The Impact of an Individual's Narcissistic Traits on Employability

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ABSTRACT

Objective: The objective of this paper is to identify narcissistic traits that may have an impact
on an individual's employability and to determine the nature of the influence of these traits on
employability.

Research Design & Methods: During the first stage, based on a critical literature review,
narcissistic traits were identified and a 20-item catalogue of traits affecting an individual's
employability was created. During the second, a diagnostic survey was conducted to determine
whether the narcissistic traits in the catalogue have an impact on employability, what is the
direction of influence of individual narcissistic traits on employability, and whether the nature of
the influence of these traits on employability varies by type. The research sample was purposive
and random. 198 respondents participated in the survey.

Findings: The obtained results confirmed that the proposed trait catalogue for studying the
impact of narcissistic traits on employability can be considered as reliable. 13 narcissistic traits
were found to weaken initial and internal employability, while 8 traits were found to weaken
external employability. The trait that most significantly weakens employability is displaying

a demanding attitude, while the most strengthening trait is a strong belief in the possibility of professional success. Assessments concerning the impact of narcissistic traits on initial and internal employability were similar. There were differences between assessing the nature of the impact on initial and internal employability and on external employability.

Implications/Recommendations: The studies confirmed that most narcissistic traits weaken employability, while some strengthen it. It was also found that the nature of the impact of narcissistic traits may vary by type of employability.

Contribution: The study showed how individual narcissistic traits affect employability. Also indicating the differences in assessing narcissistic traits in the context of initial, internal, and external employability. These findings may be useful in shaping individual employability.

Article type: original article.

Keywords: narcissism, narcissistic traits, employability, initial employability, internal employability, external employability.

JEL Classification: E24, J230.

1. Introduction

The concept of employability is of particular interest during periods when there is a high rate of unemployment in the market. This was the situation in the 1990s, when the broader notion of a new culture of employability became widespread due to the Treaty of Amsterdam (Jeruszka, 2019). However, issues concerning employability and supporting it are important not only in a situation when there is an excess of labour supply over demand, but also when unemployment levels are relatively low. This results from, among other things, the positive relationship between a culture of employability and employee well-being that has been confirmed in the course of research (Nimmi, Zakkariya & Anju, 2023).

According to Rakowska (2021) and Jeruszka (2017), employability stands for an individual's competencies that create the ability to obtain and maintain satisfactory work, meaning ones that contribute to job security. In literature, competencies are defined in various ways (Moczydłowska, 2008). According to one of the proposed interpretations, competencies constitute the features of an individual that form the basis for effective behaviour or action at work (Juchnowicz & Sienkiewicz, 2006). In the context of employability, it is not only elements of competence such as knowledge and skills that are relevant, but also personality traits, values, rules of conduct, beliefs, or self-perception, i.e. those in which there may be manifestations of narcissism.

The study focuses on the impact of narcissistic traits on employability, due to the fact that the impact of this group of traits has not been studied. Most studies of organisational narcissism and narcissistic employee behaviours are theoretical and

very few are empirical (Campbell *et al.*, 2011). Literature concerning narcissism developed only in some areas – an example is leadership (e.g. Rosenthal & Pittinsky, 2006; Fatfouta, 2019; Kowalewski & Moczydłowska, 2020). Research conducted so far does not provide a clear explanation of the relationship between narcissism and, for example, job performance (Campbell *et al.*, 2011), or attitudes towards work (Sanecka, 2020). Research does not explain how narcissistic employees affect the functioning of an organisation and its performance, or how job candidates and employees showing narcissistic traits are perceived and assessed. The significance of issues related to recruiting narcissistic candidates and work performed by narcissistic employees is highlighted by Campbell *et al.* (2011). They emphasise that recruitment professionals should be aware that narcissistic candidates may appear attractive and valuable, but they should not be fooled by this impression, because they can prove to be problematic and destructive employees.

Starting from the competence-based definition of employability cited above, and following the literature and assuming the existence of three types of employability (Hofaidhllaoui, 2013), namely initial (the ability to take up one's first job), internal (the ability to advance within an organisation), and external (the ability to change employers), the objective and research questions were formulated.

The cognitive objective is to identify narcissistic traits that may have an impact on an individual's employability and to determine the nature of the influence (strengthening–weakening) of narcissistic traits on employability.

In the course of the research, answers to the following questions were sought:

RQ1. Which narcissistic traits are relevant in the context of employability?

RQ2. Which narcissistic traits enhance employability?

RQ3. Which narcissistic traits weaken employability?

RQ4. Does the nature of the impact of narcissistic traits on employability vary due to its type?

2. Employability and Narcissistic Traits in the Context of Employability – Literature Review

The rapid rate of change in today's world is reflected in the economy and the labour market. Changes in the labour market in terms of relations between the employer and employee, the increasing significance of employment flexibility, the problems with long-term employment in one organisation and the non-linearity and unpredictability of career paths make the concept of employability increasingly important. Its importance is confirmed by the Council of the EU's interest in the issue. In the conclusions of the Council of the EU of 11.05.2012 on the employability of school and university graduates, the concept of employability is defined as "a combination of factors that enable a person to move towards, undertake, and maintain employment, as well as to develop in their career – it is a complex concept,

including not only a person's character, skills, attitude or motivation, but also other external factors going beyond education and training policies, such as labour market regulations, demographics, the structure of the economy, and the general economic situation" (Konkluzje Rady UE z dnia 11 maja 2012 r. …).

Dinh, Dinh Hai and Pham (2023) define employability as a strategy in the field of human resource management, which they link to talent management. Employers should include possibilities for developing the talents of employees in their planning of organisational development. They should also offer employees the chance to improve both technical and personal skills. With this approach, employers should create opportunities for employees to develop talent.

The literature includes an approach to employability based on competencies. According to it, employability constitutes a multidimensional process that develops over time on the basis of experience. It is assumed that employees require various competences to facilitate both obtaining and keeping a job on a competitive labour market. This approach distinguishes three types of competence: know-why, know-how, and know-whom. Know-why competencies include a person's motivation as well as awareness of personal and organisational values and interests, as well as the person's identification with the organisation's goals and culture. Know-how competences refer to the knowledge, skills, and abilities required to perform a job and build a career. Know-whom competencies reflect an individual's social capital and career-relevant interpersonal relationship networks (Römgens, Scoupe & Beausaert, 2020).

The term "employability" in relation to persons looking for a job is equated with possessing specific practical skills and using them on the labour market. Pasierbek (2016) points out that, with regard to practical skills, employability is determined by the possessed competences that increase the possibility of finding employment, but also of retaining it.

Due to the automation and digitalisation processes of the labour market, the range of competences expected of employees is changing – from technical to social. In this view, employability requires a significant role for soft competences such as teamwork, project management, leadership, communication, creative thinking, professionalism, problem solving, or emotional intelligence. According to Teng *et al*. (2019), soft skills strengthen the position of employees in the labour market because they are difficult to automate.

Employability based on competences takes into account a number of factors – including basic and advanced digital skills, which are significant from the perspective of gaining and retaining employment. Mahajan, Gupta and Misra (2022) emphasise the significance of teamwork skills, communication skills, intercultural competence, ability to make decisions, specific knowledge, focus on the customer, and stakeholder management skills. This category also includes analytical skills,

ability to learn, creativity, problem-solving skills, language skills, the ability to operate under conditions of uncertainty, the ability to communicate and cooperate with others, and the ability to adapt to change.

One of the elements of employability is building career paths. It is possible to observe an increasing amount of research concerning the importance of employability for understanding individuals' careers, thereby linking employability with the constructed career path (De Vos, Jacobs & Verbruggen, 2021). Forrier, Verbruggen and De Cuyper (2015) identified professional competences and the importance of active career path building in relation to employability. They emphasised the relationship between competences, career success, and employability. Based on research conducted in the Dutch labour market, it has been noticed that people with highly developed competences who derive satisfaction from their careers are less likely to consider employment elsewhere. This means that there is an inverse relationship between job satisfaction and actively seeking new employment (Blokker *et al*., 2019). In the context of the importance of building a career, motivation is also researched. One of the motivating factors consists of the opportunity to learn and develop within the organisation. They enhance the chances of career advancement, which in turn improves perceptions of employability (Hetty van Emmerik *et al*., 2012). Authors of studies, e.g. Groot and De Brink (2000), emphasise the positive impact of education and training on employability. They point out that improving professional qualifications in terms of general and specialised knowledge has an impact on an individual's functioning in the labour market. Researchers emphasise the significance of human capital in shaping employability more generally, i.e. including: knowledge of the labour market and opportunities for development (Peeters *et al*., 2019), as well as the ability to communicate in foreign languages, confidence, and a positive attitude (Zainuddin *et al*., 2019).

Currently, digital competences are more and more significant in terms of supporting employability. The remote working model introduced during the pandemic underlined the importance of technology and digital competences in adapting to new conditions (Mahajan, Gupta & Misra, 2022). The requirement for digital competences was also confirmed in a study by Dutta *et al*. (2020).

Employability depends on an employee's individual characteristics because, on the one hand it is related to professional skills, but on the other hand it is based on the ability to adapt to changing conditions. Job insecurity can cause psychological stress, which will vary according to the gender and age of participants in the labour market. On the other hand, employability may help to cope with change and work-related challenges. Research by Ramaci *et al*. (2021) shows that psychological characteristics are important in coping with anxiety resulting from job insecurity. The authors emphasise that it is important to focus on being effective in the tasks assigned, striving towards the set goals. Researchers have shown that for individ-

uals with a sense of self-efficacy, there is greater commitment, determination, and initiative. Ramaci *et al*. (2017) also highlighted the higher levels of job satisfaction achieved, which is associated with a lower desire to change jobs.

Work is not only a place to form one's professional identity, but also includes an element of social integration. In the case of employability, an important aspect is the sustained desire for employment, which enables workers to meet their needs and adapt to the demands of the labour market now and in the future. This is important in terms of coping with changes, both within the individual and in the labour market (Le Blanc, Van der Heijden & Van Vuuren, 2017). This applies to all workers, whether they are employed or looking for work.

Narcissism is mainly described in psychology literature (Hyla, 2021). However, due to the fact that narcissistic behaviour affects the manner in which an employee functions in the workplace, in recent years narcissism has begun to be used to describe behaviour in organisations. Organisational narcissism is usually treated in terms of a pathology and anomaly in an organisation (Kowalewski & Moczy-dłowska, 2020). Currently, as Szpunar (2016) points out, narcissistic behaviours are becoming increasingly common, due to the widespread striving to "promote oneself", to "sell oneself effectively", which also apply to labour market behaviours. Examples of "promoting oneself" and "selling oneself effectively", often including manifestations of narcissism, consist in user profiles on LinkedIn (Karczewska, 2022). Such behaviours are associated with personal branding, which is increasingly used in the labour market (Sidor-Rządkowska, 2016).

As a starting point for cataloguing the traits of a narcissistic worker, three components of narcissism should be taken into consideration: the narcissistic self, narcissistic relationships (interpersonal relationships), and narcissistic self-regulation strategies (Campbell *et al*., 2011). The narcissistic self is expressed by a sense of being someone special and unique, a sense of entitlement, vanity, and a desire for power and respect. A feature of narcissistic relationships consists of low levels of empathy and emotional involvement. Relationships are shallow and often used to manipulate and exploit others. As part of a narcissistic strategy, the individual seeks to maintain an inflated self-esteem. For this purpose, narcissistic individuals seek opportunities to draw attention to themselves and gain the attention of others, are prone to boasting, and often appropriate the recognition of others. These strategies are used, for example, to maintain power or social status.

The above components are referred to by the criteria proposed by the American Psychiatric Association (2018) diagnosing, among others, narcissistic disorder. In published work authors usually refer to these components when describing the characteristics of a narcissist. However, the lists of traits proposed by different authors are not uniform. For example, Hall (2021) lists such traits describing a narcissist as: a sense of superiority and grandiosity; fantasies concerning unlimited

success, power, greatness, beauty, perfect love; a belief in their own uniqueness and the need to maintain relationships with those of high social status; an expectation of excessive admiration; an exaggerated sense of privilege; exploitation of others; a lack of empathy; jealousy and a belief that others envy him or her; as well as arrogance and impulsiveness. Erikson (2021), on the other hand, presents a more developed list of traits, in which he includes: an unrealistic self-image; egocentrism; talking only about oneself; a sense of exceptionalism; arrogance and haughtiness; constantly criticising and judging others; not following rules; constantly emphasising their own contribution; believing that one deserves the best; not accepting criticism; striving for power and fame; constantly seeking self-affirmation; aggressive in response to disapproval; as well as cheating and manipulation.

The components of narcissism are referred to by the traits and behaviours of narcissistic people presented in the literature, also in the context of professional work, although such references are rarely found. Nowak (2011) believes that narcissistic employees are reluctant to perform monotonous and difficult work. They care more about the appreciation of others than about the results achieved from work. They tend to overstep their competences and at the same time fail to show respect to their superiors. They act as if the rules of social life do not apply to them.

From the point of view of the subject of this study, a valuable summary of the potential benefits and costs – based on the narcissistic traits outlined above – as a consequence of employing narcissistic employees was proposed by Sanecka (2020). Among the benefits she mentioned:

– self-confidence, charisma, developed social skills that facilitate effective influence on others,
– the ability to tolerate the risks that accompany pursuing individual goals,
– higher levels of life satisfaction, lower levels of stress, anxiety, and depression,
– better ability to cope in a competitive environment,
– leadership in the short term.

However, on the other hand, the author identified the following costs of narcissistic individuals in the work environment:

– arrogance, a sense of being privileged, entitlement,
– superior beliefs about oneself,
– overestimating the potential benefits related to making risky decisions,
– a tendency to behave unethically, manipulate, and exploit others,
– leadership in the long term.

Taking into consideration the three components of narcissism, the diagnostic criteria for narcissistic personality, and the narcissistic traits presented in the literature in the context of professional work, a catalogue of 20 traits of a narcissistic worker was created:

1) exaggerating one's own professional skills,

2) emphasising one's own professional achievements,

3) emphasising one's own professional experience,

4) bragging on social media, e.g. on LinkedIn, about their own outstanding skills, experience, and professional achievements,

5) a strong belief in the ability to achieve professional success,

6) expressing exaggerated career aspirations,

7) overconfidence,

8) expressing limited trust towards colleagues as well as towards superiors,

9) emphasising one's professional and social status,

10) seeking recognition and admiration from superiors and colleagues,

11) displaying a demanding attitude,

12) lack of empathy in pursuing career goals,

13) taking advantage of co-workers to achieve one's own professional goals,

14) disregarding the needs of others,

15) tendency to take risks,

16) striving for power within the organisation,

17) judging and criticising other employees,

18) tendency to dominate other team members,

19) a tendency, not always justified, to present oneself in the best possible light,

20) highlighting the fact of having graduated from a prestigious school/university or having worked for a reputable company.

The proposed catalogue was used to assess the impact of narcissistic traits on employability as part of the second stage of the conducted survey.

3. Research Design and Methods

The research procedure was carried out in two stages. During the first stage, based on a critical literature review, an answer to the first research question RQ1 was sought, and thus the first part of the research objective was carried out. On this basis, a catalogue of narcissistic traits including 20 items that could affect an individual's employability was created.

During the second stage, a study was carried out to find out whether the narcissistic traits in the catalogue affect employability. It also aimed to establish the direction of influence of narcissistic traits on employability and the related search for answers to three research questions: RQ2, RQ3, and RQ4. The research was carried out from 9.02.2023 to 13.03.2023 using a diagnostic survey. A survey technique was used, with a survey questionnaire as the tool. The questionnaire consisted of three tabular questions. The first tabulation question studied the impact of 20 narcissistic traits on initial employability, the second on internal employability, and the third on external employability. All three questions assessed the same catalogue of 20 char-

acteristics. A five-point ordinal scale was used for the assessment: strongly weakens, rather weakens, is neutral, rather strengthens, strongly strengthens.

Selecting the research sample was purposive and random in nature. The need for a purposeful selection resulted from the necessity to obtain opinions from people possessing knowledge and experience concerning the issue being researched. For this reason, requests to complete the survey questionnaire were issued to the employees of employment agencies and labour offices. The random nature of the sample was achieved thanks to using a non-return dependent random sampling procedure. Sample elements were drawn from two separate sets, i.e. a list of labour offices (PSZ, 2023) and a list of employment agencies (KRAZ, 2023) as at 15.01.2023. The sampling procedure consisted of a procedure implemented as follows:

1. The size of the sets was determined. The list of labour offices included 356 entities, while the list of employment agencies included 8,856 entities.

2. The drawing of the research sample took place. 25% of the elements were drawn from each of the two independent sets. As a result of the random sampling procedure, a research sample of 2,137 employment agencies and 89 labour offices was selected.

3. E-mails including a link to the survey questionnaire were sent to the selected employment agencies and job centres requesting that employees complete the questionnaire.

A total of 198 completed questionnaires were returned. The structure of respondents varied by gender, age, occupation, and voivodeship. The majority of the research sample consisted of females (85.4%). The predominant age group was between 41 and 50 years of age, which accounted for 37.3% of the total number of respondents. A relatively high proportion of respondents were aged 31–40 (30.3%) and 51–60 (23.3%). The youngest and oldest age groups were least represented. Respondents under the age of 30 accounted for 6.6% and those aged 61 and over for 2.5% of respondents.

Considering the respondents' occupations (KZiS, 2023) almost 60% were recruitment agents (31.2%) and career counsellors (28.3%). The following group, although not as numerous, consisted of managers of a companies providing human resources services (11.6%). The remaining 28.9% of respondents consisted of, among others, employee recruitment specialists (5.6%), professional development specialists (4.5%), temporary work agency workers (2.1%), human resources consultants (2.0%), as well as other human resources managers and specialists (14.7%).

Representatives from all voivodeships took part in the survey. The largest percentage of respondents, at more than 10%, represented the following voivodeships: Śląskie (15.2%), Małopolskie (12.7%), and Wielkopolskie (11.1%). Average, ranging from 5% to 10%, represented the following voivodeships: Podlaskie (9.1%),

Mazowieckie (8.1%), Opolskie and Pomorskie (5.6% each), as well as Warmińsko--mazurskie (5.1%). The fewest respondents – less than 5% – came from the following voivodeships: Podkarpackie (4.5%), Lubelskie and Zachodniopomorskie (4.0% each), Łódzkie and Świętokrzyskie (3.5% each), Dolnośląskie (3.0%), as well as Kujawsko-pomorskie and Lubuskie (2.5% each).

The data were analysed using reliability analysis with Cronbach's alpha coefficient. This coefficient indicates how much of the variance of the summary scale is accounted for by the variance of the true value of that scale. The minimum reliability of the scale is determined by a coefficient value greater than 0.6 (Sagan, 2003, p. 40).

4. Narcissistic Traits and Employability – Findings

The catalogue of 20 traits of a narcissistic employee used in the study was created based on a critical review of the literature concerning narcissism. Therefore, in order to test whether these characteristics affect the studied types of employability, i.e. initial, internal, and external employability, a reliability analysis was carried out (Table 1). The achieved alpha Cronbach values, all above 0.85, confirm that it is possible to assume the proposed catalogue of traits for testing the impact of narcissist traits on employability as reliable.

Table 1. Statistics of Reliability for Specific Types of Employability

Types of Employability	Alpha Cronbach
Initial	0.86
Internal	0.89
External	0.92

Source: the authors.

In the following step, a reliability analysis was carried out for the three types of employability studied after excluding one trait. The resulting alpha Cronbach values for individual types of employability (Table 2) are close to the alpha Cronbach total (Table 1). This means that excluding any of the traits did not improve the reliability of describing the different types of employability, i.e. all traits included in the catalogue are relevant and have an impact on employability.

Categorisation was then introduced for the rating scale: ratings 1 and 2 – the trait weakens employability, rating 3 – the trait is neutral to employability, ratings 4 and 5 – the trait enhances employability, which allowed identification of the nature of the impact of individual narcissistic traits on initial, internal, and external employability and assessing whether the nature of their impact varied by type of employability. It was assumed that if the percentage of ratings is more than 50%,

it indicates the nature of the trait's impact on employability. Thus, it was determined that the absolute majority (13) of the narcissistic traits negatively affect initial and internal employability, while the relative majority (8 traits) affect external employability (Table 3).

Table 2. Statistics of Reliability after Removing a Given Trait for Individual Employability Types

Trait No.	Alpha Cronbach after Removing a Trait		
	initial	internal	external
1	0.86	0.88	0.91
2	0.86	0.89	0.92
3	0.86	0.89	0.92
4	0.86	0.89	0.92
5	0.86	0.89	0.92
6	0.86	0.88	0.91
7	0.86	0.88	0.91
8	0.86	0.89	0.92
9	0.85	0.88	0.91
10	0.86	0.88	0.92
11	0.86	0.89	0.92
12	0.86	0.88	0.91
13	0.85	0.88	0.91
14	0.85	0.88	0.91
15	0.86	0.89	0.92
16	0.85	0.88	0.91
17	0.86	0.88	0.92
18	0.85	0.88	0.91
19	0.85	0.88	0.91
20	0.87	0.89	0.92

Notes: The number of narcissistic traits as in the catalogue.
Source: the authors.

In the case of all of the studied employability types "expressing a demanding attitude" was identified as the most weakening trait, followed by "judging and criticising other employees" and "not considering the needs of others". Employability is also strongly negatively affected by: "taking advantage of co-workers to achieve one's own career goals", "tendency to dominate over other team members", and "lack of empathy in pursuing career goals". In doing so, it is worth noting that these characteristics weaken initial and internal employability more than external.

The studied catalogue of narcissistic traits also includes those that respondents believe strengthen employability. This group of traits mainly includes: "strong belief in one's own ability to achieve professional success", "highlighting one's own professional achievements" and "highlighting one's own professional experience". These characteristics – according to respondents – are most strongly reinforced by external employability, to a lesser extent initial, and to the least extent internal. A trait that strengthens – although definitely less significantly – all types of employability is the "tendency to take risks". According to respondents, the two following characteristics enhance external employability, while not having such an impact on initial and internal employability. These traits are: "bragging on social media, e.g. on LinkedIn, about one's own outstanding skills, experience, and professional achievements" and "highlighting the fact of graduating from a prestigious school/ university or working for a reputable company". The most ambiguous assessment of the impact on all types of employability was made by respondents in relation to "striving for recognition and admiration from superiors and co-workers". In the case of two traits, there is a different assessment of their impact on initial, internal, and external employability. According to respondents, "exaggerating one's own professional skills" weakens initial and internal employability, while they disagreed in terms of assessing the impact of this trait on external employability. As already mentioned, "emphasising the fact of having graduated from a prestigious school/ university or working for a reputable company" was assessed as strengthening external employability, at the same time respondents disagreed in their assessments of the impact of this trait on initial and internal employability.

Table 3. Assessing the Impact of Narcissistic Traits on Initial, Internal and External Employability

Trait No.	Initial			Internal			External		
	–	–/+	+	–	–/+	+	–	–/+	+
1	73.8	14.6	11.6	72.3	14.1	13.6	43.4	15.2	41.4
2	9.6	14.1	76.3	18.2	21.7	60.1	6.6	5.5	87.9
3	10.6	10.1	79.3	16.7	23.2	60.1	8.1	7.6	84.3
4	22.2	31.3	46.5	32.3	42.4	25.3	12.6	25.3	62.1
5	1.5	9.1	89.4	4.0	10.1	85.9	2.0	5.6	92.4
6	73.2	14.7	12.1	63.6	22.2	14.2	40.9	27.8	31.3
7	67.2	18.2	14.6	66.7	20.7	12.6	44.9	18.7	36.4
8	62.1	31.3	6.6	77.8	12.6	9.6	63.2	22.2	14.6
9	67.2	24.7	8.1	69.7	23.2	7.1	49.0	23.7	27.3
10	35.9	25.2	38.9	34.8	23.2	42.0	29.3	20.7	50.0
11	94.9	2.1	3.0	94.9	4.1	1.0	86.9	8.6	4.5

Table 3 cnt'd

Trait No.	Initial			Internal			External		
	–	–/+	+	–	–/+	+	–	–/+	+
12	83.8	6.6	9.6	82.8	6.6	10.6	65.2	12.6	22.2
13	86.4	8.1	5.5	86.4	8.5	5.1	74.2	12.2	13.6
14	90.4	6.1	3.5	88.4	7.1	4.5	79.8	10.6	9.6
15	15.6	27.8	56.6	19.2	28.3	52.5	15.7	16.7	67.6
16	56.5	28.3	15.2	57.6	28.3	14.1	49.5	27.3	23.2
17	92.9	5.6	1.5	89.9	6.6	3.5	82.8	10.6	6.6
18	84.3	10.1	5.6	79.8	12.6	7.6	69.2	17.2	13.6
19	68.7	17.7	13.6	63.1	21.2	15.7	51.5	21.7	26.8
20	37.9	29.3	32.8	45.5	34.8	19.7	24.7	21.7	53.6

Notes: The number of narcissistic traits as in the catalogue.
"–" – weakens (sum of "strongly weakens" and "rather weakens" responses); "–/+" – is neutral; "+" – strengthens (sum of "rather strengthens" and "strongly strengthens" responses).

Source: the authors.

Assessments of the nature of the impact of narcissistic traits on initial and internal employability were similar. Differences were observed between assessments of the nature of the impact of narcissistic traits on initial and internal employability and external employability. In the case of external employability, the negative impact of narcissistic traits was assessed as weaker, while the positive impact was assessed as stronger as compared to the assessments made about initial and internal employability. For external employability, ratings were more often inconclusive than for the other types of employability.

5. Conclusions

Lasch (2019) believes that modern societies live in a culture of narcissism. This can be confirmed by the quite common behaviours, which include the hallmarks of narcissism, especially noticed in social media (Szpunar, 2016; Casale & Banchi, 2020). Currently, in the age of "explosion of narcissism" (Kusak, 2018), such behaviours are far more widely accepted than just a few decades ago, and attitudes to behaviours including narcissistic traits vary by generation. Representatives of younger generations are more tolerant of narcissistic behaviours than representatives of older generations (Lipka *et al.*, 2022).

Research has shown that narcissistic traits can both strengthen and weaken employability. It also shows that the nature and strength of the impact can vary depending on the type of employability. When comparing the results with other studies in a similar field, it is worth noting that they also suggest that narcissistic

traits can both enhance and undermine employability. Studies often address the phenomenon of people with narcissistic traits promoting themselves on social media, which the authors' research has shown to be one of the main factors enhancing external employability. For example, a positive correlation between social media use and narcissistic traits was found based on a 2014 survey of 2,532 respondents in Norway (Andreassen, Pallesen & Griffiths, 2017). The results of a study by Parzoń (2019) on Internet users' self-presentation on LinkedIn also show that social media profiles are a tool for professional self-presentation and can be used during a job search. This may mean that social media users see the information they post there as a means of self-promotion to help them find a job. This is consistent with the authors' findings that bragging about skills, experience and professional achievements on social media, highlighting these achievements, and emphasising work experience increases external employability. Results from a survey of leaders and members of 132 research and development teams in China show that a team leader with narcissistic traits can improve team creativity (Zhou *et al*., 2019). This may mean that narcissistic traits in a leader can enhance their internal employability. At the same time, the same study's results show that a leader's narcissistic traits can also undermine internal employability, as the leader tends to dominate and expect admiration and recognition, which can negatively affect decision-making processes, and thus the evaluation of their performance in the organisation. In contrast, based on a review of the literature, Sanecka's (2015) findings suggest that narcissistic managers show a negative relationship with the quality of interpersonal relationships in teams, which negatively affects their work. On the other hand, confirmation that employees' sense of entitlement undermine their employability can be found in the results of a study carried out by the Public Employment Service in 2017, which shows that a sense of entitlement is perceived as a negative trait by entrepreneurs (in the study: the younger generation) (Muster, 2020).

A limitation of the research carried out is that most of the respondents were employees of employment agencies, whose opinions are mainly based on their experience of working with a particular group of labour resources, such as the unemployed. This structure of respondents may have influenced their perception and assessment of narcissistic traits in the context of employability. Another limitation is that the study mainly involved employee recruiters. It is possible that assessments made from the perspective of managers and employees would change the results obtained.

Knowledge concerning the nature and strength of the influence of narcissistic traits on particular types of employability can be useful in shaping individual employability. Employees who are aware of this influence can seek to eliminate from themselves those qualities that undermine employability and develop those that enhance it. It can also be useful for recruitment professionals when assessing

job candidates. For recruiters, knowledge of narcissistic traits can be used, for example, to select employees whose presence in the team will minimise the risk of conflict, or candidates whose traits will complement each other and make the team's work more effective. Knowledge of narcissistic traits can also be used to select job applicants whose traits are compatible with the organisation's culture.

The spread of narcissistic attitudes and behaviours can also be observed on the labour market. So far, this field has not been studied. Due to the fact that the effects of narcissistic attitudes and behaviours affect both the narcissistic employee and the employing organisation, it is important, and therefore requires further in-depth research. Future research could be based on an expanded survey sample, including managers and employees. Further research could, for example, consider the nature of the work, making it possible to diagnose the impact of narcissistic traits on the employability of individuals and teams, and to identify differences according to the nature of the work.

Authors' Contribution

The authors' individual contribution is as follows: Małgorzata Król 70%, Monika Karczewska 30%.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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