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The Role of Extrinsic Orientation In the Relation Between Adolescent Narcissism and Problem Behaviors

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The University of Southern Mississippi

THE ROLE OF EXTRINSIC ORIENTATION IN THE RELATION BETWEEN
ADOLESCENT NARCISSISM AND PROBLEM BEHAVIORS

by

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Abstract

The present study examined the moderating effects of academic and religious motivational orientations on the relation between adolescent narcissism and delinquency and aggression. It was hypothesized that adolescent narcissism would be significantly correlated with extrinsic orientation in religion and academics. In addition, it was expected that participants who reported high levels of adolescent narcissism and extrinsic motivation would report the highest levels of delinquency and proactive aggression and that an intrinsic orientation would mitigate this relationship. Data were acquired through the self-report surveys of 143 adolescents (111 males, 32 females), ranging in age from 16 to 19 ($M = 17.05$, $SD = .86$), who were enrolled in a residential program in the summer and fall of 2013. Neither non-pathological nor pathological (i.e. grandiose, vulnerable) narcissism was correlated with extrinsic orientation in religion or academics. Higher levels of proactive aggression were associated with a combination of extrinsic-personal religious motivation and grandiose narcissism. Higher levels of reactive aggression were associated with high levels of extrinsic-personal religious motivation and both grandiose and vulnerable narcissism. Contrary to hypotheses, intrinsic orientation heightened the associations of grandiose and vulnerable narcissism with aggression. Implications of these findings, limitations, and suggestions for future research are discussed.

Key words: motivational orientation, narcissism, delinquency, aggression

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Introduction

Most generally, narcissism can be defined as exaggerated self-worth, which may be accompanied by a lack of empathy and exploitative or dominant tendencies to preserve one's self views (Campbell, 1999). These self-serving characteristics are associated with several negative outcomes. Adolescent narcissism has been correlated with delinquency, aggression, and an unstable or vulnerable sense of self (Barry, Grafeman, Adler, & Pickard, 2007; Kerr, Patton, Lapan, & Hills, 1994). In addition to these problematic behaviors and characteristics, narcissism is thought to hinder the development of emotionally connected relationships (Campbell, 1999). Furthermore, most individuals with narcissistic tendencies seem to form relationships and participate in activities solely for the opportunity to affirm positive beliefs about themselves that may not be based in reality (Morf & Rhodewalt, 2001). Campbell (1999) demonstrated that narcissism is associated with a preference for high-status and admiring partners who bolster the narcissist's self-esteem without requiring any true emotional intimacy. In other words, a key characteristic of narcissism is the drive to use relationships instrumentally, rather than genuinely.

This use of a relationship instrumentally can be considered an extrinsically motivated behavior (Finkelstein, 2009). Extrinsically motivated behaviors can be seen in other domains as well, such as using community service to benefit oneself in future career endeavors rather than helping others because the act is fulfilling in itself. Thus, one who participates in an activity for an externally driven reason is said to have an extrinsic orientation within that domain. Conversely, engaging in an activity because that activity is inherently satisfying is considered an intrinsically motivated behavior. One

who participates in an activity for such a reason is said to have an intrinsic orientation within that domain (Finkelstein, 2009).

The various characteristics of narcissism demonstrate its likely relation to extrinsic orientation in that narcissists consistently use relationships and other endeavors as a means to attain some external reward—even if that reward is as simple as looking good to others. Further, Watson, Hood and Morris (1984) showed that intrinsic religious orientation is inversely related to narcissism in adults. Studies on adolescent narcissism are still limited relative to the work that has been conducted with adults. Nevertheless, because adolescence is often a time when people start desiring autonomy over their own values and making decisions about participation in social endeavors (i.e. making the personal decision to attend church, participating in community service, etc.; Daddis, 2011), one's orientation toward such activities may be a function of his or her personality tendencies. In particular, narcissism may be associated with more of an extrinsic orientation toward adolescent social pursuits. Extrinsic orientation within certain social pursuits may also play a role in the established connection between narcissism and problematic behaviors (e.g. delinquency, aggression).

The present study posed the following questions:

1. Is adolescent narcissism related to extrinsic orientation in religion or academics?
2. Does the type of narcissism (i.e. non-pathological or pathological) affect the relation with extrinsic orientation in religion or academics?
3. Does extrinsic orientation in religion or academics moderate the relation between adolescent narcissism and delinquency and aggression?

4. Does intrinsic orientation in religion or academics mitigate adolescent narcissism's association with delinquency and aggression?

Value to Academic Discipline

The present study examined the relation between adolescent narcissism and academic/religious motivational orientation. Considering narcissism's association with the use of others for personal gain, one would expect a high correlation between narcissism and extrinsic motivation. However, few studies have attempted to make this connection in the domains of academic and religious orientation. Assuming that an individual who is genuinely involved in these domains is more interested in positively contributing to society than an individual who is involved in such activities solely for personal gain, the assessment of motivational orientation may provide valid insight into the established connection of aggression and delinquency with narcissism.

Literature Review

Narcissism

Among other characteristics, conceptualizations of non-pathological narcissism often include competitiveness in trying to reach goals and a desire for dominance over peers (Pincus et al., 2009). Although this tendency can contribute negatively to interpersonal relations, Maxwell, Donnellan, Hopwood, and Ackerman (2011) describe normal or non-pathological narcissism as a "seemingly healthy expression of self-enhancement" (p. 577). Recent research has suggested that with the exception of the Entitlement and Exploitativeness scales, the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (Raskin & Terry, 1988), one of the most commonly used measures of self-reported narcissism, mainly assesses non-pathological narcissism (Pincus et al., 2009).

An alternative view of narcissism focuses on characteristics that appear more pathological, and the expression of those personality tendencies can be either grandiose or vulnerable. Grandiose narcissism, similar to the DSM-IV criteria for Narcissistic Personality

Disorder (American Psychiatric Association, 2000), includes a tendency to exaggerate self-worth, feel overly entitled, and exploit others for personal gain (Maxwell et al., 2011). Conversely, Pincus and colleagues (2009) describe vulnerable narcissism as including a “conscious experience of helplessness, emptiness, low self-esteem, and shame” (p. 367). People with non-pathological narcissistic traits may develop ways to dismiss views or events that do not line up with their confident views of themselves and may even react with aggression, but individuals with high levels of pathological narcissism may cope in particularly maladaptive ways ranging from interpersonally exploitative acts and aggression to suicide attempts (Pincus et al., 2009).

Even considering this view of narcissism that separates normal from pathological narcissism, it is clear that narcissistic features include a reliance on relationships for self-centered reasons (Campbell, 1999). Morf and Rhodewalt (2001) point out the importance of external affirmation for the narcissist’s construct of self. This need for external affirmation implies that narcissists are consistently driven by extrinsic motives in some or all areas of their lives. Although it is clear that these motives are consistent in personal relationships, there are multiple other domains that have not been researched in relation to narcissism. Exploring the motives connected to adolescent narcissism across multiple domains can provide insight into the extent to which individuals with narcissistic tendencies approach various activities for the possibility of personal gain or affirmation.

Motivational Orientation

There are two broad orientations of motivation: intrinsic and extrinsic (Bénabou & Tirole, 2003). Intrinsic motivation can basically be defined as doing something for its own sake. For example, one might try hard in school because he or she enjoys the process of gaining knowledge. Extrinsic motivation can basically be defined as doing something as a means to an external end (Henningsgaard & Arnau, 2008). For example, one might try hard in school simply to obtain a good grade. In terms of narcissism where relationships are used for instrumental gain (Campbell, 1999), the question becomes whether narcissism—in this case, adolescent narcissism—can be clearly linked to extrinsic orientation for other social domains. Religion and academics were the two domains examined in the present study.

Extrinsic religious orientation involves viewing and using religion for some external reward or gain (Allport & Ross, 1967). That end may be one of a number of things such as appearing virtuous in the eyes of the community, using religion for personal comfort, or taking advantage of the social aspect of religion. According to Henningsgaard and Arnau (2008), “various aspects of religiosity, including religious orientation, frequency of church attendance, and personal prayer are negatively related to Psychoticism” (p. 703-704). Further, extrinsic religiosity has been shown to be positively related to neuroticism (Henningsgaard & Arnau, 2008). Given that psychoticism has been related to interpersonal aggressiveness and hostility (“Psychoticism,” n.d.) and neuroticism to anxiety and vulnerability (Muris, J de Jong, & Engelen, 2004), one can see how narcissists who are concerned with how others see them and often respond aggressively to negative evaluation are very likely to be extrinsically religiously oriented.

More directly, Watson, Jones and Morris (2004) reported that in their sample of 418 undergraduates, intrinsic religious orientation predicted lower narcissism along with a reduced desire for money. Extrinsic religious orientation showed the opposite relation.

To be intrinsically oriented in academics means that an individual is genuinely interested in learning and is curious about the subject matter for its own sake (Hayenga & Corpus, 2010). The benefits of a genuine interest in learning without the necessity for external rewards such as grades or praise have been verified by previous research. For example, Hayenga and Corpus (2010) found that middle school students with high intrinsic and low extrinsic motivation received better grades than students with low intrinsic and low extrinsic motivation, low intrinsic and high extrinsic motivation, and even high intrinsic and high extrinsic motivation. These results suggest that even when a student endorses both types of motivation, extrinsic motivation reduces the positive effect of intrinsic motivation (Hayenga & Corpus, 2010). However, another study with high school students suggested that controlled forms of extrinsic motivation might not have negative outcomes when present with high intrinsic motivation (Wormington, Corpus, & Anderson, 2012). In any case, high intrinsic motivation is associated with better performance.

Although there is little research on the connection between narcissism and academic orientation, one study looked at the effects of academic entitlement, “a construct that includes expectations of high grades for modest effort and demanding attitudes towards teachers” (Greenberger et al., 2008, p. 1193). This construct was related to entitlement, exploitive attitudes, and narcissism, and even though academic entitlement did not have an impact on GPA, those with high academic entitlement

reported high levels of achievement anxiety, extrinsic motivation, and academic dishonesty (Greenberger et al., 2008). Because a sense of entitlement is a feature of both pathological and non-pathological narcissism, the association between academic entitlement and narcissism is not surprising. Individuals with narcissistic tendencies seem to expect positive evaluations even when their own accomplishments are lacking (Morf & Rhodewalt, 2001), and it is likely that they would care more about a grade that would make them look good to peers (i.e., an extrinsic motivator) than genuinely learning material for its own sake (i.e., an intrinsic motivator).

Narcissism and Aggression

Previous research has demonstrated a clear association between narcissism and aggression (Bushman & Baumeister, 1998; Fossati, Borroni, Eisenberg, & Maffei, 2010; Wink, 1991). Aggression is most broadly defined as a behavior that is intended to harm or hurt others (Berkowitz, 1993), and it can be further characterized as reactive or proactive. Reactive aggression is typically a response to some perceived threat (Berkowitz, 1993), and it is not surprising that narcissists may respond this way when they perceive that their positive self-evaluations are being challenged (e.g., Bushman & Baumeister, 1998; Thomaes, Bushman, Stegge & Olthof, 2008). Proactive aggression “is used for instrumental gain or dominance over others” (Marsee & Frick, 2007, p. 969). Given that adolescent narcissism has also been consistently associated with proactive aggression (Barry et al., 2007; Fossati, Borroni, Eisenberg, & Maffei, 2010; Seah & Ang, 2008) and that this type of aggression is devoted toward achieving some external end, an extrinsic orientation (i.e., engaging in endeavors because of some extrinsic benefit) may play a role in this association.

Narcissism and Delinquency

Aggression is only one type of problem behavior that has been connected to narcissism. More specifically, the relation between adolescent narcissism and delinquency, or more varied law-violating behaviors, has been shown in multiple studies (Barry, Grafeman et al., 2007; Barry, Pickard, & Ansel, 2009; Barry, Frick, Adler, & Grafeman, 2007). Considering the possible role of extrinsic motivation in narcissism, one question that arises is whether viewing relationships and social constructs as opportunities for external or social rewards also plays a key role in juvenile delinquency for adolescents with high levels of narcissism. In addition, it is possible that an individual with narcissistic tendencies who is otherwise intrinsically motivated in relationships or social endeavors might be less apt to participate in delinquent activities. For example, Chang-Ho, Perry, and Clarke-Pine (2011) found intrinsic religiosity to be one deterrent to juvenile delinquency. However, other research into this area is lacking.

One reason that intrinsic motivation might act as a deterrent to juvenile delinquency lies in the idea that those with an intrinsic orientation are more inclined to experience life without always seeking a reward. An adolescent experiencing increased autonomy may be drawn to seek out rewards (i.e. drug experimentation, shoplifting, sexual gratification, etc.) simply because the opportunity is there, but an intrinsic orientation may deter such behavior. Specifically, genuine involvement in religion seems likely to act as a deterrent because someone who is truly interested in living up to the standards believed to be connected to his/her religion may not be as drawn to material rewards. Similarly, an intrinsic academic orientation seems likely to act as a deterrent because of the necessary curiosity about, and interest in, higher-level thinking. One who

engages in these pursuits and surrounds oneself with peers with similar interests presumably would not be as likely to engage in aggressive or other law-violating behaviors, even if he or she is highly narcissistic.

Present Study

The use of relationships and aggression for personal gain reveals a consistent pattern involving narcissism and motivation. People high in narcissism typically display extrinsically motivated behaviors (i.e., doing something as a means to some external end) in these domains. Although previous research has demonstrated the benefits of intrinsic motivation in multiple areas including academics and religion (Hayenga & Corpus, 2010; Watson, Jones & Morris, 2004), the extent of those benefits has not yet been examined. The present study aimed to determine whether an individual who was high in narcissistic characteristics and had an extrinsic religious and academic orientation would be more likely to engage in proactive aggression and delinquency and whether intrinsic motivation (i.e., the drive to do something because it is inherently satisfying) would mitigate that association.

Hypotheses

It was hypothesized that:

1. Adolescent narcissism would be significantly correlated with extrinsic orientation in religion and academics.
2. Both types of narcissism (i.e., non-pathological, pathological) would be similarly related to extrinsic orientation in religion or academics.
3. Extrinsic orientation in religion and academics would moderate the relations of proactive aggression and delinquency with adolescent narcissism, such that the

highest levels of delinquency and proactive aggression would be associated with a combination of high narcissism and a relative extrinsic orientation.

4. Intrinsic religious orientation would mitigate the associations of adolescent narcissism with delinquency and proactive aggression.

Method

Participants

Participants were 143 adolescents (111 males, 32 females), ranging in age from 16 to 19 ($M = 17.05$, $SD = .86$), who were enrolled in a residential program in the summer and fall of 2013. The program was composed of adolescents who dropped out of high school for a number of reasons ranging from academic to behavioral and sought to provide a disciplinary environment in which participants could pursue a GED. The sample was predominately male and Caucasian.

Materials

Narcissistic Personality Inventory for Children (*NPIC*; Barry, Frick, & Killian, 2003). The NPIC is a valid and reliable adaptation of the adult Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI; Raskin & Terry, 1988) that was developed for use on younger samples. It measures non-pathological narcissism (Barry & Kauten, 2014). Participants answered each item in a forced-choice format in which they chose one statement from a pair and marked whether that statement was either “sort of true” or “really true” for them, resulting in a 4-point response scale for each item. Wallace, Barry, Zeigler-Hill, and Green (2012) reported a coefficient alpha of .83 for the full 40-item scale in a sample of adolescents similar to the sample in the present study. The coefficient alpha was also .83 in the current study.

Pathological Narcissism Inventory (PNI; Pincus et al., 2009). The PNI is a 52-item survey used to measure pathological narcissism, including both grandiose and vulnerable narcissism. This measure has seven subscales: Contingent Self-Esteem, Exploitativeness, Self-Sacrificing Self Enhancement, Hiding the Self, Grandiose Fantasy, Devaluing Others and Need for Others, and Entitlement Rage. Participants rated each item in the measure on a scale from 0 (“not at all like me”) to 5 (“very much like me”). Pincus (2009) and colleagues reported a coefficient alpha of .95 for the full 52-item scale. In the current study, the internal consistencies were good for the Grandiose subscale ($\alpha = .88$) and the Vulnerable subscale ($\alpha = .94$).

Religious Orientation Scale-Revised (Gorsuch & McPherson, 1989). The Religious Orientation Scale is a 14-item survey used to measure intrinsic and extrinsic religious orientation. The measure developed by Allport and Ross (1967) was revised once by Gorsuch and Venable (1983) and again by Gorsuch and McPherson (1989). This most recent adaptation was used in the present study. The 1989 revision was intended to make the language easy to understand for all age groups and all educational levels, which made it preferable for the present study on adolescents. The revision also separates extrinsic orientation into personal and social categories. Eight items are dedicated to measuring intrinsic orientation, and six items are dedicated to measuring extrinsic orientation (i.e., three for social and three for personal). Participants rated each item on a scale from 0 (“I strongly disagree”) to 4 (“I strongly agree”). In relation to validity, Gorsuch and McPherson (1989) stated, “This scale confirms the factors found by Kirkpatrick (1989) in his reanalysis of several studies using traditional religious orientation scales” (p. 155). Gorsuch and McPherson reported an internal consistency of

.83 for the intrinsic portion of the measure but a relatively low reliability for the extrinsic portions of the measure (.57 for Extrinsic-Personal, .58 for Extrinsic-Social, and .65 for Extrinsic-Personal/Extrinsic-Social), which they attributed to the fewer number of items in this section. However, they pointed to the benefit of a relatively short measure for administration to large groups. In the current study, the internal consistencies were .73 for Extrinsic-Social, .77 for Extrinsic-Personal, and .58 for Intrinsic.

Scale of Intrinsic vs. Extrinsic Orientation (*Harter, 1981*). The Scale of Intrinsic vs. Extrinsic Orientation is used to measure intrinsic and extrinsic academic orientation in adolescents. The 30-item measure has five subscales (six questions each): Preference for Challenge vs. Preference for Easy Work Assigned, Curiosity/Interest vs. Pleasing the Teacher/Getting Grades, Independent Mastery vs. Dependence on the Teacher, Independent Judgment vs. Reliance on the Teacher's Judgment, and Internal Criteria vs. External Criteria. The first part of the title of each subscale (e.g. "Preference for Challenge") relates to intrinsic motivation, whereas the second part of each title (e.g. "Preference for Easy Work Assigned") reflects extrinsic motivation. Participants answered each item in a forced-choice format in which they chose one statement from a pair and marked whether that chosen statement was either "sort of true" or "really true" for them. Of the six questions in each subscale, three begin with a statement related to intrinsic motivation, and three begin with a statement related to extrinsic motivation. Harter (1981) reported good factorial, construct, and predictive validity in her analysis of the measure. A composite score of the sum of all items was used in this study to provide a unitary measure of academic orientation. The internal consistency for the SIEO composite was .68.

Self-Report of Delinquency (SRD; Elliot & Ageton, 1980). The SRD allows respondents to anonymously report on their history of, and involvement in, 34 delinquent acts. Responses are made in a yes/no format wherein the respondent indicates whether he or she has ever engaged in the behavior described in each item. The acts fall under the general categories of violent, property, drug, and status offenses. In a study conducted on a similar population as the current study, the coefficient alpha was .92 for one cohort and .93 for another (Barry, Grafeman, et al., 2007). The coefficient alpha was .87 in the present study.

Peer Conflict Scale (PCS; Marsee & Frick, 2007). According to Marsee and Frick (2007), the PCS is a 40-item measure “including ten items in each of four aggression categories: proactive overt (“I start fights to get what I want”), proactive relational (“I gossip about others to become popular”), reactive overt (“When someone hurts me, I end up getting into a fight”), and reactive relational (“If others make me mad, I tell their secrets”)” (p. 972). Items are rated on a 4-point scale ranging from 0 to 3 (0 = “not at all true,” 1 = “somewhat true,” 2 = “very true,” 3 = “definitely true”). In Marsee and Frick’s (2007) study, the internal consistency was .82 for the proactive overt scale and .80 for proactive relational scale, which are the main scales of interest in the present study. These scales were combined in the present study to form a 20-item scale of proactive aggression. Models that predicted reactive aggression were also used. In the current study, the internal consistencies were good for the Proactive ($\alpha = .93$) and Reactive ($\alpha = .91$) scales.

Procedure

This study was approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at The University of Southern Mississippi. Parental consent was obtained for adolescents to be invited to participate in this study at the time that they were enrolled in the residential program. Adolescents with parental consent were invited to participate approximately eight weeks after their enrollment in the program. The nature of the study was explained, and research assistants dispersed assent forms. The assent form was read out loud by a research assistant who also explained the purposes of the research, the expected duration of the subject's participation, the procedures to be followed, any reasonably foreseeable risks or discomforts to the participant, the extent to which confidentiality of records identifying the subject would be maintained, that participation was voluntary and could be discontinued at any time, who to contact for questions about the research, and the participants' rights. If they agreed, participants completed questionnaires on computers via a secure website, with research assistants available to address any questions from participants. Participation in this study in no way affected an adolescent's status in the residential program.

Results

Descriptive statistics for the study variables are listed in Table 1. As expected, both non-pathological and pathological narcissism were significantly positively correlated with aggression: non-pathological, $r = .43$, vulnerable, $r = .51$, grandiose, $r = .32$. Non-pathological and the vulnerable dimension of pathological narcissism were also positively correlated with delinquency: non-pathological, $r = .23$, vulnerable, $r = .20$. Grandiose narcissism's relation with delinquency was not significant, $r = .05$.

Table 1.

Descriptive statistics for study variables.

Variable (possible range)	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>
NPIC (0 to 120)	111	53.33	15.72	14.00	108.00
Grandiose Narcissism (1 to 6)	148	3.54	.88	1.00	6.00
Vulnerable Narcissism (1 to 6)	148	3.02	.91	1.00	5.64
Academic Orientation (30 to 120)	145	78.74	10.55	54.00	107.00
Intrinsic Religious Orientation (0 to 32)	145	18.21	5.19	3.00	32.00
E-P Religious Orientation (0 to 12)	145	7.22	3.16	.00	12.00
E-S Religious Orientation (0 to 12)	144	3.91	2.94	.00	12.00
Proactive Aggression (0 to 60)	146	2.92	6.11	.00	28.00
Reactive Aggression (0 to 60)	146	5.77	7.52	.00	37.00
Delinquency (0 to 34)	143	9.78	5.80	.00	28.00

Note: Possible range is determined by the mean item score.

Hypothesis 1 stated that adolescent narcissism would be significantly correlated with extrinsic orientation in religion or academics. This hypothesis was not supported for any type of narcissism (vulnerable, grandiose, or non-pathological) in relation to extrinsic orientation for religion, as shown in Table 2. Also shown in Table 2, these three dimensions of narcissism were not significantly correlated with intrinsic or extrinsic orientation in academics.

Hypothesis 2 stated that narcissism would be similarly related to extrinsic orientation in religion or academics. Both non-pathological and pathological narcissism had weak, non-significant relations with extrinsic orientation in both domains.

Table 2.

Correlations between main variables.

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.
1. Grandiose Narcissism	—	.71***	.27**	-.07	-.04	.13	.06
2. Vulnerable Narcissism		—	.13	-.08	-.04	.10	.05
3. Non-Pathological Narcissism			—	.01	.05	.15	.08
4. Academic Orientation				—	-.001	-.23**	-.05
5. Religious Orientation (Intrinsic)					—	.51***	.07
6. Religious Orientation (Extrinsic-personal)						—	.27**
7. Religious Orientation (Extrinsic-social)							—

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Table 3.

Correlations between main variables.

	<i>Delinquency</i>	<i>Aggression</i>
1. Grandiose Narcissism	.05	.32***
2. Vulnerable Narcissism	.20*	.51***
3. Non-Pathological Narcissism	.23*	.43***
4. Academic Orientation	-.07	-.06
5. Religious Orientation (Intrinsic)	-.14	.04
6. Religious Orientation (Extrinsic-personal)	-.10	.04
7. Religious Orientation (Extrinsic-social)	.02	-.01

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Hypothesis 3 stated the extrinsic orientation in religion and academics would moderate the relation between adolescent narcissism and delinquency and proactive aggression, such that the highest levels of delinquency and proactive aggression would be associated with a combination of high narcissism and high extrinsic orientation.

Hypothesis 4 stated that intrinsic religious orientation would mitigate the association between adolescent narcissism and both delinquency and proactive aggression. These hypotheses were investigated through multiple regression analyses with a narcissism variable (i.e., vulnerable, grandiose, or non-pathological) and an orientation variable (i.e.,

academic orientation, intrinsic religious orientation, extrinsic-social, or extrinsic-personal religious orientation) entered in the first step and the interaction term between these predictors entered in the second step. Separate models were analyzed for predicting variance in proactive aggression and delinquency. The models were repeated to explore potential interaction effects for reactive aggression. Therefore, there were a total of 36 regression models examined.

Of these models, 7 yielded significant interaction effects. None of the interactions involving academic orientation or delinquency were significant. In addition, no models with non-pathological narcissism as the independent variable were significant. However, significant interactions were observed for models using religious orientation as a moderator, with grandiose and vulnerable narcissism as predictors of aggression.

As shown in Figure 1, higher levels of proactive aggression were associated with the combination of high extrinsic-personal religious motivation and high grandiose narcissism than when extrinsic-personal religious motivation was low, $B = .31$, $se = .15$, $p < .05$, $R^2 \text{ change} = .03$. Displayed in Figure 2, a significant effect was observed for predicting reactive aggression when high extrinsic-personal religious motivation was present with high grandiose narcissism, $B = .54$, $se = .18$, $p = .003$, $R^2 \text{ change} = .05$. In addition, as shown in Figure 3, there was a significant interaction effect between extrinsic religious orientation and vulnerable narcissism in the prediction of reactive aggression, $B = .41$, $se = .16$, $p = .01$, $R^2 \text{ change} = .03$, such that the highest levels of reactive aggression were associated with a combination of vulnerable narcissism and high extrinsic-personal religious orientation.

Contrary to what was predicted in Hypothesis 4, intrinsic religious orientation did not mitigate the relation between adolescent narcissism and proactive aggression. In fact, relatively high levels of proactive aggression were associated with intrinsic religious orientation and high grandiose narcissism, $B = .20$, $se = .10$, $p = .04$, $R^2 \text{ change} = .03$. There was also a significant interaction effect for intrinsic religious orientation in the relation between grandiose narcissism and reactive aggression, $B = .39$, $se = .11$, $p < .001$, $R^2 \text{ change} = .07$; vulnerable narcissism and reactive aggression, $B = .34$, $se = .09$, $p < .001$, $R^2 \text{ change} = .06$; and vulnerable narcissism and proactive aggression, $B = .20$, $se = .09$, $p = .02$, $R^2 \text{ change} = .03$. These interactions all demonstrated the same pattern (see Figures 4-7) in that intrinsic religious orientation seemed to heighten the risk of aggression for individuals with relatively high levels of grandiose or vulnerable narcissism. Particularly low levels of aggression were associated with intrinsic religious orientation in the relative absence of narcissism.

Discussion

The present study was designed to explore the relations between adolescent narcissism, aggression, delinquency, and motivational orientation in the domains of academics and religion. Relatively few studies have examined narcissism's connection to motivational orientation, so the goal was to begin to understand how these constructs may interact to influence well-established correlates of narcissism (i.e., aggression, delinquency). The key findings of the present study appeared to apply to pathological narcissism (i.e., grandiose, vulnerable) as opposed to non-pathological narcissism. Hypothesis 1 stated that adolescent narcissism would be significantly related to extrinsic orientation in academics or religion, which was based on a defining characteristic of

narcissism—the tendency toward instrumental use of people and situations and preoccupation with social status (Morf & Rhodewalt, 2001). However, this hypothesis was not supported, suggesting that extrinsic orientation in domains other than religion or academics may be more central to narcissism. Hypothesis 2 stated that pathological and non-pathological narcissism would be similarly related to extrinsic orientation for both domains. Though both were similarly related, these relations were not strong or significant.

Hypothesis 3 stated that the highest levels of delinquency and proactive aggression would be associated with a combination of high narcissism and high extrinsic orientation. In fact, in the presence of high extrinsic religious motivation, higher levels of both proactive and reactive aggression were seen in participants high in grandiose narcissism. In some cases, those high in grandiose narcissism may support others emotionally and instrumentally, even while secretly considering those people inferior and experience this act of generosity as proof of their own moral and practical superiority (Pincus et al., 2009). This tendency seems likely to have an outlet for expression if one uses religion instrumentally, as one high in grandiose narcissism would be able to validate an exaggerated sense of self-worth by taking part in a community that is based on helping others. This access to, and use of, a community to affirm one's moral superiority along with the ability to use religion as a tool for comfort during difficult times without feeling a need for the tenets of that religion to affect one's daily life (Gorsuch & McPherson, 1989) seems likely to exacerbate aggressive tendencies typically displayed by an individual high in grandiose narcissism. Whether acting proactively aggressive toward others to fulfill fantasies of power or reactively aggressive when one's

sense of superiority is challenged, an extrinsic religious orientation could offer the individual the necessary entitlement to engage in the act and provide an escape from guilt after the act is complete.

Higher levels of reactive aggression were observed in those participants high in vulnerable narcissism with concomitant extrinsic religious orientation. As previously stated, Pincus and colleagues (2009) describe vulnerable narcissism as, among other things, including feelings of low self-esteem and shame. Although people high in vulnerable narcissism often suffer for long periods of time with these feelings, they typically experience a sense of uniqueness or elevated status as a result of their “psychic pain” (Pincus et al., 2009, p. 367). Based on the views of Pincus and colleagues (2009), adolescents with high levels of vulnerable narcissism may be socially avoidant. Therefore, they may not exploit the religious community to the extent of using others that they do not care about in order to feel superior, but someone high in vulnerable narcissism may still use religion extrinsically to justify acts of aggression and provide comfort in times of need. Another important component of vulnerable narcissism to consider is entitlement rage, which describes feelings of anger that arise when an individual does not think that others offer the respect, compensation, or compliance that he or she deserves (Pincus et al., 2009). If an individual high in entitlement rage believes that others in the religious community fail to reciprocate helpful acts or that others do not show appropriate respect for his or her belief or involvement in religion, he or she could react with aggression. The motives behind aggression among some adolescents with an extrinsic religious orientation should be the subject of future research.

More difficult to explain is the finding that the relations of grandiose and vulnerable narcissism and aggression were heightened by the presence of intrinsic religious orientation. One consideration is that intrinsic and extrinsic-personal religious orientations, the only two motivational orientations to moderate the relation between narcissism and aggression, were significantly correlated ($r = .51$). This pattern indicates that some common factor between these scales made it difficult for participants to make a significant distinction between the two. Extrinsic-personal items pertain to what the individual personally gains from religion such as peace, comfort, and protection (Gorsuch & McPherson, 1989). Possibly, participants high in narcissism did not recognize a difference or did not find these views incompatible with intrinsic items that emphasize pursuing religion for its own sake, which may be indicative of feelings of superiority for some adolescents.

Although intrinsic religious orientation has been associated with positive factors in some other studies (Watson, Hood, & Morris, 1984; Watson, Jones & Morris, 2004), it still may contribute to feelings of status over others that when combined with narcissistic feelings, might promote aggression as a strategy toward others. For grandiose narcissism, this effect may translate to an increase in feelings of superiority over others who are not religious, which could contribute to interpersonal conflict in certain circumstances. As mentioned earlier, those high in vulnerable narcissism often experience feelings of entitlement and typically exercise social avoidance. Intrinsic religious orientation might contribute to these feelings of entitlement without necessarily making the individual less avoidant of peers. If ridiculed by others for these atypical behaviors, they may react aggressively. Such individuals may engage in proactive

aggression to increase self-esteem or control certain situations they deem inappropriate (Wallace et al., 2012). Although an intrinsic religious orientation implies that the individual is not just using religion for comfort in times of need, participants high in both dimensions of pathological narcissism may still find comfort in the opportunity for forgiveness of their actions, which may perpetuate aggression in the future.

Although there was a significant interaction effect for both types of aggression in the presence high extrinsic-personal religious orientation and high levels of pathological narcissism, no effect was observed for delinquency. Given that many of the participants engaged in delinquent acts before entering the program, it may be that religious orientation was less likely to significantly influence frequency of delinquent acts in this group than in other samples for which delinquent activity might have been less common. In addition, the SRD focuses on a much wider range of behaviors than aggression against others, including property, drug, violent and status offenses (Elliott & Ageton, 1980). Religious orientation, which may contribute to a sense of superiority and dominance over others in those high in narcissism, may not exacerbate these behaviors that do not involve behaviorally expressing that superiority to others. Further, the SRD asks questions about the entire history of delinquent behaviors with no consideration of the subject's present view of, or engagement in, the specified behaviors. Someone with an intrinsic religious orientation who attempts to live by the tenets of the religion in the present may have engaged in any number of delinquent behaviors in the past. On the other hand, the PCS evaluates aggressive behaviors and attitudes in the present (i.e., "I start fights to get what I want;" Marsee & Frick, 2007). This distinction may also contribute to differences in

the outcome of religious orientation as a moderator across models involving aggression and delinquency.

Academic orientation did not moderate the relations between dimensions of narcissism and aggression in this study; in fact, academic orientation demonstrated no significant associations with other study variables. The aforementioned study of the effects of academic entitlement—a construct related to narcissism, entitlement, and exploitive attitudes—found that academic entitlement did not have an effect on GPA but that those with high academic entitlement reported high levels of achievement anxiety, extrinsic motivation, and academic dishonesty (Greenberger et al., 2008). Although extrinsic academic orientation may affect grades, and those with academic entitlement may be more likely to engage in dishonest behavior in school (Greenberger et al., 2008; Hayenga & Corpus, 2010), these effects may not translate to higher levels of interpersonal aggressiveness and delinquency, particularly as a function of narcissism. In addition, the academic orientation of participants in this sample (i.e., adolescents who had dropped out of school) may be influenced by very different processes than adolescents of a similar age with a stronger academic history. Further research on the connection between academic orientation and narcissism in a more varied adolescent sample is needed.

Limitations

This study had a number of limitations, which should be considered. First, the program from which participants were recruited had a predominantly male and White enrollment. Therefore, generalizability may be limited by a lack of diversity in the sample. Next, considering that many participants had a past with either behavioral or

academic problems, the results may not apply to those adolescents who are not in a residential setting. In addition, all data were collected using self-report surveys. Consequently, responses could have been distorted on any of the measures, and the correlations between them could be somewhat inflated given that they came from the same source (i.e., participant self-reports). Socially desirable responding, in particular, could have altered some of the findings. For example, when reporting delinquent activities, participants were asked to remember the first time and the total number of times they engaged in the activity, which is often difficult to remember and may not be preferable to report. Some argue that police reports are more reliable than self-report in the assessment of adolescent delinquent behaviors and their correlates (Elliott & Ageton, 1980); however, such an approach is limited to only those acts for which adolescents are arrested. An individual's aggressive tendencies may also be assessed by the reports of others, as the individual may not have an accurate view of his/her own aggression or may want to represent him or herself positively. In relation to academic and religious orientation, the individual may also want to represent him or herself positively, so it might be useful to obtain additional information from parents or peers in these areas to increase the comprehensiveness, and potentially the validity, of the data.

In addition, the possibility of amotivation (i.e., lacking motivation for the relevant activity) was not explored (Barkoukis, Tsorbatzoudis, Grouios, & Sideridis, 2008) in the present study. Considering that most of the participants did not complete high school, assuming an intrinsic or extrinsic orientation for them in academics may not have been the appropriate approach. If participants did not have a religious affiliation, the same problem could have been encountered in that domain. Gorsuch and McPherson (1989)

attempted to measure extrinsic religious orientation in a multidimensional fashion (i.e., extrinsic-personal; extrinsic-social), but there were only three items in each of these scales. Furthermore, this measure uses separate items to delineate extrinsic and intrinsic orientation, rather than viewing them as two ends of the same continuum. Thus, for adolescent respondents, it may be difficult to wholly endorse one orientation versus another given the possibility that they interpreted some intrinsic and extrinsic items in a similar manner, as evidenced by the significant moderate correlation between intrinsic orientation and extrinsic-personal orientation in the present study.

Future Directions

The present study revealed two patterns concerning the role of motivational orientation in the established relations of narcissism with aggression and delinquency. High grandiose and vulnerable narcissism consistently resulted in relatively higher levels of aggression when accompanied by either self-reported intrinsic or extrinsic-personal religious orientations. These findings suggest not only that these motivational drives to engage in religious practices exacerbate aggressive tendencies in individuals high in pathological narcissism but also, as noted above, that participants may have had a difficult time understanding or distinguishing between items indicative of intrinsic versus extrinsic religious orientation. Alternatively, adolescents in this sample may very well not have a fully formed religious orientation.

Considering that the intrinsic and extrinsic-personal scales of the ROS were highly correlated, future studies could examine the similarities between the scales that might make it difficult for participants to distinguish between items from each. These studies might start by addressing the low number and nature of items in the extrinsic-

personal scale. Additionally, future studies could consider amotivation to address the possibility that some participants may not have any motivation for the specified religious or academic activities addressed in this study. To address other limitations of the present study, future studies could use a more diverse sample and incorporate methods of measurement other than self-report.

A more diverse sample might be especially important in determining the connection between academic orientation and narcissism because the present sample's academic experiences differed from much of the general population. In relation to the role of motivational orientation in the relation between narcissism and aggression, it might be helpful to examine these relations over time in a longitudinal study or to expand on findings in the present study by examining the motives behind aggression in some adolescents with an extrinsic religious orientation. Last, exploring the role of motivational orientation in domains other than religion and academics (i.e., community service, organization involvement, etc.) as they relate to narcissism and its correlates could contribute to better understanding in this area. Indeed, the results of the present study suggest that motivational orientation may provide some answers as to the circumstances under which aggression may be more or less favored as an interpersonal strategy for adolescents with narcissistic tendencies.

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Figures

Figure 1. Interaction between grandiose narcissism and extrinsic-personal religious orientation for predicting proactive aggression.

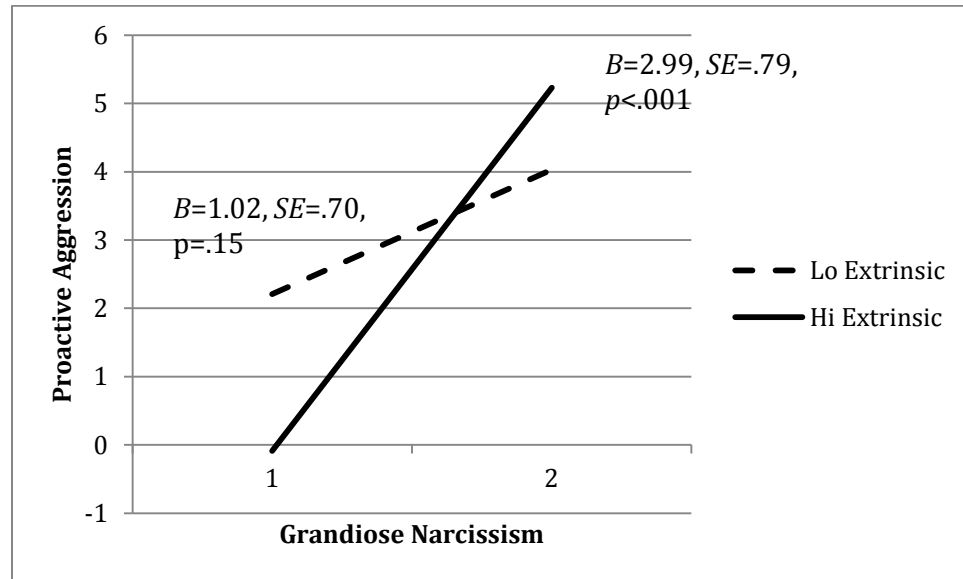


Figure 2. Interaction between grandiose narcissism and extrinsic-personal religious orientation for predicting reactive aggression.

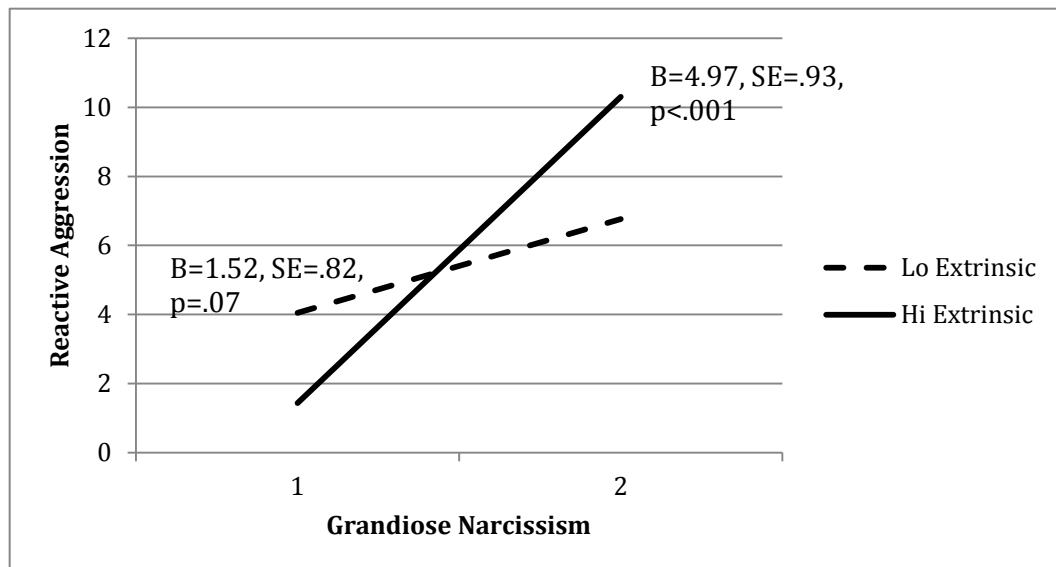


Figure 3. Interaction between vulnerable narcissism and extrinsic-personal religious orientation for predicting reactive aggression.

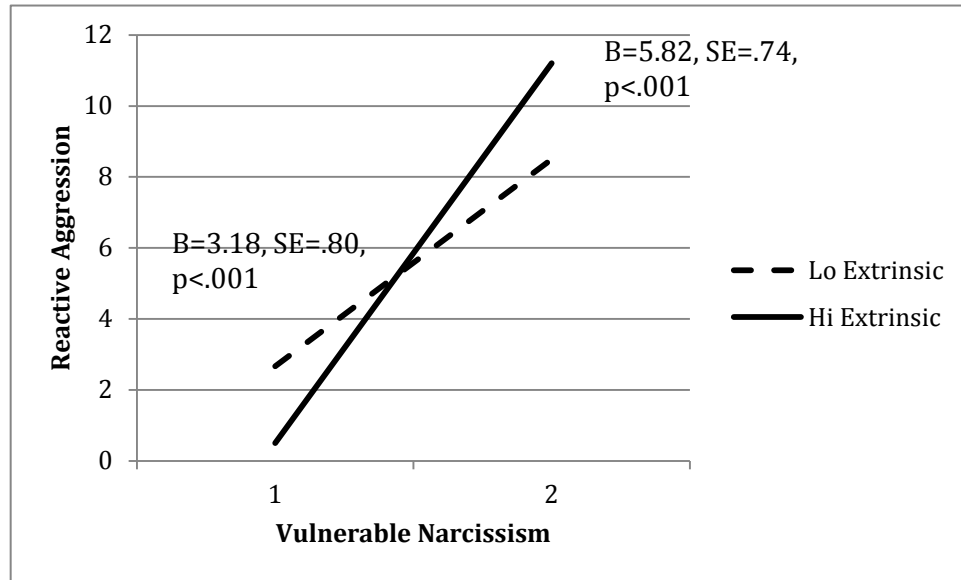


Figure 4. Interaction between grandiose narcissism and intrinsic religious orientation for predicting proactive aggression.

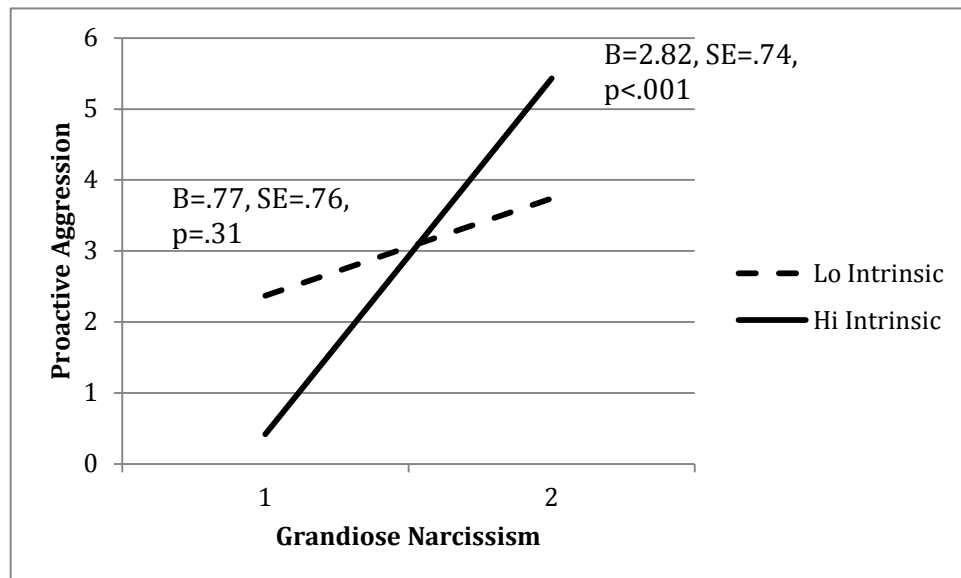


Figure 5. Interaction between grandiose narcissism and intrinsic religious orientation for predicting reactive aggression.

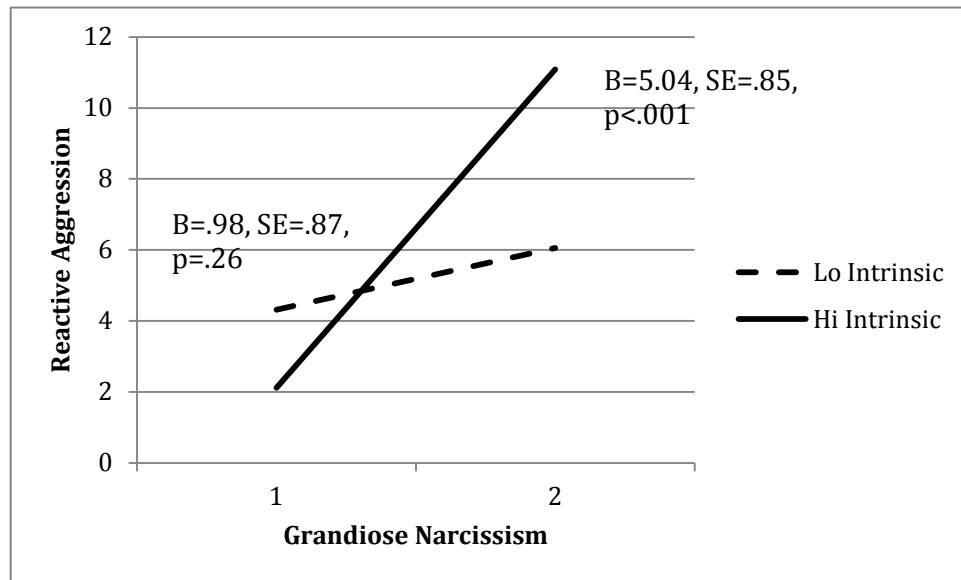


Figure 6. Interaction between vulnerable narcissism and intrinsic religious orientation for predicting reactive aggression.

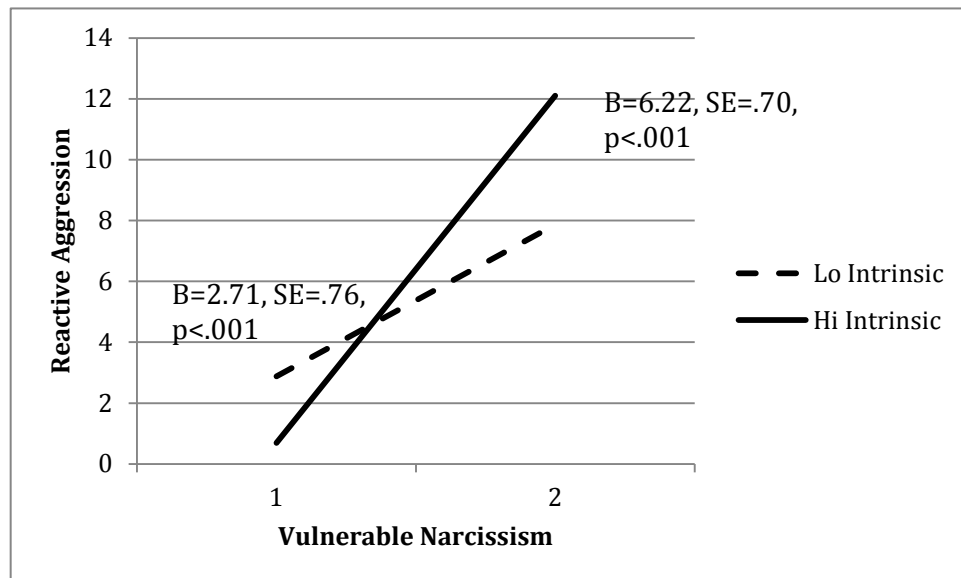


Figure 7. Interaction between vulnerable narcissism and intrinsic religious orientation for predicting proactive aggression.

