

## **The Role of Narcism in The Detection of Financial Fraud: A Systematic Literature Review**

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### **Abstract**

**Introduction / Main Objectives:** This article aims to map the literature review regarding financial fraud detection by analyzing narcissistic individuals when using social media. **Background Problems:** The writer found indications of narcissism in the literature with the keywords "the impact of narcissism using social media" and "detection of financial fraud on narcissistic behavior." The findings show that narcissism is a personality disorder characterized by excessive self-assessment, thirst for recognition, and lack of empathy. Narcissism can negatively influence individuals when uploading content on their social media. The rise of wealth-flexing content is evidence of selfish individuals trying to gain social recognition. Without realizing it, flexing range triggers destructive perceptions from other people, especially if they excessively highlight wealth items on virtual networks. Perceptions about alleged unethical behavior in financial crimes. Even though it does not have a strong correlation, these allegations of narcissistic individuals can have the potential to commit financial fraud. **Novelty:** The novelty of this research is how to map the literature review regarding narcissism in detecting financial fraud **Research Method:** This article uses the bibliometric method to describe research developments related to narcissism and financial fraud. **Findings/Result:** The findings presented results from an empirical review of 207 Scopus-indexed papers. The mapping results show that 40 pieces meet the criteria for an empirical study of narcissism. **Conclusion:** Through this bibliometric approach, the authors conclude that although there is no strong correlation, narcissistic individuals can potentially commit financial fraud.

**Keywords:** narcissistic; flexing; financial fraud; systematic literature review

**JEL Classification:** M41; H83

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### **INTRODUCTION**

One of the advantages of digitalization is that it makes it easier for individuals to communicate and interact with others on virtual networks. In line with its development, this interaction gives rise to selfish behavior in social media users. Of course, this phenomenon

is an interesting topic to research. Hence, the increasing frequency of use of social media in everyday life. Referring to research conducted by Hawk et al (2015); Kauten et al (2015) concluded that narcissism in social media is suspected by the tendency to update content uploaded to social networks continuously. Also, narcissism will encourage individuals to start addictive habits so that they spend much time in cyberspace (McCain & Campbell, 2018). even though this addictive behavior will be detrimental to the individual himself (Hawk et al., 2019). However, it turns out that narcissistic individuals do not behave narcissistically on some of their social media platforms. Their studies (Błachnio, Przepiorka, & Rudnicka, 2016; Casale & Banchi, 2020; Leung, 2013) explain that there are different patterns of social media use that can influence differences in the behavior of narcissistic individuals.

Narcissism is the emergence of a person's dependence on external validation, which is very relevant to the discipline of psychology, which explains that narcissism is part of three series of negative behaviors or "Dark Triad Personality." The majority of research discussions based on this topic conclude that narcissistic individuals will always be self-serving (Jonason et al., 2015), potentially committing unethical actions (Bailey, 2019; Schröder-Abé & Fatfouta, 2019; Szabó et al., 2022), emotional dysregulation (Andreassen et al., 2017; Hussain et al., 2021; Nickisch et al., 2020) to the emergence of indications of FOMO (Jabeen et al., 2023; Tandon et al., 2021). In the development of behavioral analysis of narcissism, several researchers are interested in adding new space by linking it to the field of accounting for financial fraud.

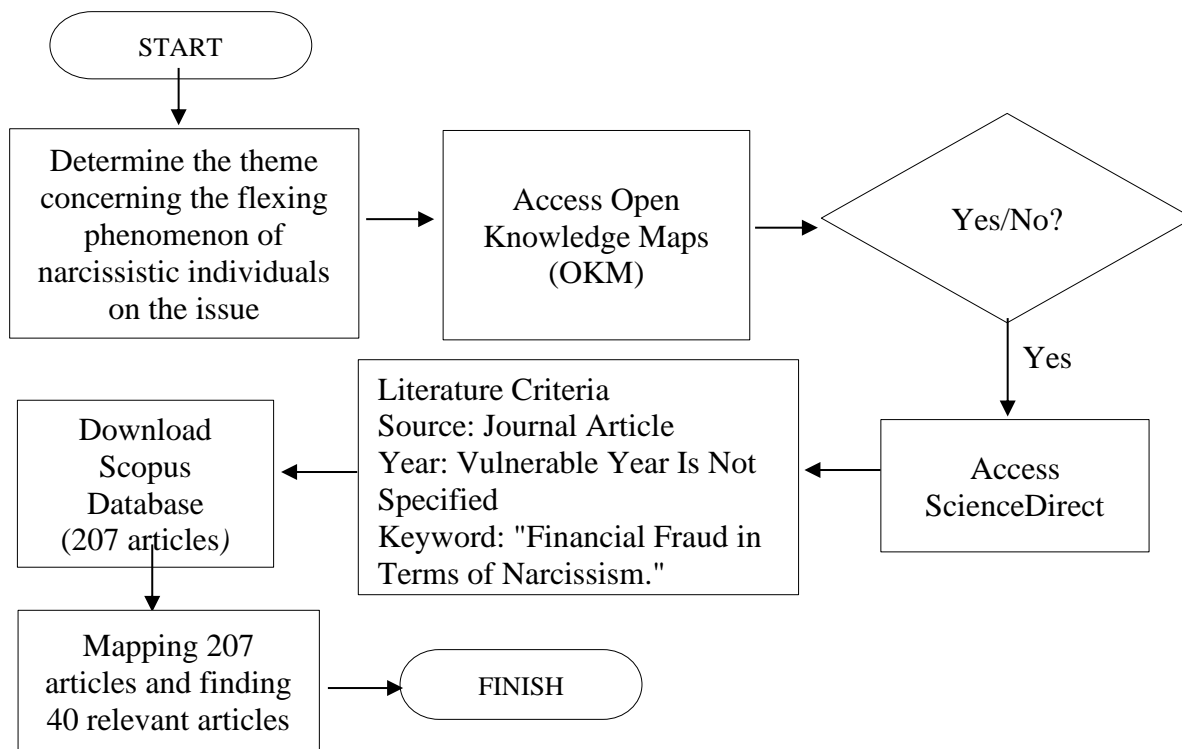
The emergence of issues of narcissistic leadership as the main factor causing fraud shows that the theme of narcissism can be explored in more depth. For example, research conducted by Capalbo et.al (2018); Cragun et.al (2020); Presley & Abbott (2013); Rijsenbilt & Commandeur (2013); Schrand & Zechman (2012); Xiang & Song (2021) explains that a narcissistic CEO in a company has control over his work environment and takes advantage of his position to commit financial fraud through manipulating financial reports. Also, a study by Olsen & Stekelberg (2016) explains that narcissistic CEOs positively and significantly influence tax avoidance. The results of this research are similar to those of García-Meca et al (2021), who concluded that the effect of CEO narcissism has a significant influence on tax avoidance. Although tax avoidance is not illegal, the position of a narcissistic individual as executive leader of an organization will have an impact in the form of legal risks (O'Reilly et al., 2018). Based on the background above, the research problem formulation is how to map the literature review regarding narcissism in detecting financial fraud. So, this research aims to map literature related to narcissism in financial detection and open up future research opportunities.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a systematic literature review with a bibliometric approach. *Bibliometrics* is a data mapping technique that looks at the development of related research based on a period for further review. In this article, the author presents literature



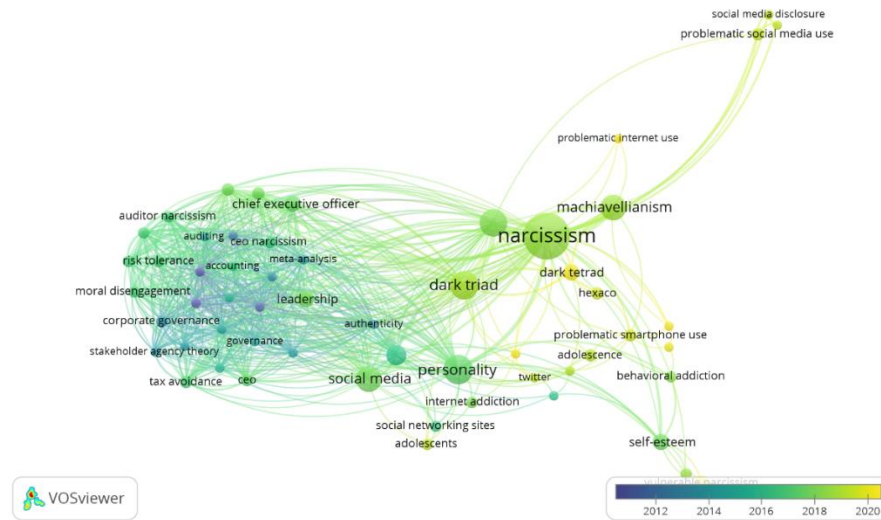
mapping manually using tables in the Microsoft Word application. The author also uses VV software (VOS viewer) to cluster literature and support research results in data visualization and analyzing publication data. The database used in this writing is the Scopus database. This study uses the disciplines of psychology and behavioral accounting as a reference for literature mapping. The author uses the keyword "narcissistic behavior in social media " for the psychology discipline. In contrast, for the behavioral accounting discipline, the author uses the keyword "financial fraud based on narcissism" in an unspecified period to see the development of research related to narcissism and financial fraud. The data collected from the literature search using the keywords above amounted to 207 journal articles.



**Figure 1.** Research design

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section will develop research on narcissism in financial fraud based on Scopus data with 207 previous research papers. Based on the mapping results, 40 papers meet the criteria for empirical studies of narcissism. Among them, six papers discuss the impact of narcissism in organizations. Six papers discuss narcissistic leaders committing financial fraud, eight papers relate to narcissistic individuals causing polemics when using social media, five papers discuss emotional disorders in narcissistic individuals, four papers explain differences in narcissism patterns, one paper explains selfish from a gender gap perspective, eight papers examine the positive and negative impacts of narcissism, and two papers present discussion of narcissistic CEOs who trigger tax avoidance.

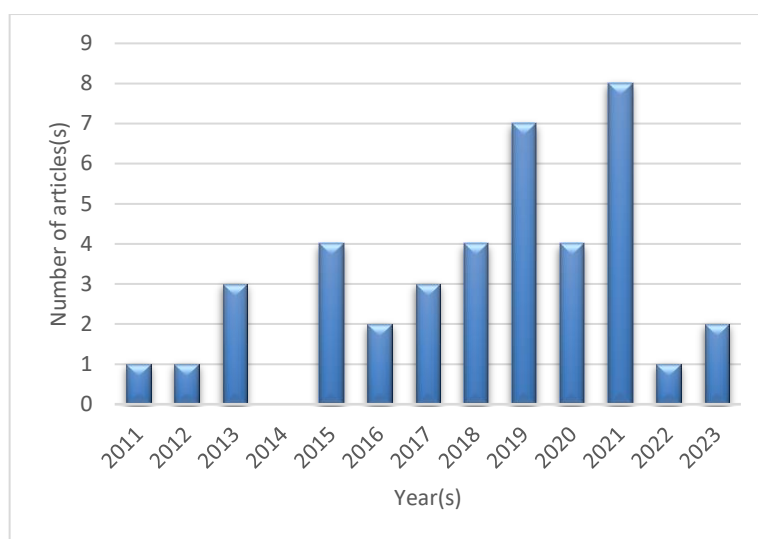


**Figure 2.** The development of narcissistic research

From the view above, research on narcissistic individuals was widespread in the 2000s. However, a journal article explicitly discussing the relationship between narcissism and financial fraud emerged in 2011, namely an analysis by with the research object of narcissism in organizations. Schrand & Zechman (2012) conducted a more specific study of selfish individuals who worked as company leaders the following year. This research resulted in findings that executive employees with excessive self-confidence have the potential to misstate their finances deliberately. Presley T et al (2013), Rijsenbilt & Commandeur (2013) conducted similar research using the narcissistic psychological perspective of company leaders. Some studies highlight indications of tax fraud in the form of tax evasion (Olsen & Stekelberg (2016); Iyer & Reckers (2017); García-Meca et al (2021) emerging and developing until 2023.

The development of narcissism research with indications of financial fraud based on the year of publication is still relatively fluctuating (see Figure 3). Research on narcissism mostly appears in the single digits every year. Interestingly, in 2021, research related to narcissism experienced striking growth compared to previous years (n=8).





**Figure 3.** Publication trends

**Publication outlets**

**Table 1.** Narcissism Publication

Journal title	Database	Number of articles(s)
Abacus	Scopus	1
Academy of Management Review	Scopus	1
Addictive Behaviors Reports	Scopus	2
Addictive Behavior	Scopus	1
Advances in Accounting	Scopus	2
Althea Medical Journal	Scopus	1
BMC Psychology	Scopus	1
China Journal of Accounting Research	Scopus	1
Computers in Human Behavior	Scopus	4
Human Resource Management Review	Scopus	2
Journal of Accounting and Economics	Scopus	1
Journal of Accounting Education	Scopus	1
Journal of Behavioral Addictions	Scopus	1
Journal of Business Ethics	Scopus	1
Journal of Business Research	Scopus	3
Journal of Economic Psychology	Scopus	1
Journal of Management	Scopus	1
Journal of Managerial Psychology	Scopus	1
Journal of the American Taxation Association	Scopus	1
Personality and Individual Differences	Scopus	7
Psychological Bulletin	Scopus	1
Psychology of Popular Media Culture	Scopus	1
The Leadership Quarterly	Scopus	3

Source: data processed

The distribution of journal articles from 2011-2023 with the keyword narcissistic individual shows that Personality and Individual Differences is the most productive publication space because it contains seven articles about narcissism (see Table I). In addition, the Computers in Human Behavior publication space contributed to publishing four themes related to the impact of technology on individual behavior. The Journal of Business Research and The Leadership Quarterly consistently publish journal articles on narcissism, with three papers each.

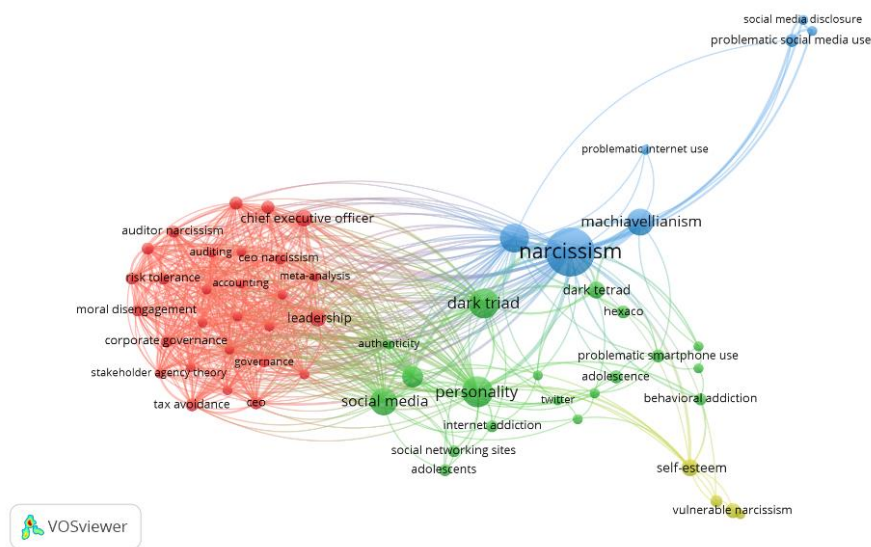


Figure 4. Areas that are often used as research

In this section, the author represents the area or scope often used as the research object. Based on the picture above, narcissism in behavior and ethics, problems using social media, emotional dysregulation, and selfishness in leadership behavior have a broad scope, indicating that these areas have often been used as research and are interrelated.



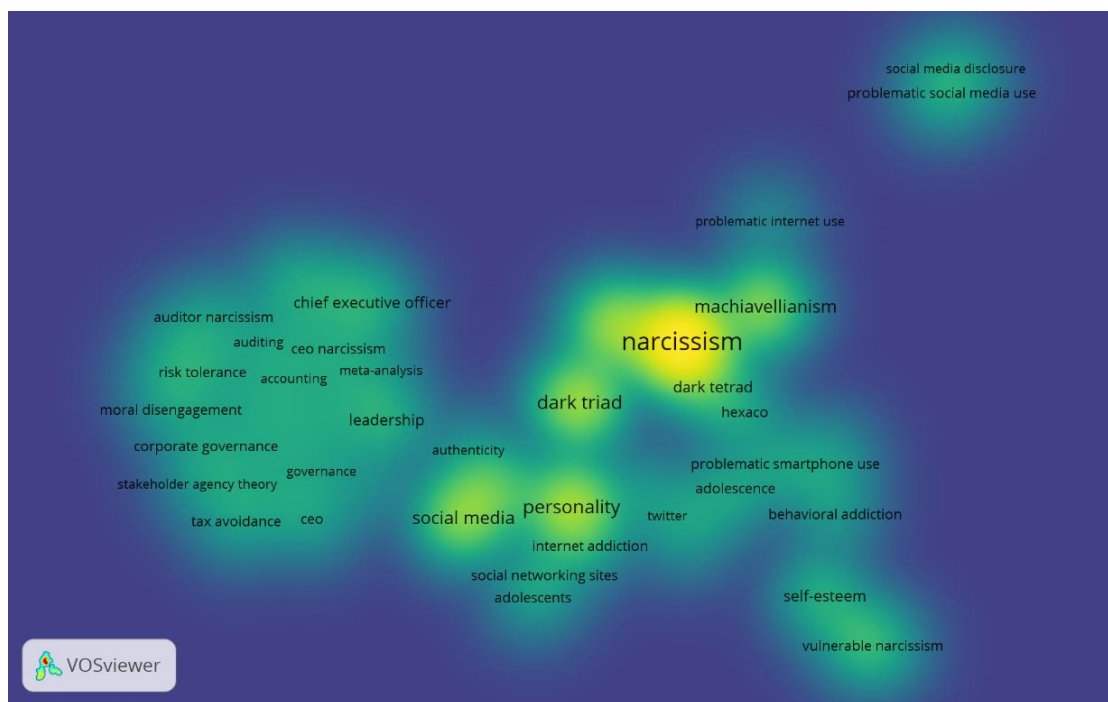


Figure 5. Areas that are often used as research

To support the previous explanation, the illustration above (figure 5) illustrates that narcissism research based on financial fraud detection can be carried out in psychology and topics related to economics & business—for example, narcissism on social media, corporate governance, audits, leadership behavior, etc.

Another analysis used by the author was mapping from 40 journal articles related to abstracts, methods, results, and discussion to conclusions. It is hoped that the results of this mapping will increase readers' insight into the phenomenon of narcissism, which is correlated with financial fraud.

Table 2. Findings and quotes from previous research

Findings	Author
An overview of narcissism in the organizational scope in the form of the potential for narcissistic individuals to become leaders and use their authority when making decisions that tend to lead to unethical actions, causing the company to face legal risks.	(Campbell et al., 2011; Chatterjee & Pollock, 2017; O'Reilly et al., 2021)
Narcissistic leaders have the potential to commit financial fraud. For example, intentional misstatement of financial reports, earnings management, and committing fraud.	(Ahn et al., 2020; Capalbo et al., 2018; Presley & Abbott, 2013; Rijsenbilt & Commandeur, 2013; Schrand & Zechman, 2012; She et al., 2020; Xiang & Song, 2021)

Findings	Author
There needs to be more narcissistic patterns across various social media platforms. The diversity of social media applications does not necessarily make narcissistic individuals show their existence. Regarding differences in motives, narcissistic individuals will choose social media they are comfortable using to gain external validity (recognition).	(Andreassen et al., 2017; Błachnio, Przepiorka, & Rudnicka, 2016; Casale & Banchi, 2020; Leung, 2013)
Differences in levels of narcissism from a gender perspective.	(Grijalva et al., 2015)
The emergence of problems when using social media is triggered by the increasingly addictive behavior of narcissistic individuals towards social media, giving rise to polemics in the form of uploading content that is oversharing and excessive	(Balcerowska et al., 2023; Hawk et al., 2015, 2019; Kauten et al., 2015; Kircaburun & Griffiths, 2018; McCain & Campbell, 2018; Susanto et al., 2021)
Narcissism can have a positive impact, namely that narcissistic individuals have a tough mentality and are vulnerable to criticism. In the context of career paths, narcissistic individuals can become leaders in companies because they are considered to have a dominant persona.	(Pruysers et al., 2019; Ronay et al., 2019; Rovelli & Curnis, 2021b; Schröder-Abé & Fatfouta, 2019; Szabó et al., 2022)
Narcissistic leaders abuse power because they feel most powerful and can influence subordinates to engage in unethical actions.	(Bailey, 2019; Fatfouta, 2019; Iyer & Reckers, 2017)
Fantasies about power and recognition from other people cause emotional dysregulation or disturbance in narcissistic individuals. This emotional disorder causes a lack of empathy and a tendency to express oneself excessively. Narcissistic individuals will feel anxious if their efforts to attract external attention fail.	(Hussain et al., 2021; Jabeen et al., 2023; Jonason et al., 2015; Tandon et al., 2021)
Narcissistic leaders fuel tax avoidance schemes. Regarding personality disorders, narcissistic individuals feel superior to others and are overconfident. So, narcissistic leaders try to set tax obligations unrealistically without considering advice from tax experts.	(García-Meca et al., 2021; Olsen & Stekelberg, 2016)

Source: data processed

After carrying out detailed mapping, it can be said that narcissism research is more dominant in analyzing the impact of technology on individual behavior. The author concludes that narcissism is closely related to social media problems. Generally, narcissism is known as a personality disorder. However, after mapping journal articles (see Table II), narcissism positively impacts selfish individuals by being mentally tough and having a dominant aura suitable for filling leadership positions in companies. However, the negative side of narcissistic personality disorder cannot be eliminated. This disorder causes emotional dysregulation, which influences the actions of narcissistic leaders when using their authority. For example, in the context of financial fraud, narcissistic individuals are in control when making corporate decisions. Abuse of power when making decisions has the potential to encourage unethical behavior. For example, narcissistic leaders influence subordinates to





manipulate financial data. This manipulation can result in misstatement of financial reports and tax evasion.

Presentation of several research opportunities regarding narcissism research in the context of financial fraud.

**Table 3.** Future research opportunities.

Developments in Narcissism Research	
Current Conditions	For the Future
Most narcissism research areas still focus on psychology, with research results revealing personality disorders.	Researchers can develop research areas in other scientific disciplines. For example, the development of narcissism is linked to forensic accounting. This article explains that selfish behavior can potentially carry out unethical actions and financial fraud.
The negative impact of narcissism is linked to the rise of individual conflicts on social media. This conflict takes the form of flexing trends and oversharing.	Research into the negative impacts of narcissism can reach a broader population, for example, in an organization.
Research into FOMO as part of the habits of narcissistic individuals has only been linked to emotional dysregulation.	In financial fraud detection, researchers can conduct an in-depth analysis of whether there is a relationship between the fraud triangle and the emotional dysregulation of selfish individuals.
Selfish behavior can result in individuals committing unethical actions.	In detecting financial fraud, researchers can carry out measurements using open-ended questionnaires direct interviews, and conduct studies using experimental methods on narcissistic individuals.
The discussion regarding the positive impact of narcissistic individuals is closely related to mental strength and dominant aura.	In the context of financial fraud detection, researchers can carry out measurements using an experimental approach to measure how far positivism is beneficial.

Source: data processed

The phenomenon of narcissistic behavior has been a research topic since the 1990s, starting when social media was first released (Casale & Banchi, 2020). Leung (2013) explains that differences in social media usage patterns influence a person's narcissism. Narcissistic individuals use social media to fulfill 5 (five) socio-psychological needs: showing affection, venting negative feelings, getting recognition, entertainment, and fulfilling cognitive needs. Without realizing it, narcissistic behavior has excessive interest when uploading content on social media platforms and can potentially cause unfavorable responses from other individuals (Kauten et al., 2015). The research base on narcissism does not stop with the aspect of social media use but is starting to develop and is relevant to a gender perspective. Grijalva et.al (2015) explained that men are more narcissistic than women. However, the results of this research have not been able to resolve the problem of the gap in narcissism for both women and men.

In addition to gender diversity, self-esteem is essential in assessing individual self-worth. Although the influence is not very strong, the perception of the judgment of narcissistic individuals triggers addictive social media behavior (Błachnio, Przepiorka, Boruch, et al., 2016; Casale & Banchi, 2020; Hussain et al., 2021). In the development of research on narcissism behavior, many researchers connote narcissism as bad behavior. In their study, Chung et al (2019) stated that narcissism is included in the dark personality with dark personality traits (dark triad), namely Machiavellianism, psychopathy,

narcissism, which has the opportunity to throw tantrums and be addicted to playing social media. This analysis is also explained in previous research (Jonason et al., 2015; Kircaburun & Griffiths, 2018) and provides clarity if narcissistic individuals are vulnerable to criticism and do not want to be rivaled.

Research by Tandon et al (2021) reveals that narcissistic individuals have high anxiety and fear being left behind by trends or what we often hear as FOMO (Fear of Missing Out). Jabeen et.al (2023)- were also interested in conducting a survey and showed that FOMO arises, followed by feelings of anxiety and time pressure. This behavior changes the mindset of selfish individuals to become active and dependent on trends circulating in cyberspace. The widespread distribution of flexing content is evidence of competition and dependence from related individuals. The flexing trend is indirectly aimed at those with a luxurious lifestyle to show that these individuals grow up to see their values as more than others (Susanto et al., 2021). This unhealthy lifestyle has become a syndrome snowballing among the upper class. However, strangely, in a study conducted by Szabó et.al (2022) individuals with high levels of narcissism had positive aspects in terms of mental toughness, so they deserved good career opportunities (Ronay et al., 2019; Rovelli & Curnis, 2021). For example, a narcissistic individual has a company executive leader position.

The emergence of financial fraud issues due to selfish individuals opens more in-depth research and discussion opportunities. Previous findings reveal that one of the main factors in fraud is narcissistic individuals who work as executive leaders, CFOs, and CEOs (Schrand & Zechman, 2012; Presley & Abbott, 2013; Rijssenbilt & Commandeur, 2013). Narcissistic leaders are characterized by having a sense of superiority and entitlement, a lack of empathy and moral sensitivity, and being exploitative because the individual feels they have complete control over their position (Chatterjee & Pollock, 2017; Iyer & Reckers, 2017). Companies led by narcissistic CEOs are at risk of being involved in legal problems (O'Reilly et al., 2018). The emergence of narcissistic traits in CEOs is triggered by the ego prioritizing their interests over the entity's, which can trigger fraud.

The emergence of narcissistic traits in CEOs is triggered by the ego prioritizing their interests over the entity's, which can trigger fraud. Of course, this behavior is unethical and is carried out solely to gain profit (Johnson et al., 2021). Even in taxation, narcissistic CEOs tend to avoid taxes. Findings in research by Olsen & Stekelberg (2016) state that the narcissistic CEO leadership style positively affects tax avoidance. Concerning the same research object, the research results of García-Meca et al (2021) mention similar findings and provide a solution if the consequences of this discretionary behavior can be limited if the company has an audit committee aware of tax avoidance schemes. It can be concluded that the development of narcissism analysis studies, which were initially limited to discussing individual behavior, can be linked to in-depth discussions regarding the detection of financial fraud.



## CONCLUSION

This study seeks to explore the relationship between narcissism and the detection of financial fraud. Narcissism is usually associated with problems with social media. Narcissistic individuals tend to have an addictive nature towards social media due to dependence on external validity. Apart from that, there is a wrong perception about the value of oneself and others, which creates new problems in controlling emotions. The flexing phenomenon is an example of a lack of emotional control, resulting in excessive anxiety if selfish individuals do not carry out activities that are trending on social media. They may feel happy and proud of recognition from others. Flexing modifying represents that narcissistic individuals are too excessive in uploading content, often inviting criticism and creating negative perceptions about themselves.

However, narcissism does not necessarily have a negative impact. Uniquely, individuals who have narcissistic personality disorder have a tough mentality. In addition, overconfidence in narcissistic individuals increases the potential for a good career path. In the discussion of this study, it is stated that narcissistic individuals can have CEO positions in several companies. However, the nature of narcissism, which refers to problems with the mindset and behavior of narcissistic CEOs, gives rise to the potential for committing financial fraud. This unethical act is solely carried out for personal gain. Some literature also reveals the potential for tax avoidance. The worst possibility that a company with a narcissistic individual as executive leader will face is dealing with the law.

This research is expected to provide an understanding of the role of narcissism in detecting financial fraud. With a better understanding of the characteristics of narcissistic individuals, companies and organizations can adopt more effective approaches to preventing and detecting fraud. This research is also expected to provide new insights for professionals in the audit and finance fields to improve fraud detection by considering aspects of narcissism in individuals involved in financial processes.

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## AUTHORSHIP CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

All authors contributed to this study. Starting from the design of the research framework, collecting references, discussing, and bringing out statements according to the team's agreement.

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