

Men tend to be more narcissistic than women, large study says

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Credit: University at Buffalo

With three decades of data from more than 475,000 participants, a new study on narcissism from the University at Buffalo School of Management reveals that men, on average, are more narcissistic than women.

Forthcoming in the journal *Psychological Bulletin*, the study compiled 31 years of [narcissism](#) research and found that men consistently scored higher in narcissism across multiple generations and regardless of age.

"Narcissism is associated with various interpersonal dysfunctions, including an inability to maintain healthy long-term relationships, unethical behavior and aggression," says lead author Emily Grijalva, PhD, assistant professor of organization and human resources in the UB School of Management.

"At the same time, narcissism is shown to boost self-esteem, emotional stability and the tendency to emerge as a leader," she says. "By examining gender differences in narcissism, we may be able to explain [gender disparities](#) in these important outcomes."

The researchers examined more than 355 journal articles, dissertations, manuscripts and technical manuals, and studied gender differences in the three aspects of narcissism: leadership/authority, grandiose/exhibitionism and entitlement.

They found the widest gap in entitlement, suggesting that men are more likely than [women](#) to exploit others and feel entitled to certain privileges.

The second largest difference was in leadership/authority. "Compared with women, men exhibit more assertiveness and desire for power," Grijalva says. "But there was no difference in the exhibitionism aspect, meaning both genders are equally likely to display vanity or self-absorption."

In addition, the study looked at data from college students between 1990 and 2013, and found no evidence that either gender has become more narcissistic over time.

Research has shown that personality differences, like narcissism, can arise from [gender stereotypes](#) and expectations that have been ingrained over time. The authors speculate that the persistent lack of women in

senior leadership roles may partially stem from the disparity between stereotypes of femininity and leadership.

"Individuals tend to observe and learn [gender roles](#) from a young age, and may face backlash for deviating from society's expectations," Grijalva says. "In particular, women often receive harsh criticism for being aggressive or authoritative, which creates pressure for women, more so than for men, to suppress displays of narcissistic behavior."

Future research could further investigate the social, cultural or biological factors that contribute to these [gender differences](#).

Provided by University at Buffalo

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