

Choi, Youngkeun

**Article**

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\*Corresponding author: Youngkeun Choi, Division of Business Administration, College of Business, Sangmyung University, 20, Hongjimun 2-gil, Jongno-gu, Seoul 110-743, Korea  
E-mail: [penking1@smu.ac.kr](mailto:penking1@smu.ac.kr)

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## MANAGEMENT | RESEARCH ARTICLE

# A study of the effect of perceived organizational support on the relationship between narcissism and job-related attitudes of Korean employees

Youngkeun Choi<sup>1\*</sup>

**Abstract:** The purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of narcissism on job-related attitudes such as job satisfaction and organizational commitment. And this study explores if perceived organizational support can moderate the relationship between narcissism and job-related attitudes. For this, this study collected data from 285 employees in Korean companies through a survey method and uses SPSS 18.0 for hierarchical regression analysis in the hypothesis test.

In the results, first, narcissism decreases work satisfaction, colleague satisfaction and supervision satisfaction among the sub-factors of job satisfaction. And narcissism decreases affective commitment among the sub-factors of organizational commitment. Second, perceived organizational support decrease the negative effect of narcissism on work satisfaction and colleague satisfaction among the sub-factors of job satisfaction and affective commitment among the sub-factors of organizational commitment. This study provides some of the managerial implications to corporate executives who try to manage organizational attitude.

**Subjects:** General Psychology; Social Psychology; Work & Organizational Psychology

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Youngkeun Choi has published peer-reviewed articles in the areas of social psychology, organizational behavior, and workplace violence. He has conducted assessments and psychotherapy with employees. The information in the current perspective article is important for workplace violence preparation and response planning. Violence affect victims at every level: financial, practical, physical, and emotional. Information can assist organizational policy-makers, support communities, and help to turn victims into survivors.

### PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

Narcissists are characterized as having an antagonistic interpersonal style because they tend to be exploitative, manipulative, and lacking empathy. The purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of narcissism on job-related attitudes such as job satisfaction and organizational commitment. And this study explores if perceived organizational support can moderate the relationship between narcissism and job-related attitudes. In the results, first, narcissism decreases job satisfaction. And narcissism decreases organizational commitment. Second, perceived organizational support decrease the negative effect of narcissism on job satisfaction. And organizational commitment. The results show that perceived organizational support can replenish the psychological resources for employees with higher level of narcissism. Because narcissism exists in reality, it is also not ignorable in the context of workplace. Given this situation, corporate executives need to assign positions by considering individual traits.

**Keywords: narcissism; job satisfaction; organizational commitment; perceived organizational support**

## 1. Introduction

Narcissism was defined as a cognitive-affective preoccupation with the self (Giacomin & Jordan, 2016; Westen, 1990). Miller and Campbell (2008) viewed narcissism as a personality trait with several dimensions. Narcissists place their own needs, wishes, glory, and goals above others, and focus their attention on themselves (Emmons, 1987; Westen, 1990). Narcissists are characterized as having an antagonistic interpersonal style because they tend to be exploitative, manipulative, and lacking empathy (Sinead, Catherine, Emily, & Julian, 2018; Miller & Campbell, 2008). Empathy is defined as another-oriented emotional response congruent with the perceived welfare of another person (Batson, Klein, Highberger, & Shaw, 1995). This grandiose narcissism, the focus of this paper, is characterized by four facets which are: Entitlement/Exploitativeness, Superiority/Arrogance, Self-absorption/Self-admiration, and Leadership/Authority (Emmons, 1987; Raskin & Hall, 1979).

Although the growing body of research on narcissism has not yet been integrated with a model of organizational management, narcissism appears to have several significant implications for organizational management.

The conservation of resources (COR) theory posits that people demand resources and that they strive to maintain and protect our remaining resources (Hobfoll, 1989). In line with this theoretical perspective, I conceptualize narcissism as a demander that need personal resources (e.g. self-esteem, time, and energies), leaving them with insufficient resources to fulfill work demands. I examine the effects of narcissism on job-related attitudes. Furthermore, I examine how perceived organizational support (POS) may mitigate these negative consequences through providing a variety of resources to narcissists. By examining these empirical linkages, I make three important contributions to the literature. First, I propose and test a theoretical model that links narcissism to job-related attitudes. Second, although managers are aware of the consequences of narcissism, little empirical work has been done to clarify the role of organizations in mitigating these consequences (O'Leary-Kelly, Lean, Reeves, & Randel, 2008). This is a critical oversight, as this knowledge can result in more effective and actionable policies that can potentially reduce costs for both employees and organizations (Swanberg, Logan, & Macke, 2005). In the sections that follow, we elaborate on our proposed model, generate and test predictions concerning the expected relationships among them, and discuss the implications of findings.

## 2. Literature review & hypothesis development

### 2.1. Narcissism

Individuals with high levels of narcissism lack empathy, are exploitative (Sedikides et al., 2004; Sinead et al., 2018), and have a selfish orientation to relationships (Campbell et al. 2000; O'Boyle, Forsyth, Banks, & McDaniel, 2012) with a strong sense of entitlement which impairs their ability to experience empathy (Buss, 1999). They are preoccupied with their own needs, goals, and desires, and are defined as having a cognitive-affective preoccupation with the self (Westen, 1990). In interpersonal relationships, they exhibit less agreeableness, empathy, and gratitude with more anger, hostility and distrust of others, and are usually abrasive and dismissive in these interpersonal relationships (Sedikides et al., 2004; Sinead et al., 2018). They can be exploitative and ruthless towards others with little to no empathy (Soyer, Rovenpor, & Kopelman, 1999). They also do not deal well with failure, are not aware of others' feelings, and are prone to create conflict with others (Wallace & Baumeister, 2002).

However, individuals high in narcissism can also be charming, charismatic, confident, interpersonally skilled, entertaining, assertive, gregarious, bold, extroverted, and attractive to others

(Giacomin & Jordan, 2016; Campbell, Hoffman, Campbell, & Marchisio, 2011; Soyer et al., 1999). While some research has positioned narcissism in a group of “dark triad” personality types (O’Boyle et al., 2012; Paulhus & Williams, 2002), it is not surprising that researchers refer to the “bright” and “dark” sides of narcissism (Back et al., 2013), “bad” and “good” aspects of narcissism (Malkin, 2015), or “healthy” and destructive” narcissism (Lubit, 2002). Clearly, narcissism is a complex personality trait (Campbell et al., 2011; Twenge & Campbell, 2009) with high relevance to organizational studies.

Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI) has four factors, which is the most frequently used measure of narcissism for personality types in the general population (Emmons, 1987). These four factors are: exploitativeness/entitlement: a belief that one is skilled at manipulating people, and a sense of entitlement to do so. Next, leadership/authority: the belief that one possesses an extraordinary ability to influence others, and a general preference for leadership and authority roles. The third factor is superiority/arrogance, or the belief that one is simply “better” than others. Finally, self-absorption/self-admiration is the final factor, which is an elevated sense of vanity and the belief that one’s self is special.

Narcissists have a common characteristic, which is self-enhancement, a tendency to exaggerate skills and accomplishments (Paulhus, 1998). This self-enhancement rarely applies to areas described as communal domains such as caring, empathy, and concern (Campbell et al., 2011). Narcissists are viewed as socially insensitive, hostile, and selfish (Back et al., 2013; Wurst et al., 2017). Twenge and Campbell (2009) state that narcissism is absolutely corrosive to social relationships. In particular, narcissists typically initiate quick social relationships easily, but over time, their behaviors degrade the relationships substantially (Campbell et al., 2011; Wurst et al., 2017).

## **2.2. Narcissism and employee’s attitudes in workplace**

Recently, narcissism in organization management has become a growing area. Although the growth of research on narcissism has not yet been integrated with a model of organizational management, narcissism seems to have some significant implications for organizational management. Organizational management tries to align employees’ efforts in pursuit of organizational goals through planning, assessing performance, providing feedback, and adapting accordingly (Aguinis, 2013; Aguinis & Poerce, 2008; DeNisi & Pritchard, 2006). Organizational management leads to higher employee performance if it strengthens the linkages between employees’ action and their need satisfaction (DeNisi & Pritchard, 2006).

This framework’s conceptual core consists of two key relationships. Those between narcissism and the key job-related attitudes of job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Narcissism’s relationship with the various facets of job satisfaction that contribute to overall job satisfaction is illustrated, instead of global job satisfaction. Job satisfaction, as measured by the Job Descriptive Index (Smith, Kendall, & Hulin, 1969), is a composite measure comprised of five sub-scales. Each facet contributes to an employee’s perception of overall job satisfaction and can influence this overall perception positively or negatively. Global assessments of job satisfaction fail to account for specific facets which can influence an individual’s overall assessment of satisfaction. This paper provides a more fine-grained framework for the analysis of the relationship between narcissism and job satisfaction.

No previous studies were found which addressed the relationships of narcissism with the dimensions of an organizational commitment, so this framework uniquely addresses those research gaps. I extend the framework to illustrate the relationship with propensity to leave, which is the likelihood an employee will end their affiliation with an employer voluntarily in the near future (Bluedorn, 1982), and which has been shown to be an effective predictor of sales force turnover (Johnston, Parasuraman, Futrell, & Black, 1990). This framework is based on the premise

that firms desire to have a sales force that seeks to practice a relational strategy versus a transactional strategy (Weitz & Bradford, 1999).

COR theory (Hobfoll, 1989) suggests that stress occurs when there is a threat to valued resources, an actual demand for resources, or insufficient gain following the investment of resources. I conceptualize narcissism as a demander that emanates from the domestic environment. That is, narcissism produces negative effects by threatening a person's pool of personal resources, where resources are defined as those objects, personal characteristics, conditions, or energies that are valued in their own right or that are valued because they act as conduits to the achievement or protection of valued resources (Hobfoll, 2001). The narcissism depletes personal resources such as one's sense of self-worth, time, and physical energy (Aguilar & Nightingale, 1994; Swanberg et al., 2005). I propose that resource demand from the narcissism can carry over into the workplace directly affecting job performance.

Job-related attitudes, like job satisfaction and organizational commitment, indicate the extent to which employees fulfill important values (Hochwarter, Perrewé, Ferris, & Brymer, 1999; Maier & Brunstein, 2001). Employers that recruit and select employees whose values closely match the organization's values, and promote through organizational culture the behaviors those values represent, stand to benefit from greater productivity, lower turnover, and strong adherence to organizational goals. Job satisfaction is important for several reasons. Despite uncertainty regarding the exact nature of the relationship, job satisfaction and sales performance show a positive association (Brown & Peterson, 1993), and job satisfaction has also been shown to be causally related to organizational commitment (Brown & Peterson, 1993; Johnston et al., 1990). Both job satisfaction and organizational commitment have negative relationships with employees' intentions to leave a firm (Johnston et al., 1990; Johnston, Varadarajan, Futrell, & Sager, 1987), and these intentions, measured by propensity to leave, represent a very effective predictor of sales force turnover (Johnston et al., 1990; Sager, Varadarajan, & Futrell, 1988).

Research focused on the antecedents of job satisfaction has shifted appreciably since the mid-eighties from a focus on role perceptions and organizational variables to how personality traits might influence these feelings. Narcissistic employees with more ego threats from their jobs are less satisfied with their jobs, due to the exploitativeness/entitlement and superiority/arrogance components of their narcissistic personality (Judge, LePine, & Rich, 2006; Maynard, Brondolo, Connelly, & Sauer, 2015; Wallace & Baumeister, 2002).

Narcissism has been linked to workplace deviance and contextual performance (Judge et al., 2006; O'Boyle, Forsyth, Banks, & McDanel, 2012). This issue become important due to the growth in narcissism, which researchers consider an epidemic (Twenge & Campbell, 2009). Due to their selfish nature, sense of entitlement, exploitative personalities, sense of superiority, and social callousness, they seem quite likely to engage in deviant organizational and deviant interpersonal dimensions of salesperson deviant behaviors described by Jelinek and Ahearne (2006). Therefore, those with the higher level of narcissism are less committed to their organizations. As results, they show more counterproductive work attitudes. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is established.

*Hypothesis 1: Narcissism will be negatively associated with job satisfaction.*

*Hypothesis 2: Narcissism will be negatively associated with organizational commitment.*

### **2.3. The moderating role of perceived organizational support**

Narcissism is referred to as a relatively broad behavioral trait domain, expressed by, among others, the exploitativeness/entitlement, superiority/arrogance, and social callousness components of their narcissistic personality (Jelinek & Ahearne, 2006; Judge et al., 2006; Maynard et al., 2015;

Wallace & Baumeister, 2002). These traits provide an outlet for self-confidence and self-assertion (Cambell et al., 2000).

COR theory predicts that people will reduce their demand for resources by investing in or drawing from other resources that they possess or are accessible from their environment. In an elaboration of the COR theory, Ten Brummelhuis and Bakker (2012) proposed that in addition to their own resource pool, the environments in which people are embedded may also serve as a resource that can be used to buffer the spillover effects of aversive home experiences into the workplace. One workplace resource that has been shown to buffer the demand-strain relationship is perceived organizational support (POS).

Organizational support theory (OST) suggests that employees form expectancies of support based on the degree to which the organization both values employees' contributions and demonstrates concern for their well-being (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchinson, & Sowa, 1986; Narang & Singh, 2012). Based on OST, I expect perceived organizational support (POS) to buffer the negative relationship between narcissism and job-related attitudes for several reasons. First, POS provides access to relevant resources at work, which can help narcissists replenish or conserve their stock of resources. For instance, instrumental support in the form of organizational policies like personal leave and flexible work arrangements can offer respite from work and opportunities for narcissists. A supportive work environment could also help in reducing work demands, such as when coworkers take over tasks assigned to the employee, which may help conserve remaining resources (Ray & Miller, 1994). Second, a supportive work environment signals that the employee is a valued member of the organization, which can lead to resource accumulation through its positive impact on one's sense of self-worth and its satisfaction of the fundamental human need for belongingness (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Self-esteem and feeling a sense of belonging are both important socio-emotional resources and so events or experiences that replenish or increase them can potentially counteract the socio-emotional resources that narcissism demands. Therefore, POS can provide a supportive work environment which replenishes the psychological resources for narcissism. In turn, the more employees perceive that the organization values employees' contributions and demonstrates concern for their well-being, the less their job satisfaction and organizational commitment decrease. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is established.

*Hypothesis 3: The negative relationship between narcissism and job satisfaction is moderated by POS, such that the negative relationship is stronger for low as opposed to high levels of POS.*

*Hypothesis 4: The negative relationship between narcissism and organizational commitment is moderated by POS, such that the negative relationship is stronger for low as opposed to high levels of POS.*

### **3. Methodology**

#### **3.1. Data collection & sample**

The objective of the study is to identify behavioral factors related to social media addiction by an empirical test. The factors of organizational behaviors can be identified by measuring organization's members' perceptions in the workplace situations. I adopted an online survey method using a convenience sampling for data collection as it is very useful in collecting data from a large number of individuals in a relatively short period of time and at a better cost.

To test our hypotheses of this study, a self-completion questionnaire was administered to business office workers (20 ~ 59 years old) in South Korea. All participants received an email requesting for this online survey with an accompanying email that explains the purpose of the survey, emphasized voluntary participation, and guaranteed confidentially. Participants were asked to fill out the questionnaire.

The survey questionnaire consisted of three parts. In the first part of the survey questionnaire, participants were instructed to read the purpose of the survey. The second part of the questionnaire included the items measuring the respondent's narcissism, social media addiction, job satisfaction, organizational commitment. The third part of the study consisted of basic information about firm profiles and respondents' characteristics, using nominal scales (e.g. demographic variables, the industry of their companies, the number of employee, tenure)

Finally, I collected 285 complete responses from the online survey. The characteristics of respondents are reported in Table 1 (e.g. age, gender, the industry of their companies, the number of employees in their companies, tenure, the level of their education, the marital status).

**Table 1. Sample profile**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Items</b>	<b>Percentages</b>
Age	20's	24.6
	30's	27.4
	40's	22.4
	50's	25.6
Gender	Male	46.3
	Female	53.7
Industry of their company	Manufacturing	28.8
	Construction	10.2
	Service	32.2
	Public agency	5.6
	Wholesale/retail	8.1
	Others	15.1
Number of employees in their company	Less than 10	20.7
	11-50	29.8
	51-300	29.5
	301-1000	7.1
	More than 1001	12.9
Tenure	Less than 5 years	53.3
	6-9 years	23.5
	10-14 years	12.3
	15-19 years	4.2
	More than 20 years	6.7
Level of their education	Middle school	0.7
	High school	15.8
	Community college	20.8
	Undergraduate school	52.9
	Graduate school	9.8
Position	Staff	44.6
	Assistant manager	18.2
	Manager	15.4
	Senior manager	13.3
	Director	6.3
	Others	2.1
Marital Status	Married	54.7
	Single	45.3

**Table 2. The measurements of variables**

Variables	Sub-factors	Item number	References
Narcissism	-	16	Ames, Rose, and Anderson (2006)
Job satisfaction	Work	3	Smith et al. (1969)
	Pay	3	
	Promotion	3	
	Colleague	3	
	Supervision	3	
Organizational commitment	Affective commitment	8	Allen & Meyer(1990)
	Continuance commitment	8	
	Normative commitment	8	
Perceived organizational support	-	9	Wayne, Shore, and Liden (1987)

### 3.2. Measurement

Table 2 shows the measurements of variables in the present study.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Verification of reliability and validity

The validity of variables is verified through the principal components method and factor analysis with the varimax method. The criteria for determining the number of factors is defined as a 1.0 eigenvalue. We applied factors for analysis only if the factor loading was greater than 0.5 (factor loading represents the correlation scale between a factor and other variables). In the factor analysis, we eliminated two items in the variables of shared vision and system thinking. The reliability of variables is judged by internal consistency as assessed by Cronbach's alpha. We used surveys and regarded each as one measure only if their Cronbach's alpha values were 0.7 or higher.

### 4.2. Relationship between variables

Table 3 summarizes the Pearson correlation test results between variables and reports the degree of multicollinearity between independent variables. The minimum tolerance of .731, maximum variance inflation factor of 1.367 show that the statistical significance of the data analysis was not compromised by multicollinearity.

**Table 3. Variables' correlation coefficient and other statistics**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Narcissism	1								
Work	-.123**	1							
Pay	.022	-.011	1						
Promotion	-.101	-.032	.000	1					
Colleague	-.121*	.028	.018	.005	1				
Supervision	-.021*	-.019	.000	.000	-.052	1			
Affective	-.031**	.221**	.043	-.062	.130	.123*	1		
Continuance	-.015	.176**	.021	.122*	.076	.143*	.021	1	
Normative	-.115	.120	.209	.109	.121	.132	.043	.021	1
POS	-.399	.012**	.039**	.104**	.105**	.054**	.083**	.113**	.001**

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



### 4.3. Hypothesis test

To analyze the effects of narcissism on the sub-factors of job satisfaction and organizational commitment, the results of model 1s in Table 4, consisting control and independent variables, show that all of the control variables have no significance with all of the sub-factors in independent variables. It shows that narcissism has statistical significances with sub-factors of job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Moreover, regarding sub-factors of job satisfaction, it has negative relationships with work satisfaction ( $\beta = -.246, p < .01$ ), colleague satisfaction ( $\beta = -.206, p < .01$ ) and supervision satisfaction ( $\beta = -.382, p < .01$ ). However, it is shown to have no significance with pay satisfaction and promotion satisfaction. This implies that the more narcissistic people are, the weaker their job satisfaction is. Therefore, this is shown to support H1. Regarding the sub-factors of organizational commitment, it has negative relationships with affective ( $\beta = -.201, p < .01$ ). However, it is shown to have no significance with continuance commitment and normative commitment. This implies that the more narcissistic people are, the weaker their organizational commitment is. Therefore, this is shown to support H2.

The results of model 2 in Table 4, consisting of moderators, shows the interactions between the narcissism and perceived organizational support. Perceived organizational support has a moderating effect on the relationship ( $\beta = .113, p < .05$ ) between narcissism and work satisfaction, the relationship ( $\beta = .098, p < .05$ ) between narcissism and colleague satisfaction, and the relationship ( $\beta = .120, p < .05$ ) between narcissism and affective commitment. Based on these results, when people have higher perceived organizational support in workplace, narcissism has a weaker impact on their job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Therefore, this is shown to support H3 and H4.

Figure 1 shows the moderating effect of POS on the relationship between narcissism and their job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

## 5. Conclusion

### 5.1. Discussion

Based on these empirical results, this study highlights some findings. First, narcissism decreases work satisfaction, colleague satisfaction, and supervision satisfaction among the sub-factors of job satisfaction. However, narcissism has no significance with pay satisfaction and promotion satisfaction. The results show that employees with higher level of narcissism think intangible satisfaction such as work satisfaction, colleague satisfaction, and supervision satisfaction more importantly than tangible satisfaction such as pay satisfaction and promotion satisfaction. Therefore, managers should consider intangible satisfaction than tangible satisfaction more for employees with higher level of narcissism. And, narcissism decreases affective commitment among the sub-factors of organizational commitment. However, narcissism has no significance with continuance commitment and normative commitment. The results show that employees with higher level of narcissism think emotional commitment such as affective commitment more importantly than rational commitment such as continuance commitment and normative commitment. Therefore, managers should promote emotional commitment than rational commitment more for employees with higher level of narcissism.

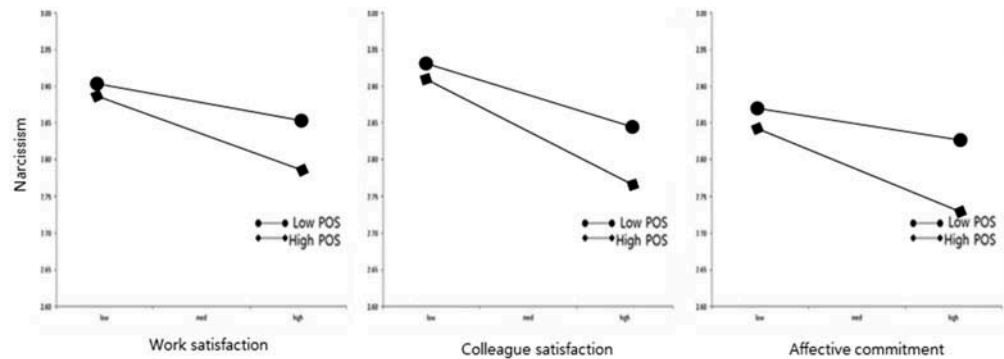
Second, POS decreases the negative effect of narcissism on work satisfaction and colleague satisfaction among the sub-factors of job satisfaction. However, perceived organizational support do not influence the negative effect of narcissism on supervision satisfaction. And, POS decreases the negative effect of narcissism on affective commitment among the sub-factors of organizational commitment. The results show that POS can replenish the psychological resources for employees with higher level of narcissism. Therefore, managers should try to provide more psychological resources for employees with higher level of narcissism.

**Table 4. Analysis**

	Job satisfaction												Organizational commitment					
	Work		Pay		Promotion		Colleague		Supervision		Affective		Continuance		Normative			
	model 1	model 2	model 1	model 2	model 1	model 2	model 1	model 2	model 1	model 2	model 1	model 2	model 1	model 2	model 1	model 2		
Sex	-.211*	-.195	-.024	-.023	.045	.039	-.032	-.035	.061	.053	-.081	-.075	.061	.055	.142	.112		
Age	.161	.134	.049	.042	.043	.037	.073	.058	-.039	-.024	.128**	.119**	.137	.123	.095	.087		
Education level	.092	.081	.062	.059	-.032	-.024	.051	.039	.043	.051	.091	.081	.016	.021	.022	.017		
Narcissism	-.246**	-.216**	.052	.047	.068	.071	-.206**	-.199**	-.382**	-.301**	-.201**	-.199**	.012	.010	.021	.018		
POS		.041**		.025**		.046**		.049**		.112**		.121**		.041**		.028**		
Narcissism *POS		.113*		.009		.116		.098*		.101		.120*		.064		.014		
Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	.115	.135	.008	.108	.009	.107	.109	.131	.111	.112	.114	.133	.011	.106	.010	.105		
F	7.919**	9.982**	1.374	7.224**	1.514	7.014**	7.424**	9.792**	7.601**	7.711	7.809**	9.885	1.717	6.891	1.624	6.771		

\*p < .05, \*\*p < .01

**Figure 1. The moderating effect of POS.**



## 5.2. Research implications and limitations

This study makes two kinds of academic implications. First, this study introduces narcissism in the context of workplace and investigate organizational behaviors related to it. The study is the first to empirically verify the consequences of narcissism in the workplace. Second, this study suggests and empirically verifies that perceived organizational support is an interpersonal factor moderating the relationship between narcissism and job-related attitudes.

Moreover, this study provides some of the practical implications to corporate executives who try to manage organizational attitude. Because narcissism exists in reality, it is also not ignorable in the context of workplace. Although the definition of narcissism is inconsistent, it decreases employees' job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Given this situation, corporate executives need to assign positions by considering individual traits.

The analysis results based on our interpretation of the questionnaires provided several insights into the relationships between organizational behaviors and social media addiction. However, I must also acknowledge the following limitations. First, this study collected our responses from employees who are working at Korean companies. This study can apply this study's methods to data samples in other countries in order to check the constancy of our variables' relationships. Second, as the variables were all measured at the same time, it cannot be sure that their relationships are constant. Although the survey questions occurred in reverse order of the analysis model to prevent additional issues, the existence of causal relationships between variables is a possibility.

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### Author details

Youngkeun Choi<sup>1</sup>

E-mail: [penking1@smu.ac.kr](mailto:penking1@smu.ac.kr)

<sup>1</sup> Division of Business Administration, College of Business, Sangmyung University, 20, Hongjimun 2-gil, Jongno-gu, Seoul 110-743, Korea.

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