

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

I am so wise: agentic narcissism, communal narcissism, and overclaiming among Polish and Italian students

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BACKGROUND

Self-enhancement is the tendency to maintain a positive self-concept, often linked to narcissism. While agentic narcissists enhance their self-image through competence and status, communal narcissists do so through perceived morality and altruism. This study examined the relationship between four forms of grandiose narcissism – admiration, rivalry, sanctity, and heroism – and two self-enhancement strategies: overclaiming and the better-than-average (BTA) effect.

PARTICIPANTS AND PROCEDURE

We investigated these relations in Polish and Italian university students ($N = 306$), considering cross-cultural differences in agency and communion. Participants completed a series of validated self-report measures assessing narcissistic traits, overclaiming tendencies, and self-perceived superiority. The study design incorporated a randomized presentation of variables and ensured measurement invariance across cultural contexts. Furthermore, to mitigate potential collinearity concerns and delineate shared and distinct variance components, we performed commonality analyses.

RESULTS

Initially, we examined the zero-order correlations between narcissistic dimensions and self-enhancement variables, including domain-specific (agentic and communal) overclaiming, actual knowledge, and the BTA effect. To account for the substantial intercorrelations among narcissism subtypes, we subsequently employed multiple regression models to isolate their unique contributions.

CONCLUSIONS

Our findings revealed that within agentic narcissism only admiration was positively related to self-enhancement, whereas communal narcissists employed both sanctity and heroism. However, in Italy, communal self-enhancement was expressed only in the BTA effect, suggesting that cultural norms may influence the expression of narcissistic self-enhancement. These findings contribute to the literature on domain-specific self-enhancement, emphasizing the interplay between narcissism, culture, and self-perception.

KEY WORDS

communal narcissism; self-enhancement; agentic narcissism; better-than-average effect; overclaiming

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BACKGROUND

Self-enhancement, a process aimed at fostering the positivity of one's self-concept, is one of the fundamental motives (Alicke & Sedikides, 2009). Self-enhancement can occur through exaggerated estimation of knowledge or skills, i.e., overclaiming (Paulhus et al., 2003), or beliefs about superiority over others, i.e., the better-than-average (BTA) effect (Alicke & Govorun, 2005; Zell et al., 2020). While self-enhancement is a general psychological process, its influence on cognition and behavior varies depending on individual differences, with narcissism being one of the most extensively studied (Miller et al., 2021; Sedikides, 2021). Narcissistic individuals often display exaggerated self-perceptions, as reflected in both overclaiming and the BTA effect (Alicke & Sedikides, 2009).

Narcissism is driven by two interrelated processes: self-enhancement and self-protection (Alicke & Sedikides, 2009; Sedikides, 2021). These processes operate in a domain-specific manner (Sedikides, 2021; Żemojtel-Piotrowska et al., 2025). Self-enhancement-based narcissism reflects grandiosity and inflated self-views, while self-protection-based narcissism emphasizes defensiveness and sensitivity to criticism.

People tend to self-enhance only within domains they consider important to their self-identity (Sedikides & Strube, 1997; Tesser, 2000). This principle, known as self-centrality breeds self-enhancement (SeCeBreSe), links self-centrality with cultural socialization by proposing that socially desirable traits are more likely to be integrated into one's self-concept, and thus more likely to be enhanced (Gebauer et al., 2013). Thus, cultural norms are likely to shape manifestations of self-enhancement. This principle may be particularly relevant for narcissistic individuals, whose self-concept is shaped not only by personal values but also by socially endorsed traits they internalize – such as success, intelligence, or harmony.

Our study addresses two key questions: (1) Are overclaiming and the BTA effect more strongly associated with self-enhancement-based narcissism (characterized by grandiosity) than with self-protection-based narcissism (characterized by defensiveness)? (2) Are there domain-specific and cultural differences in overclaiming and the BTA effect?

Narcissism is a complex psychological phenomenon (Krizan & Herlache, 2018; Miller et al., 2021), with grandiose and vulnerable narcissism usually being distinguished (Wink, 1991). Grandiose narcissists are characterized by high levels of extraversion and self-confidence, along with a dominant and manipulative interpersonal style (Sedikides, 2021). They hold overly positive self-views, reflecting a strong tendency to self-enhancement. Grandiose narcissists are especially motivated to showcase their perceived exceptional qualities, such as intelligence and creativity

(Zajenkowski & Dufner, 2020). Vulnerable narcissism reflects a defensive and insecure grandiosity that obscures feelings of inadequacy and negative affect (Miller et al., 2011). Because vulnerable narcissists primarily seek to hide their fragile selves rather than engage in self-enhancement (Sedikides, 2021), our study will not focus on this subtype.

According to the agency-communion model (Gebauer et al., 2012; Gebauer & Sedikides, 2018), grandiose narcissists can be distinguished based on how they satisfy their need to self-enhance. Agentic narcissists self-enhance on agentic traits, such as assertiveness or competence, whereas communal narcissists self-enhance on communal traits, such as helpfulness or trustworthiness (Gebauer et al., 2012). Within agentic and communal narcissism, we can further distinguish two forms of agentic narcissism (Back et al., 2013) and two forms of communal narcissism (Żemojtel-Piotrowska et al., 2024, 2025), each rooted in narcissistic motives of self-enhancement and self-protection (Alicke & Sedikides, 2009). Narcissistic admiration and rivalry are two positively related yet distinct forms of agentic narcissism (Back et al., 2013). Both serve to maintain a grandiose self; however, admiration is characterized by a promotional self-view (i.e., striving for uniqueness, grandiose fantasies, and charm), while rivalry is manifested through the derogation of others (i.e., supremacy, devaluation of others, and aggressiveness; Back et al., 2013). In the communal domain, we can also distinguish two types of self-views serving to maintain a communal sense of grandiosity. Narcissistic sanctity is characterized by overly positive self-views of communal traits, such as kindness, trustworthiness, or high morality. Narcissistic heroism reflects an inflated sense of self-importance in the social domain, achieved through exceptional efforts to improve social domain. This form incorporates elements of both agentic and communal self-views (Żemojtel-Piotrowska et al., 2025). In summary, admiration and sanctity are grounded in grandiose self-views within their respective domains, while rivalry and heroism serve to protect the narcissistic self when it is threatened (Żemojtel-Piotrowska et al., 2024, 2025).

Self-enhancement motivates individuals to elevate the positivity of their self-views and to protect their self-views from negative information (Alicke & Sedikides, 2009; Sedikides & Strube, 1997). This process is regarded as a characteristic of grandiose narcissism (Alicke & Sedikides, 2009). Specifically, such a link was established for two self-enhancement manifestations: overclaiming bias (Grosz et al., 2017) and the BTA effect (Zell et al., 2020). According to the SeCeBreSe principle, self-enhancement is strongest in domains central to one's identity. Therefore, narcissists should overclaim in domains aligned with their specific narcissistic orientation. Consequently, agentic narcissists overclaim their knowledge in

agentive areas, such as academic knowledge (Paulhus & Harms, 2004; Paulhus et al., 2003). However, their actual knowledge in the agentive domain is not higher. Unlike agentive narcissists, communal narcissists overestimate their knowledge of communal topics without actual substantial knowledge in this domain, and they do not overclaim their knowledge in the agentive domain (Gebauer et al., 2012).

THE CURRENT STUDY

Previous studies did not differentiate between domain-specific self-enhancement (that is, admiration and sanctity) and between domain-specific self-protection (that is, rivalry and heroism). Taking this into account, we extend prior studies by examining the relationship between domain-specific overclaiming and the four narcissistic forms: admiration, rivalry, sanctity, and heroism. Moreover, previous studies have been conducted without cross-cultural comparisons and have focused primarily on specific countries (Gebauer et al., 2012; Grosz et al., 2022; Leniarska et al., 2023). Therefore, the present research provides additional insights by incorporating a cross-cultural perspective.

In line with previous research (Gebauer et al., 2012; Leniarska et al., 2023), we expect to find positive relationships between domain-specific (agentive and communal) overclaiming and a domain-specific BTA effect with corresponding forms of self-enhancement. Specifically, we hypothesize that there will be a positive relationship between agentive overclaiming and admiration (H1a) and a positive relationship between communal overclaiming and sanctity (H1b). Additionally, we hypothesize a positive relationship between the agentive BTA and admiration (H2a) and between the communal BTA and sanctity (H2b).

The association of self-enhancement with admiration and sanctity is hypothesized because these two aspects of narcissism primarily serve to bolster the self through an overly positive self-view. In contrast, rivalry and heroism, which are primarily oriented to self-protection, are not expected to show the same pattern. Given that people self-enhance on culturally shaped values central to their self (SeCeBreSe; Gebauer et al., 2013), we examined a link between overclaiming and narcissism in two countries, Italy and Poland. These countries are characterized by different cultural values (House et al., 2004; Schwartz, 2008), which may reflect agency and communion. Italy and Poland can be compared on the cultural values of mastery and harmony (Schwartz, 2008), which correspond to the performance (indicative of agency) and human orientation (indicative of communion) dimensions of the GLOBE project, respectively. While the countries are comparable in the mastery dimension (Italy: 3.81; Poland: 3.84) – defined as a culture that emphasizes suc-

cess through personal effort, characterized by independence, ambition, drive, and competence – there is a notable difference in the harmony dimension, a cultural preference for appreciating the natural world as it is (Italy: 4.62; Poland: 3.86; Schwartz, 2008).

Therefore, following SeCeBreSe (Gebauer et al., 2013), we expect stronger relationships between sanctity and communal overclaiming (H3a) and communal BTA (H3b) in Italy as compared to Poland. On the other hand, we do not expect such differences in the relationship between admiration and agentive self-enhancement.

PARTICIPANTS AND PROCEDURE

PARTICIPANTS

One hundred fifty-four Italian students (118 women, 36 men) aged 18–63 years ($M = 26.67$, $SD = 9.29$) and one hundred fifty-two Polish students (101 women, 51 men) aged 18–50 years ($M = 23.71$, $SD = 4.24$) participated voluntarily in an online study, without any compensation. Data were primarily collected at Cardinal Stefan University in Warsaw and Niccolo Cusano University in Rome. Participants were required to be at least 18 years old and currently enrolled in university. They were informed about the nature of the study and asked to provide their consent prior to participation. Participants completed self-report measures, presented in a randomized order for each participant. After completing the study, participants were debriefed and thanked. The research conforms to the provisions of the Declaration of Helsinki. The research was approved by the Ethical Board for Scientific Research of the Institute of Psychology at Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw (Approval No. O-22-2023).

MEASURES

Narcissistic admiration and rivalry were measured with the Polish (Rogoza et al., 2016; $\alpha = .76$) and Italian (Żemojtel-Piotrowska et al., 2024; $\alpha = .73$) 6-item Narcissistic Admiration and Rivalry Questionnaire-Short (NARQ-S; Leckelt et al., 2018). Participants were asked to report their agreement (1 – *definitely disagree* to 6 – *definitely agree*) with three items measuring admiration (e.g., “I deserve to be seen as a great personality”) and three items measuring rivalry (e.g., “I want my rivals to fail”).

Narcissistic sanctity and heroism were measured with Polish (Żemojtel-Piotrowska et al., 2024, 2025; $\alpha = .87$) and Italian (Żemojtel-Piotrowska et al., 2024; $\alpha = .83$) versions of the Narcissistic Sanctity and Heroism Questionnaire (NSHQ; Żemojtel-Piotrowska et al., 2025). Participants were asked to report

their agreement (1 – *definitely disagree* to 6 – *definitely agree*) with five items measuring sanctity (e.g., “I have a unique gift of understanding others”) and five items measuring heroism (e.g., “Thanks to me, the world is more just”).

Overclaiming was assessed by the Polish version (Żemojtel-Piotrowska et al., 2025; $\alpha = .95$) of the Overclaiming Questionnaire (Paulhus et al., 2003). The Italian version was translated and backtranslated for this study ($\alpha = .95$). Participants were asked to indicate their level of familiarity (0 – *I’ve never heard of this*, 6 – *I am very familiar with this*) with eight different topics – four agentic (e.g., physical sciences) and four communal (e.g., humanitarian aid organizations). Each topic was assessed using six items, following the procedure used by Gebauer et al. (2012). In each topic, four items were “real” (e.g., “United Nations Children’s Fund [UNICEF]”), and two were “foil” items (e.g., “The Wall Institute Berlin [WIB]”) that participants were not informed about. Overclaiming bias was assessed by evaluating claimed knowledge of foil items, and knowledge accuracy was determined based on the recognition of existing items.

The better-than-average effect was measured by the Polish version (Żemojtel-Piotrowska et al., 2025; $\alpha = .85$) of the Self-attribution Questionnaire (Pelham & Swann, 1989), modified to measure agentic and communal traits. The Italian version was translated and backtranslated for this study ($\alpha = .86$). We asked participants to rate 12 traits (six in the agentic domain and six in the communal domains, selected from Abele et al., 2016) in comparison to their typical peers, using a scale from A = bottom 5%, followed by lower 10%, 20%, 30%, and 50%, through upper 50%, 30%, 20%, 10%, and ending with J = upper 5%.

STATISTICAL ANALYSES

Prior to conducting analyses, we verified the comparability of narcissism assessments across Poland and Italy. We conducted confirmatory factor analyses (CFA) of all forms of narcissism, followed by multi-group confirmatory factor analyses (MG-CFA), examining measurement invariance. To test our hypotheses, we needed at least a metric level of invariance (Davidov et al., 2014). After establishing invariance, we extracted individual latent scores for all four forms of narcissism before testing the hypotheses. First, to establish the total strength of association between studied variables, we analyzed zero-order relations between narcissism and variables of interest – actual knowledge and overclaiming specific to each domain (agentic, communal) and BTA for each domain. Second, given the overlap between narcissism forms, we estimated the strength of unique effects of each narcissism form using linear regression analyses, separate for each dependent variable.

Finally, acknowledging their shared part (i.e., narcissism in general), and to avoid issues with multicollinearity, we conducted commonality analyses (Ray-Mukherjee et al., 2014). Thus, we examined the amount of variance explained uniquely by each narcissism form, as well as the variance accounted for by combinations of their shared components. These analyses allowed us to provide information on general tendency to self-enhance among people characterized by high grandiose narcissism.

We evaluated the model’s fit relying on the robust maximum likelihood (MLR; Yuan & Bentler, 1998) estimator and standard thresholds of fit indices: CFI, RMSEA, and SRMR. The significance of specific coefficients was inferred based on 95% CI, similar to correlation coefficients. All analyses were conducted in R software, using the “lavaan” package for SEM (Rosseel, 2012), the “yhat” package (Nimon et al., 2008) for commonality analysis, and the “pwr” package (Champely, 2020) for sensitivity power analyses; with $n = 152$ (smaller of two samples). Such a sample size is adequate to reliably (i.e., $\alpha = .05$, power = .80) detect true correlation effects of .22 and higher. In terms of multiple regression analysis with five predictors, the sample is sufficient to verify models explaining 2.3% of variance.

RESULTS

In Table 1, we report zero-order correlation coefficients between variables. Measurement invariance tests are reported in Supplementary materials (Table S1). Narcissism forms were highly correlated, which indicates that they hardly differed. However, the relationships between narcissism forms aligned with the theoretical pattern. We found positive relations between domain-specific overclaiming and BTA with corresponding agentic (admiration) and communal (sanctity) self-enhancement. In Poland, the results for admiration and sanctity were congruent with the hypotheses. In Italy, our hypotheses were in part supported, as we found a positive relationship between admiration and agentic BTA, but not with agentic overclaiming. Sanctity was unrelated with communal BTA and with communal overclaiming.

Moreover, in both countries, communal narcissism also correlated with agentic measures of self-enhancement, which was not expected. In line with the theoretical assumptions, we did not find a relationship between rivalry and self-enhancement manifestations (with a few exceptions; see Table 1). Lastly, heroism was correlated positively with both agentic and communal BTA. Positive correlations between heroism and overclaiming in both domains were found only in the Polish sample. In the Polish sample, stronger correlations were found between domain-specific (agentic and communal) overclaiming and BTA, as

Table 1

Correlations between narcissism forms, domain-related actual knowledge and domain-related overclaiming. Results across Italy and Poland

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<i>M</i>	3.92	2.85	2.85	2.12	0.32	0.32	5.61	0.32	0.21	6.76
<i>SD</i>	0.82	0.94	1.03	0.87	0.15	0.14	1.30	0.18	0.12	1.01
1. Sanctity	.84** [.78, .88]	.87** [.83, .90]	.45** [.33, .55]	.20* [.06, .33]	.06 [-.08, .20]	-.01 [-.15, .13]	.38** [.26, .50]	.06 [-.08, .20]	.09 [-.06, .22]	.30** [.16, .42]
2. Heroism	.26** [.10, .40]	.46** [.32, .58]	.58** [.48, .67]	.33** [.20, .45]	.04 [-.10, .18]	.03 [-.11, .17]	.35** [.22, .47]	.03 [-.11, .17]	.09 [-.05, .23]	.23** [.10, .36]
3. Admiration	.04 [-.12, .20]	.24** [.09, .39]	.79** [.73, .85]	.79** [.73, .83]	.01 [-.14, .14]	-.04 [-.18, .10]	.34** [.21, .46]	-.04 [-.17, .11]	-.09 [-.23, .05]	.11 [-.03, .25]
4. Rivalry	.28** [.13, .42]	.29** [.14, .43]	.23** [.07, .37]	.22** [.06, .36]	-.01 [-.14, .14]	-.05 [-.19, .09]	.25** [.11, .38]	-.08 [-.22, .06]	-.08 [-.22, .06]	.08 [-.07, .21]
5. A. overclaiming	-.13 [-.29, .03]	-.22** [-.37, -.07]	-.21** [-.36, -.06]	-.21* [-.36, -.05]	-.35** [-.48, -.20]	.06 [-.08, .20]	.20** [.06, .33]	.70** [.62, .77]	-.22** [-.35, -.08]	.22** [.08, .35]
6. A. knowledge	.36** [.21, .49]	.29** [.14, .43]	.19* [.03, .34]	.01 [-.15, .17]	.31** [.16, .45]	.19* [.03, .34]	-.02 [-.16, .13]	-.14* [-.28, -.00]	.33** [.20, .45]	-.02 [-.12, .16]
7. A. BTA	.30** [.14, .44]	.31** [.16, .45]	.18* [.02, .33]	.14 [-.02, .30]	.75** [.67, .81]	-.44** [-.56, -.30]	.13 [-.03, .28]	.17* [.03, .30]	-.09 [-.23, .05]	.65** [.56, .72]
8. C. overclaiming	-.18* [-.33, -.02]	-.29** [-.43, -.14]	-.20* [-.35, -.04]	-.17* [-.32, -.01]	-.37** [-.50, -.22]	.49** [.35, .60]	-.05 [-.20, .11]	-.51** [-.62, -.38]	-.51** [-.61, -.40]	-.03 [-.17, .11]
9. C. knowledge	.28** [.13, .42]	.20* [.04, .35]	-.04 [-.20, .12]	-.15 [-.30, .01]	.16 [-.01, .31]	.19* [.03, .34]	.66** [.56, .74]	.09 [-.07, .25]	-.04 [-.20, .12]	
<i>M</i>	3.92	2.89	2.96	2.81	0.35	0.31	5.83	0.32	0.19	7.08
<i>SD</i>	0.81	0.98	1.04	1.03	0.16	0.17	1.41	0.18	0.14	1.34

Note. Below diagonal – Poland, above diagonal – Italy. A. means agentic, and C. means communal. BTA – better-than-average effect. Correlations are for latent variables; descriptive statistics are for observed variables. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

Table 2
Multiple regression analysis in which narcissism forms were used as predictors of overclaiming and BTA effect

Predictor	Polish sample			Italian sample			Polish sample			Communion		
	Agentic overclaiming knowledge	BTA	Actual knowledge	Agentic overclaiming knowledge	BTA	Actual knowledge	Communal overclaiming knowledge	BTA	Actual knowledge	Communal overclaiming knowledge	BTA	Actual knowledge
Sanctity	.08	.19*	-.11	-.20	.00	.12	.03	.05	.23	.07	.05	.23
Heroism	-.02	-.12	.11	.22	.14	-.31*	.10	.06	.00	-.05	.06	.00
Admiration	.00	.38**	.06	-.12	.34**	.04	-.03	-.19	-.21	.01	-.19	-.21
Rivalry	.11	-.18	-.02	.07	-.17	-.03	-.02	.02	.11	-.09	.02	.11
The same construct in different domain ^a	.72**	.45**	.68**	.24**	.64**	.44**	.72**	.65**	.23**	.67**	.65**	.23**
Total explained variance (R^2)	.58	.50	.46	.07	.55	.28	.58	.46	.10	.46	.46	.10
Variance explained by narcissism only	.12	.17	.01	.02	.17	.10	.11	.11	.05	.02	.11	.05

Note. BTA – better-than-average effect; ^afor example, in regression analysis of agentic bias, communal bias was included, to partial out the shared variance of both. Therefore, explained variable left is the residual agentic bias, with all communion and non-specific bias partialled out. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.

well as corresponding forms of narcissism: agentic (admiration) and communal (sanctity). In the Italian sample, however, there were no significant correlations between narcissism and overclaiming. Therefore, the hypothesis about cross-cultural differences in self-enhancement pattern was not supported.

In Table 2, we report the results of separate multiple linear regression analyses in which self-enhancement variables were predicted by all four forms of narcissism. Thus, we could distinguish their unique effects. However, as they were highly correlated, interpreting only the regression coefficients (i.e., their unique effects) may be misleading, as much of the explained variance is shared. Therefore, we also presented shared variance (all $R^2 < .17$) explained jointly by all narcissism forms (Table 2). For the same reasons, we partialized out the dependent variable by controlling the same construct in another domain. Thus, the dependent variables were represented by residual scores derived from control regressions. For example, agentic bias in the Polish sample (Table 2) is uniquely predicted only by communal bias. In sum, regression analyses suggested a general tendency to self-enhancement among narcissists, rather than a domain-specific pattern.

DISCUSSION

We conducted a study on how agentic and communal narcissists engage in self-enhancement in Polish and Italian samples to distinguish between self-enhancing and self-protective forms of grandiose narcissism in agentic and communal domains. Previous research highlights that agentic narcissists overestimate their agentic knowledge (Paulhus & Harms, 2004), which is limited to admiration (Zajenkowski et al., 2023). Recent studies have focused on how communal narcissists engage in self-enhancement (Gebauer et al., 2012; Leniarska et al., 2023), as it seems they should not be concerned with agentic traits such as intelligence (Zajenkowski & Dufner, 2020; Zajenkowski et al., 2023). However, it has been shown that communal narcissists similarly overestimate their intellectual abilities (Leniarska et al., 2023), possibly because they aim to achieve agentic goals via communal means (Gebauer et al., 2012; Leniarska et al., 2023).

In our study, we distinguished four grandiose narcissism forms: admiration, sanctity, rivalry, and heroism. Our findings indicate that both agentic and communal narcissists self-enhance through self-promotion strategies, that is, admiration and sanctity, in the corresponding domains of self-enhancement. However, overclaiming was unrelated to narcissism in the Italian sample. Notably, sanctity was positively correlated with agentic overclaiming and agentic BTA. This result is congruent with the agency-communion model of narcissism, suggesting that communal nar-

cissists are driven by agentic motives, but they use communal means to satisfy these motives (Gebauer et al., 2012).

Regarding self-protection forms, rivalry was positively correlated only with agentic overclaiming in Poland; no association with other self-enhancement measures was identified in either country in multiple regression analysis. Although heroism showed a positive correlation with self-enhancement indicators in both agentic and communal domains, the regression analysis results suggest that it is not uniquely related to self-enhancement.

Our findings suggest that agentic narcissists self-enhance only in the agentic domain through admiration. Meanwhile, communal narcissists self-enhance through sanctity and heroism in both agentic and communal domains, but these effects are not unique for heroism. Thus, communal narcissists aim to achieve both agentic and communal goals, whereas agentic narcissists focus solely on agentic ones (Gebauer et al., 2012). We anticipated differences in how communal narcissism would be associated with self-enhancement measures in Italy, given the country's cultural emphasis on communal traits. However, this hypothesis was not confirmed. Interestingly, two measures of self-enhancement were correlated with each other in expected directions. Thus, it is possible that overclaiming is manifested independently from narcissism in Italy.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Although our study used the newest models of grandiose narcissism, employing various manifestations of self-enhancement, it is not free from limitations. First, women were overrepresented in our sample. Such uneven distribution could affect the results, as agentic narcissism is higher among men, while communal narcissism tends to be higher among women (Gebauer et al., 2012; Žemojtel-Piotrowska et al., 2025).

Secondly, students are well educated; hence, examining overclaiming of knowledge might be influenced by social approval, as knowledge might be important for students regardless of their narcissism levels. Therefore, our study should be replicated in a non-student population to rule out the possibility that the differences between Polish and Italian participants can be explained by cultural differences, rather than different educational systems. Future studies employing overclaiming technique should not be restricted to students, as this group may manifest agentic traits, given the necessity to demonstrate them during their studies. In addition, as this study is correlational in nature, future research would benefit from adopting an experimental paradigm allowing us to examine causal effects of narcissism (e.g., examined as an activated state).

Although we relied on established frameworks to justify cultural comparisons between Italy and Poland, differences in human orientation and harmony may be minimal (Hanel et al., 2018). Future research should consider using countries with clearer cultural contrasts or assess individual-level cultural orientation directly, rather than relying solely on a national context. Given that our samples were moderate in size, power issues could affect the results. Recognizing cultural influences on self-enhancement can further refine approaches to leadership, communication, and media literacy, fostering a more accurate and balanced self-perception in different social contexts.

Supplementary materials are available on the journal's website.

DISCLOSURES

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The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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