

# Dimensions of narcissism in athletes in universities

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## ABSTRACT

This study aims to discover the levels of narcissism among university students, who are actively involved in sports, in order to reveal the differences between narcissism levels and sociodemographic variables. A total of 611 athletes participated in the study, of whom 236 were females (38.6%) and were males 375 (61.4%). They all have actively participated in individual and team sports that were organized by the Turkish University Sports Federation. For the purpose of determining the narcissism levels of the athletes, the "Narcissistic Personality Inventory", which was developed by Ames et al. (2006) and adapted into Turkish by Atay (2009), was used. The scale consisted of 16 items representing 6 dimensions "exhibitionism", "superiority", "authority", "entitlement", "self-sufficiency", and "exploitativeness". The study data were analysed by utilizing IBM SPSS Statistics v22 package software was used. To reveal whether the data had a normal distribution, a single-sample "Kolmogorov-Smirnov" test was conducted and it was discovered that the data did not distribute a normal distribution. Following these initial evaluation, it was decided to use the non-parametric test methods. In the comparison of narcissism levels of athletes with demographic variables, the "Mann Whitney U Test" was conducted for two-sample comparisons while "Kruskal Wallis-H Test" was conducted for comparisons between three and/or more samples. Additionally, the "Mann Whitney U test" was conducted to determine the groups with significant differences. The level of significance was regarded as  $p < 0.05$ . In conclusion, it was observed that the mean total scores of athletes in the "Narcissistic Personality Inventory" was  $7.11 \pm 3.26$ . When the relationships between the narcissism levels and demographic variables of athletes were examined, significant differences were observed between the narcissistic tendencies of athletes and the variables of gender, age, and department of education. Finally, when the literature was examined, it was seen that the athletes in the sample had an acceptable level of narcissism.

**Keywords:** Narcissism, university athletes, Narcissistic Personality Inventory.

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## INTRODUCTION

Narcissism has been a rather attractive field for various subfields of psychology. The term narcissism is derived from Narcissus in Greek mythology that falls in love with his own image reflected in a pool of water and wasted his life watching this beautiful face reflected. According to the mythology; a despised lover of Narcissus, whose name was Ameinius, committed suicide with a sword.

Ameinius' revenge prayer was heard by a nymph, Nemesis. Using her power; she made Narcissus fall in love with himself but on one condition: "Because *he never loved anyone, he fell in love with himself*". One day, Narcissus bends down to drink water, sees his own image on the water in a pool, and falls in love with himself. He spends the rest of his life longing this

beloved. Believing that only death can save him from this pain; Narcissus, at last, ends his life by stabbing himself with a dagger (Rataj, 2003; cited by Atay, 2009).

Narcissism, one of the basic dynamics of psychoanalysis (Freud, 1914), object relations (Kernberg, 1995), and self-psychology (Kohut, 1977), has been investigated in various dimensions such as a personality disorder in clinic psychology (DSM 5, APA, 2013), a distinct personality feature in personality psychology (Gentile et al., 2013), a leadership feature in organizational psychology (Grijalva et al. 2015), a feature of organizational culture (Rousseau and Duchon, 2015), one of the determinants of online behaviour in cyber psychology (Davenport et al., 2014), a dynamic of

interpersonal relationships and a significant feature that influences satisfaction in relationships and healthy relationships in romantic relationships (Wurst et al., 2017), and has been an interesting concept that is comprehensive, complex and worthy of its meaning. In light of the information above mentioned; the study aims to explore the levels of narcissism among university athletes, who are actively involved in sports, in order to reveal the differences between narcissism levels and sociodemographic variables.

## **NARCISSISM AND SPORTS**

Narcissistic individuals excessively admire themselves in physical and psychological aspects, get above themselves, expect constant admiration, interest, and approval, and assume that they will get privileged attention wherever they go and deserve a superior place. Undoubtedly, it is inevitable to experience frequent disappointments and traumas in such intense expectations.

The self-respect of narcissistic individuals feeds on external interest, admiration, and approval. The individuals in question cannot tolerate criticism and expect praise constantly. Thus, their appearances and behaviours are shaped in a way to achieve these continuously. Because these individuals use others to aggrandize themselves and view and show themselves superior, their friendships are also for profit in this way. Furthermore, because narcissistic individuals cannot empathize with the feelings, thoughts, and requirements of others, they are known as selfish and egocentric in their relationship (Öztürk, 2002).

Narcissism can sometimes affect the performances of individuals (athletes) positively. The superiority feeling of narcissistic athletes depends on their abilities to demonstrate superiority on others and gain their admiration. By demonstrating the best moves in the field of sports, they attempt to demonstrate their superiority and attract attention. They pay less attention to being loved and cared for. Therefore, narcissistic athletes behave more belligerently and tenaciously to prevent their self-respect from being ruined due to performance failure. For narcissistic athletes, the only important thing is to win. To achieve their goals, they also resort to non-moral behaviours (Wallace and Baumeister, 2002; Twenge and Campbell, 2010).

Upon failure, narcissistic individuals attempt to prove that the failure is actually due to mischance. Narcissistic athletes do not believe that they lose the match due to their own mistakes and attribute the defeat to decisions of referees, errors in rules, audiences, erroneous tactics of coaches, etc.

Narcissistic athletes are more successful in individual sports than team sports. Most of the features that define narcissism reveal that narcissistic individuals cannot become team players. Because they lack the ability of

empathy, they understand nor care about the feelings and thoughts of teammates and view their teammates as a means to demonstrate their performances.

What is important for narcissistic athletes is not the victory of the team but becoming the centre of attention by demonstrating their abilities. Thus, it is difficult for a team that consisted of narcissistic athletes to demonstrate their skills in a harmonious and coordinated way (Wallace and Baumeister, 2002).

## **Types of narcissism in athletes**

### ***Benign narcissism***

The object of benign narcissism emerges from the self-struggle and self-engagement of athletes. For example, athletes can receive praise thanks to a movement that they train to learn and or a success they achieve.

Because the object of narcissism emerges thanks to their efforts, the excessive interest they feel toward their achievement and work is constantly balanced with the interest they have for the work itself in this process. Therefore, the factors that create benign narcissism check themselves (Fromm et al., 1994). Benign narcissism enables athletes to feel that they can deal with their environment and the expectations of the environment effectively, enjoy activities, feel proud of their achievements, and experience embarrassment and anger due to their mistakes and imperfections (Gülmez, 2009).

### ***Pathological narcissism***

The object of pathological narcissism is not something that athletes create or produce but something that they possess such as, body, external appearance, wealth, beauty, etc. Pathologically narcissistic athletes take pride in what they own rather than what they achieve (Fromm et al., 1994). Kernberg stated that the basis of pathological narcissism lies in individuals' hate in themselves rather than the excessive love for themselves (Kernberg as cited in Gülmez, 2009).

According to the general psychodynamic perspective, corresponding fears, failures and needs for dependency in childhood with negligence, criticism or mockery due to lack or parents or disorders cause pathological narcissism to develop (Güleç and Koroğlu, 1998).

## ***Dimensions of narcissism in athletes***

**Superiority:** Superiority represents self-confidence, independence, assertiveness, and the need for success.

**Exploitativeness:** Exploitativeness represents rebelliousness, discordance, vindictiveness, and not

respecting or tolerating others.

**Authority:** Authority represents dominance, assertiveness, criticism, and self-confidence.

**Entitlement:** Entitlement represents ambitiousness, need for power, dominance, vindictiveness, and obstinacy.

**Self-sufficiency:** Self-sufficiency represents assertiveness, independence, self-confidence, and the need for success.

**Exhibitionism:** Exhibitionism represents pursuits of emotions, extroversion, and inability to control impulses.

**Self-admiration:** Self-admiration is related to individuals' attraction to themselves physically and thus, the belief that they are judged by others (Gülmez, 2009).

### Narcissism in sports

In times when the meaning and importance of sports increase, narcissism becomes inevitable along with fame and high income of athletes. The approach of press members to athletes, being in the centre of attention for other people, and having a body size that is defined as ideal brings the feelings of leadership to the forefront (Tazegül et al., 2013). Athletes who possess narcissistic features demonstrate observable behaviours. These behaviours sometimes affect the performances of athletes positively or negatively.

The feelings of competition and ambition in athletes with narcissistic features are prominent and they make an effort to attract attention and be in the centre during competitions (Tazegül, 2013).

Furthermore, in these individuals, actions, such as inability to accept their mistakes, blaming misfortune, opponents, referees, and various similar aspects, provoking disturbances, and proving themselves constantly (Wallace and Baumeister, 2002).

### Diagnosis of narcissism in athletes

In previous studies, narcissism in sports has been divided into two groups as benign (non-pathological) and pathological (malignant) narcissism. The concept of pathological narcissism was first used by Jones and defined as being only in one's fantasy world, assuming that only what one knows is correct by valuing oneself over everyone else, desiring to be excessively praised, loved and rewarded (Jones and Brunell, 2014).

Individuals without benign narcissism channel their focus of interest through something that they created themselves while individuals with pathological narcissism channel their focus of interest to themselves, such as their body, hair, or face. In this respect, pathological narcissism can be more severe and dangerous (Gülmez, 2009). In a study conducted by Sohrabi et al. (2011), two groups were chosen. The first group included athletes who were in contact with opponents such as martial arts while the other group included athletes who were not in

contact with opponents.

When the narcissism data between these two groups were evaluated, significant differences were observed. It was determined that the narcissism indicators in athletes who were in contact with opponents were more compared to those who were not in contact with opponents (Sohrabi et al., 2011).

Moreover, there is a group that is defined as bullying narcissist. These individuals are defined as those who block others and prevent others from advancing, especially in workplaces and in positions such as leaders, hide the required information from others, interfere with others' jobs, criticize and despise others, ridicule everyone and belittle the ideas of others (Burgo, 2016). The personality traits of narcissistic individuals significantly affect the performance of sports that they do. These individuals, who constantly fight with an ambition for competition and combat, can reach significant positions in the sports environment (Gülmez, 2009). However, these individuals are generally known as individual contenders who cannot adapt to teams (Gülmez, 2009).

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### Research model and hypotheses

A descriptive study was conducted to determine athletes' narcissism levels in terms of sociodemographic variables. To this end, the study relies on a descriptive screening model, in which individuals are asked various questions about a case or situation and their responses are examined to understand the case/situation.

Büyüköztürk et al. (2018) stated that in the screening research model the goal is to take the picture of a situation in order to describe it. The hypotheses for this particular study are as follows:

H1: There is a significant difference between athletes' narcissism levels on gender.

H2: There is a significant difference between athletes' narcissism levels on age.

H3: There is a significant difference between athletes' narcissism levels on department of education.

H4: There is a significant difference between athletes' narcissism levels on number of siblings.

H5: There is a significant difference between athletes' narcissism levels on employment status.

H6: There is a significant difference between athletes' narcissism levels on place of residence.

H7: There is a significant difference between athletes' narcissism levels on sports with license.

### Population and sample

The population of the study was composed of athletes

who studied in various departments of universities in Turkey and actively participated in organizations that were held by the Turkish University Sports Federation.

The sample of the study was composed of a total of 611 athletes who were recruited with random sampling method, 236 females (38.6%), and 375 males (61.4%), who participated in the competitions.

Questionnaires were applied in tournaments, which was organized by the Turkey University Sports Federation. It was ensured that the athletes answered the questions in a calm and understanding time. For this, the period of time that they are resting at the hotel was chosen.

## Data collection tools

### *Personal information form*

The participants were given a personal information form designed by the researcher that addressed information about participants' age, gender, department of education, number of siblings, parents' status, place of residence, employment status and the status of doing sports with a license.

### *Narcissistic Personality Inventory*

Narcissistic Personality Inventory NPI was developed in 1988 by Raskin and Terry and was consisted of 220 statements. Later; it was transformed into a scale of 54 items after internal consistency analyses were performed. Raskin and Terry (1988) removed some of the items as a result of item and factor analyses and Narcissistic Personality Inventory was designed with 40 items. The inventory was clustered into 7 subscales: exhibitionism, superiority, authority, entitlement, self-sufficiency, exploitativeness and vanity (Atay, 2009).

However, Dr Ames et al. from the University of Columbia designed the final version of Narcissistic Personality Inventory with 16 questions in 2006. The scale was adapted into Turkish by Atay in 2009. Thus; language and cultural equivalency of the scale was achieved and the necessary reliability and validity tests were performed.

In the first study done after Atay's pilot implementation; scale's Cronbach's Alpha value was calculated as 0.57. Due to low-reliability value; four statements which were detected to be negatively perceived and made no contribution to the scale was revised after the correlation of each factor with the scale was examined. In the measurements done after the revision; scale's Cronbach's Alpha value increased to 0.652.

As in the English form of NPI, questions in the Turkish form were also distributed to 6 factors; exhibitionism,

superiority, authority, entitlement, self-sufficiency, exploitativeness (Atay, 2009).

The total score of the NPI ranges between 0 and 16; while factor/subscale scores change between 0 and 2 in authority; 0 and 3 in exhibitionism; 0 and 3 in exploitativeness; 0 and 2 in entitlement; 0 and 3 in self-sufficiency; 0 and 3 in superiority. High scores indicate a higher level of narcissism (Atay, 2009).

As a result of the test performed to look at the internal consistency of the study; Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficients of the Narcissistic Personality Inventory Subscales were 0.71 for Authority, 0.67 for Exhibitionism, 0.72 for Exploitativeness, 0.69 for Entitlement, 0.71 for Self-sufficiency, 0.88 for Superiority and 0.71 for Total Narcissism.

## Data analysis

For the analyses of the data; Portable IBM SPSS Statistics v20 package program was used. One sample "Kolmogorov-Smirnov" test was employed in order to know whether or not the data followed a normal distribution and it was seen that the data did not follow a normal distribution. Following these initial evaluation, it was decided to use the non-parametric test methods in the statistical analyses.

In the comparison of narcissism levels of athletes with demographic variables, the "Mann Whitney U Test" was conducted for two-sample comparisons while "Kruskal Wallis-H Test" was conducted for comparisons between three and/or more samples. Additionally, the "Mann Whitney U test" was conducted to determine the groups with significant differences. The level of significance was regarded as  $p < 0.05$ .

## RESULTS

In Table 1, the distributions of the participants were presented according to sociodemographic variables. 236 of the participating athletes were females (38.6%) while 375 of them were males (61.4%).

Additionally, 55.2% of the athletes were 21-23 years old ( $n = 337$ ) while 28.8% of the athletes were 18-20 years old ( $n = 176$ ).

While 73.8% of the athletes stated that they studied in the departments of universities providing education about sports, 26.2% stated that they studied in different departments of universities.

When we look at the number of siblings of the athletes it is seen that 14.2% of them have been only one child in their family, and 85.8% have more than one sibling.

When evaluated in terms of athlete students' working status; it was observed that 73.0% were unemployed, 6.4% part time, 3.4% public sector, 10.5% private sector and 6.7% are working other sectors.

**Table 1.** Distribution of athletes according to sociodemographic variables.

Variable	Group	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Female	236	42.6
	Male	375	57.4
Age	18-20	176	28.8
	21-23	337	55.2
	24 and older	98	16.0
Department of Education	Physical Education and Sports	451	73.8
	Other	160	26.2
Number of Siblings	Only Child	87	14.2
	1 and More Siblings	524	85.8
Employment Status	Unemployed	446	73.0
	Part-Time	39	6.4
	Public Sector	21	3.4
	Private Sector	64	10.5
	Other	41	6.7
Place of Residence	With Family	121	19.8
	Student house	281	46.0
	With Relatives	34	5.6
	Dormitory	148	24.2
	Other	27	4.4
Sports with License	Yes	420	68.7
	No	191	31.3

In terms of the places where athletes live, 19.8% stated that they stay with their family, 46% in a student house, 5.6% with their relatives, 24.2% in a dormitory and 4.4% in another place.

While 45% of the athletes participating in the study were actively continuing their sports lives in a licensed way, 76% stated that they did not have any athlete license.

In Table 2, the distributions of total scores of the

participants in the Narcissistic Personality Inventory and the scores obtained in the dimensions were presented.

It was found out that mean scores obtained from Narcissistic Personality Inventory used to determine narcissism level of the athletes were as follows: Authority  $1.05 \pm 0.78$ , Exhibitionism  $1.06 \pm 0.85$ , Exploitativeness  $1.52 \pm 0.86$ , Entitlement  $0.69 \pm 0.76$ , Self-sufficiency  $1.73 \pm 0.99$ , Superiority  $0.99 \pm 0.83$  and Total Narcissism  $7.05 \pm 2.34$ .

**Table 2.** Distribution of mean scores obtained by athletes form narcissistic personality inventory subscale.

Narcissism	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Minimum	Maximum
Authority	611	1.05	0.78	0.00	2.00
Exhibitionism	611	1.06	0.85	0.00	3.00
Exploitativeness	611	1.52	0.86	0.00	3.00
Entitlement	611	0.69	0.76	0.00	2.00
Self-sufficiency	611	1.73	0.99	0.00	3.00
Superiority	611	0.99	0.83	0.00	3.00
Total Narcissism	611	7.05	2.34	0.00	15.00

In Table 3, according to the results of the Mann Whitney U-test conducted to determine whether the scores of the Narcissistic Personality Inventory differed according to the variable of gender, it was determined that the difference in the mean ranks of the groups was statistically significant in terms of the *exhibitionism* dimension ( $u = 75568.000$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ).

In other words, female athletes appear to have more exhibitionistic narcissism at a rate significantly higher than in male athletes. It is thought that exhibitionist narcissism levels are higher than male athletes due to the desire of female athletes to be admired and watched in sports as well as in other areas of life.

In terms of the scores of Narcissistic Personality Inventory and other dimensions, no statistically significant difference was observed according to the variable of gender.

In Table 4, in the comparison of university athletes who actively did sports according to the variable age groups, significant differences were observed in the subscale of exhibitionism ( $\chi^2 = 6.487$ ,  $p < .05$ ).

The exhibitionist narcissism levels of the 18-20 years old athletes were found to be higher than those of 21-23 years old and 24 years and older. In other words, 18-20 years old athletes have a higher level of exhibitionistic narcissism than other groups.

This age group, which is at the beginning of its youth, is thought to exhibit exhibitionistic narcissism in order to attract attention in the society.

A statistically significant difference cannot be detected between the age groups in terms of other sub-dimensions.

Table 5 shows the test results performed to determine whether there is any significant difference between the number of siblings and narcissism sub-dimensions.

Among the total narcissism score and superiority sub-dimensions and the number of siblings owned, being a single child was found to be significantly higher than those with more than one sibling in terms of the total score of narcissism and superiority sub-dimension. In other dimensions, no significant difference was observed.

**Table 3.** Mann Whitney U-Test to discover whether or not athletes' subscale scores differed in terms of "Gender".

Narcissism	Variable	N	Mean Rank	Total Rank	U	P
Authority	Female	236	156.97	16752.50	8950.50	0.65
	Male	375	151.25	21750.50		
Exhibitionist	Female	236	168.85	18017.00	7568.00	<b>0.02*</b>
	Male	375	143.96	20486.00		
Exploitativeness	Female	236	154.18	16547.50	9352.50	0.79
	Male	375	152.01	21955.50		
Entitlement	Female	236	146.14	15599.50	8775.50	0.25
	Male	375	165.21	22903.50		
Self-sufficiency	Female	236	151.36	16232.50	9142.50	0.83
	Male	375	154.13	22270.50		
Superiority	Female	236	158.32	16787.50	8750.50	0.65
	Male	375	152.47	21715.50		
Total Narcissism	Female	236	156.73	16924.50	8968.50	0.52
	Male	375	148.51	21578.50		

\* $p < 0.05$ .

**Table 4.** Kruskal-H Wallis U-Test to discover whether or not athletes' subscale scores differed in terms of "Age".

Narcissism	Variable	N	Mean Rank	Chi-square	df	P	Sig.
Authority	18-20 years old	176	154.86	2.31	2	0.35	
	21-23 years old	337	146.21				
	24 years old and older	98	134.01				

**Table 4.** Continues.

Exhibitionism	18-20 years old <sup>1</sup>	176	164.44	6.48	2	<b>0.02*</b>	1 – 2
	21-23 years old <sup>2</sup>	337	141.25				
	24 years old and older <sup>3</sup>	98	148.13				
Exploitativeness	18-20 years old	176	148.85	0.89	2	0.82	
	21-23 years old	337	138.73				
	24 years old and older	98	151.54				
Entitlement	18-20 years old	176	144.24	0.30	2	0.98	
	21-23 years old	337	146.56				
	24 years old and older	98	150.31				
Self-sufficiency	18-20 years old	176	141.54	0.19	2	0.85	
	21-23 years old	337	143.63				
	24 years old and older	98	146.51				
Superiority	18-20 years old	176	131.34	0.05	2	0.96	
	21-23 years old	337	130.20				
	24 years old and older	98	136.53				
Total Narcissism	18-20 years old	176	150.15	1.689	2	0.524	
	21-23 years old	337	148.32				
	24 years old and older	98	146.21				

\*p &lt; 0.05.

**Table 5.** Mann Whitney U-Test to discover whether or not athletes' subscale scores differed in terms of "Number of Siblings".

<b>Narcissism</b>	<b>Variable</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean Rank</b>	<b>Total Rank</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>P</b>
Authority	Only child	87	152.25	18547.50	8950.50	0.85
	1 and more siblings	524	148.20	22650.50		
Exhibitionism	Only child	87	153.54	17921.00	7568.00	0.54
	1 and more siblings	524	145.74	21245.00		
Exploitativeness	Only child	87	154.18	17421.50	9352.50	0.88
	1 and more siblings	524	152.01	21896.50		
Entitlement	Only child	87	132.14	14589.50	8775.50	0.32
	1 and more siblings	524	139.22	22548.50		
Self-sufficiency	Only child	87	143.36	15984.50	9142.50	0.68
	1 and more siblings	524	148.13	22154.50		
Superiority	Only child	87	166.32	16787.50	8750.50	<b>0.01*</b>
	1 and more siblings	524	139.47	21715.50		
Total Narcissism	Only child	87	194.92	16924.50	8968.50	<b>0.00*</b>
	1 and more siblings	524	169.58	21578.50		

\*p &lt; 0.05.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this section, the literature review about the narcissistic tendencies that were caused by the variables of gender, age, and the number of siblings in the individuals who participated in the study were discussed.

In the two-sample comparison conducted for the variable of the gender of the university athletes who participated in the study, statistically, significant differences were determined in the *exhibitionism* dimension ( $u = 75568.00$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). This difference was in favour of female students. In other words, female athletes appear to have more exhibitionistic narcissism at a rate significantly higher than in male athletes. It is thought that exhibitionist narcissism levels are higher than male athletes due to the desire of female athletes to be admired and watched in sports as well as in other areas of life. No significant difference was found in other sub-dimensions of narcissism in terms of gender variable.

When the literature is examined, there are similar studies with our study findings, as well as completely opposite results. Previous studies reported that narcissism did not differ significantly according to gender (Orhan, 2014; Kocakula, 2012; Koşan, 2015). However, several studies reported that female students had higher scores in the exploitativeness subscale compared to male students (Özdemir, 2017). Demirel et al. (2018) stated that there is a difference in favour of male athletes in the exhibitionist dimension. In another study, significant differences were found in favour of males in the exploitation dimension of university athletes, while no significant difference was found in other dimensions (Bayrak et al., 2015).

In the literature, it is seen that there are similar results between the gender variable and the levels of narcissism with our study findings. While studies with similar sociodemographic characteristics of the study groups show similar results, studies with different sample groups show different results. It is thought that the similarity and difference between the literature and our study are due to this.

The exhibitionist narcissism levels of the 18-20 years old athletes were found to be higher than those of 21-23 years old and 24 years and older. In other words, 18-20 years old athletes have a higher level of exhibitionistic narcissism than other groups.

In the comparison according to the variable of age in university athletes who actively did sports, significant differences were observed in the exhibitionism dimension. The exhibitionist narcissism levels of the 18-20 years old athletes were found to be higher than those of 21-23 years old and 24 years and older. In other words, 18-20 years old athletes have a higher level of exhibitionistic narcissism than other groups.

In other words, the university athletes who were in the 18 to 20 years old group demonstrated exhibitionist

behaviours more than others. In a study conducted by Akıncı (2015) with university athletes, it was stated that adolescents who were in the early 20s demonstrated higher levels of narcissistic tendencies compared to older adolescents. In a study conducted by Cramer (2011), it was stated that the characteristic features of narcissistic tendency decreased as the age increased. It has been found that there is a correlation between age and the level of narcissism and that the level of narcissism decreases with age.

In another study conducted by Foster et al., it was discovered that the older participants demonstrated lower levels of narcissistic tendencies (Foster et al., 2003). It could be stated that narcissistic tendencies decreased as age increased. It is believed that high levels of narcissistic tendencies in young age groups and especially the higher levels in the exhibitionist dimension can be a way for adolescent individuals to be accepted in societies and overcome the problems of adapting to social environments. Most of the studies in the literature show that the level of narcissism decreases as the age gets older. As people get older, their ability to control their emotions increases. Their view of life and their perception of life changes with age. This is thought to be the reason for the difference between age and narcissism.

According to the variable of the number of siblings in university athletes who actively did sports, significant differences were observed in the superiority and narcissism dimensions of the Narcissistic Personality Inventory. This difference was observed to be in favour of individuals who were the only child in their families. In other words, it could be stated that individuals who were the only child in their families had higher superiority and narcissistic tendencies.

In a study conducted by Akıncı (2015), it was stated that the individuals who were the only child in their families had higher narcissistic tendencies. In the literature review, in studies that investigated the connection between the number of siblings in the family, the birth order of the children, and narcissistic tendencies, it was observed that fear and anger experienced in childhood could be main reasons for narcissism to emerge (Fromm, 1999).

Furthermore, Adler (1992), one of the personality theoreticians, frequently emphasized that the birth order among siblings could have effects on their personalities while stating that being the middle child was a more disadvantageous situation compared to being the first and last child. According to Adler, middle children felt like they were alienated from their families while being between the first children, who had priorities in families, and the last children who were extensively cared for. Joubert (1989) stated that individuals who demonstrated narcissistic features and individuals who had the first birth rank in families could demonstrate similar tendencies such as lack of empathy, entitlement, and tendency to view themselves unique.



The results of this study, in which the narcissism levels of athletes studying at universities were examined, show that the narcissism levels of sports athletes are above the reference range examined in the literature. The feeling of winning and achieving inherent in sports is thought to affect the narcissism levels of athlete students.

University students increase their popularity by highlighting their sportive success in their circle of friends. With their self-esteem reaching a certain level, the state of being a loved one and admired triggers narcissism.

The current finding of narcissism in athlete students should be repeated in a variety of settings (eg high school, university, amateur league, professional league), with larger sample sizes for players at different stages of their sports career.

Finally, research should be conducted with different groups that prefer different sports, as the incentive for narcissism may increase when athletes gain public attention.

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