			10,395	,000
	Completed years of education	-,044	,032	-,110		-1,401	,163
	Age	-,003	,010	-,028		-,343	,732
	Gender	-,267	,233	-,088		-1,146	,254
	How long have you worked with the same leader?	-,003	,002	-,120		-1,518	,131
	Zscore: How many people do you supervise? (Span of supervision)	-,178	,111	-,127		-1,599	,112
4	Zscore (Narcissism)	-,323	,115	-,221		-2,798	,006
	(Constant)	7,007	,678			10,331	,000
	Completed years of education	-,044	,032	-,108		-1,376	,171
	Age	-,003	,010	-,028		-,349	,728
	Gender	-,258	,235	-,085		-1,095	,275
	How long have you worked with the same leader?	-,003	,002	-,120		-1,512	,133
4	Zscore: How many people do you supervise? (Span of supervision)	-,149	,142	-,106		-1,048	,296
	Zscore (Narcissism)	-,321	,116	-,219		-2,774	,006
	Z_work x narcissm	-,039	,119	-,033		-,331	,741

a. Dependent Variable: Loyalty

General discussion

The present study wished to examine the possibility of a buffering effect of span of supervision on the outcomes of leader narcissism in relation to two follower variables; job satisfaction and loyalty. As shown in the results, the mean score of leader narcissism was generally low. This tells us that on average, our sample did not really consist of leaders high in trait narcissism. The maximum score was just above 4, which, out of 7, is arguably not very high. Furthermore, we also saw that, in general, both loyalty and job satisfaction were high, indicating that the followers are quite satisfied and loyal. In the following paragraphs, we will discuss theoretical findings and implications, the strengths and limitations of our study, suggestions for future research, and finally we will finish this thesis by discussing the practical implications of our results.

Theoretical implications

The main contribution of this paper was to look at leader narcissism and follower outcomes in an understudied context – municipalities, while also investigating the possibility of a buffering moderator. Following our findings, we were able to find a process of narcissism and both our follower outcomes. The process is consistent with Weiss and Cropanzano's (1996) Affective Events Theory, which assumes that employees that are exposed to negative workplace events, such as narcissism in this case, will respond with negative affect. In our study, we see results that indicate that employees will have lower levels of both job satisfaction and loyalty when the levels of narcissism are higher. As previously described, these affective changes might further lead to other evaluative judgements regarding one's job and further behavioural consequences. Based on the theory we have presented earlier, both lower levels of job satisfaction and loyalty can possibly lead to the employee leaving their job (Soler, 1998). These findings are important because they show that narcissism can have detrimental effects on the employees. It also supports the tenet from Weiss and Cropanzano (1996) about the importance of the experiences that employees encounter at work. In this case, the negative work event of having a narcissistic leader manifested itself in lower levels of job satisfaction and loyalty.

Furthermore, we found support for our hypotheses in a municipality setting, which is arguably an understudied context in the narcissistic leadership

research field as previously explained. Despite low levels of narcissism, we still saw lower levels on both loyalty and job satisfaction with higher levels of narcissism. This indicates that municipalities are yet another arena where narcissists can unfold. This is interesting considering the research stating that certain traits usually consistent with narcissism such as self-confidence, charisma and cynical behaviour are more prevalent in the private sector (e.g., Schaubroeck, Ganster & Jones, 1998). Therefore, one could argue that narcissists would be more attracted to private sector businesses where such traits are more valued. However, the public vs private sector distinction might also explain why we generally found low scores on narcissism, as we will discuss later.

In addition, we have encountered research on gender differences with narcissistic traits. Grijalva, Tay, Donnellan, Harms, Robins and Yan's (2015) meta-analysis, spanning over more than 30 years, showed a small, but statistically significant and consistent results of gender differences in narcissism, with men scoring higher than women. Taking that into consideration, we decided to test our data to see if we could find any statistical significance to support this claim. Although small, our results did show statistical significance on men scoring higher on narcissism than women. Our study depended on mitigating the effects of leaders high in narcissistic trait, but instead, our leader sample consisted of more females whose results showed very healthy, low levels of narcissism. Therefore, although still speculation, there is a possibility that we would have found other results if our sample was larger and had more variation in terms of gender.

Despite the findings on loyalty and job satisfaction, we still did not find any support for span of supervision as a moderating, buffering variable. Our further discussion will revolve around possible reasons for this.

First, we can take a closer look on the context where the data was gathered. As described earlier, we gathered data from Norwegian municipalities – the public sector. Even though we found negative correlations with our outcome variables, the psychological and motivational differences between public sector employees vs private sector employees might have impacted our results. This line of thought is further connected to the fact that we generally had a very low mean of narcissism, which could have explained the lack of moderation effect. Furnham, Hyde & Trickey (2011) present that leaders with certain dark traits are,

in fact, attracted to different types of sectors in work-life. For example, Schaubroeck, Ganster & Jones (1998) found that individuals in private sector have higher self-esteem, masculinity, social desirability and lower scores of neuroticism than individuals in public sector. These are all aspects that have been connected to leaders high on trait narcissism. As further explained, people tend to seek out organizations that fit their personality and values (Furnham, Hyde & Trickey (2011). Therefore, considering that we gathered data in a public sector, we might have found low scores on narcissism because the public sector is generally a sector with less narcissistic individuals.

The idea that people in public and private sector can differ, is further supported by the findings in Furnham, Hyde and Trickey (2013). They found that public sector employees were less likely to display the same levels of persuasive, influential and self-confident behaviour as those in the private sector. On the other hand, people in private sector were more likely to be cynical, more charismatic and more outgoing. As discussed previously, these are all traits that are more consistent with a leader exhibiting narcissistic traits. Furthermore, people that possess traits such as boldness and mischievousness will be more attracted to the private sector where those kinds of traits are more valued. This is again connected to aspects of narcissism, where self-confidence is associated with boldness and the risk taking associated with mischievousness (Furnham, 2010). However, we did see a pattern with lower scores on satisfaction and loyalty accompanied by higher levels of narcissism, indicating that the process of negative work events, as explained in Weiss and Cropanzano (1996) is just as relevant in public sector context. Therefore, it is likely that we did not find the expected results because our leaders had very low levels of narcissism. This may be because of the sector that we gathered data in. If we had gathered data in the private sector, we might have got different results regarding span of supervision as a moderator effect, although this is a mere speculation at this point.

Another possible reason for not finding support for span of supervision as a moderator could be connected to the mean. As shown in the results, we had a high mean of span (23.30), indicating that the majority of leaders already had a wide span of supervision. When span of supervision is wide, there is also a tendency for the hierarchy to be flatter (Greenberg & Baron, 2011). Considering this considering what we know about trait narcissism, it is likely that narcissists

would thrive more in environments where the hierarchy is more prominent and the possibility to have more power over others is higher.

In sum, our findings can be understood and discussed in several directions. We found results connecting leader narcissism to lower levels of job satisfaction and loyalty interesting, and we have also discussed possible reasons for not finding support for our moderator. The next paragraph will account for strengths and limitations of our study that will further shed light on our findings in a different way.

Strengths and limitations

Due to the research design of our study we cannot demonstrate any causal relations between the variables. We also encountered some methodological difficulties along the way. As Hair et al (2014) explain, the sample size can affect the statistical test by making it too insensitive when there is a small sample. With small sample sizes, it is difficult to ensure representative distribution of the population and to find statistically significant relationships. A larger sample size would in this case likely increase the precision of the results even though that is not guaranteed (Bryman & Bell, 2015). However, despite our small sample, we could find interesting, significant results between leader narcissism and our follower outcomes in an understudied context, which is a prominent strength of the study.

In addition, Norway consists of over 300 municipalities with numerous employees and leaders connected to various natures of jobs. Therefore, if we wanted our results to be generalizable over a larger population we would have needed a much bigger sample taken over diverse organizations. However, by focusing on one context rather than several we can generalize in a larger degree compared to if we looked at narcissism in several contexts (e.g. both public and private sector).

Apart from the limited access and small sample issues, there might also be issues in the data we have collected. When it comes to collecting information from participants, i.e. self-reported information, there are always certain types of bias that might be present. Bias that might have influenced our results could be exaggeration. This means that one of the reasons that our study had almost no narcissistic participants is due to exaggerating one's sense of self. As mentioned

in our methods section, other possible disadvantages of self-completion questionnaires are the fact that it generates a greater risk of missing data, as well as lower response rates (Bryman & Bell, 2015) as we have experienced ourselves in our data collection. However, although self-reported data can have its disadvantages, it can also have its advantages and add a certain degree of strength to our study. Since narcissism is a sensitive construct that many may have negative associations to, gathering data through a self-completion questionnaire might make it less scary to be honest in their answers compared to if it was done by an interviewer. As Bryman and Bell (2015) argue, the presence of an interviewer might make it more likely for people to exhibit social desirability bias, which is especially important when gathering data on sensitive issues such as personality traits. Even though we observed very low scores on narcissism, it is not impossible that the small sample of leaders we had were low on narcissism. However, if we would have had much larger samples, and again observed very low levels of narcissism, we could have suspected the presence of social desirability bias.

Furthermore, an additional strength of the study is the use of already established questionnaires which also gave us strong reliability results. With high scores on Cronbach's alpha (internal reliability) we can be more confident that the items in our questionnaires, e.g. our indicators, are in fact related to each other (Bryman & Bell, 2015). This is important to analyse and make deductions in our results.

Finally, considering that we gathered data from different sources that also corresponded, we could not completely guarantee for the respondent's complete anonymity, because we needed to know which follower was associated with which leader. This might have reduced the participant's response or reduced their willingness to answer the questionnaire (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee & Podsakoff, 2003). However, to reduce such potential problems, all respondents were informed that their responses would be treated strictly confidential. In addition, gathering data from two sources (leaders and followers) gives more strength to our study than it would have if we had gathered it solely from the followers.

Suggestions for future research

Even though our buffering hypotheses were not supported, the idea that some variables can buffer against the effects of narcissism should be further elaborated. Considering research that suggests that narcissism is prevalent in work-life, it is important to gather information on how to protect against the negative outcomes that may follow (Foster & Campbell, 2007). This is especially important considering that narcissistic leaders can perform well, but not treat their followers well. Thus, ways to protect, or buffer against the negative outcomes is an important venue for research in the future. Attempts to this have been made by researchers such as Owens, Waldman and Wallace (2015) who investigated the counterbalancing effects of humility. One possibility could therefore be to research whether humility functions as a buffer, or consider other traits, for example, honesty, integrity, communication skills and other positive traits that leaders with narcissistic tendencies can possess in order to be less harmful.

Furthermore, it is possible that a larger sample with more variation in narcissism scores could have yielded different results. Therefore, we encourage further research to investigate this hypothesis further with larger samples and more variation. Moreover, considering research on narcissism and public sector has not been that elaborated in the past, it would be fruitful to investigate these associations on a larger scale. The public sector is vast and there are numerous possibilities to research the relation between narcissistic leaders and their followers in several contexts to learn more about handling and protecting against narcissistic leaders.

Moreover, based on the Weiss and Cropanzano's (1996) framework, there are several possibilities to build further on our results. We established that loyalty and job satisfaction are affective responses from the event of having a narcissistic leader. According to the Affective Events Theory, after the process between workplace event and affective reactions has been established, the consequences are both attitudinal and behavioural. Therefore, another venue for future research is to look at the attitudes that are shaped after these affective reactions. Work attitudes can be defined as evaluative tendencies towards one's job, such as turnover intent and organizational commitment (Verquer, Beehr & Wagner, 2003). Other examples of workplace attitudes can be resistance to change, perceived performance and perceived organizational support (Rosenblatt, Talmud & Ruvio,

1999). Therefore, it would for instance be interesting to investigate how these attitudes are shaped and in what degree. The next step would be to look at the behavioural consequences which can be both judgemental and affective. Affect driven behaviours follow directly from the affective experiences, and are influenced by processes such as coping and mood management. Judgement driven behaviours are mediated by the attitudes that are shaped after the affective reaction and are the consequences of the decision processes where one's evaluation of the job itself is involved (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). Therefore, it would be interesting to further investigate how employees will behave after the affective and attitudinal responses. *Will their performance change? Will they quit their job? Or will they stay put?* Research has shown that lower levels of job satisfaction and loyalty will affect the decision and willingness to stay or leave the organization (Soler, 1998). However, extensively researching the behavioural actions following the affective responses would be an interesting direction for future research, and might also shed light on all the consequences that may follow from having a narcissistic leader, both on individual and organizational level.

Practical implications

The key practical implication of our study is that higher levels of leader narcissism yield lower levels of both job satisfaction and loyalty in a municipality setting. Therefore, our results present how municipalities and the public sector are yet another arena where narcissists can thrive and unfold despite the research suggesting that private sector organizations might be more attractive to them (e.g. Hochwarter & Thompson, 2012; Owens, Wallace & Waldman, 2015). This has consequences for HR practices on several areas. As Rosenthal and Pittinsky (2006) suggested, one way to reduce the negative impact of narcissistic leadership is to have executive training, honest feedback and to reduce the influence of the narcissistic leader. We argue that this will be an important implication from our results as well, in order to avoid having employees with lower levels of job satisfaction and loyalty. However, as described by Morf and Rhodewalt (2001) narcissists tend to be overly sensitive to feedback from others. Therefore, getting them to participate in training and giving them other types of feedback might be difficult or even impossible. However, one could promote the training program as exclusive or something that is just offered for talented, high performance

individuals in order to avoid damaging the narcissists' image and thus frame it consistent with their own self-view (Galvin, Waldman & Balthazard, 2010). Still, as far as we know, there is no research investigating how narcissists react to such initiatives.

Furthermore, we argue that it is important to map out how the employees are feeling with annual performance reviews and engagement surveys. It is important to give employees the opportunity to rate their leader anonymously, without the fear of repercussions. That way, the organization can map out leaders who have many unsatisfied employees and address the issue through various practices with the leader.

Prior to our findings, the link between narcissistic leadership and loyalty has not been extensively discussed. Thus, based on our results, an important implication is being aware of the negative effects that narcissism can have on employee loyalty as well as other established negative outcomes. Research has suggested that one way to battle lower levels of loyalty is having leaders that are able to apologize sincerely when wrongdoings are made. Leaders who were believed to sincerely apologize were viewed humbler, and more transformational (Basford, Offermann & Behrend, 2014). Therefore, we argue that it might be important to train and hire leaders who are able to convey sincere apologies and would essentially come across as humbler. In addition, a study by Owens, Wallace & Waldman (2015) also suggested that narcissistic leaders can have positive effects on their followers when their narcissism is tempered by their humbleness. This can, for example, be done by developing programs that stress the importance of establishing trustworthiness and build more positive relationships (Basford, Offerman and Behrend, 2014).

All in all, narcissistic leaders have been studied for decades and the solution for their detrimental effects is that there is neither one, nor simple solution. It is unfortunate that a lot of followers must suffer due to their leader's behaviour and therefore every organization should address this issue seriously. Additionally, the assumption is that every organization knows their employees the best, and therefore can decide which practices are more suitable and which ones are not. The goal of our study was to find a relatively simple way to alleviate followers' dissatisfaction through manipulating the span of supervision. However,

our hypotheses were not supported, and therefore the need for more research is crucial in delivering more information.

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Attachments

Appendix 1 – Questionnaires

Following questions were answered by the followers (questions in Norwegian)

Job satisfaction

1. Alt i alt er jeg tilfreds med jobben min.

Helt Uenig 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ 6 ___ 7 Helt Enig

2. Generelt liker jeg ikke jobben min

Helt Uenig 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ 6 ___ 7 Helt Enig

3. Generelt liker jeg å jobbe her

Helt Uenig 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ 6 ___ 7 Helt Enig

Lojalitet

The participants are asked to rate how well each saying describes closest leader on a scale from 1 = 'Not at all', to 7 = 'Absolutely accurate'.

___1: Jeg føler meg helt trygg på at min leder alltid vil behandle meg rettferdig

___2: Min leder ville aldri prøve å oppnå en fordel ved å lure arbeidere

___3: Jeg har full tiltro til min leders/overordnedes integritet

___4: Jeg føler en sterk lojalitet overfor min leder

___5: Jeg ville støtte min leder i nesten hvilken som helst krise

___6: Jeg har en sterk lojalitetsfølelse overfor min leder

Bakgrunnsinformasjon

Hva er tittelen på din nåværende stilling? _____

Antall år med avsluttet utdanning _____ år

(F.eks Videregående skole 12 år)

Hvor gammel ble du sist du hadde fødselsdag? _____ år

Kjønn? ___ Mann ___ Kvinne

Hvor mange år har du jobbet med samme overordnet leder? __ år __ mnd

The following questions were answered by the leader (in Norwegian)

Narsissisme

1. Jeg liker å skape nye trender og moter

Helt Uenig 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ 6 ___ 7 Helt Enig

2. Jeg ville gjøre nesten hva som helst, dersom jeg ble utfordret.

Helt Uenig 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ 6 ___ 7 Helt Enig

3. Jeg liker å være midtpunkt.

Helt Uenig 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ 6 ___ 7 Helt Enig

4. Jeg blir opprørt når folk ikke legger merke til hvordan jeg tar meg ut når jeg er ute blant folk.

Helt Uenig 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ 6 ___ 7 Helt Enig

5. Beskjedenhet kler meg ikke.

Helt Uenig 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ 6 ___ 7 Helt Enig

6. Jeg har en tendens til å gjøre meg viktig når jeg får sjansen.

Helt Uenig 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ 6 ___ 7 Helt Enig

7. Jeg skulle ønske noen en dag ville skrive min biografi.

Helt Uenig 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ 6 ___ 7 Helt Enig

8. Jeg anser meg selv som en spesiell person.

Helt Uenig 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ 6 ___ 7 Helt Enig

9. Jeg liker å motta komplimenter

Helt Uenig 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ 6 ___ 7 Helt Enig

10. Jeg vet jeg er dyktig fordi alle stadig forteller meg det.

Helt Uenig 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ 6 ___ 7 Helt Enig

11. Jeg er en enestående person.

Helt Uenig 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ 6 ___ 7 Helt Enig

12. Alle liker å høre historiene mine.

Helt Uenig 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ 6 ___ 7 Helt Enig

13. Jeg kan vanligvis snakke meg ut av enhver situasjon.

Helt Uenig 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ 6 ___ 7 Helt Enig

14. Jeg finner det er enkelt å manipulere folk

Helt Uenig 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ 6 ___ 7 Helt Enig

15. Jeg kan få hvem som helst til å tro hva som helst.

Helt Uenig 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ 6 ___ 7 Helt Enig

16. Jeg kan lese folk som en åpen bok.

Helt Uenig 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ 6 ___ 7 Helt Enig

17. Jeg later som om jeg er uhyre interessert i det en person sier, når det er noe jeg vil oppnå.

Helt Uenig 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ 6 ___ 7 Helt Enig

18. Jeg gjør tjenester for folk, for at de skal føle seg forpliktet til å gjøre meg en tjeneste til gjengjeld

Helt Uenig 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ 6 ___ 7 Helt Enig

Bakgrunnsinformasjon

Hva er tittelen på din nåværende stilling? _____

Antall år med avsluttet utdanning _____ år

(F.eks Videregående skole 12 år)

Hvor gammel ble du sist du hadde fødselsdag? _____ år

Kjønn? _____ Mann _____ Kvinne

Hvor mange personer er det i den arbeidsgruppen du er nærmeste leder for?

_____ personer

Appendix 2 – Preliminary Thesis Report

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Abstract

This paper contains our preliminary thesis report. Our thesis seeks to explore the possibility of span of supervision variable functioning as a buffer between leader narcissism and follower job satisfaction, organizational citizenship behaviour and loyalty. Firstly, we present a literature review and introduce the gaps in the research field on leader narcissism. Secondly, we present our constructs, model and hypotheses. Thirdly, we describe the methods and measures that will be used in our study. Finally, we present a tentative plan for further progress.

Introduction

Some researchers claim that the definition of leadership only implicates its positiveness (Yukl & van Fleet, 1992), and therefore they unfairly ignore the concept of destructive leadership from their research (e.g. Kelloway, Mullen and Francis, 2006; Bass & Avolio, 1990). Some researchers point out the complexity of the issue and difficulty of conceptualizing destructive leadership, but still put an effort to contribute to the field (e.g. Krasikova, Green & LeBreton, 2013; Einarsen, Aasland & Skogstad, 2007; Hogan, Padilla & Kaiser, 2007). In extant research, leadership has mostly been studied and portrayed as a positive concept (e.g. Kelloway, Mullen and Francis, 2006). One of the potential reasons for that might be that the word ‘leader’ is used to describe effective individuals with a positive approach to their environment (Kellerman, 2004, as cited in Kelloway et al. 2006). Furthermore, the term ‘leadership’ is also usually defined solely in positive terms. For example, House (2004, p. 494) defines leadership as: “(...) the ability of an individual to influence, motivate, and enable others to contribute toward the effectiveness and success of the organizations of which they are members”, while Burns (1978, p. 18, as cited in Kelloway et al. 2006) talks about leaders as those who “arouse, engage, and satisfy the motives of followers” to “realize goals mutually held by leaders and followers”.

With the main focus on positive leadership, destructive leadership has been somewhat understudied. Many of the studies on destructive leadership contain various different opinions of the authors, resulting in different definitions and theories (e.g. Einarsen et al. 2007; Hogan et al. 2007). Additionally, many of them call for substantial further research (e.g. Einarsen et al. 2007; Hogan et al. 2007; Campbell, Hoffman, Campbell & Marchisio 2011).

Destructive leadership has usually been characterized by three specific types (also called “the dark triad”) – narcissism, psychopathy, and Machiavellianism (e.g. Jonason, Slomski & Partyka, 2012, Furnham, 2010). For our thesis, we choose to further pursue effects of narcissism.

Narcissism has been shown to have close ties with leadership, where a growing body of evidence has identified the negative consequences of leaders’ narcissistic behaviors (Judge, Piccolo & Kosalka, 2009). Still, despite of these conceptual evidences, the concrete influences on leader behaviors and outcomes remain somewhat unclear (Campbell et al. 2011). One of the main debates has

been if narcissistic leadership is actually bad or good for the organizations. Some researchers argue that narcissism is less effective in the organizations (e.g Blair, Hoffman & Helland, 2008), while others have not found any link between leader narcissism and effectiveness (e.g Judge, et al 2006). Maccoby (2000) and Rosenthal & Pittinsky (2006) discuss how narcissistic leaders are equipped with a great vision and large amounts of followers which might help the organization at a certain point. However, their good sides become irrelevant when overpowered by a large number of their weaknesses, such as sensitivity to criticism, lack of empathy, intense desire to compete, distaste for mentoring, the inability to listen, paranoia, amorality, arrogance, and so on.

Furthermore, we have constantly been bombarded with news about the most influential people in the world. Those same people that lead this modern world are, in fact, narcissists (Maccoby, 2010). We find it fascinating that there is all this research that has been majorly pointing out the detrimental effects of such leaders, and yet, there is a large number of them among us. This spiked an interest between us and we decided to look closely at how employees with narcissistic leaders can survive long-term. We started to wonder if certain behaviors or policies exist that can help mitigate those harmful effects.

According to Campbell et al. (2011), there has generally been three ways one can respond to the inconsistencies in the research on narcissistic leadership. Firstly, there is a need for more empirical findings that can further accumulate knowledge on narcissistic leadership. More specifically, Campbell et al. (2011) call for more research on narcissism that is based on observable and measureable data derived from actual experience, rather than just theory and/or belief. Secondly, there is a need to investigate the behavioral tendencies of the narcissistic leader closer. That is, how do narcissistic leaders tend to behave in certain situations or contexts? For example, how do narcissistic leaders tend to behave when criticized in a meeting? Or how do they tend to behave in decision making contexts? Finally, one could search for the situational moderators that play a part in the relationship between leader narcissism and various outcomes. One example of the latter is taken from an article from Hoffman, Strang, Kuhnert, Campbell, Kennedy & LoPilato (2013) where they investigated how ethical context could moderate the relationship between leader narcissism and perceptions of ethical leadership.

Our goal is to contribute to the research field by adding a new and seemingly unexplored moderator – span of supervision, which, we further argue, will function as a buffer against the detrimental effects leader narcissism can have on follower outcomes. This choice was firstly based on the idea that certain variables could buffer or protect against the negative associations narcissism can have on follower outcomes. Secondly, we asked ourselves if it was possible that distance between leader and followers could protect against the negative behaviors they tend to engage in, such as lack of empathy, distance for mentoring and manipulative behavior (Rosenthal & Pittinsky, 2006). Span of supervision is related to the closeness of the leader and followers, where wider spans of supervision can mean less contact between followers and the leader (Antonakis, 2002). Thus, we wanted to see if span of supervision can function as a buffer, where we might see less negative associations between leader narcissism and follower outcomes.

By doing so, we answer to Campbell et al.'s (2011) suggestion to further investigate how situational moderators can play a role in the relationship between leader narcissism and different outcomes. In our study we choose to investigate the associations between three outcome variables in a cross sectional research design. Those are: job satisfaction, loyalty and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). These variables have been connected to leader narcissism in various ways. First of all, the research on the relationship between leader narcissism and employee *job satisfaction* has been very scarce. In addition, many articles focus only on the narcissistic individual and the effect the trait has on them, rather than others (e.g. Kopelman & Mullins, 1992; Soyer, Rovenpor, Kopelman, Mullins & Watson, 2001). Furthermore, Leary, Green, Denson, Schoenfeld, Henley & Langford (2013) found that narcissistic, grandiose behavior did not, in fact, produce a negative relationship with job satisfaction. However, their study lacked evidence for external validity, thus making it difficult to generalize. Several researchers provide explanation for this phenomenon. Maccoby (2010) explains that organizations choose narcissistic leaders in the age of innovation, dynamics, crisis, because narcissists thrive in that chaos. Rosenthal & Pittinsky (2006) also briefly mentioned how narcissists' confidence and dominance in some cases can inspire and attract followers. It is probable that certain distinctions have to be made when conducting research,

such as distinguishing between the emergence of the narcissistic leader and long-term narcissistic leaders. Narcissistic leaders often use manipulation techniques and are willing to take credit from others. That kind of behavior might entice detrimental outcomes for the subordinates directly affected by it, resulting in lower job satisfaction (Campbell et al. 2000; Kets de Vries & Miller, 1997). Thus, most research on job satisfaction has not looked at the relation between leader and follower. Therefore, we try to respond to that gap by investigating how leader narcissism and job satisfaction are associated through the buffering role of span of supervision.

Furthermore, *organizational citizenship behavior* (OCB) is a positive construct, both in terms of intent and outcome, and is thus an important behavior to generate in organizations (Yildiz & Oncer, 2012). OCB is a voluntary action where employees go beyond the formal requirements of the job and do more than what is required. Such actions can be staying late, helping colleagues and making other sacrifices that go beyond their formal work role (Organ, 1990). OCB and narcissism have been related in different ways. However, most research has focused on whether or not the narcissistic leader engages in OCB, and in what way they participate in such behavior. There has not been that much research that directly investigates the associations between leader narcissism and OCB behavior for the employee. Therefore, we seek to fill that gap by gathering data on that particular relationship. Moreover, even though most research indicates that narcissistic leadership can have negative associations with follower OCB, the possibility of a buffer that can mitigate that relationship has not been investigated. Finally, even though narcissistic leaders might seem attractive and create followers who are passionately devoted to them (Yukl, 1999), their devotion can also inhibit rationality from subordinates, creating insecurities and dependencies, rather than *loyalty*. Narcissistic leaders tend to act as if they are entitled to the loyalty of their followers (Resick, Whitman, Weingarden, & Hiller, 2009). In other words, they tend to “demand loyalty”. Since narcissistic leaders actively use different manipulation techniques (Kets de Vries & Miller, 1997) their true nature will, presumably, not stay hidden for too long. Once uncovered, the loyalty and esteem of their subordinates may disrupt soon (Hogan, 1994; Hogan & Hogan, 2001; as cited in Paunonen, Lönnqvist, Verkasalo, Leikas, & Nissinen, 2006). Thus, we know that it is likely that leader

narcissism will lead to lower levels of loyalty from the subordinates. However, there is a lack of research on how such detrimental effects can be mitigated or removed completely. We try to respond to this gap by looking at how span of supervision can moderate the relationship through a possible buffering effect.

In order to investigate these associations, we have chosen to gather our data in a municipality setting. Most research on leader narcissism has taken place in private sector organizations (e.g. Yildiz & Oncer, 2012; Owens, Waldman & Wallace, 2015; Hochwarter & Thompson, 2012), leaving a gap on how leader narcissism can function in the public sector. It is likely that there could be significant differences between public and private sectors, therefore looking at narcissism in this context might be fruitful. Further, this study takes place in Norway, where public sector stands for more than 50% of the country's GDP (The Economist, 2013). Municipalities are a large part of this, and therefore are worth studying in more detail when it comes to leader narcissism.

Constructs and hypotheses

Narcissism

In social-personality literature, narcissism has been recognized as a trait that is normally distributed in population (Foster & Campbell, 2007). On the other hand, the clinical psychology and psychiatric literature has defined narcissism as a personality disorder, where many specific traits are present and the narcissism tends to cause distress and impairment (Campbell et al. 2011). Furthermore, due to low prevalence of narcissistic personality disorder, large prevalence of individuals with narcissistic traits (e.g. Stinson, Dawson, Goldstein, Chou, Huang, Smith & Grant, 2008; as cited in Campbell et al. 2011), and restricted medical data, we will focus on narcissism as a *trait*. Moreover, even though the extant research has been helpful in understanding the narcissistic trait and its effects on leadership, it has been slightly lacking in explaining the relationship between narcissistic leaders and their subordinates. This study will try to respond to that gap.

Many definitions of narcissism have been composed. Every researcher chooses to add something of theirs to the definition, but essentially, they all arrive at the same conclusion. Campbell et al. (2011, p. 269) proposed the following definition:

(...) Narcissism is a relatively stable individual difference consisting of grandiosity, self-love and inflated self-views. It is useful to think of narcissism as containing three components: the self, interpersonal relationships and self-regulatory strategies. First, the narcissistic self is characterized by positivity, specialness and uniqueness, vanity, a sense of entitlement and a desire for power and esteem. Second, narcissistic relationships contain low levels of empathy and emotional intimacy. Third, there are narcissistic strategies for maintaining inflated self-views. For example, narcissists seek out opportunities for attention and admiration, brag, steal credit from others, and play games in relationship (Campbell et al. 2011, p. 269)

Furthermore, narcissism has been a hot topic for a while since it has been attributed to many powerful leaders. Maccoby (2000) delivers a fun review on the subject. He discusses productive and unproductive narcissistic leaders, and their strengths and weaknesses. The issue of the emergence of narcissistic leaders has been discussed by many other researchers as well (e.g. Campbell et al. 2011; Brunell et al. 2008; De Vries & Miller, 1997). However, it has still not been completely clarified if the narcissistic leader hinders or somewhat benefits the organization, since many researchers mention both upsides and downsides, with the latter much more extensively discussed (Rosenthal & Pittinsky, 2006; Maccoby, 2000; De Vries, 2004).

Additionally, most of the research tends to focus on analyzing the leader. De Vries & Miller (1997) discuss several types of narcissistic leaders (e.g. reactive, self-deceptive, and constructive). Campbell et al. (2011) discuss narcissistic leaders and the changes in their performance. Maccoby (2000) discusses the differences between productive and unproductive narcissistic leaders, without delving into the extreme pathology of those conditions. Grijalva et al.'s (2015) meta-analysis focuses mainly on leadership effectiveness. This is why we choose to focus on the employees and the effects narcissistic leaders can have on them, rather than exclusively on the leader.

Span of supervision

Span of supervision, also called span of control can be defined in

different ways. Greenberg & Baron (2011) define it as “the number of subordinates in an organization who are supervised by a manager” (Greenberg & Baron, 2011 pp. 550).

More specifically, when a supervisor is responsible for many individuals, he/she is said to have a wide span of supervision. On the opposite side, when supervisors are responsible for few subordinates, he/she has a narrow span of supervision. The span of supervision can further be connected to the types of organizational hierarchies. Narrow spans of supervision are likely to have a taller hierarchy structure, while wider spans of supervision will likely have more “flat” structure with less clear authority figures (Greenberg & Baron, 2011).

Napier and Ferris (1993) propose that it is theoretically possible that span of supervision could affect the degree of interaction between leaders and followers. Furthermore, Judge and Ferris (1993) argue that a wider span of supervision will be associated with less leader-follower contact, because it will be more difficult for the leader to spend time with them. According to Bass (1998), leaders who supervise a great number of followers might be obliged to use less active forms of leaderships compared to e.g. transformational leadership and constructive transactional leadership. In addition, followers that are distant from their leaders will have less information about them, and might be prone to attributions and assumptions (Shamir, 1995). As narcissistic individuals can leave attractive first impressions, the followers might end up idealizing them. As Shamir (1995) discussed: “(...) the idealized image (...) also requires a distance to have an effect. Close examination of the vision is likely to reveal flaws and problems in the picture that may ruin its inspirational and motivational effect.” Therefore, it is plausible to argue that the detrimental effects would be weaker when followers are not closely attached to their leader. This was also suggested by Howell, Bowen, Dorfman, Kerr & Podsakoff (1997) who argued that leader distance could be considered as a *neutralizer* that could reduce certain effects that leader behaviours have on others.

The buffering hypothesis

We argue that the span of supervision functions as a moderator between leader narcissism and follower outcomes. More specifically, we ask if it's plausible that the span of supervision will function as a buffer against the negative effects of leader narcissism on follower job satisfaction, OCB and loyalty. We predict that the wide span of supervision may buffer against the lower levels of follower job satisfaction, OCB and loyalty that might stem from having a narcissistic leader. To be precise, without the wide span of supervision, the negative effects of narcissism are expected to be more pronounced. This is a *buffering hypothesis* (Hoffman et al. 2013). Therefore, our research model showing a relationship between span of supervision and other outcome variables is as follows:

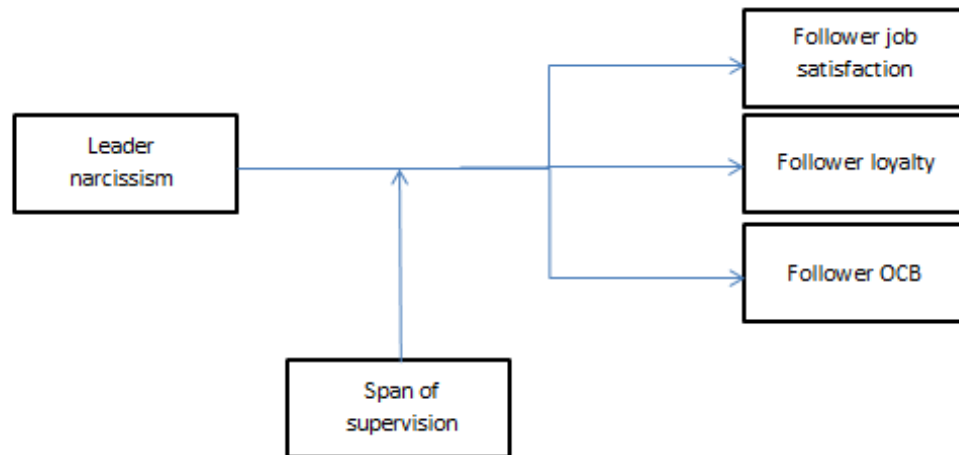


Figure 2. Research model

Job satisfaction

Narcissistic leaders are known for their use of many manipulation techniques, such as impression management, and are willing to take credit from others. Such behavior might entice detrimental outcomes for the employees that are directly affected by it, and in result, might generate low satisfaction (Campbell et al. 2000; Kets de Vries & Miller, 1997). As mentioned before, leaders that are responsible for many employees are said to have wider span of supervision. Wider span of supervision would allow less contact between the leader and their employees. In the case of a narcissistic leader it

might be healthier for the employees to have less contact with them. Antonakis (2002) emphasizes that wider spans of supervision will lead to a larger social distance between leader and follower, thus leading to less individualized attention. More specifically, when the leader has less possibility to give the individual attention, the leader might also lose the opportunity to act manipulative and in other ways affect the employee in negative ways (e.g. amorality, distaste for mentoring). Because of this, it seems likely that the detrimental outcomes that can arise from having close contact with a narcissistic leader can be mitigated. Additionally, as discussed previously, followers might end up idealizing distant leaders (Shamir, 1995), resulting in better job satisfaction. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

H1: The negative relationship between narcissism and job satisfaction is attenuated by wider span of supervision.

Loyalty

As discussed before, narcissistic leaders tend to act as if they are entitled to the loyalty of their followers (Resick, Whitman, Weingarden & Hiller, 2009). They use different manipulation techniques to do so, and at first, their employees might even be attracted to them. Once their true nature gets uncovered, the loyalty of their employees may decrease soon. Through span of supervision, these effects could be postponed. Leaders with wider span of supervision will be more socially distant to their employees. Shamir (1995) argues that leaders that are more distant will attract attributions of exceptional qualities from their followers because of various techniques (e.g. great visions, rhetoric, articulation of idealism). We have already mentioned how narcissistic leaders can be great visionaries and attract large number of followers (Maccoby, 2000). Therefore, if they can maintain distance, their followers might idealize them because of their positive first impressions. This type of idealization is called attributed charisma (Antonakis & Atwater, 2002). Furthermore, because they are more idealized, those leaders will be trusted unconditionally (Shamir, 1995). This type of trust is called distant trust (Antonakis & Atwater, 2002). Therefore, we argue that narcissistic leaders with wide span of supervision (distant leaders) will retain the loyalty of their followers more than they would if they were close to them.

Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

H2: The negative relationship between narcissism and loyalty is attenuated by wider span of supervision.

Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB)

Yildiz and Oncer (2012) argued that narcissism functioned as a moderator between organizational trust and OCB. Their results showed that organizational trust had positive effects on OCB, but that narcissism moderated this relationship negatively. Moreover, Judge et al. (2006) found that narcissism was significantly negatively related to supervisor ratings of OCB, but positively related to self-ratings of OCB. Bourdage, Lee, Lee and Shin (2009) in Campbell et al. (2011) found that narcissistic leaders that possess a dose of humility were motivated to engage in OCB, but more in the form of impression management. When discussing narcissism and OCB it is natural to also mention OCB's counterpart - counterproductive work behavior (CWB), which includes behaviors intended to harm organizations and its members (e.g. theft and aggression) (Penney & Spector, 2002 in Campbell et al. 2011). According to Campbell et al. (2011), narcissism has the clearest link with such kind of behavior. Research has shown that narcissism can predict conflict, aggression and bullying across various contexts. Therefore, it is likely that one would see increased levels of CWB and lowers levels of OCB when there are leaders with trait narcissism present (Campbell et al. 2011).

Since more distance can help alleviating harmful effects of leaders (Antonakis & Atwater, 2006; Shamir, 1995), we propose that it will be more likely that employees will engage in OCB, than it would be if the distance was much closer. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

H3: The negative relationship between narcissism and OCB is attenuated by wider span of supervision.

Overall, we argue that leader narcissism will have negative relationships with these three outcome variables. However, as described above, we argue that span of supervision will function as a buffer against the

detrimental effects.

Methods

Quantitative design will be applied to measure leader narcissism on follower outcomes and the moderating role of span of supervision. Validated measures of job satisfaction, OCB, loyalty and leader narcissism will be used and further inserted together in Qualtrics into one single questionnaire. The data will be collected from a municipality, from both leaders and subordinates. We will need 50 responses from leaders and 250-300 responses from subordinates. We need this amount of respondents in order to perform a HLM analysis so that we can properly test our research model.

Furthermore, the respondents will receive a link to the electronic questionnaire and each participant will be informed that all the data is strictly confidential.

The instruments for our variables were originally written in English. Even though Norwegian respondents generally know English well, we have chosen to have the questionnaires in Norwegian through a translation-back conversion process. That way we can avoid misunderstandings and assure similarity in the way respondents acquire meaning to the item (Brislin, Lonner, & Thorndike, 1973; Cavusgil & Das, 1997).

Instruments

Narcissism will be measured with a sixteen-item scale adapted from Raskin and Terry (1988). The leaders are asked to rate sayings on a scale from 1 = 'strongly disagree' to 7 = 'strongly agree'. Sample items include: "I think I am a special person"; "I know that I am good because everybody keeps telling me so"; anchors: 1 = 'strongly disagree', 7 = 'strongly agree'.

OCB will be measured using a five-item Likert scale (1= 'Never', 5 = 'Always') (Williams and Anderson, 1991). Sample item includes "I take time to listen to coworker's problems and worries" and "I help others who have heavy workloads".

Job satisfaction will be measured using a three-item scale from Camman, Fichman, Jenkins and Klesh (1983). The responses were rated on a 7 point scale: 1 = 'Strongly disagree', 2 = 'Disagree somewhat', 3 = 'Slightly disagree', 4 =

‘Neither agree nor disagree’, 5 = ‘Slightly agree’, 6 = ‘Agree somewhat’, 7 = ‘Strongly agree’. Sample items include: “In general, I like working here” and “All in all, I am satisfied with my job”. This is a measure of overall job satisfaction.

Loyalty will be measured using a six-item scale from Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman and Fetter (1990). The participants are asked to rate how well each saying describes closest leader on a scale from 1 = ‘Not at all’, to 4 = ‘Absolutely accurate’. Sample items include: “I feel quite confident that my leader will always treat me fairly” and “I feel a strong sense of loyalty towards my leader”.

Finally, to measure span of supervision leaders will report how many subordinates they are responsible for, so that we can get an image of how wide or narrow the span is for each leader participating in the study.

Tentative plan for completion

The next important step is to get in contact with the municipality to see our possibilities. After we have gotten their approval, we will start sending out the questionnaires to leaders and followers. Our goal is to finish the data collection by March 30, so our analysis can start in April. After we have gathered all the necessary information, we will continue to finish our thesis. The writing process will mainly take place in May and June. Hopefully, we will be finished with writing by July, so that we can spend the remainder of time extensively proofreading and perfecting it before September 1.

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