

## THE ROLE OF PARENTING AND SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF NARCISSISTIC TRAITS

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### ABSTRACT

*This review investigates the intricate relationship between parenting styles, social relationships, and the development of narcissistic traits. It aims to synthesize existing research and theoretical perspectives to provide insights into personality development. The study employed a qualitative content analysis of peer-reviewed articles, identified through comprehensive database searches. Key themes extracted included the significant influence of parental overvaluation and invalidation, the impact of parental narcissism, gender differences in narcissistic expression, and the amplifying role of societal and cultural factors, particularly social media. The findings suggest that narcissism has complex roots, challenging simplistic views and highlighting the need for comprehensive, biopsychosocial interventions. A limitation is the reliance on existing literature, predominantly in English and from Western contexts, which may limit generalizability and the ability to establish causal links due to the prevalence of cross-sectional studies.*

### INTRODUCTION

Based on the myth of Narcissus, narcissism is used to describe those with an overly high view of themselves and are sensitive about being criticized (Grenyer, 2013; Coward, 2008). Healthy self-esteem and serious personality traits involving narcissism are often marks of someone compensating for emotional needs they have not met (Bogart et al., 2004; Krizan & Herlache, 2018). Before, narcissism was studied mainly in medical discussions, but today it is recognized in social, education and work environments as well (Logan & Prescott, 2022; Schmidt, 2025). Researchers now believe that parenting and social contacts are especially important in shaping these traits because of today's high use of social media and cultural changes toward individualism (Goel et al., 2023; Kılıçkaya et al., 2023; Santos et al., 2017).

How a person's personality grows depends a lot on early things like parenting styles and the sorts of social relationships they have (Kaur & Sanches, 2023; Saracho, 2023). Neglect in childhood or

problems between parents and children can usually lead individuals toward cynicism and antagonistic narcissism (Csathó & Birkás, 2018; Szymczak et al., 2022). At first, Freud (1914) thought that infants feel a natural self-love which helps them survive, but it's best when that love moves outward to strengthen external relationships. If parents do not provide the right amount of caring or attention, their children may fixate, building maladaptive narcissistic traits (Mondal & Thapa, 2024). Besides, children who are brought up in this way tend to suffer a decline in self-esteem and can develop both exaggerated self-importance and a general lack of confidence (Jadon & Tripathi, 2017; Rohmann et al., 2021).

New studies combine biological and environmental factors to show how they influence the rise of narcissism (Blay et al., 2024; Hopwood et al., 2013). Problems with handling feelings and creating social ties, due to upbringing and friendships, boost a person's narcissistic habits

(Saladino et al., 2024). This review gathers ideas from studies and research on the link between parenting, relationships and narcissism development. It investigates parenting methods like overrating, scolding and lack of care and it looks at early social life, involving relationships with peers and the emotional bond formed (dos Reis et al., 2024; Wang et al., 2023). The goal of the paper is to unite theory and practical evidence and provide insights into improving personality development.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### Exploring the Interaction between Parenting Style and Narcissism

Lots of research has examined how parents shape their children's personalities such as whether they develop narcissism. Her work divides parenting into authoritative, authoritarian, permissive and neglectful types and every style impacts a child's development differently (Kılıçkaya et al., 2023). Giving children loving care and consistent limits usually helps them form a healthy sense of themselves and control their feelings. Unlike authoritarian parenting, that is often neglectful, tends to result in children showing narcissistic traits more frequently (Jadon & Tripathi, 2017). Frequently happening in indulgent or permissive parenting, parents overvaluing their kids has been demonstrated to lead to grandiose narcissism marked by assuming one's own significance is greater and thinking oneself entitled (Rawn et al., 2023). In contrast, caregivers who are up and down or do not show much emotion may produce vulnerable narcissists that have a hard time feeling secure and are hypersensitive (Kealy & Ogrodniczuk, 2023). It points out the detailed routes through which being a parent can affect narcissism. Dos Reis et al. (2024) carried out an in-depth review and combined data analysis, finding that both parental overvaluation and cool or harsh treatment are key factors in developing the main narcissistic subtypes. The results highlight how much parental feedback influences a child's view of themselves. Wang et al. (2023) also showed that, thanks to childhood abuse and fear of abandonment, forming an insecure attachment in early life can create later narcissistic problems.

### Exploring the Relation between Social and Narcissism

Factors that play a big role in narcissistic traits are peer interactions and other social settings away from family life. Other people in a group set up opportunities for narcissists to judge their place in the group and feel good about themselves. Szymczak et al. (2022) explained that being rejected can make someone with vulnerable narcissism feel worse, but being socially approved may boost grandiose narcissism. Being active on social media increases the chances to show oneself and collect validation which may explain the growth of narcissism among young adults (Brailovskaia & Margraf, 2022; Nguyen et al., 2025). Goel et al. (2023) discovered that spending more time online is linked to higher levels of narcissism, since the feedback people get on social media magnifies their self-importance. The way culture influences us modulates how narcissistic tendencies appear in social settings. Foster et al. (2021) explained that individualistic groups often have more overt grandiose narcissism. Unlike in individualistic cultures, narcissism in collectivistic cultures usually looks like careful efforts to uphold a positive social climate (Li & Benson, 2022). Different social values and cultures explain why narcissism changes with people's environments.

In addition, individuals' interactions with peers when they are young often strengthen and determine how narcissism is shown. Being with peers is a major way for individuals to learn their own social standings and the values others place on them. Having their peers appreciate them often lets people with narcissistic tendencies believe their own grandiose predictions about their importance. Facing such peer-related difficulties, a vulnerable narcissist may feel more inadequate and sensitive which are their main characteristics (Blay et al., 2024). Social acceptance has the ability to both protect from and increase signs of narcissism, depending on the situation and it helps people control their self-esteem around others. Also, because of digital social environments, people now have opportunities to present themselves and build their identity in new and different ways. Since visibility, feedback and the curation of online images are central to social media, this makes it easier for narcissism to appear (Brailovskaia & Margraf, 2022). People on social media try to make themselves look valuable by gaining likes, comments and shares from friends and strangers

(Nguyen et al., 2025). Still, always trying to enjoy social approval can make one even more afraid when the approval is not strong or saying “No.” It was learned through cross-cultural studies that the values of people from different cultures influence these digital interactions, so that collectivistic groups often prefer to display social harmony and indirect self-expression on social media, while those in individualistic groups tend to make bold statements about themselves (Foster et al., 2021; Li & Benson, 2022). If we want to understand how narcissism appears in different parts of society now, we need to understand these social and cultural patterns.

### **Critical Gaps and Emerging Trends**

Even with numerous studies on the growth of narcissism, important gaps in the thinking about its background and how it forms are still present. One big obstacle is the frequent use of cross-sectional studies which allow us to discover links but are restricted in revealing causes or explaining how things develop over time. According to Mondal and Thapa (2024), this type of design interferes with researchers’ efforts to spot the timing of environmental influences and narcissistic outcomes which makes finding the reasons behind narcissistic behaviors quite challenging. In addition, a lasting problem in this field is telling the two main forms of narcissism apart, grandiose and vulnerable, using both concepts and studies. According to Edershile and Wright (2022), a lot of studies do not clearly tell apart the different types of narcissism and usually treat it as a single concept. Because the traits are not clearly defined, it is challenging to understand how these differing types of narcissism appear in symptoms. Because the differences are not always clear, tailored treatments for one subtype can end up being useless or worse for the other.

In response, new approaches in theory recommend seeing narcissism as related to biological background, environmental situations and learning experiences from others. In their work, Blay et al. (2024) and Hopwood et al. (2013) suggest that genetic and temperament factors work together and change over time with early relationships and continued interactions. Such a perspective goes beyond looking just at the symptoms by seeing that multiple factors play a part in narcissism, changing from person to person and with age. This research can help to find out how

the various factors influence changes in narcissistic traits throughout a person’s life. Paying attention to research methods and processes based on time allows researchers to understand better what favors or inhibits the development or recovery of narcissism. It also means that wellness actions and mental care efforts made with this approach focus on personal, familial and community factors at once (Kang & Zhao, 2024). Coach a research advancement here could support new clinical methods to help reduce maladaptive narcissistic signs and support stronger personality growth.

### **3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Developmental explanations for narcissistic traits involve linking several theories that show how early interactions, observe others and societal context are involved.

#### **Psychoanalytic Theory**

Freud first saw narcissism as a typical way infants relate to themselves and named it “primary narcissism.” At this stage, an infant uses their libido to help keep themselves healthy and safe. Augustine (2023) argues that we grow healthier psychologically when we are able to shift our love for ourselves outward. It’s very important for growing and maintaining strong bonds and a good sense of self. Trouble with this development can cause a person to become stuck in self-centered thinking which leads to issues with interacting with others. According to Freud, it was early difficulties in self-control that could lead to trouble in developing a healthy personality. According to Kohut (1977), following Freud, how parents watch and sympathize with their child helps to shape their self-image as they grow. Kohut (1977) believed parents who show their child respect for how they feel help the child form a well-defined and connected identity. Absence of parental understanding puts the child at risk for personality disruptions and leads to narcissistic behavior. It points out that narcissistic vulnerabilities begin in early life due to parent-child relationship interruptions that affect how a person manages their self-esteem and creating their identity. He felt that even severe emotional issues could be corrected by concentrating on empathy in the therapeutic process.

### **Attachment Theory**

According to John Bowlby (1969), early parenting interactions create lasting ways of thinking about oneself and about others which influence personality and the way we get along with those around us. The type of attachment—secure, anxious, avoidant or disorganized— someone has can affect their ability to handle feelings and what they expect from close relationships. A lot of studies have found solid links between insecure attachment and narcissism. According to Gao et al. (2024), people with both kinds of narcissism commonly have anxious and avoidant attachment models, due to having problems forming emotional and intimate bonds. Those with insecure attachment frequently lack empathy and tend to use unhealthy self-protective methods, typical of narcissistic disorder. It means that any early neglect from caregivers can cause a person's feelings not to be met, resulting in the person turning to narcissistic actions in college or adulthood. People with anxious attachment may act in ways typical of vulnerable narcissism, showing hypersensitivity and emotion instability, while those with avoidant attachment usually exhibit great self-importance and become emotionally disconnected (Csathó & Birkás, 2018). They may help someone's self-esteem, but they also lead to problems in healthy relationships. This approach shows how narcissistic features develop when children cope with difficulties in their first relationships.

### **Social Learning Theory**

Albert Bandura (1977) believes that watching, copying actions and getting rewards or punishments affect a person's behavior. The way children grow derives from their observation of how parents behave and think. If parents overload their children with praise and possessions, it often leads to children feeling disproportionately bigheaded about themselves, a condition known as grandiose narcissism (Thalib et al., 2024). Similarly, being rejected, criticized too harshly or ignored by parents can lead to vulnerable narcissism which means a person tends to feel insecure and overly sensitive to other's opinions. The idea includes the notion that children can learn from peers and other members of their society as well. Significantly, social media networks give people more chances to act narcissistically. The authors point out that being online can allow

people to seek impressions from others and boost their egos. Because of social media, receiving likes and comments right away can quickly make someone act more exhibitionistic and self-centered. Exposure to such amplification can strengthen damaging narcissistic habits in young people, mainly due to the combination of social learning and today's technology.

### **Sociocultural Perspectives**

Experts focusing on sociocultural views argue that a person's personality develops under the influence of the cultural and societal values in their community. The researchers suggest that cultures that stress individual achievement and self-glorification tend to raise grandiose narcissism. Their research also pointed out that changes in Western cultures, including messages from popular culture, have played a big role in raising narcissistic traits among people. Social media has greatly increased these cultural effects because it makes narcissism more visible and encourages such behaviors by others (Brailovskaia & Margraf, 2022). Researchers have found that people in collectivistic cultures usually display narcissism in ways that protect community bonding and preserve group harmony, while in individualistic cultures, open grandiosity is the main way narcissism is expressed (Foster et al., 2021). The study proves that exploring narcissism in context with each culture can show its full range of ways it appears in different places.

### **Combining Theories**

According to the research, the formation of a narcissistic trait depends on how early attachment, parenting, reinforces through society and culture all interact. This approach goes further than one-cause explanations by seeing how being biologically vulnerable, experiencing specific environments and feeling the influence of societal values all influence someone's personality (Ronningstam, 2016). Thus, many experts advise electronic health records that include both biological, psychological and sociocultural aspects in their research and treatments. Because of this framework, we are better able to notice the differences between the grandiose and vulnerable types of narcissism. It can also direct the creation of special approaches focused on resolving challenges in self-regulation, relationships and fitting into society. Using ideas from each of the

listed theories, this method builds a strong basis for dealing with and studying narcissistic pathology. Using this approach allows researchers to learn more and therapists to tailor treatments for each person. This model allows experts to see narcissism as a combination of biological, psychological and social factors (Zhang et al., 2024). While, for example, how someone is temperamentally and what genes they have could guide their personality to some degree, the way they interact with family and others as they grow strengthens and shapes those traits. Researchers conclude that vulnerabilities to narcissism arise during early childhood and continue to develop with external rewards from others, social situations and cultural surroundings using attachment theory, theories from psychoanalysis, social learning and sociocultural points of view. The theories together promote a full view of narcissism that combines differences between people with the role of the community.

The framework's integration provides helpful advice for creating focused methods to assist those with narcissistic traits. If researchers and therapists know the main differences between grandiose and vulnerable narcissism, they can develop personalized approaches for each group. For example, those with grandiose narcissism might be helped by treatment that improves how they deal with moods, handles sense of entitlement and encourages empathy, but those with vulnerable narcissism may gain from support that improves their self-image, lower their sensitivity to criticism and forms stronger relationships. By looking at how biological weaknesses, childhood life and social settings are connected, this theory improves research and treatment of narcissistic problems.

#### 4. METHODOLOGY

To study the literature, this study applied a qualitative content analysis approach. Content analysis provides an orderly and reproducible approach for analyzing text, helping to spot, label and group patterns found in both research and theories (Krippendorff, 2019). Such a method lets researchers combine different studies and form a unified view of complicated psychological matters such as narcissism.

##### Research Design

A qualitative review was designed, using content analysis as the main tool for analysis. By contrast,

while quantitative meta-analyses use statistics, qualitative content analysis allows a detailed analysis of important themes, theoretical ideas and research findings from a wide range of studies (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). Due to this approach, main ideas on parenting styles, social relationships and the growth of narcissism can be identified in a way that includes a broad spectrum of methods and groups.

##### Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The literature was reviewed to find works from among peer-reviewed articles published between 2015 and 2025. The study has used Google Scholar, PubMed, PsycINFO and Scopus in this search of electronic databases. By using Boolean operators, the study combined "narcissism," "parenting styles," "social relationships," "attachment," "personality development," and "narcissistic traits," to search for results in the databases. Only articles in English and those involving humans were looked at. Furthermore, we looked at the lists of important articles to find other relevant studies.

##### Selection Criteria

The choice of studies in this review was determined with specific criteria to ensure only careful studies made the cut. Studies could only be considered for the analysis if they fulfilled four key criteria. First, studies had to explore the link between parenting methods or social connections, on the one hand and the growth of narcissistic personality traits, on the other hand, by using research evidence or ideas. Thanks to this criterion, every study focused on parenting, social relationships and narcissism, bringing useful findings about their relationships. Furthermore, these studies included participants who were children, teenagers and adults. Thanks to the age range, researchers could learn about narcissistic trait growth from childhood all the way to adulthood, noticing changes that may occur with age. Only studies appearing in peer-reviewed journals were included which helped ensure they all met the academic standards set by scientists and researchers. The peer review process detects and eliminates research based on bad research practices or unwarranted claims. To support accuracy in reviewing, articles had to be supplied in full-text online. Being able to read full articles allowed me to accurately evaluate study setups, who took part and the important results.

On the other hand, some exclusions were necessary to preserve the purpose and quality of the analysis. We excluded clinical studies focused only on treatments or other medical interventions, since this review centers on learning how narcissism starts and grows during development. Empirical evidence was missing from opinion pieces, editorials and theoretical commentaries, so those papers were excluded from the analysis. This study avoids unpublished theses and dissertations because they are less accessible and might show variability in quality. Besides, any studies in other languages were removed so that the summaries and codes could be the same and correct, realizing that this reduced the cultural mix, but still kept consistency in the method. Selecting studies based on these strict requirements made it possible for the review to include both a wide range of studies and those that met quality control.

#### **Gathering and Coding Data**

First, the articles were checked using only their titles and abstracts to select those that had the best chance of answering our research questions. After reviewing the initial data, studies not connected to parenting, social ties or narcissism were removed from the sample. Later, all remaining documents were subjected to a thorough examination of the full text to check if they should be analyzed further. By following this two-stage screening, only information related to narcissism and parenting/social settings was selected which meant the collection was more precise and relevant to this theme.

Key details were extracted from each selected study by filling in a prepared data extraction form. This form included detailed information such as study objectives, study sample's features, research design (qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods), details on parenting involvement, relationships with peers, ways researchers measured narcissism and main theories used in the study. By writing data in this orderly way, we were able to compare different studies and kept our information gathering the same.

Core to the analysis was using inductive coding which examined the studies to discover frequently occurring patterns, groups and themes, without using ready-made classification schemes. Different codes were designed to pick out details in parenting such as moments of warmth, signs of paying too much or too little attention and different

approaches to discipline. Likewise, peer interaction variables were measured using whether peers accepted or rejected someone and how often and in what ways they interacted online. To represent the main subtypes seen in research, narcissistic traits were labeled with both grandiosity and moments of increased vulnerability.

Improving the consistency and correctness of coding, two or more members of the research team completed the process independently. When all prior analysis was done, the team got together to explain any disagreements and agree on how to code the data. By working together, the article reduced subjective differences and increased how reliably has been grouped with the topics. With this detailed and orderly way of collecting and coding data, the study guaranteed solid groundwork for the following thematic analysis and synthesis.

#### **Thematic Analysis and Synthesis**

To analyze themes, the study organized the retrieved data from the selected studies into neat groups that illustrate the many faces of developing narcissistic personality traits. The main findings were organized into various large themes that represent significant areas affecting narcissism. One theme was called "How Parenting Styles Affect Your Child," which looked at how varying parenting styles—like warmth, overvaluation, neglect and control—can shape a child's developing self-esteem and ego. Another point made by this chapter is that early experiences of attachment can play a role in shaping emotions, trust with others and therefore influence whether someone is vulnerable to narcissistic traits or is grandiose. This theme examined the ways peers affect kids both at school and in their online actions and how social media encourages your child to be more self-centered. The final piece looked into how narcissism changes depending on wider social and cultural values, especially the difference between individualism and collectivism. Employing thematic synthesis, the study linked information from different research studies into stories that clearly show what is similar and different in the literature. This consolidation step made it possible to find agreements on key factors, for example, how the quality of parenting warmth reduces some concerning narcissistic traits. It also assigned topics where conclusions are unclear, including the impacts of various cultural elements and the effects

of being online for many years on narcissism. Putting the literature in these themed groups allowed for a clearer and more accessible explanation of how many biopsychosocial aspects together shape narcissism across a person's entire development.

### **Limitations**

Even though qualitative content analysis offers important insight, it depends on previously published written content which can introduce bias. Because there are so many ways to define and test narcissism, it is difficult to understand results consistently. Also, since English isn't spoken everywhere, searching only in English journals may reduce cultural variety. Even though these problems are natural in literature synthesis, they are solved by carefully following a clear approach and scrutinising each source. Also, since narcissism was defined and measured in so many ways by various studies, the thematic synthesis allowed us to see the similarities and links between findings. Grouping research that shares concepts and findings helped the review analyse the part played by parenting, social ties and culture in narcissism. Going forward, researchers could create standardised ways to identify and measure narcissistic traits which would make research findings from different studies more similar and easier to generalise. Using a wider variety of research techniques such as mixed methods or longitudinal studies, would let us examine how narcissism forms and remains in people from various groups.

## **5. RESULTS**

This chapter presents the core findings drawn from thematic content analysis of selected peer-reviewed literature, highlighting how parenting styles and social relationships contribute to the development of narcissistic traits. The analysis focused on recurring patterns across 8 studies, categorising them into three interlinked thematic areas investigator conduct this analysis based on common themes and variables such as parenting behaviors, parental narcissism, cultural influences, and gender differences in the development of narcissistic traits.

### **Theme 1: Parenting Styles and Narcissism**

Parenting overvaluation is a consistent theme across the studies as a key predictor of narcissism.

Overvaluation occurs when parents perceive their children as exceptional, often creating a sense of entitlement in the child. This has been linked to the development of grandiose narcissism in children. Social Learning Theory supports this concept. It suggests that children internalise the inflated views their parents have about them, leading to a heightened sense of self-importance and entitlement (Brummelman et al., 2015; dos Reis et al., 2025). This aligns with findings from Huxley & Bizumic (2016), where parental overvaluation was associated with both grandiose and vulnerable narcissism. In contrast, psychoanalytic theory posits that a lack of warmth and emotional neglect is a key factor, but findings from Brummelman et al. (2015) contradict this by showing that parental overvaluation was more influential than the lack of warmth in developing narcissistic traits in children.

### **Theme 2: Parental Narcissism and its Impact**

The impact of parental narcissism (both grandiose and vulnerable) has been highlighted as a significant factor in the development of narcissistic traits in children. Research from Estlein et al. (2024) and Kislev (2022) showed that when parents have narcissistic tendencies, children often adopt similar patterns of behavior. Maternal vulnerable narcissism has been linked to child maladjustment through the mediation of perceptions and attributions about the child, which can influence the way children view themselves and their relationship with others. Parental narcissism, especially when overbearing or dismissive, can lead to children developing narcissistic behaviors as a coping mechanism for low self-esteem.

### **Theme 3: Gender Differences in Narcissism**

Gender differences in narcissism are evident in multiple studies. Kislev (2022) found that while grandiose narcissism was more linked to negative relationship outcomes for men, vulnerable narcissism was associated with reduced satisfaction for both men and women, but the dynamics of admiration traits differed by gender. Specifically, for women, higher narcissistic admiration correlated with increased relationship satisfaction, while for men, it led to decreased satisfaction. This finding suggests that narcissism may have varying relational consequences based on gender and may influence relationship satisfaction differently between men and women.

#### **Theme 4: The Role of Warmth vs. Invalidation**

Parental warmth is a recurring theme and is consistently found to reduce narcissistic traits. Parental warmth, characterised by affection and emotional support, contributes to healthy self-esteem in children. In contrast, parental invalidation, which includes rejecting or ignoring the child's emotions, has been identified as a strong predictor of both grandiose and vulnerable narcissism. In Huxley & Bizumic's (2016) study, parental invalidation was shown to contribute significantly to the development of narcissism, particularly vulnerable narcissism, suggesting that the absence of emotional validation in early childhood leads to the formation of fragile self-views that foster narcissistic behaviors.

#### **Theme 5: Societal and Cultural Influences**

Narcissism is a personal trait and it is also influenced by cultural shifts. Studies have indicated that Western societies, with their emphasis on individualism, are more likely to foster grandiose narcissism than collectivistic cultures. This trend has been attributed to a cultural environment that encourages self-promotion and individual achievement. The rise of social media has amplified narcissistic behaviors, particularly among younger individuals, by providing constant validation and reinforcing the need for public admiration. Brummelman et al. (2015) and Janković & Bogaerts (2023) further highlighted the role of digital validation in the socialisation of narcissistic traits.

#### **Theme 6: Interventions and Clinical Implications**

Many research studies have focused on treatments for narcissistic traits, mainly when narcissism among the parents is present. Focusing on improving how parents relate with their children, especially through reducing positive but inaccurate beliefs and cold behavior, while supporting parents to be warmer and more caring, is suggested. Factors linked to developing narcissistic traits come from narcissism and also from what society teaches individuals, as discovered in numerous studies. Having strong beliefs about parental importance strongly predicts narcissism and this is most true for grandiose narcissism. If parents give too much praise to their kids or see them as the best, it can turn into a feeling of entitlement and boost self-esteem which are the key signs of grandiose narcissism. In addition, children whose mothers

have vulnerable narcissism often develop different thoughts and feelings because they often take on their mother's narcissistic features which can harm their emotional and mental well-being. People of different genders may experience and relate to narcissism in different ways. According to studies, how narcissistic traits such as grandiosity and entitlement affect relations may be affected by a person's gender.

Narcissistic admiration traits may help a woman feel more content with her relationship, while making men feel less content. So, it shows that each gender needs interventions designed to cope with their own form of narcissistic behaviors. Besides, when parents are caring and validate their children, it helps prevent narcissistic characteristics from appearing, but when parents invalidate their children, it tends to enhance these traits. When a child's support and comfort are missing in the family, that child may resort to narcissistic behaviors. Trends in culture and society, especially social media, also make it easier for narcissism to appear in young people who want validation and attention through the internet. As a result, it is now possible for future studies and professionals to pay particular attention to these factors and reduce the risk of narcissism in children. As a result, interventions can work on both narcissistic tendencies and improve relationships which helps future generations grow emotionally and mentally.

## **6. DISCUSSION**

This analysis revealed several important themes about how parenting behaviors can contribute to the development of narcissism in children. Consistent with previous research, the findings support the idea that narcissism has complex roots, often beginning in childhood. One of the main patterns that emerged was the influence of parental overvaluation. When parents excessively praise or place their child on a pedestal, it can lead to the development of grandiose narcissistic traits. This supports Bandura's (1977) social learning theory, which suggests that children adopt behaviors and beliefs modeled by their caregivers. Brummelman et al. (2015) also found that children who are constantly told they are special may come to believe they are superior to others, developing an inflated sense of self. More recently, Blay et al. (2024) confirmed that this kind of overvaluation can contribute to both grandiose and vulnerable narcissism.

Interestingly, these findings challenge traditional psychoanalytic views that link narcissism to a lack of parental warmth. While Huxley & Bizumic (2016) connected emotional invalidation to vulnerable narcissism, this analysis pointed more strongly to overvaluation as a driving factor. Kohut (1977) argued that both excessive admiration and emotional neglect can harm a child's self-image, just in different ways. Another pattern found was that maternal narcissism, especially when linked to vulnerability, could affect how a child sees themselves and their worth. Estlein et al. (2024) suggested that children of narcissistic mothers are more likely to experience emotional challenges. Hopwood et al. (2013) and Rawn et al. (2023) also showed that narcissistic parents often use parenting styles like overprotection or emotional neglect, which can foster narcissistic traits in their children. Krizan & Herlache (2018) added that these patterns can create ongoing cycles of dysfunction in families.

It was also observed that there are gender-specific differences. As revealed by Kislev (2022), women who are narcissistically admired tend to have more satisfying relationships, but this is not true for men. The way society views narcissism differs by gender, so things like seeking attention might be regarded as flattering in women. This agrees with the findings of Bogart et al. (2004) that the absence of emotional intimacy in a relationship can cause problems linked to narcissism. Foster et al. (2021) argued that within individualistic Western cultures, women are often praised for showing pride in their looks and social life.

Another good finding was that loving relationships with parents protected children. Bowlby claimed in 1969 that secure attachments aid kids in shaping a healthy self-image and this claim was confirmed in the analysis. Kaur & Sanches (2023) discovered that children who have emotional support growing up usually develop less narcissistic traits. Alternatively, not paying attention to feelings and rejecting the child's existence were shown to increase the likelihood of vulnerable narcissism. Gao et al. (2024) concluded that results were similar, especially in children who had insecure attachment styles.

It was also proven that the broader culture and society play a part. Self-focus and the desire for prominent success in Western society might be a reason for more narcissism (Foster et al., 2021). Santos et al. (2017) mention that because of this

cultural adjustment, narcissism levels have been on the rise throughout recent years. This also seems related to the role of social media. Brailovskaia & Margraf (2022) claimed that apps such as Instagram and Facebook which pay users to self-promote, make narcissistic behavior more common among young users. So, this study found that a child's narcissism is shaped by being praised too much and receiving less warmth from parents, as well as by parents having narcissist traits. Besides the main traits, gender, culture and especially social media on the internet impact the way narcissism is present in people. Having healthy feelings among family members helps; efforts should also be made to fight cultural narratives promoting narcissistic behavior.

#### *Implication of the Study*

The findings from this review have significant implications for both psychological research and therapeutic practice. By identifying parenting styles, particularly overvaluation and emotional invalidation, as key contributors to narcissistic development, interventions can target parent-child dynamics early in life to prevent maladaptive traits. Additionally, cultural and digital influences, such as social media, highlight the need for broader societal strategies promoting healthy self-concepts in youth. Clinicians can use differentiated approaches for grandiose and vulnerable narcissism, focusing on empathy-building, emotional regulation, and relationship repair. Education programs that encourage balanced parenting and reduce narcissistic modeling may mitigate long-term psychological harm. Overall, a biopsychosocial approach that integrates parenting, social environment, and cultural context is essential for supporting healthier personality development across the lifespan.

#### *Limitations of the study*

This research has a few limitations. It is based only on previously published studies, which means it may be influenced by the choices and interpretations of other researchers. Different studies define and measure narcissism in various ways, which can make it hard to compare results or draw clear conclusions. Also, most of the articles used were written in English and focused mainly on Western countries. This limits the cultural variety in the analysis and may not fully represent how parenting and social relationships affect narcissism in other parts of the world. Another issue is that many of the studies reviewed are cross-

sectional, meaning they look at data from one point in time. Because of this, it's difficult to understand how narcissistic traits develop or change over time. The research also left out unpublished work and papers that weren't peer-reviewed, which means some useful ideas might have been missed. To improve future research, it would be helpful to use studies that follow people over a longer time and to include more cultural perspectives. This would give a better understanding of how parenting and social relationships influence the development of narcissism in different situations.

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