

Narcissistic Personality Parents as a Correlate of Relationship with Their Children

Mr. Shivanand ¹

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Abstract

The parent-child relationship is a crucial topic to be discussed in the present scenario. As it is the unique and intimate connection between the parent and the child, including physical, social and emotional factors such as concern, affection and mutual accountability. But many personal and social factors are there which directly or indirectly affect the relationship between both parents and a child and also with their children. One of the major factors seen nowadays is narcissistic personality parents, which is a personality type whose intensity is molded by an individual's environment, his/her independence, and modernization. Narcissistic Personality Disorder is a psychological illness characterized by an exaggerated perception of one's own significance, which is also associated with selfishness, isolation, entitlement and grandiosity. The present study focuses on the relationship between narcissistic personality type parents and their children. The sample consists of 30 parents (15 Fathers and 15 Mothers). The subjects were individually contacted and provided a set of questionnaires that consist of the Narcissistic Personality Inventory and Child-Parent Relationship Scale. The obtained data were analyzed using SPSS v.20 and represented through descriptive statistics, correlation matrix, and One-Way ANOVA. The findings of the present study revealed that there is a negative correlation between narcissism and child-parent relationship; no significant gender difference was found in narcissism, but there is a significant gender difference in child-parent relationships.

Keywords: Parent-Child Relationship, Independence, Narcissistic Personality and Correlation Matrix.

Introduction

Parents are the being that brought up and care for their offspring's. Parents (especially mothers) are the first people with whom the child does the interaction through various sensations. Parents and their children together form a social system with some elderly

1 Research Scholar, Department of Psychology, D.D.U. Gorakhpur University, Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh, India

✉ Mr. Shivanand, E-mail: shivanandrao300@gmail.com

members called family. In a family, each member is dependent and connected with one another through emotions, social behavior and interests. The environment within the family is the core foundation for the physical, psychological and social development of the child because the child lives in that environment and grasps the things that happen in their surroundings. It decides what they will say, what their behaviour will be and the way of expression in different situations.

Moreover, the behavior and personality of parents have a crucial impact on the child's mental health, i.e. how both mother and father talk, treat and show interest in them and towards their children. The relationship between child and parents is the most beautiful and expensive bond that can't be compared to other bonds in the lifespan of living species; when this bond is healthy and vigorous due to selfless love, faith and mutual respect, then the upbringing of the child is confident, emotionally connected and socially expressive personality. But when this bond is lacking, the child bears personal and social conflicts. The Child-Parent relationship can be categorized in four dimensions that are following:

1. Secure Relationship: It shows the strongest attachment between parents and their child. In this type of relationship, the child knows that his parents will always be there when he needs social and emotional support.
2. Avoidant Relationship: Complete dependency is not found in the children due to the rearing style, he knows how to handle themselves.
3. Ambivalent Relationship: In this type of relationship, the child wants to seek the attention of parents by doing certain behavior occasionally due to insecurity.
4. Disorganized Relationship: Lack of understanding, care and mutual respect is found, the child couldn't understand the expectations of the parents and starts predicting their reactions towards any of their behavior.

As earlier, we have discussed the factors that put significant impact on child-parent relationship. One of the major factors is the narcissistic personality trait of parents. Firstly, we need to understand the term "Narcissism" as it is an egoistic personality style that is characterized by excessive emphasis on oneself and on one's needs and wants, often neglecting other persons. The word "Narcissism" is derived from the Greek mythology character "Narcissus", who fell in love with his own reflection and wanted to achieve it.

According to Psychologists, a moderate level of Narcissism is common in nature, but when its level increases, it rises to Narcissistic Personality Disorder, a condition in which a person needs medical and counselling support. This type of personality people leave a negative impact on each relationship they have. Basically, when a parent shows these traits, he will ignore his child's needs and wants, his feelings, emotions and lacks in providing social and psychological help. In the modern era, the problems are rising day-by-day, every relationship is suffering due to some factors. All the problems could be cured by making a balance between everything in life and by deciding your priority. When we talk about society, our social behavior could be such that no person could bear any harm (i.e. physical, social and psychological) to maintain mutual respect, trust and affection.

Review of Literature

Robert. C. Pianta developed the "Child-Parent Relationship Scale (CPRS)" in 1992 and conducted a study on school going children's. The results of his study revealed that the

relationship between parent and child at present determines the social behavior and mental condition of the child in future. He found that warmth relation between parent and child has a significant correlation with their academic performance and social maturity. The less the conflict and selfishness, the more will be the closeness among them.

According to Biringen et.al. (2001), parents with high narcissistic personality traits show unavailability and a conflicting nature towards other people and their child. Due to their physical, social and emotional unavailability, a large gap takes place between them and their children because of reasons such as lack of conversation, isolation and being too focused on oneself. Children are facing problems mainly ignorance, lack of understanding and lack of love and security.

Campbell et.al. (2002) investigated "How narcissism affects close and personal relationships". The present study revealed that narcissistic people know only about their needs and wants, which should be fulfilled at any cost. These types of people want attention, respect, and obedience without giving them in return, which could damage their long-lasting relationships also.

Twenge and Campbell (2009) found in the study that the narcissistic personality trait is found more in younger generations of modern societies. The present study explained how cultural and environmental factors play a major role in building an individual's personality trait. Campbell et.al. introduced the book "The Narcissism Epidemic", which denotes the era of narcissistic people and compared it to a disease that needs pathological treatment.

Cui and Congobardi (2022) investigated "The impact of parenting on the development of narcissistic traits". The results of the present study revealed that there is a significant correlation between the mentioned factors: overprotection in relationships, manipulative tactics, and lack of emotional support, love and care, which leads to underdevelopment of personality of the child. Lack of emotional regulation often works as a mediating factor between narcissistic personality parents and the child's social adjustment problems.

Implication of the study

The present study, "Narcissistic Personality Trait Parents as a correlate of relationship with their children's", is done to explore the impact of narcissistic personality parents on relationships with their children and also to look over the gender difference in such relationships.

As in the modern era, it is the major to maintain balance between all the relationship in our life especially parents are busy in themselves only and neglecting their child needs and wants, no open conversation is followed and neither they get psychological nor social support somehow, which damages their potential required for enhancing their life.

Objective of the study

- i. To explore the relationship between narcissistic parents and their relationship with their children.
- ii. To explore the gender difference in narcissism and parent-child relationship.

Hypotheses

- i. There will be a negative correlation between narcissism and parent-child relationship.

- ii. There will be a significant gender difference in narcissism and parent-child relationship.

Methodology

Sample

The sample includes 30 parents in the age group (28-36) and, in terms of gender, there are 15 Fathers and 15 Mothers participants addressed from Gorakhpur City.

Description of tools

Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI-16), developed by Daniel R. Ames, Paul Rose and Cameron P. Anderson in 2006, consists of 16 items based on scoring of (0= wrong response, 1= correct response) as mentioned in response consistent.

Child-Parent Relationship Scale (CPRS), developed by Dr. Robert C. Pianta in 1992 at the University of Virginia, consists of 30 items with 5-point Likert Scale (1= definitely does not apply, 2= not really, 3= neutral/not sure, 4= applies somewhat and 5= definitely applies).

Data Analysis

The obtained data are analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS v.20) and described through Descriptive statistics, Correlation Matrix and One-way ANOVA.

Results

Table 1. Mean and Standard Deviation of narcissism and child-parent relationship.

S.No.	Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1.	NPI	30	9.2333	3.02499
2.	CPRS	30	81.0333	16.74450
3.	GENDER	30	1.4667	0.50742

Table:-1 represents the descriptive statistics (Mean and Standard Deviation) of narcissism and child-parent relationship. The mean of narcissism (N = 30) is 9.2333, and its standard deviation is 3.02499. The mean of child-parent relationship (N = 30) is 81.0333, and its standard deviation is 16.74450 respectively.

Table 2. Correlation Matrix (Narcissism and Child-Parent Relationship).

Variables	NPI	CPRS
NPI	1	-.138
CPRS		1

Table 2 represents the correlation coefficient between narcissism and the child-parent relationship, as Narcissism is negatively correlated with the child-parent relationship ($r = -.138$).

Table 3. One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) of both groups (i.e. males and females) in both variables.

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
NPI	Between Groups	17.633	1	17.633	1.993	.169
	Within Groups	247.733	28	8.848		
	Total	265.367	29			
CPRS	Between Groups	1628.033	1	1628.033	7.010	.013
	Within Groups	6502.933	28	232.248		
	Total	8130.967	29			

Table 3 represents the one-way analysis of variance of narcissism and child-parent relationship. Firstly, for NPI, the sum of squares between groups is 17.633 with df as 1 and mean square as 17.633, and the sum of squares within groups is 247.733 with df as 28 and mean square as 8.848. In CPRS, the sum of squares between groups is 1628.033 with df as 1 and mean square as 1628.033, and the sum of squares within groups is 6502.933 with df as 28 and mean square as 232.248.

Discussion

The objective of the present study was to explore the relationship between narcissistic personality parents and the child-parent relationship through quantitative research designs and is analyzed through descriptive statistics, correlation matrix and One-way ANOVA to obtain our results which reveals that negative correlation is found between narcissism and parent-child relationship which validates the first hypothesis. As narcissism has a negative component its minimal amount could also harm human society because it will always put negative impact on any of the relationship not only child-parent relationship.

Further, we found that there is no significant gender difference in narcissism; the reason could be that the modern world around them, which enables and provokes them to always prioritize them although when it is not necessary too but there is a significant gender in child-parent relationship which validates our second hypothesis which could be explained as there is a lot of difference in males and females (such as physical, biological and emotional), mother who gives birth to a child have divine and different connection with the child that father doesn't have. Many factors work behind this: with whom the child spends more time, emotional connectivity, reinforcement and rewards and closeness (especially Electra and Oedipus complex) during the development stages of the child.

Conclusion

The present study examined the relationship between narcissistic personality traits and parent-child relationships among parents, with particular attention to gender differences. The findings indicated a negative association between narcissism and the

quality of the parent–child relationship, suggesting that higher levels of narcissistic traits may be associated with less positive parent–child relationships. However, the observed correlation was weak ($r = -.138$), and therefore the finding should be interpreted cautiously.

The study also examined gender differences in narcissism and parent–child relationships. The findings showed that the gender difference in narcissism was not statistically significant ($F = 1.993$, $p = .169$), whereas a statistically significant gender difference was observed in parent–child relationship scores ($F = 7.010$, $p = .013$). These findings indicate that although fathers and mothers did not differ significantly in their narcissism scores in the present sample, differences were observed in their reported parent–child relationship scores.

Overall, the study highlights the importance of examining parental personality characteristics in understanding parent–child relationships. The findings may contribute to a broader understanding of how narcissistic personality traits are associated with family relationships.

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