

**TITLE:** Can Narcissism be Adaptive? The Association Between Individuals' Adaptive and Maladaptive Narcissistic Traits, Emotional Intelligence, Empathy and Leadership Ability

**RESEARCHER:** Angela McInerney  
The University of New England (NSW, Australia)  
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**OBJECTIVE:** The purpose of this study was to investigate how narcissism might be related to emotional intelligence, empathy and leadership ability.

**METHODOLOGY:** The sample consisted of a convenience sample of people with management experience (N=80) in the Sydney metropolitan area who were enrolled in university classes. The typical respondent was 38 years old, and 48 men and 32 women participated. Fifty respondents (62%) were currently employed in management positions and the remainder had previous management experience. The average tenure in management was 10 years. Respondents completed the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (Raskin & Terry, 1988), Assessing Emotions Scale (Schutte et al., 2001), Interpersonal Reactivity Index (Davis, 1980) and the Leadership Practices Inventory.

**KEY FINDINGS:** Participants who scored higher on positive narcissism also scored significantly higher on leadership ability (LPI total score). Likewise, there was a significant positive correlation between emotional intelligence and leadership ability. When EI was regressed on leadership ability, 34 percent of the variance in leadership ability was explained by EI and when positive narcissism was regressed, it accounted for 21 percent of the explained variance in leadership ability. EI showed significant positive correlations with all five leadership practices. Positive narcissism was more likely to be significantly associated with the five leadership practices than was negative narcissism. Gender differences were not significant for leadership ability.