

Saviour or Disaster?

The Influence of Leaders' Narcissism on Leader Effectiveness during Crisis

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Abstract

This study examined the effects of leaders' narcissism on perceptions of leadership effectiveness. We hypothesized that narcissistic individuals, due to their display of agentic characteristics, would be perceived by others as effective leaders. This positive effect would be enhanced during an external, rather than an internal, crisis, because then narcissists' most prominent traits match with the demands of the situation. Contrary to our predictions, leaders' narcissism negatively affected others' perceptions of leadership effectiveness. We argue that this relationship would be best explained by narcissists' deficiency with respect to communal characteristics. Furthermore, narcissistic leaders rated their own leadership effectiveness positively and this effect was explained by increased perceptions of their display of agentic characteristics. Also, prior to the group task, narcissistic individuals perceived themselves as appropriate for the leader role. When they did not obtain the leader role, narcissists rated the performance of the group leaders more negatively. The results of the current study indicate that there is a large discrepancy in self-ratings and other-ratings of leadership effectiveness of narcissistic individuals. The practical and theoretical implications of the above findings are discussed.

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"The difference between God and Larry is that God does not believe he is Larry."

Anonymous quote about Oracles' CEO Larry Ellison

Many of today's successful business leaders are being described as having narcissistic personalities. CEO's like Bill Gates (Microsoft), Larry Ellison (Oracle) and Jeff Bezos (Amazon.com) lead their companies with a heavy-handed policy and dealing with them asks for a thick skin (Maccoby, 2000). On the other hand, these CEO's play a crucial role in shaping new technologies and markets and they are being admired for it. Consider the example of Steve Jobs, former CEO of Apple Inc. When leading the company, Steve Jobs was described as manipulative, rude and authoritarian by a lot of people, even by his own employees (Harvey, 2001). However, in 2010 97% of the Apple employees said they supported his leadership and decisions (Glassdoor.com, 2010). Also, Jobs was widely celebrated for his innovative products and ideas and was even named *iGod* (The Telegraph, 2009). Thus, although the before mentioned leaders are not easy to work with, their leadership is often perceived as effective by most of their employees. Indeed, research has shown that narcissistic individuals tend to emerge as leaders and are also perceived as effective (Brunell, Gentry, Campbell, Hoffman, Kuhnert, & DeMarree, 2008; Judge, LePine, & Rich, 2006). It would, therefore, be interesting to identify which specific traits and behaviors lead to this perceived leader effectiveness and also in which circumstances these traits and behaviors are being perceived as effective.

Early literature on this subject has explored the behaviors and traits of narcissistic leaders (Kets de Vries & Miller, 1985). What seems to drive their interest in leadership roles

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is a personal egotistic need for power and admiration (Kets de Vries & Miller, 1985). To affirm their feelings of superiority, narcissistic individuals need to be surrounded by people who admire them and their actions (Morf & Rhodewalt, 2001). Also, narcissists possess characteristics like dominance, confidence and extraversion that fit well with the general leader prototype (Brunell, et al., 2008). When leaders match the leader prototype others tend to perceive them as effective leaders (Lord, Foti, & De Vader, 1984). Thus, the combination of a narcissists' desire to fulfill leadership positions with a good leader profile, leads to an increased likelihood that narcissistic individuals emerge as leaders in groups (Brunell, et al., 2008).

In addition to the role of behaviors and traits that are associated with the emergence of narcissistic leaders, research has studied the influence of narcissism on perceived leader effectiveness. A number of studies revealed that narcissism is positively related to other-ratings of leader performance (Deluga, 1997; Chemers, Watson, & May, 2000). A possible explanation for this finding is that characteristics like confidence and charisma are considered important components of effective leaders (Rosenthal & Pittinsky, 2006). These leader traits fit well with the general leader prototype that people hold (Lord, et al., 1984). However, other research has found that narcissism is negatively related to other-ratings of leadership (Judge, et al., 2006). A lack of empathy and a focus on their own goals at the expense of others may explain why other people perceive the leadership of narcissists as ineffective.

Thus, although several characteristics and behaviors of narcissistic leaders generally enhance the positive perception of leader effectiveness, others may reduce this positive perception or even lead to a negative perception of leader effectiveness. An explanation for these contradicting findings may be that the strength and direction of the relationship between narcissism and perceived leader effectiveness depends on the context in which narcissists lead

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(Rosenthal & Pittinsky, 2006). Characteristics like confidence, charisma, and dominance may be well suited in particular situations which ask for strong and powerful leaders. A clear example of such a situation is a crisis. During a crisis most people feel threatened and insecure and they long for a leader who can reassure them and reduce their uncertainty (Shamir & Howell, 1999; Yukl, 2010). In this context, narcissists, with their dominant and confident attitude, fit the leader profile well and their emergence and effectiveness will be enhanced (Deluga, 1997; Rosenthal & Pittinsky, 2006). There is a considerable amount of evidence that confirms the assumption that people prefer a powerful and confident leader during a crisis (Hoyt, Simon, & Reid, 2009; Padilla, Hogan, & Kaiser, 2007). However, other research on the selection of leaders during organizational crises revealed that individuals who possess traits like empathy and intuitiveness were more likely to be accepted as leaders than individuals who possess qualities like competitiveness and self-confidence (Bruckmüller & Branscombe, 2010; Ryan, Haslam, Hersby, & Bongiorno, 2011).

Thus, there remain contradicting results on the leader traits and behaviors that are perceived as effective during a crisis. What may explain this discrepancy in research findings is that it is not merely the presence of a crisis, but rather the *type* of crisis that contributes to the perceived effectiveness of narcissistic leaders. Specifically, the distinction between an internal and external crisis may account for the differences in perceived leader effectiveness. Internal crises, like high turnover, are caused by internal disturbances in organizations (Choi, Sung, & Kim, 2010). In contrast, external crises, like government regulations, are caused by environmental or external factors. Both types of crises ask for different approaches and thus for leaders with different leader profiles (Seeger, Sellow, & Ulmer, 2003; Madera & Smith, 2007).

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In this study we will test this hypothesis and we hope to provide insights into the *why* and *when* of the perceived effectiveness of narcissistic leaders. We will start with a description of narcissism and narcissistic leaders to get a better understanding of the behaviors and traits of narcissistic individuals. Next, we will provide a brief review of the research on narcissism and leader effectiveness. Based on that review we will generate hypotheses about the relationship between these variables and its underlying explanatory factors. Finally, we will look at narcissism and leader effectiveness in the context of a crisis and provide hypotheses about the moderating role of this situational variable.

Narcissism

Narcissism can be described as a personality trait characterized by inflated self-importance and a constant need for admiration from others (Ouimet, 2010). What is probably most pronounced in this personality trait is self-esteem. Narcissists come across as confident, dominant, and charming people (Rosenthal & Pittinsky, 2006). However, although they may appear to have high self-esteem, in fact they have a very fragile and vulnerable self-concept (Morf & Rhodewalt, 2001). In an attempt to strengthen their self-concept, narcissists search for constant praise, attention, and reassurance from people in their surroundings (Morf & Rhodewalt, 2001). Unfortunately, this attempt often fails in the long run, because narcissists are generally insensitive to social constraints and oppose the views of others (Morf & Rhodewalt, 2001). Their arrogant and dominant attitude often creates problems in social interactions and maintaining important relationships. This can be seen as the narcissistic paradox: narcissists strive to receive admiration and self-affirmation, but mostly they end up with destroying the relationships on which they are dependent (Morf & Rhodewalt, 2001).

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The most widely used instrument to measure narcissism as a personality trait is the *Narcissistic Personality Inventory* (NPI) (Raskin & Terry, 1988). Although the NPI is based on the DSM-II criteria for narcissistic personality disorder, it is designed to measure features of narcissism in the general population (i.e., normal or subclinical narcissism). The NPI gives an indication of narcissism as a general construct as well as seven components of that construct, including autonomy, entitlement, exhibitionism, exploitation, self-sufficiency, superiority, and vanity (Raskin & Terry, 1988). In this study we will use the NPI to measure narcissism in the normal population on a continuum, from low to high scores. When mentioning narcissistic individuals and/or leaders in this article, we refer to those scoring at the high end of the continuum.

Narcissistic Leaders

When it comes to narcissistic leaders, their behaviors and traits are mostly described in downside or upside terms. One potential downside of narcissists is their arrogance (Rosenthal & Pittinsky, 2006; Miller, Hoffman, Gaughan, Gentile, Maples, & Campbell, 2011). They do not easily listen to the opinions of others, tend to dominate meetings, and are focused on their own ideas and thoughts. Moreover, narcissistic leaders are very sensitive to criticism from others and are poor listeners (Maccoby, 2000). Criticisms from others tend to undermine the fragile and vulnerable self-concept of narcissists and this is why they feel very uncomfortable with negative expressions from people with whom they interact. Also connected with the protection of their own identity is a lack of empathy, or an inability to understand the perspectives of others (Maccoby, 2000; Rosenthal & Pittinsky, 2006). Narcissistic leaders may have problems with recognizing the feelings and needs of others, in order to maintain a secure emotional distance and protect themselves from vulnerability (Morf & Rhodewalt,

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2001). Another potential downside of narcissists is their self-interested influence (Ouimet, 2010; Miller, et al., 2011). They are completely focused on their own goals and satisfaction of their needs (Ouimet, 2010). Narcissistic leaders tend to exercise their power in a personalized way; they seek power to inflate themselves and satisfy their need for esteem and status from others (Yukl, 2010). Again, this behavior is aimed at constructing and protecting their vulnerable self-concept (Morf & Rhodewalt, 2001).

Apart from the downsides, several upsides of narcissists can be described. The great vision that most narcissistic leaders have is probably the most appealing strength (Galvin, Waldman, & Balthazard, 2010). Rather than understand the future, narcissistic leaders shape the future with their revolutionary ideas (Maccoby, 2000). In addition to having a great vision, narcissists have the capability to inspire others with their vision (Galvin, et al., 2010). They can very easily make people believe in their ideas by giving inspiring speeches. The confident and powerful attitude of most narcissistic leaders contributes to what is mostly described as a charismatic gift (Shamir, House, & Arthur, 1993). Because of their charismatic qualities, these leaders have the ability to attract followers who believe in their vision (Galvin, et al., 2010). However at the end, for narcissistic leaders the ultimate goal of inspiring people with their vision is to receive admiration from devoted followers who will help to maintain their grandiose self-view (Rosenthal & Pittinsky, 2006).

A more integrated view of the traits and behaviors of narcissistic leaders can be represented by using the concepts of agency and communion (Sedikides, Rudich, Gregg, Kumashiro, & Rusbult, 2004). These two behavioral orientation styles provide an understanding of how individuals relate to their social world. Also, these styles have been associated with styles of reasoning, personality traits, and self-concept (Sedikides, et al., 2004). The agentic orientation refers to an individual's wish to master the environment, and to

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experience competence, achievement, and power (Bakan, 1966). In contrast, communion refers to a person's desire to closely relate to and cooperate with other people. Narcissists are frequently considered as being high on the agentic dimension and low on the communal dimension (Campbell, Rudich, & Sedikides, 2002). They seek to establish power and are dominant and assertive, rather than trying to build stable and trusting relationships. Not only do other people view narcissistic individuals as being high on agency, they also tend to rate themselves high on traits reflecting an agentic orientation (e.g., intellectual skills, extraversion, competence) (Campbell, et al., 2002; Judge, et al., 2006).

Narcissistic Leaders and Perceived Leader Effectiveness

The relationship between narcissism and leader effectiveness can be best understood by using the trait approach. The trait approach is a widely used theory, which assumes that particular skills and traits can predict whether someone will be effective in a leader position (Yukl, 2010). The process of how these traits are linked to effective leadership is explained by implicit leadership theory (Lord, et al., 1984). This theory argues that individuals hold mental representations or prototypes for how leaders should behave (Lord, et al., 1984). Prototypes are profiles of typical or preferred leader behavior and include leader attributes, personality characteristics and values (Lord, et al., 1984). These prototypes shape the perceptions that people have about leaders. When there is a strong match between the implicit leader prototype and the traits and behaviors that are displayed by a leader, people will perceive the leader as effective. Research on specific characteristics shows that high self-confidence, high dominance, high intelligence, high energy level, and masculinity most accurately represent the implicit leader prototype (Yukl, 2010; Foti & Hauenstein, 2007; Epitropaki & Martin, 2004).

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A more integrated profile of an effective leader can be derived from the Big Five model. From the five personality traits, extraversion, conscientiousness, and openness to experience are most strongly and consistently related to leadership effectiveness (Judge, Bono, Ilies, & Gerhardt, 2002). Leaders who are energetic, innovative and show persistence and effort match the general leader profile well and thus will be perceived as effective by others. When integrating most of the above mentioned leader characteristics, we can draw a profile of leadership effectiveness that is best described by the construct of agency (i.e., an individuals' desire to master the environment and to experience competence, achievement, and power) (Bakan, 1966; Schein, 2001).

Based on the traits and behaviors of narcissistic individuals we can make assumptions about their perceived effectiveness as leaders. Most importantly, narcissists possess characteristics that match well with the general leader prototype. They come across as very confident, dominant, dedicated, and energetic people (Rosenthal & Pittinsky, 2006). These attributes fit with the mental representation of how a good leader should be like (Yukl, 2010; Foti & Hauenstein, 2007; Epitropaki & Martin, 2004). Also, narcissists rate themselves and are rated by others as highly on the agentic dimension (Campbell, et al., 2002; Judge, et al., 2006). As stated earlier, agentic attributes are frequently associated with the leader role, and this association will lead others to believe that anyone who displays these characteristics is likely to be an effective leader (Schein, 2001).

Several studies found that narcissism was indeed positively related to other-ratings of leadership. For instance, in a study using historiometric procedures to measure narcissism in American presidents it was found that narcissism was related to increased perceptions of presidential effectiveness (Deluga, 1997). Other research among students at a large university in the United States revealed that students with high narcissism scores were more positively

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rated by others on leadership dimensions than students with low narcissism scores (Judge, et al., 2006). Also, it was found that the perception of leader's authority explained for the positive effects of narcissism on perceived leader effectiveness (Nevicka, Ten Velden, De Hoogh, & Van Vianen, 2011). Although narcissists lack traits that are also related to perceived leadership effectiveness, like integrity and emotional stability (Yukl, 2010; Miller, et al., 2011), we expect that because of the strong overlap between the agentic characteristics of narcissists and the implicit leader prototype they will generally receive positive ratings of leadership performance from others. Following from the above argumentation, we hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 1: Leaders' narcissism will have a positive effect on perceived leadership effectiveness.

We expect this effect to be influenced by the demonstration of specific traits and behaviors of narcissistic leaders. More specifically, narcissism can be described as a construct that is strongly related to the agentic dimension (e.g., including traits like confidence, dominance, and competence). Narcissists' agentic orientation style matches well with the general leader prototype that people have and it will lead, therefore, to a positive perception of the effectiveness of narcissistic leaders. Thus, we predict that:

Hypothesis 2: The positive effect of leaders' narcissism on perceived leadership effectiveness will be mediated by narcissists' agentic orientation style.

Contextual Factors: Narcissistic Leaders and Crisis

Although research has shown that narcissism can be related to positive perceptions of leader effectiveness, there is also evidence which shows the opposite. For instance, in a study with participants who represented a variety of industries, it was found that narcissism was

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negatively related to supervisor ratings of leadership (Blair, Hoffman, & Helland, 2008).

Also, among beach patrol members, narcissism was found to be negatively related to other and supervisor reports of leadership (Judge, et al., 2006).

The inconsistency in results may be explained by an additional variable. It has been suggested that the effectiveness of specific leader traits and behaviors depends on the context. More specifically, the implicit leader prototypes are not always stable and static; they also tend to adjust to situational and contextual factors (Lord, Brown, Harvey, & Hall, 2001). Constraints in a particular context may activate the need for specific leader behaviors and the leader prototype that people hold is adjusted to this need (Lord, et al., 2001). Thus, it is possible that positive perceptions of effectiveness of narcissistic leaders are reduced in one situation, because of a mismatch between their traits and the demands of that situation, but yet in another situation these positive perceptions are enhanced, because narcissists' traits match with the requirements of the situation.

A context where a specific leader profile becomes evident is in the event of an organizational crisis. During a crisis, the leader is the organization's public face and is expected to handle the situation effectively by remaining calm and displaying control and authority (King, 2007). The leader prototype that is activated in a crisis may fit well with the traits and behaviors (e.g., decisiveness and self-confidence) of narcissistic individuals.

Organizational crises can be defined as: *low-probability, high-impact events that threaten the viability of the organization and are characterized by ambiguity of cause, effect, and means of resolution, as well as by a belief that decisions must be made swiftly* (Pearson & Clair, 1998). Examples of an organizational crisis include takeover, personnel assault, and product tampering (Pearson & Clair, 1998). During these situations organizational members may experience high levels of stress and feelings of anxiety and insecurity (Pescosolido,

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2002). The context of a crisis asks for leadership from someone who can handle the stress by remaining calm, who can make quick decisions, and who provides direction (Yukl, 2010). Related to this, it has been suggested that an authoritarian style of leadership would be appropriate during a crisis (Seeger et al., 2003). Furthermore, when people feel anxious and threatened they show a higher preference for leaders with an agentic orientation style (e.g., decisiveness, confidence, and assertiveness) and they are more willing to accept assertive leadership (Hoyt, et al., 2009; Padilla, et al., 2007). Based on these findings, we expect that the perceived effectiveness of narcissistic leaders will be enhanced in the context of a crisis. The agentic attributes of these leaders match with the leader prototype that is activated during a crisis and this leads to a positive perception of their leadership.

However, there is also evidence that during an organizational crisis people are more likely to accept leaders who are high on communal attributes (e.g., helpfulness, concern for others, empathy) rather than on agentic attributes (Bruckmüller & Branscombe, 2010; Ryan, et al., 2011). It has been suggested that leader traits like empathy and intuitiveness are useful in times of crisis, because in this context it is important to pay attention to the feelings of those involved in the crisis and to build an environment of trust (Lalonde, 2004). Especially at the initial phases of a crisis a leader should show empathy, in order to reassure the followers and to reduce the feelings of uncertainty (Reynolds & Seeger, 2005). Also, mobilizing others' emotions is important to provide followers with a sense of self-efficacy, so they feel adequate enough to handle the crisis (Reynolds & Seeger, 2005).

A possible explanation of this inconsistency in research findings may be that it is not the presence of a crisis, but rather the *type* of crisis that accounts for the differences in perceived leader effectiveness. Specifically, a distinction between internal and external crises may contribute to a better understanding of these differences. When the source of a crisis lies

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within the organizational team it can be described as internal (Choi, et al., 2010). Examples of an internal crisis are conflicts among members, high turnover or leadership problems. In contrast, an external crisis refers to a source outside the team boundary (e.g., consumer claims, takeovers) (Choi, et al., 2010). Both types of crises ask for different approaches to deal with and thus for leaders with different traits and behaviors. For instance, when there are conflicts among organizational members leaders who display communal traits may be more appropriate than leaders who display agentic traits. In this context, it is necessary to rebuild trust and to do so the leader must show sympathy and concern for others (Pearson & Clair, 1998). Indeed, it was found that leaders expressing sadness (associated with sympathy and concern) during an internal crisis were evaluated more favorably by others than leaders expressing anger (associated with dominance, strength, and intelligence) (Madera & Smith, 2007). In contrast, during an external crisis, like a hostile takeover, the stakes of an organization are in immediate threat and decisions need to be made quickly (Seeger, et al., 2003). To reassure all organizational members, leaders must provide direction and display a sense of confidence (King, 2007). In this context, directive leadership from someone who is high on agentic attributes may be better suited (Seeger, et al., 2003; Hoyt, et al., 2009). Research has provided some evidence for this assumption; during intergroup threat (i.e., conflict between groups) group members showed a stronger preference for a leader high on agentic attributes than during intragroup threat (i.e., conflict within the group) (Van Vugt & Spisak, 2008).

Thus, based on the different demands of each type of crisis we propose that the agentic attributes of a narcissistic leader lead to a positive perception of leadership during an external crisis, but not during an internal crisis. Traits and behaviors that are considered to be agentic, like confidence, decisiveness and assertiveness, match with the general leader prototype that

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is activated during an external crisis. Therefore, narcissistic leaders are perceived to be effective by others in this situation. In short, we hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 3: During an external crisis, leaders' narcissism will have a positive effect on perceived leadership effectiveness.

In contrast, during an internal crisis, leaders' communal attributes match better with the activated leader prototype and thus will lead to a positive perception of leadership. Thus, we expect that:

Hypothesis 4: During an internal crisis, leaders' narcissism will have a negative effect on perceived leadership effectiveness.

Method

Participants and Design

One hundred and forty seven students of several faculties at the University of Amsterdam participated in this study. In exchange for participation they received ten euro or course credit. Among the participants, there were 48 men and 99 women. Their average age was 21.14 years ($SD = 3.72$). All participants were randomly assigned to one of 49 three-person groups in either an internal crisis condition or an external crisis condition. Groups consisted of three participants: one leader and two group members. The leader was randomly assigned to each group (20 men and 29 women). The main dependent variables were leaders' agentic orientation style and leaders' perceived effectiveness.

Procedure and Task

Groups of three participants were invited to come to the laboratory at the University of Amsterdam simultaneously. Upon arrival, each participant was randomly assigned the letter

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code A, B, or C. Next, they were seated in a cubicle behind the table that corresponded with their letter code and they were asked to complete the informed consent form. Also, they were instructed not to talk to the other group members unless the experimenter said so. Partitioning walls were placed on the tables to separate the group members and to make sure that they were not able to read each others' answers and task instructions.

Participants then received a description of the group task they were going to engage in. The group task was a 'Lost at sea' exercise which required participants to imagine that they were on a yacht that was destroyed by fire on the way (Nemiroff & Pasmore, 1975). They managed to save fifteen items and a rubber life craft needed for survival. Their chances of survival would depend on their ability to rank these items in relative order of importance. For the purpose of this study we used the Dutch version of the 'Lost at sea' exercise (See 'Appendix'). After reading the task description, participants were asked to think about a possible ranking of the fifteen items in order of importance to survival and to compare their ranking later on with the other group members. Also, they read that if their group rated at least half of the items in the right order, they would receive an extra bonus of two euro per group member. This instruction served to ensure that the participants would be motivated and committed to the task. Furthermore, to enhance the salience of time pressure, instructions said that the group only had 7 minutes to discuss the ranking of the items. Next, the type of crisis was manipulated as either internal or external (see 'Manipulation of Crisis').

After reading the task description and the instructions, participants were asked to individually complete a short questionnaire involving several personal characteristics. This questionnaire was used to examine the leader prototype that would be activated after reading the two crisis conditions. Also, participants were asked to point out how appropriate each of their group members (A, B, and C) would be as leader of the group in the task.

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Next, the partitioning walls were removed by the experimenter and participants were told that they were about to engage in the group task. They were instructed to compare their ranking of the fifteen items on the 'lost at sea' exercise with the other group members. As a group, they had to reach consensus about the final ranking of the items. The experimenter asked which of the group members was the group leader (in fact this was always the group member with letter code A) and that the leader would be responsible for writing down the final group ranking. Furthermore, the experimenter once mentioned the possibility of receiving two euro bonus and the time limit of seven minutes to complete the task. Also, to enhance the salience of the internal or the external crisis condition, the manipulation texts were presented again to the participants.

After seven minutes, the experimenter entered the room and ended the group session. Next, the partitioning walls were replaced on the tables and participants were instructed to individually complete questionnaires assessing their perceptions of the leaders' orientation style (PAQ; Spence & Helmreich, 1978) and leader effectiveness and to check the manipulations. Also, to measure their level of narcissism, participants were asked to complete the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI; Raskin & Terry, 1988). Finally, all participants were debriefed and given twelve euros (i.e., ten euros for participation and two euro bonus) or course credit for participation.

Manipulation of Crisis

Crisis was manipulated by using two different conditions, namely an internal crisis condition and an external crisis condition. These two conditions were distributed among the groups. Participants in the *internal crisis condition* read the following text:

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‘In this part of the experiment we are interested in the effect of internal pressure on group decision making. This means that one of the group members is instructed to act as devil’s advocate during the group session. This group member will, at a certain moment, disagree with the other group members. However, he or she has to agree with the final group ranking, otherwise the ranking is not taken into account for the two euro bonus. Furthermore, the group member is instructed to lie about his or her role of devil’s advocate. The internal pressure can seriously threaten the group goal of making an accurate decision within the given time frame. Take this into consideration.’

This manipulation is in accordance with the definition of an internal crisis, because the source of the crisis (i.e., the sabotage) comes from within the group (Choi, Sung, & Kim, 2010). Furthermore, we expected that group members would experience both uncertainty and time pressure in this condition. Recalling from its definition, a crisis is an event that creates uncertainty and that is characterized by a belief that decisions must be made swiftly (Pearson & Clair, 1998; Pillai & Meindl, 1998). To further enhance the salience of time pressure, we also set a short time interval to complete the task (i.e., 7 minutes).

Participants in the *external crisis condition* read the following text:

‘In this part of the experiment, we are interested in the effect of external interference on group decision making. This means that during the group session, a fourth participant comes in and joins the group. Also, this participant needs to agree with the final group ranking, otherwise the ranking is not taking into account for the two euro bonus. The external interruption can happen at any time and it can seriously threaten

the group goal of making an accurate decision within the given time frame. Take this into consideration.'

This manipulation fits with the definition of an external crisis, because the source of the crisis comes from outside the group boundary (Choi, et al., 2010). As in the internal crisis condition, group members were expected to experience both uncertainty and time pressure in this condition.

Manipulation Checks

The manipulation of internal versus external crisis was checked with one item for internal crisis (e.g., 'The threat to the group goal of making an accurate decision within the given time frame came from a source within the group'; 1 = *completely disagree*, 7 = *completely agree*) and one item for external crisis (e.g., 'The threat to the group goal of making an accurate decision within the given time frame came from a source outside the group'; 1 = *completely disagree*, 7 = *completely agree*).

To ensure that under both types of crisis the participants experienced the same amount of time pressure and uncertainty, we also measured whether the participants experienced time pressure and feelings of uncertainty and insecurity while working on the task (1 = *completely disagree*, 7 = *completely agree*). Time pressure was calculated as the mean across five items (e.g., 'I experienced time pressure during the task'; $M = 4.53$, $SD = 1.34$, $\alpha = .81$). Uncertainty and insecurity were both measured with one item.

Finally, we assessed participants' motivation to engage in the group task with three items (e.g., 'I put my decision into serious consideration'; 1 = *completely disagree*, 7 = *completely agree*). The motivation scale was then computed as the mean across the three

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items ($M = 4.90$, $SD = .94$, $\alpha = .71$). Also, participants' awareness of the two euro incentive was measured with one item.

Measures

Independent Measures

Leaders' Narcissism. The Narcissistic Personality Inventory was used to measure participants' narcissism (NPI; Raskin & Terry, 1988). The NPI has been shown to be valid and reliable instrument to measure subclinical narcissism in the general population (Raskin & Terry, 1988; Emmons, 1984). In this study we employed the NPI-40, a 40 item forced-choice version of the NPI. Participants had to assign a score of 1 (*true*) or 0 (*false*) to each statement (e.g., 'I am more capable than other people'). Score 1 represents a narcissistic response and score 0 represents a nonnarcissistic response. The NPI score was computed as the mean across all 40 items. The internal consistency reliability was high for this scale ($\alpha = .84$).

Dependent Measures

Leaders' Agentic Orientation Style. Leaders' agentic orientation was assessed with the Personal Attributes Questionnaire (PAQ; Spence & Helmreich, 1978). For the purpose of this study, participants did not have to rate themselves on the various adjectives, but they were asked to give an indication of the extent to which the group leader could be characterized as displaying either agentic or communal attributes.

The PAQ was originally developed to measure personality trait measures of masculinity and femininity, but there is empirical consensus that masculinity in fact reflects an agentic orientation and that femininity reflects a communal orientation (Spence, 1984). Research has shown that the PAQ is a reliable and valid instrument to assess masculine and feminine attributes (Helmreich, Spence, & Wilhelm, 1981; Yoder, Rice, Adams, Priest, & Prince, 1982). The PAQ is a 24-item questionnaire in which people are asked to indicate the extent to which they can be characterized in terms of various adjectives. These adjectives reflect either an agentic orientation style (e.g., self-confident, independent), an unmitigated agentic orientation (e.g., arrogant, hostile) or a communal orientation style (e.g., gentle, helpful). Since we were only interested in measuring the agentic and communal orientation, we omitted eight items reflecting unmitigated agency from the questionnaire. The remaining sixteen items were rated on a 7-point bipolar scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) possessing the attribute to 7 (*very much so*) possessing the attribute.

Based on reliability analysis and factor analysis, two items reflecting an agentic leader orientation were dropped ('Feels inferior' (reverse coded); 'Goes to pieces under pressure' (reverse coded)). The agentic scale was then computed as the mean across six items and was shown to have good internal consistency reliability ($M = 4.47$, $SD = 0.84$; $\alpha = .80$). For the communal orientation scale two items were omitted based on their low reliability values and

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ICC values ('Is emotional'; 'Is understanding'). The communal scale was then computed as the mean across six items and showed good reliability ($M = 4.76$, $SD = 0.76$; $\alpha = .79$).

Perceived Leader Effectiveness. Group members rated the group leader on a four item measure of perceived leader effectiveness (De Hoogh, Den Hartog, & Koopman, 2005). In prior research this measure has shown to be a reliable instrument for measuring perceived leader effectiveness (De Hoogh, et al., 2005; Nevicka, et al., 2011).

An item example is: 'How effective is the person you are evaluating as a leader?' The response scale ranges from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*very much so*; $M = 3.98$, $SD = 0.98$; $\alpha = .86$).

Additional measures

Dependent Measures

Preferred Leader Characteristics. To assess which leader prototype was activated after reading the manipulation of internal and external crisis, we asked participants to rate several characteristics on their importance for the future leader. Eight items represented agentic characteristics (e.g., power, skillfulness, confidence, competitiveness). Communal characteristics were also represented by eight items (e.g., understanding, warmth, consideration, caring). Prior research has shown that these sixteen characteristics can be considered as reliable representations of the agentic dimension and the communal dimension (Rosette & Tost, 2010).

Responses were given on a 7-point bipolar scale ranging from 1 (*not at all important*) to 7 (*very much important*). The agentic characteristics scale was computed as the mean across the eight items ($M = 4.81$, $SD = .69$; $\alpha = .69$). The communal characteristics scale was also computed as the mean across eight items ($M = 4.97$, $SD = .89$; $\alpha = .84$).

Leader Appropriateness. In addition to the preferred leader characteristics we asked the participants to rate each group member (including themselves) on their appropriateness for the leader role prior to the assignment of the group leader. Ratings of leader appropriateness were assessed on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 = *not at all appropriate* to 7 = *very much appropriate*. We calculated the rating of leader appropriateness by averaging the scores from the two other group members ($M = 4.83, SD = .92$). Also, we created a variable for self-ratings of leader appropriateness for each group member ($M = 4.58, SD = .99$).

Data Aggregation

To justify the aggregation of individual follower scores to the team level, we calculated intraclass correlations (ICC[1]), reliabilities of the mean (ICC [2]) and within team agreement (r_{wg}) (LeBreton & Senter, 2008). First, these values were calculated for the follower ratings of perceived leaders' agentic and communal orientation style. For both the agentic orientation style and the communal orientation style the ICC and within team agreement values were sufficient to justify data aggregation to the team level (agentic orientation style: ICC[1] = .40, ICC[2] = .69, r_{wg} = .85; communal orientation style: ICC[1] = .20, ICC[2] = .42, r_{wg} = .88). Next, ICC and within team agreement values were calculated for the follower ratings of leader effectiveness. These values also provided sufficient support for data aggregation (ICC[1] = .25, ICC[2] = .49, r_{wg} = .67).

Results

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 displays the means, standard deviations, and correlations of the variables that were included in the analyses testing our hypotheses. Leaders' gender correlated negatively

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with leaders' narcissism, indicating that the male leaders were more narcissistic than the female leaders. Because gender did not correlate with any of the dependent variables, including gender as control variable in the analyses did not alter our results. Therefore, this variable is not further discussed.

Manipulation Checks

An independent samples t-test revealed that participants in the internal crisis condition ($M = 3.21, SD = 1.62$) did not experience more threat from within the group boundary than participants in the external crisis condition ($M = 2.83, SD = 1.51, t(145) = -1.48, ns$).

Furthermore, results revealed that participants in the internal crisis condition ($M = 3.85, SD = 1.97$) experienced more threat from outside the group boundary than participants in the external crisis condition ($M = 2.76, SD = 1.63, t(138) = -3.64, p < .001, Cohen's d = .67$).

These results indicate that the crisis manipulation was not successful. The conditions of internal and external crisis were therefore not taken into account in further analyses.

Also, we performed independent t-tests to test if there were any differences between the two conditions in experienced time pressure and feelings of uncertainty and insecurity. Results revealed that participants in the internal crisis condition ($M = 4.75, SD = 1.25$) did not experience more time pressure than participants in the external crisis condition ($M = 4.31, SD = 1.40, t(145) = -2.01, ns$). Furthermore, no significant differences were found in experienced feelings of uncertainty (internal crisis: $M = 3.44, SD = 1.73$; external crisis: $M = 3.07, SD = 1.52, t(145) = -.55, ns$) and insecurity (internal crisis: $M = 3.21, SD = 1.73$; external crisis: $M = 3.05, SD = 1.71, t(145) = -1.45, ns$) between the two conditions. Taken together, the results indicate that participants in both conditions experienced the same amount of time pressure, uncertainty and insecurity.

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Finally, the motivation of the participants to engage in the task was assessed by how carefully they reflected on and made their decision. Results revealed that participants in the internal crisis condition ($M = 4.83$, $SD = 1.04$) and the external crisis condition ($M = 4.96$, $SD = .84$, $t(145) = .84$, ns) did not differ in their motivation to engage in the group task.

Agentic Orientation Style and Perceived Leader Effectiveness

To examine whether leaders' agentic orientation style mediated the relationship between narcissism and perceived leader effectiveness we conducted linear regression analysis. First, we performed regression analysis with leaders' narcissism as the independent variable and perceived leader effectiveness (aggregated follower ratings) as the dependent variable, to show that narcissism is a significant predictor of leader effectiveness. Results revealed that leaders' narcissism negatively affected perceived leader effectiveness ($\beta = -.24$, $t = -1.68$, $p = .049$ (one-tailed)). The hypothesis that leaders' narcissism has a positive effect on perceived leadership effectiveness (H1) was thus not confirmed by the results. Since leaders' narcissism was found to be a significant predictor of leader effectiveness, albeit in the opposite direction than expected, we can conclude that the first condition of mediation was satisfied (Baron & Kenny, 1986).

Second, a regression analysis using leaders' narcissism as independent variable and leaders' agentic orientation style (aggregated follower ratings) as dependent variable was carried out, to test if narcissism is a significant predictor of agentic orientation style. Because of its significant correlation with leaders' narcissism, we also included leaders' gender as a control variable. Results revealed that leaders' agentic orientation style was not significantly predicted by leaders' narcissism ($\beta = -.11$, $t = -.79$, ns). Thus, the second condition of mediation was not met (Baron & Kenny, 1986).

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Third, we performed regression analysis with agentic orientation style as the independent variable and leader effectiveness as the dependent variable. It was found that leaders' agentic orientation style positively affected perceived leader effectiveness ($\beta = .80$, $t = 9.22$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .64$), indicating that agentic orientation style significantly predicted leadership effectiveness and thus meeting the third condition of mediation (Baron & Kenny, 1986).

Taken the results of the three analyses together, we can conclude that the first and third conditions of mediation were met, but that the second condition was not satisfied. Since all conditions should be met to establish mediation, we did not find sufficient support for the existence of a mediated relationship (Baron & Kenny, 1986). Also, the found effect in the first analysis was not in the expected direction. The hypothesis that the effect of leaders' narcissism on perceived leadership effectiveness is mediated by narcissists' agentic orientation style (H2) was thus not confirmed by the results.

Crisis and Perceived Leader Effectiveness

The manipulation checks did not provide sufficient support to include the internal and external crisis conditions into further analyses. Therefore, the hypotheses that during an external crisis, leaders' narcissism has a positive effect on perceived leadership effectiveness (H3) and that during an internal crisis, leaders' narcissism has a negative effect on perceived leadership effectiveness (H4) could not be confirmed.

Additional Analyses

In the previous analyses we found that the perceptions of leader effectiveness appeared to be in a negative direction, indicating that leaders who were high on narcissism were

perceived as less effective by their followers. It would, therefore, be interesting to examine how narcissistic leaders perceived their own leadership performance, as they have been found to be overconfident and frequently overestimate their abilities (Campbell, et al., 2002; Judge, et al., 2006). To examine this relationship, we performed some additional analyses.

Descriptive Statistics

Tables 2 and 3 display the means, standard deviations, and correlations of the variables that were included in the additional analyses. Gender (of the leader and individual group members) was found to correlate negatively with narcissism. As with analyses of our main hypotheses gender did not correlate with any of the dependent variables, so this variable is not further discussed.

Agentic Orientation Style and Leaders' Ratings of Leader Effectiveness

First, we wanted to examine how narcissistic leaders perceived their own leadership performance and their display of agentic characteristics. We conducted a linear regression analysis using leaders' narcissism as the independent variable and leaders' ratings of their own leader effectiveness as the dependent variable (See Table 2 for means, standard deviations and correlations among variables). Results revealed that leaders' narcissism positively affected leaders' ratings of their own effectiveness as a leader ($\beta = .30, t = 2.12, p = .040, R^2 = .09$). Leaders' narcissism showed to be a significant predictor of leaders' perceptions of their own leader effectiveness, satisfying the first condition of mediation (Baron & Kenny, 1986). Furthermore, regression analysis revealed that leaders' narcissism significantly predicted leaders' agentic orientation style ($\beta = .39, t = 2.87, p = .006, R^2 = .15$), thus satisfying the second condition of mediation (Baron & Kenny, 1986).

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Also, leaders' agentic orientation style was significantly related to leaders' perceived effectiveness ($\beta = .54, t = 4.42, p < .001, R^2 = .29$). This indicates that leaders' agentic orientation style was a significant predictor of leaders' perceptions of their leader effectiveness, meeting the third condition for mediation (Baron & Kenny, 1986).

Finally, regression analysis was conducted with leaders' narcissism and leaders' agentic orientation style as the independent variables and leaders' ratings of leader effectiveness as the dependent variable. Results revealed that, when controlling for the effect of leaders' agentic orientation style on leaders' perceived leader effectiveness, the effect of leaders' narcissism was no longer significant ($\beta = .10, t = .75, ns$), satisfying the fourth condition for mediation (Baron & Kenny, 1986).

To test whether the indirect effect of leaders' narcissism on leaders' perceived leadership effectiveness through leaders' agentic orientation style is significantly greater than zero, we also conducted the Sobel Test (Preacher & Hayes, 2004). Results revealed that leaders' agentic orientation fully mediated the effect of leaders' narcissism on perceived leader effectiveness ($z = 2.24, p = .025$). Also, the 95% confidence interval ranged from .73 to 6.00, indicating that the mediated effect was significantly different from zero at $p < .05$ (1000 bootstrap resamples; Preacher & Hayes, 2004).

Taken the results of the analyses together, we found evidence that leaders' narcissism positively affected leaders' ratings of their own effectiveness as a leader through increased leader perceptions of agentic characteristics. In other words, leaders high on narcissism rated their own performance positively, because they perceived themselves to be high on agentic traits.

Narcissism and Leader Appropriateness

In addition to perceived leader effectiveness, we were interested in how narcissistic individuals perceived their own leader appropriateness. Leader appropriateness indicated the extent to which the participants believed that they would be the most appropriate leader for the group task.

We performed mixed model analyses using narcissism as the independent variable and self-ratings of leader appropriateness as the dependent variable to examine the before mentioned relationship (See Table 3 for means, standard deviations and correlations among variables). Results revealed that narcissism positively affected the self-ratings of leader appropriateness ($b = 1.64, t(145) = 3.50, p = .001$), indicating that individuals high in narcissism perceived themselves as more appropriate for the leadership role.

Also, we found that narcissism significantly predicted desired agentic leader characteristics ($b = .81, t(145) = 2.55, p = .012$), indicating that narcissistic individuals preferred leaders who are high on agentic characteristics.

Further analysis did not reveal a significant effect of preferred agentic leader characteristics on self-ratings of leader appropriateness ($b = .17, t(145) = 1.37, ns$), thus the third condition for establishing a mediated relationship was not met (Baron & Kenny, 1986). Therefore, we conclude that the effect of narcissism on self-ratings of leader appropriateness was not mediated by preferred agentic leader characteristics. This means that the preference for leaders who are high on agentic traits did not explain the finding that individuals high on narcissism rated themselves as more appropriate for the leader role.

Followers' Narcissism and Ratings of Leader Effectiveness

Since narcissistic individuals considered themselves as appropriate for the leadership role, as was found above, it would be interesting to examine their perceptions of leader effectiveness when they were not appointed as the group leader. We conducted mixed model analyses using followers' narcissism as the independent variable and perceived leader effectiveness as the dependent variable to investigate this. Results revealed that followers' narcissism significantly predicted perceived leader effectiveness in the negative direction ($b = -2.23, t(95) = 3.05, p = .003$), indicating that followers with high levels of narcissism rated their group leader as less effective.

Discussion

Narcissistic leaders often appear as individuals displaying agentic characteristics, like self-confidence, dominance, and decisiveness (Rosenthal & Pittinsky, 2006; Campbell, et al., 2002). Because agentic characteristics match with the general leader prototype that people hold (Schein, 2001; Foti & Hauenstein, 2007; Epitropaki & Martin, 2004; Lord, et al., 2001), we expected that narcissistic leaders will be perceived as effective by others. Also, it was our prediction that this effect is enhanced when a group is confronted with an external, rather than an internal, crisis. During an external crisis, which entails a threat from outside the group boundary, group members prefer a leader who provides direction and who can reassure them (Seeger, et al., 2003; Hoyt, et al., 2009). The agentic traits of narcissists fit with the demands of the situation and therefore perceptions of their leader effectiveness will be enhanced. In contrast, during an internal crisis, where the source of crisis lies within the group boundary, the leader mainly needs to rebuild trust and show sympathy and concern for others and thus a leader who is displaying communal attributes will be better suited (Pearson & Clair, 1998).

With respect to the relationship between leaders' narcissism and perceived leadership effectiveness, we did not find a significant effect in the expected direction. Our expectation that narcissistic leaders will be perceived as effective by the other group members was thus not supported. More specifically, the results even revealed the presence of a relationship in the opposed direction, indicating that narcissists were perceived as less effective leaders by others. Although one other study has found this negative effect (Judge, et al., 2006), it is contrary to our expectations and other research findings on leaders' narcissism and other-ratings of leadership effectiveness (Judge, et al., 2006; Nevicka, et al., 2011).

A possible explanation for the negative relationship between narcissistic leaders and their perceived leadership effectiveness is the nature of the group task itself. The 'Lost at Sea'

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task can be defined as a consensus seeking task, where the group needs to build consensus about the final ranking of the different items (Nemiroff & Pasmore, 1975). However, in our study we also appointed a group leader who was formally responsible for writing the final group decision down. In order to complete the task successfully, the leader needed to deal with the social interactions within the group to build consensus as well as decide on the final ranking. We can argue that to manage these processes successfully, a leader should possess both communal and agentic characteristics. In fact, this was exactly what the group members indicated before they started working on the group task: both agentic (e.g., self-confidence, competence, decisiveness) and communal (e.g., understanding, consideration, empathy) characteristics were considered as desirable leader traits. These findings are consistent with the connectionist model of leadership prototype generation, which states that perceptions of a prototypical leader are influenced by contextual constraints, such as organizational culture and task characteristics (Lord, et al., 2001). Depending on the goals of the task, prototypical leader traits are activated and alter the expected behaviors of a leader (Lord, et al., 2001). Thus, with respect to our group task, a leader prototype was activated that included agentic as well as communal traits. Furthermore, we found that both the agentic and communal leader orientation styles were positively related to the ratings of leader effectiveness. Thus, the performance of leaders who displayed both characteristics was perceived as more effective.

Our findings showed, however, that the negative relationship between leaders' narcissism and perceived leader effectiveness was not explained by leaders' low agentic orientation style. This result was to be expected because narcissistic individuals have been found to be high on agentic characteristics in earlier research (Campbell, et al., 2002). Thus, perhaps the negative effect of narcissism on perceived leader effectiveness is better explained by narcissists' deficiency with respect to the communal traits. Most narcissists lack

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characteristics that are focused on building and maintaining good relations with others, like empathy and being considerate (Morf & Rhodewalt, 2001; Rosenthal & Pittinsky, 2006). Indeed, we found that leaders' narcissism was negatively related to three communal characteristics (e.g., understanding of others, warm in relations with others, and able to devote self to others). These communal characteristics in turn positively affected perceptions of leader effectiveness. Thus, the negative effect of narcissism on followers' perceptions of leadership effectiveness may be clarified by narcissists' lack of communal traits that were considered as important for successful performance.

Our study did not find any evidence of the expected mediation effect of leaders' agentic orientation style on perceived leader effectiveness. The hypothesis that the effect of leaders' narcissism on perceived leadership effectiveness will be mediated by leaders' agentic orientation style was thus not confirmed. In fact, the relationship between narcissism and agentic traits was in a negative direction, indicating that group members perceived narcissistic leaders as, among others, less self-confident and decisive. This was a surprising finding, because it is contrary to what has been described in the literature and research on narcissistic individuals and their most prominent traits (e.g., Hogan, Curphy, & Hogan, 1994; Maccoby, 2002; Campbell, et al., 2002).

What may explain this finding is the occurrence of a halo effect. A halo effect is a cognitive error in which the judgment of a persons' character is influenced by the overall impression of that person (Thorndike, 1920). Because of earlier interaction between group members before their engagement in the group task (i.e., before our experiment participants worked together on another task, where consensus was important to accomplish the task), participants in our study may have had a negative overall impression of narcissistic individuals and this then negatively affected the subsequent evaluations of their leadership

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performance. In other words, group members may have had the impression of narcissists as ineffective leaders. Their evaluation of narcissists as being lower on agentic traits may be explained by the strong positive correlation between agentic characteristics and perceived leader effectiveness that we found. This correlation indicates that group members did not seem to distinguish between the agentic traits of leaders and their perceived effectiveness, in other words they perceived agentic characteristics to be the same as an effective leader. Consequently, if group members had an overall impression of narcissists as ineffective leaders, then they would also assess other aspects that they thought belonged to an effective leader as negative for narcissists. This effect is despite the fact that narcissism has been frequently found to be associated with agentic traits like confidence, decisiveness, and authority (Hogan, et al., 1994; Campbell, et al., 2002; Nevicka, et al., 2011).

With respect to our hypotheses regarding the expected moderating effect of crisis on the relationship between narcissism and perceived leader effectiveness, we did not find any results. Although participants in both conditions experienced the same amount of time pressure and uncertainty, they did not perceive the differences between the internal and external crisis. Thus, the manipulation of crisis in this study was not successful and therefore we were not able to test our final hypotheses.

A possible explanation for the fact that the crisis manipulation was unsuccessful is that the dynamics of the group interacted with the manipulations. Before engaging in our experiment, the group members worked together on another group task. It is possible that, certain roles, like the leader role, already evolved naturally before they were assigned to a specific role in our experiment. These implicit present roles may have reduced the impact of the assigned roles and made the manipulations less salient. Also, because of the strong time pressure, group members may have given higher priority to accomplishing the task within the

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specific time frame. The possible pressure due to the manipulations (i.e., intervention of a fourth group member or sabotage from a group member) may have been considered of lower priority than accomplishing the group task within the short time frame.

In addition to the effect of leaders' narcissism on other-ratings of leader effectiveness, we examined narcissists' perceptions of their own leader appropriateness and performance. Since narcissists have been found to be overconfident and to frequently overestimate their abilities (Morf & Rhodewalt, 2001; Campbell, Goodie, & Foster, 2004), we were interested in what they thought of their appropriateness for the leader role and their performance during the group task. First of all, we found that narcissistic individuals rated themselves as more appropriate for the leader role before they engaged in the group task. This finding fits with other research that has shown that narcissism is related to self-views of overconfidence (Campbell, et al., 2004) and leadership potential (Judge, et al., 2006). Also, since narcissists constantly seek to enhance themselves, the leader role would be an excellent opportunity to display their skills and talents to others (Morf & Rhodewalt, 2001).

Furthermore, our findings showed that once appointed as leaders narcissists rated their own leadership performance as more effective. This positive effect was explained by increased perceptions of their own agentic characteristics. Thus, narcissistic leaders perceived their leadership as effective because of their high display of agentic traits (e.g., self-confidence, dominance). This finding is in line with earlier research that has found that narcissists have an inflated self-view on traits reflecting an agentic orientation style (Campbell, et al., 2002). Related to this, they also tend to overestimate their performance in group tasks and discussions (John & Robins, 1994; Judge, et al., 2006).

Finally, since the leader role is a potential opportunity for narcissists for self-enhancement, we were also interested to see what would happen if this role is denied to them.

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Most importantly, we found that narcissistic group members who were not assigned to the leader role rated the group leader as less effective. A possible explanation for this finding is that these individuals were angry because they did not get the chance to show off their abilities. Earlier research has shown that when narcissistic individuals did not have the opportunity for self-enhancement during a task, their motivation to perform the task was reduced and ultimately their performance suffered (Wallace & Baumeister, 2002). Indeed, in our study we found some evidence that the motivation to engage in the task was reduced among narcissistic group members. Furthermore, we found that narcissists experienced slightly more negative emotions during the group task, like anxiety, nervousness, and discouragement. This finding is consistent with other research where it has been found that narcissistic individuals experienced more anger and frustration when their ego was threatened by situational constraints (Penney & Spector, 2002). Thus, the denial of the leader role might have negatively affected the motivation to engage in the group task and elicited negative emotions among narcissistic group members. Consequently, they rated the group leaders lower on desirable leader characteristics (e.g., self-confidence and independence) and on leadership effectiveness.

Implications

This research has some important theoretical and practical implications. From a theoretical perspective, our findings add to the leadership literature by elucidating the effects of leaders' personality (i.e., narcissism) on perceptions of leadership effectiveness. While narcissism has been often linked to leader emergence (e.g., Brunell, et al., 2008; Nevicka, De Hoogh, Van Vianen, Beersma, & McIllwain, 2011; Paunonen, Lönnqvist, Verkasalo, Leikas, & Nissinen, 2006), only a few studies examined narcissism in the context of leader

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effectiveness (Judge, et al., 2006; Nevicka, et al., 2011). Our main finding was that narcissistic leaders were perceived as less effective by their group members. In the discussion we argued that this effect is probably best explained by their lack of communal characteristics that involve dealing with social interactions. Contrary to our expectations and the literature, narcissism was found to be negatively related to an agentic orientation style. We provided a possible explanation for this finding, but further research is needed to examine the differences between positive and negative agentic leader characteristics and their relative impact on perceptions of leadership.

Another interesting extension to the current literature is that our findings suggested that there is a contradiction in other-ratings and self-ratings of leadership of narcissistic individuals. More specifically, narcissistic leaders were perceived as less effective by their group members, but they rated their own leadership performance as more effective. These findings extend prior research which has shown that narcissism is related to positive self-ratings of leadership that are contrary to other-ratings of leadership (Judge, et al., 2006) and further emphasize the inflated self-image of narcissistic individuals (John & Robins, 1994; Campbell, et al., 2002).

In addition to the aforementioned theoretical contributions, our research has some potential practical implications. Our findings highlighted that in contexts that require social interaction and cooperation, narcissistic leaders would be unsuitable because of a mismatch between their prominent traits and the preferred leader characteristics. Thus, organizations with a clan culture (i.e., focus on internal processes and relationships; Cameron & Quinn, 1999) and where consensus is an important aspect of decision making, should be careful in selecting narcissistic individuals for a team. Since narcissists value competition over

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cooperation, their role in a team may be very detrimental to the team atmosphere and the interpersonal relationships between team members (Judge, et al., 2006).

Another practical implication points to the potential danger of narcissists who do not have the opportunity for self-enhancement. As suggested before, when narcissistic individuals are denied the leader role or when they are not adequately challenged, their motivation to perform the task may be reduced and their actual performance may deteriorate (Wallace & Baumeister, 2002). Also, when narcissists' ego is threatened by situational constraints negative emotions may be elicited, such as anger and frustration, which in turn may lead to retaliation or aggression (Penney & Spector, 2002). Narcissistic individuals may be taking out their frustrations by downgrading the performance of others, as a covert form of retaliation. This may seriously harm relationships within a team. Thus, organizations should pay careful attention to the tasks and responsibilities that are assigned to employees who are high on narcissism.

Limitations and Future Directions

Since our study employed an experimental design, we were able to draw conclusions about cause and effect relationships and to provide a better understanding of the effects of narcissism on perceived leader effectiveness. However, as with all experimental research, our study also has some limitations.

First, because our manipulation of crisis was unsuccessful, we were not able to test our hypotheses regarding the moderating effect of crisis. Testing these hypotheses would have extended our knowledge concerning the context in which narcissistic leaders lead and how this influences perceptions of their leader effectiveness. In earlier research crisis was manipulated successfully by using scenarios representing companies that were either in crisis

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or not (Madera & Smith, 2009; Ryan, et al., 2010; Bruckmüller & Branscombe, 2010).

Manipulating crisis with scenarios would probably be more effective than our approach, because the differences between the internal and external crisis could be made more salient.

Also, it would be easier to control for certain biases, like participant bias, which could have an influence on the results (Goodwin, 2003). Therefore, future research should use scenarios that represent examples of internal and external crises to determine the specific effects of the type of crisis on perceived leader effectiveness.

Second, our sample which consisted of students and the specific group task may not be representative of team work in organizations. For instance, most participants in our study did not have relevant leader experience. Leader characteristics, including experience, influence the expectations that people have of a leader and are connected to the perceptions of leadership effectiveness (Lord, et al., 2001; Ridgeway, 2001). It would, therefore, be interesting to examine how the leaders' personality (i.e., narcissistic traits) interacts with other leader characteristics, like experience, status, or seniority. Future research should use other samples, like MBA students who have managerial experience or team leaders within organizations, to add to our understanding of how different leader characteristics affect perceptions of leader effectiveness. In addition to our sample, the utilized group task, which can be defined as a consensus seeking intellectual task (Nemiroff & Pasmore, 1975), may not be representative for an organizational context. Although consensus based decision making is a part of business in organizations (Mohammed & Ringseis, 2001), the content and constraints of the 'lost at sea' task were especially designed for this study and therefore the task lacks potential generalizability for decision making in organizations.

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Thus, in order to generalize our findings to organizational contexts, future research should be conducted within applied settings using different samples and tasks that are more widely applicable.

Conclusion

The main objective of this research was to provide insights into the *why* and *when* of the perceived leadership effectiveness of narcissistic leaders. Most importantly, our findings demonstrated that self-ratings and other-ratings of leadership of narcissistic individuals are inconsistent. Because of their display of agentic characteristics, narcissistic individuals consider themselves as appropriate for the leader role and, once assigned to this role, they perceive their performance as effective. In contrast, other group members perceive narcissistic leaders as ineffective because of their lack of communal characteristics. In the current study we were not able to address the question of how a particular context (i.e., internal and external crisis) influences the relationship between narcissism and perceptions of leadership effectiveness. Future research should examine the role of crisis to see if this variable affects the strength and/or direction of this relationship.

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Table 1

Means (M), Standard Deviations (SD), and Correlations among the Variables Leaders' Narcissism, Agentic Orientation Style, and Leader Effectiveness as Perceived by the Followers

	M	SD	1	2	3
1. Leaders' Gender ^a	1.59	0.50			
2. Leaders' Narcissism	0.47	0.17	-.34*		
3. Agentic Orientation Style	4.34	1.05	.19	-.11	
4. Leader Effectiveness	4.47	0.84	.10	-.24	.80**

Note. $N = 49$

^a male = 1, female = 2

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

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Table 2

Means (M), Standard Deviations (SD), and Correlations among the Variables Leaders' Narcissism, Agentic Orientation Style, and Leader Effectiveness as Perceived by the Group Leaders

	M	SD	1	2	3
1. Leaders' Gender ^a	1.59	0.50			
2. Leaders' Narcissism	0.47	0.17	-.34*		
3. Agentic Orientation Style	4.67	0.76	-.23	.39**	
4. Leader Effectiveness	4.58	0.99	-.26	.30*	.54**

Note. $N = 49$

^a male = 1, female = 2

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

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Table 3

Means (M), Standard Deviations (SD), and Correlations among the Variables Individual Narcissism, Agentic Leader Characteristics, and Leader Appropriateness as Indicated by all Group Members

	M	SD	1	2	3
1. Gender ^a	1.67	0.47			
2. Individual Narcissism	0.46	0.18	-.24**		
3. Agentic Leader Characteristics	4.81	0.69	-.16*	.21*	
4. Leader Appropriateness	4.94	1.04	-.10	.28**	.11

Note. $N = 147$

^a male = 1, female = 2

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

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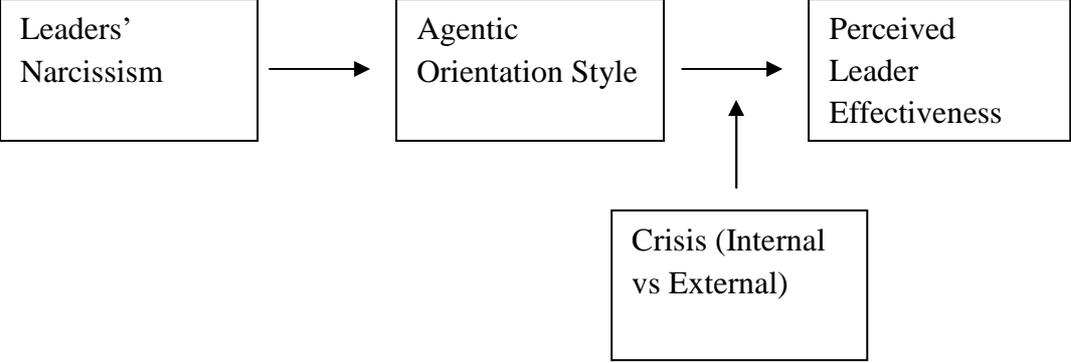
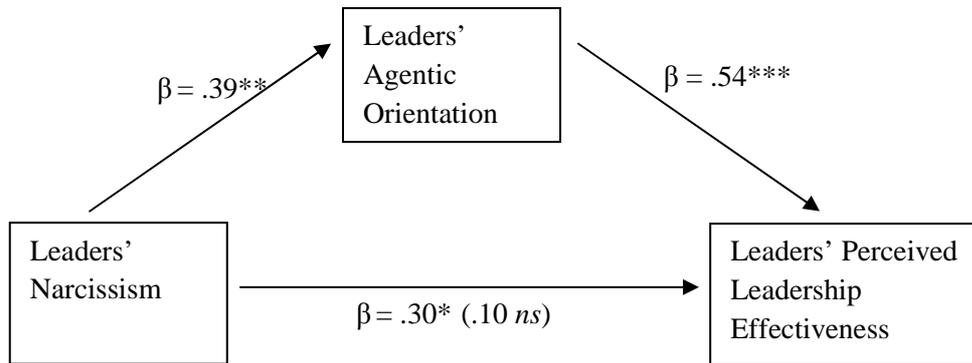


Figure 1. Theoretical Model

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Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Figure 2. Effect of Leaders' Narcissism on Leaders' Perceived Leader Effectiveness Mediated by Leaders' Perception of Agentic Orientation Style.

Appendix

Besluitvormingstaak: De Schipbreuktaak

In dit onderdeel van het onderzoek zijn we geïnteresseerd in het effect van groepsintelligentie op de kwaliteit van beslissingen die groepen nemen. Onderzoek heeft aangetoond dat naarmate groepen intelligenter zijn, zij beter hoofd- en bijzaken kunnen identificeren en onderscheiden.

In deze taak willen we je vragen je voor te stellen dat je samen met twee vrienden een jacht hebt gehuurd om de reis van je leven over de Atlantische Oceaan te maken. Omdat geen van jullie eerdere ervaring met varen heeft, hebben jullie een ervaren schipper en een bemanning van twee personen ingehuurd.

Ongelukkigerwijs breekt er midden op zee een hevige brand in de kombuis los, waarbij de schipper en de bemanningsleden omkomen in een poging het vuur meester te worden. De jacht is onherstelbaar beschadigd en zinkt langzaam de diepte in.

Jullie locatie is onbekend, aangezien het vuur alle navigatieapparatuur heeft vernietigd. Het enige dat zeker is, is dat jullie vele honderden kilometers van het dichtstbijzijnde vasteland zijn.

Jij en je vrienden konden echter 15 voorwerpen ongeschonden van de vlammen redden. Daarnaast hebben jullie een kleine rubberboot en een doosje lucifers kunnen bemachtigen. Jullie taak is om de 15 voorwerpen te rangschikken op hun belang, terwijl jullie op jullie redding wachten.

Allereerst willen we je vragen om zelf na te denken over een mogelijke rangschikking van de 15 onderwerpen.

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Onderstaand de 15 voorwerpen in willekeurige volgorde:

- Een sextant (instrument dat gebruikt wordt om de breedte- en lengtegraad op zee te bepalen door hoekafstanden met de zon, maan en sterren te meten)
- Een scheerspiegel
- Enkele klamboes
- Een tank met 25 liter water
- Een kist met legerrantsoenen
- Kaarten van de Atlantische Oceaan
- Een drijvend zitkussen
- Een vat met 10 liter olie/petroleummengsel
- Een kleine transistorradio
- 2 vierkante meter aan waterdicht plastic zeil
- Een bus haaienafweermiddel
- Een fles rum van 80 % alcohol
- 4,5 meter aan nylon touw
- 2 doosjes chocoladerepen
- Een kist met visbenodigdheden