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Narcissism and Academic Delay of Gratification in Students of Accounting and Controllership and Finance Courses at the Federal University of Minas Gerais

Narcisismo e Prorrogação da Gratificação Acadêmica em Estudantes de Ciências Contábeis e Controladoria e Finanças da Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais

Narcisismo y Academic Delay of Gratification en Estudiantes de Contabilidad y Contraloría y Finanzas de la Universidad Federal de Minas Gerais

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KEYWORDS

Academic Delay of
Gratification. Narcissism.
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Abstract: This study aims to analyze the non-pathological traits of narcissistic personality in students of Accounting and Controllership and Finance related to the difficulties of these students in delaying gratifications. To collect evidence, 165 printed questionnaires were applied to students of Accounting and Controllership and Finance courses enrolled at the Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG). We found that, for the most part, students exhibit some narcissistic behaviors - a talent for influencing people, they consider themselves good leaders, they like to be praised and look at themselves in the mirror - but it is not possible to conclude whether these behaviors are in a level considered normal or excessive. Regarding immediate gratifications, we found that respondents postponed available opportunities in favor of seeking academic gratifications that were considered more valuable. The main findings corroborate the idea that narcissist students would have greater difficulties in postponing gratifications, considering that impulsiveness and the search for immediate pleasure are characteristics present in individuals who have such personality traits.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Prorrogação da gratificação acadêmica. Narcisismo. Ciências Contábeis.

Resumo: O objetivo deste estudo consiste em analisar se traços não patológicos de personalidade narcisista em estudantes de graduação dos cursos de Ciências Contábeis e Controladoria e Finanças estão relacionados à dificuldade destes discentes em adiar gratificações imediatas. Para a coleta de evidências, foram aplicados 165 questionários impressos a estudantes dos cursos de Ciências Contábeis e Controladoria e Finanças matriculados na Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais (UFMG). Verificou-se que, em sua maioria, os estudantes pesquisados apresentam alguns comportamentos cunhados como narcisistas – talento para influenciar pessoas, consideram-se bons líderes, gostam de ser elogiados e de se olharem no espelho, dentre outros - apesar de não ser possível inferir se tais comportamentos estão em um nível considerado normal ou excessivo. Acerca das gratificações imediatas, verificou-se, em média, que os respondentes tendem a adiar oportunidades disponíveis em favor de perseguir metas acadêmicas consideradas mais valiosas. Por fim, os principais achados apoiam a ideia de que estudantes narcisistas teriam maiores dificuldades em adiar gratificações, tendo em vista que a impulsividade e a busca pelo prazer imediato são características presentes em indivíduos que apresentam tais traços de personalidade.

PALABRAS CLAVE

Academic Delay of Gratification. Narcisismo. Ciencias Contables.

Resumen: El objetivo de este estudio es analizar si los rasgos no patológicos de personalidad narcisista en estudiantes de los cursos de Contabilidad y Contraloría y Finanzas se relacionan con la dificultad de estos estudiantes para posponer bonificaciones (Academic Delay of Gratification). Para la recolección de evidencia, se aplicaron 165 cuestionarios impresos a estudiantes de los cursos de Contabilidad y Contraloría y Finanzas matriculados en la Universidad Federal de Minas Gerais (UFMG). Se encontró que, en su mayoría, los estudiantes encuestados presentan algunos comportamientos acuñados como narcisistas -talento para influir en las personas, se consideran buenos líderes, les gusta ser elogiados y mirarse al espejo, entre otros-, aunque no es posible inferir si dichas conductas se encuentran en un nivel considerado normal o excesivo. En cuanto a las gratificaciones inmediatas, se encontró, en promedio, que los encuestados tienden a posponer las oportunidades disponibles en favor de la consecución de objetivos académicos considerados más valiosos.

Introduction

The theme of narcissism has been studied in both national (D'Souza, 2016; Lopes, Cardoso, Reina & Reina, R 2016; Avelino & Lima, 2017; Avelino, Lima, Cunha & Colauto, 2017) and international scopes (Penney, Moretti & Silva, 2008; Weikel, Avara, Hanson & Kater, 2010; Golmaryami & Barry, 2010; Lau, Marsee, Kunimatsu & Fassnacht., 2011; Ackerman, Witt, Donnellan, Trzesniewski, Robins & Kashy, 2011; Davis & Brunell, 2012; Gungor, Eksi & Aricak, 2012; Godkin & Watson, 2012; Pauletti, Menon, Menon, Tobin & Perry, 2012), gaining prominence in recent years. This could be due, among other factors, to the concept of narcissism being extended to a non-pathological connotation, moving away from the restricted domain of mental illness and being differentiated into clinical and subclinical. While clinical narcissism is defined as a personality disorder, subclinical (non-pathological) narcissism can be understood as a trait or personality characteristic presented by a large number of individuals considered "normal" (Wallace & Baumeister, 2002; Brunell, Staats, Barden & Hupp, 2011).

As Hudson (2012) highlights, although an exact definition of non-pathological narcissism is difficult to formulate, there are essential characteristics that define the term. Firstly, individuals with excessive narcissistic traits tend to exhibit a great sense of self-importance (Brown, Budzek & Tamborski, 2009) and entitlement, characterized by a generalized feeling that they deserve more in rewards and recognition, compared to others (Campbell, Foster & Brunell 2004). They evaluate themselves more positively than their peers (Robins & Beer, 2001), believe they are better than others, and heavily depend on positive feedback from other individuals (Rhodewalt & Morf, 1998). If this feedback is not received, as in the case of failure, the narcissist responds with extreme manifestations of negative emotions (Bushman & Baumeister, 1998; Rhodewalt & Morf, 1998).

Such characteristics result in negative consequences for overly narcissistic individuals, whether in the professional field, personal life, or

academic environment. Regarding the latter, the issue arising from this reality is that evident narcissistic traits in university students may be associated with specific difficulties, such as aggressive reactions after receiving criticism (Bushman & Baumeister, 1998; Twenge & Campbell, 2003). Furthermore, narcissists have greater difficulty seeking counseling and are more prone to seek immediate pleasures at the expense of delaying or postponing gratifications (Hudson, 2012). Specifically concerning the postponement of gratifications, Hudson (2012) points out that this aspect may conceptualize a learning strategy, essential for achieving academic success. For example, a good student might not go to a concert (immediate gratification) so that they can stay home studying for an evaluation. They delay their gratification so that they are likely to achieve a higher grade on the exam because they choose to study instead of attending the concert.

Individuals who do not postpone gratification do not fully engage in their academic tasks and, consequently, are less academically successful than those capable of postponing reward (Bembenutty, 1999). Moreover, this capability is associated with impulsivity (Vazire & Funder, 2006), which narcissistic individuals have difficulty controlling (Hudson, 2012). In this sense, Cardoso (2022) elucidates that managers' characteristics, such as narcissistic personality traits, values, and experience, are reflected in the aggressiveness of decisions, which can affect performance in the corporate environment.

Therefore, this study aims to answer the following question: What is the relationship between non-pathological narcissistic personality traits and the postponement of academic gratification? Consequently, this study aims to analyze whether non-pathological narcissistic personality traits in undergraduate students of Accounting Sciences and Controllershship and Finance enrolled at the Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG) are related to these students' difficulty in delaying gratifications.

Regarding the study's relevance, it's valid to reinforce the prominence that the theme has gained in recent years, both nationally and internationally, corroborating the need for continued research on

this topic. It's also important to highlight the issue of the professional field, since non-pathological narcissistic personality traits in managers can affect the decision-making process, a crucial role in the accounting field. Additionally, the research advances by addressing the Controllship and Finance course, a field of similar importance in the decision-making process.

Moreover, studying the relationship between non-pathological narcissistic personality traits and the postponement of academic gratifications contributes to the debate on how students' behavior can affect the teaching-learning process, as individuals who do not delay gratification do not fully engage in their academic tasks, which may have consequences for this process.

Furthermore, the study aims to foster discussion among faculty and educational institutions, encouraging student engagement in academic performance without neglecting to seek gratifications at appropriate times. Discussions can help faculty, students, and the academic community identify students with difficulties in postponing gratifications, making it possible to think about mechanisms to minimize such behaviors. The fact is that students can be trained to defer gratification and exercise self-control, so discussions on the topic are fundamental for applications in this aspect. This can become even more relevant when considering students who exhibit non-pathological narcissistic personality traits, who, although not expressive, may require special attention to deal with discomfort in the academic environment.

Theoretical Elements of the Research

Conceptual Approach to Narcissism

The use of the term narcissism, introduced by Ellis in 1898, brought about the expression Narcissus-like. This expression stems from the myth of Narcissus, who in Greek mythology was a young man who fell in love with his reflection in a lake, ultimately dying due to his fascination. Complementing this, Guimarães (2012) reports that although Ellis alluded to the myth of Narcissus in 1898, it was Paul Nücke, a year later, referencing

Ellis's text, who coined the word narcissism.

Chatterjee and Hambrick (2007) elucidate that the concept of narcissism had a significant influence on Freud's thinking (1914/1957), who identified several of its manifestations, such as self-love, self-admiration, self-aggrandizement, and a tendency to view others as an extension of oneself. In synergy, Freud (1914, p.14) defines narcissism as: "[...] behavior in which the individual treats their own body as if it were that of a sexual object, that is, looks at it, touches it, and caresses it with sexual pleasure, until achieving satisfaction through these acts." D'Souza, Aragão, & De Luca (2018) add that Freud treated narcissism as a psychological state with notable traits of self-love, selfishness, and the capacity to maintain unconsciously any feeling that could reduce the sense of self.

In turn, the American Psychiatric Association (2014) classifies narcissism as a personality disorder characterized by a pervasive pattern of grandiosity, need for admiration, and lack of empathy that begins in early adulthood and is present in various contexts. Regarding personality, D'Souza (2016) emphasizes that narcissism is detected in arrogant individuals, who tend to present an abnormally high level of self-esteem, believing they are unique and entitled to praise and admiration. Chatterjee and Hambrick (2007) also add that as a personality trait, narcissism has cognitive and motivational elements. From a mental standpoint, narcissism implies a belief in one's superior qualities, while from the motivational side, narcissism entails an intense need to reaffirm one's superiority.

From a non-clinical perspective, Pincus, Ansell, Pimentel, Cain, Wright, & Levy (2009) denote that narcissism is considered "normal," more commonly assessed in research on social-personality psychology, while pathological narcissism is more routinely evaluated in clinical practice research. In this view, regarding subclinical (non-pathological) narcissism, Raskin and Terry (1988), through the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI), identified seven elements related to the construct of the narcissistic

personality, namely: i) authority; ii) self-sufficiency; iii) superiority; iv) exhibitionism; v) exploitation; vi) vanity; and vii) entitlement.

Nonetheless, according to Dworkis (2013), not all aspects of narcissism are considered "bad." For instance, managers with high authority and self-sufficiency often perform their roles well in an organization. Moreover, a high level of superiority can contribute to managers believing in their capabilities, which may increase motivation and effort. However, Dworkis (2013) also notes that some characteristics of narcissism can be destructive, leading to adverse consequences at the group or organizational level. The author adds that narcissistic individuals are not capable of moderating their behaviors in specific domains, such as in a workplace environment.

Cruz (2021) found that CEO narcissism increases the levels of accrual-based earnings management. When actual activities management was assessed, it was observed that CEOs with high levels of narcissism, when members of the board of directors, tend to practice cash flow and discretionary expenses earnings management.

From this perspective, Cardoso (2022) emphasizes that organizational decisions tend to reflect a lot of the decision-makers. The characteristics of the CEO and the Chief Financial Officer (CFO), specifically narcissistic personality traits, can influence the company's strategic decisions and, consequently, business performance.

Dworkis (2013) emphasizes that narcissism becomes an integral part of a manager's intrinsic motivation, playing a fundamental role in the decision-making process. In this context, it's worth noting that, thinking in the long term, a manager may make a current decision that postpones gratification. Similarly, the academic environment also deserves attention, as students are already involved in decision-making and gratification processes from academia, such as deciding whether to go to a concert or study to achieve good grades in future exams.

The Postponement of Gratifications and Narcissism

According to Bembenutty and Karabenick (1998), initially, Mischel and Mischel (1983) viewed the postponement of gratification as a skill or competency that children developed over time, learning relevant delaying strategies, such as imagining a temporally distant goal, in addition to enhancing self-verbalization and attention control capabilities. Others focused on postponing gratifications as a personality disposition (Funder, Block & Block, 1989). Generally, delaying gratifications can be considered a controllable activity, although not always conscious (Cantor & Langston, 1989), in which cognitive operations and motivational determinants organize to fulfill goals (Pressley & McCormick, 1995). Essentially, it refers to the choice between immediate gratification and later, presumably superior gratification (Bembenutty & Karabenick, 1998).

Following the same line of thought, Bembenutty and Karabenick (2004) suggest that students strategically postpone immediate gratifications to secure academic rewards that are temporally distant but highly valuable. The authors posit that the postponement of gratification is a learning strategy akin to self-monitoring and effort regulation, referring to the students' disposition to forego an immediately available option in favor of an alternative that will be obtained over a more significant time interval. The postponement of gratification in academic situations is necessary for students to guide their behavior in learning activities without an external coercive stimulus. For Pressley, Reynolds, Stark, & Gettinger (1983), postponing gratifications can facilitate learning and information processing among students, resulting in significant implications for education and academic performance. Thus, it is recommended that students be trained to postpone gratification and exercise self-control.

Bembenutty and Karabenick (2004) further clarify that a student's decision to postpone gratification depends not only on the attractiveness of the study (e.g., whether it is interesting) but also

on its utility value. Utility value is a function of how much the student believes that being successful on a test and obtaining high grades is associated with a valuable education and temporally and psychologically distant professional outcomes. Therefore, understanding the postponement of gratification involves considering beliefs or orientations towards the future, including the student's future time perspective (Klineberg, 1968; Husman & Lens, 1999). From this perspective, the postponement of gratification is interpreted as a self-learning strategy, which, along with facilitating beliefs about the future, increases the likelihood of completing academic tasks (Bembenutty & Karabenick, 2004).

As previously mentioned, individuals who do not postpone gratification do not fully engage in their academic tasks (Bembenutty, 1999). If a narcissistic student fails to defer gratification, they may risk not completing assignments on time or not studying enough when faced with a pleasant distraction. They may go to a concert to experience short-term pleasure at the expense of staying home to study and achieve long-term gratification: a good grade.

Methodological Elements of the Research

Definition of Research Characteristics and Sample

This study is characterized as descriptive research with a quantitative survey approach. To conduct the study, printed questionnaires were administered to undergraduate students in Accounting Sciences and Controllershship and Finance enrolled at the Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG), using accessibility criteria. Therefore, this is a non-probabilistic sample, and the findings cannot be generalized. Although only some students from these two courses may become future managers and/or controllers, all students, at some point, will be – or even already are – integrated into the workforce in such a way that their perceptions and behaviors could be carried

into their future careers, affecting decisions and choices. Thus, issues arising from excessive non-pathological narcissism, in addition to the difficulty in delaying gratifications, can and should be investigated starting from the academic environment.

Data Collection and Analysis

The questionnaire developed for this study was administered in person to 165 students (98 from the Accounting Sciences course and 67 from the Controllershship and Finance course), with the professors' permission and the students' consent, from September to December 2018. The instrument used, after modifications from a pre-test and after approval by the Research Ethics Committee (COEP) of the Federal University of Minas Gerais (CAAE: 84962818.0.0000.5149), consists of three parts: i) General participant data, including information about gender, age, marital status, and engagement in remunerated activity; ii) Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI), developed by Raskin and Terry (1988) to identify the presence of narcissistic personality traits in the sample of students; and iii) Academic Delay of Gratification Scale (ADOGS), a scale developed by Bembenutty and Karabenick (1998), containing items to identify respondents' propensity to delay gratifications.

The NPI is a forced-choice measure, where each item of the instrument contains a pair of statements (for example: "I am a born leader" versus "Leadership is a quality that takes a long time to develop"): a score of 1 point is assigned to the narcissistic response; and a score of 0, to the non-narcissistic response (Brunell et al., 2011). The level of narcissism is obtained through the total sum of points achieved on the inventory. In this study, the 40-item version of the scale was used (Raskin & Terry, 1988): individuals' scores are summed considering the items, with higher scores representing higher levels of narcissistic traits.

Magalhães and Koller (1994) highlight that the NPI scale is designed to assess the construct's multidimensionality and its main components

through seven relatively independent sub-scales representative of significant dimensions. The components extracted from the total scale, which generate the seven sub-scales, called "narcissistic dimensions," are, according to the mentioned authors: authority, exhibitionism, superiority, entitlement, self-sufficiency, vanity, and exploitation.

The ADOGS scale is also a forced-choice measure, with each item of the instrument, ten in total, containing a pair of statements (for example: "Going to a party the night before an exam for this course and studying only if I have time" versus "Studying first and going to the party only if I have time"): a score of 1 point is assigned to the response that implies postponing gratification, and a score of 0, to the contrary response. Individuals' scores are summed considering the items, so that higher scores represent a greater propensity to use academic gratification postponement.

The possible relationship between the researched variables – non-pathological narcissistic personality traits in students and the propensity to delay gratifications – was verified through Spearman's correlation tests, a non-parametric association measure. The use of correlation is justified in evaluating the relationship between two quantitative variables and obtaining the degree of correlation between them (Fávero & Belfiore, 2017).

Presentation and Discussion of Results

Respondent Profile

The data on the students enrolled at the Higher Education Institute analyzed (Table 1) reveal that 86.06% of the students are single; 67.27% are aged between 21 and 30; 61.82% are male; 52.12% attended high school in public institutions; and 71.51% are engaged in remunerated activity. The average age of the respondents was 24.

Based on the data shown in Table 1, it is possible to outline a profile separated by course. Regarding the students enrolled in the Accounting Sciences course, 84.69% are single, similar to that

observed when analyzing students from the Controllershship and Finance course (88.06%). Most students from both courses fall within the age range of 21 to 30 years, although the percentage in this range is higher in the Accounting Sciences course (79.59% vs. 49.25% in the Controllershship and Finance course). As for gender, 57.14% of the students in the Accounting Sciences course analyzed and 68.66% of the Controllershship and Finance course students are male.

Table 1
Respondent Profile

Identification		Accounting Sciences		Controllershship and Finance		TOTAL	
		Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Marital Status	Single	83	84,69	59	88,06	142	86,06
	Married	15	15,31	6	8,96	21	12,73
	Not Specified	0	0	2	2,98	2	1,21
	TOTAL	98	100	67	100	165	100
Age Group	Up to 20 years	7	7,14	28	41,79	35	21,21
	Between 21 and 30 years	78	79,59	33	49,25	111	67,27
	Over 30 years	12	12,24	6	8,96	18	10,90
	Not Specified	1	1,03	0	0	1	0,62
	TOTAL	98	100	67	100	165	100
Gender	Female	42	42,86	21	31,34	63	38,18
	Male	56	57,14	46	68,66	102	61,82
	TOTAL	98	100	67	100	165	100
Type of High School Attended	Public	51	52,04	35	52,24	86	52,12
	Private	47	47,96	32	47,76	79	47,88
	TOTAL	98	100	67	100	165	100
Engaged in Remunerated Activity	Yes	90	91,84	28	41,79	118	71,51
	No	8	8,16	39	58,21	47	28,49
	TOTAL	98	100	67	100	165	100

Regarding the type of institution where the respondents attended high school, similar percentages are noted in both courses: 52.04% of the respondents from the Accounting Sciences course and 52.24% of those enrolled in the Controllershship and Finance course attended high school in public institutions. Finally, the only significant difference between the courses relates to engaging in remunerated activity: 91.84% of the students enrolled in the Accounting Sciences course engage in some remunerated activity, a percentage only 41.79% in the Controllershship and Finance course. This scenario can be attributed to the schedule of the Accounting Sciences course, considering that night courses may be a facilitating element for students to balance work and study, or

a result of the course's profile. The Controllershship and Finance course, being during the day, could make it challenging to engage in any remunerated activity.

Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI)

The analysis of the Narcissistic Personality Inventory initially involved calculating the relative and absolute frequencies for each of the statements listed in the instrument. Out of the 40 questions considered, the narcissistic response was predominant in seven of them, namely: question 1 (I have a natural talent for influencing people), question 8 (I will be a success), question 10 (I see myself as a good leader), question 11 (I am a confident person), question 26 (I like to be complimented), question 29 (I like looking in the mirror) and question 33 (I would like to be a leader). Thus, it is observed that respondents have optimistic expectations about the future, believing that they will be successful individuals, besides the fact that they would like to occupy leadership positions and consider themselves good in this role. A similar result was verified in the study by Avelino et al. (2017), conducted with students enrolled in the Accounting Sciences course at the University of São Paulo (USP).

After analyzing the NPI in general, the instrument was segregated into the seven subscales present in the construct, as advocated by Raskin and Terry (1988), and thus named: authority, self-sufficiency, superiority, exhibitionism, exploitation, vanity, and entitlement – translation by Magalhães and Koller (1994) and already considered as such in the work by Avelino et al. (2017). The characteristics listed, as highlighted by Lima, Avelino, and Cunha (2017), are treated in the literature as attributes of narcissistic individuals: exhibitionists, with feelings and thoughts of omnipotence involving the control/exploitation of others, vain, intolerant of criticism, tendency to be critical of others who are different from themselves, as well as considering themselves self-sufficient and not needing anyone. The item "entitlement" refers to feelings of entitlement involving the expectation of special privileges over others and special exemptions from

typical social demands (Raskin & Terry, 1988).

Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics of the scores on the NPI, considering each of the aforementioned subscales and the total score on the instrument under analysis. In this Table, only the students enrolled in the Accounting Sciences course are considered.

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics of Scores on the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI) – Accounting Sciences

Variable	Obs.	Mean	Standard Deviation	Min.	Max.
Authority	98	3,50000	2,04713	0	8
Self-sufficiency	98	1,45918	1,21136	0	5
Superiority	98	1,51020	1,37911	0	5
Exhibitionism	98	1,47959	1,73639	0	7
Exploitation	98	1,24490	1,17589	0	4
Vanity	98	1,0000	1,09356	0	3
Entitlement	98	1,61224	1,43328	0	6
Total score on the NPI	98	11,89796	6,457617	2	31

Note: the maximum possible score on each of the subscales - Authority: 8 points; Self-sufficiency: 6 points; Superiority: 5 points; Exhibitionism: 7 points; Exploitation: 5 points; Vanity: 3 points; Entitlement: 6 points.

The maximum possible score on the NPI is 40 points, with 31 points being the highest value obtained in this study, considering the analysis restricted to respondents from the Accounting Sciences course. The average score on the NPI ($\bar{x} = 11.90$), relative to the selected sample – undergraduate students in Accounting Sciences enrolled at the Federal University of Minas Gerais – was lower than the average scores reported in international studies (average score of 15.55 in the survey by Raskin and Terry, 1988; 15.20 in the work by Foster, Campbell, and Twenge, 2003; 15.23 in the research by Trzesniewski, Donnellan, and Robins, 2008 and 16.60 in the studies by Miller, Campbell, Young, Lakey, Reidy, Zeichner & Goodie, 2009, and Watson, 2012, among others). However, such research was not necessarily conducted with students of the course in question. When analyzing specifically students enrolled in the Accounting Sciences course, as observed in the works of Avelino et al. (2017) and Lima, Avelino, and Cunha (2017), this research also presented an average score on the NPI lower than that verified in these last two studies (12.46 and 12.62, respectively).

Regarding the scores segregated into the

seven subscales defined by Raskin and Terry (1988), the average score of the Authority item ($\bar{x} = 3.50$) stands out, clearly superior to those presented in the remaining subscales, in a similar manner to what was observed in the works of Raskin and Terry (1988), Young and Pinsky (2006), and, in the national context, in the research of Avelino et al. (2017) and Lima, Avelino, and Cunha (2017). In this item, the narcissist's ability to influence other individuals is related to their belief that they are a successful, confident person, a good leader and that they feel good when demonstrating authority (Avelino et al., 2017).

Table 3 shows the descriptive statistics of the scores on the NPI, considering each of the construct's subscales and the total score on the instrument under analysis, considering only the students enrolled in the Controllershship and Finance course.

Just as observed for the students enrolled in the Accounting Sciences course, the same maximum NPI score was presented in the analysis of respondents from the Controllershship and Finance course (31 points). The average score on the NPI ($\bar{x} = 14.06$), however, was higher than the average score reported for the Accounting Sciences students analyzed in this study and higher than the values found in the works of Avelino et al. (2017) and Lima, Avelino, and Cunha (2017), also conducted with Accounting Sciences students. However, it remains lower than the values verified in the previously listed international studies (Raskin & Terry, 1988; Foster, Campbell & Twenge, 2003; Trzesniewski, Donnellan & Robins, 2008; Miller et al., 2009; Watson, 2012).

Regarding the scores segregated into the seven subscales defined by Raskin and Terry (1988), the average score of the Authority item ($\bar{x} = 4.00$) is noteworthy, a result equivalent to that found in the analysis of respondents enrolled in the Accounting Sciences course.

Table 3
Descriptive Statistics of Scores on the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI) – Controllershship and Finance

Variable	Obs.	Mean	Standard Deviation	Min.	Max.
Authority	67	4,00	2,08167	0	8
Self-sufficiency	67	1,47761	1,21054	0	5
Superiority	67	1,85075	1,33999	0	5
Exhibitionism	67	1,98507	2,08525	0	7
Exploitation	67	1,49254	1,29537	0	5
Vanity	67	1,23881	1,06015	0	3
Entitlement	67	2,01493	1,41948	0	6
Total score on the NPI	67	14,0597	6,68531	1	31

Finally, Table 4 shows the results considering the total number of respondents.

The maximum NPI score remained at 31 points, and the average score on the instrument, considering the total number of respondents, moved to 12.77. This value remained lower than those verified in the previously listed international studies and slightly higher than the averages found in the works of Avelino et al. (2017) and Lima, Avelino, and Cunha (2017). As for the scores segregated into the seven subscales, the highlight remained on the Authority item ($\bar{x} = 3.70$).

Table 4
Descriptive Statistics of Scores on the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI) - TOTAL

Variable	Obs.	Mean	Standard Deviation	Min.	Max.
Authority	165	3,70303	2,06959	0	8
Self-sufficiency	165	1,46667	1,20736	0	5
Superiority	165	1,64848	1,36956	0	5
Exhibitionism	165	1,68485	1,8961	0	7
Exploitation	165	1,34545	1,22799	0	5
Vanity	165	1,09697	1,08327	0	3
Entitlement	165	1,775758	1,437102	0	6
Total score on the NPI	165	12,77576	6,617006	1	31

Academic Delay of Gratification Scale (ADOGS)

As previously discussed, the Academic Delay of Gratification Scale (ADOGS), developed by Bembenuddy and Karabenick (1998), presents ten choices between two alternative courses of action, one of which represents the capacity to delay

reward/gratification (alternatives B - scoring one point), while the other depicts the opposite situation (alternatives A - scoring zero points). It is considered that the higher the total score obtained on the scale, the greater the propensity to postpone academic gratification. Table 5 presents the descriptive statistics of the scores on the scale in question, considering the students from the Accounting Sciences and Controllershship and Finance courses separately and a global analysis.

The maximum possible score on the Academic Delay of Gratification Scale is 10 points, with these same 10 points being the highest value obtained in this study, considering the analysis segregated by course and the global analysis. The average score on the scale did not show significant variations when checking the responses by course and the total analysis, with all values being above 6.70.

Table 5
Descriptive statistics of scores on ADOGS

Variable	Obs	Mean	Standard Deviation	Min	Max
Total score on the ADOGS – Accounting Sciences	98	6,70408	2,58947	1	10
Total score on the ADOGS – Controllershship and Finance	67	6,71642	2,23475	1	10
Total score on the ADOGS – TOTAL	165	6,70909	2,44455	1	10

Note: The scale presented the following options – (A) Going to a favorite show or sports event and studying less for this course, although this may mean getting a lower grade on an exam I will take tomorrow / (B) Staying home and studying to increase my chances of getting a higher grade; (A) Spending more time with my friends and studying as much as I can just before the exam / (B) Studying a little every day for a test in this course and spending less time with my friends; (A) Missing several classes to accept an invitation to a very interesting trip / (B) Postponing the trip until the course/semester is over; (A) Going to a party the night before a test for this course and studying only if I have time / (B) Studying first and going to the party only if I have time; (A) Spending most of my time studying only the interesting content of this course, even if it might mean not doing so well / (B) Studying all the content that is assigned to increase my chances of doing well in the course; (A) Skipping class when the weather is good to enjoy it and trying to get notes from someone later / (B) Attending the class to make sure I don't miss anything, even knowing that the weather outside is good; (A) Going out to have fun with my friends and trying to complete the assignment when I get home later that night / (B) Staying in the library to make sure I will finish a course assignment that is due the next day; (A) Studying for this course in a place with many pleasant distractions / (B) Studying in a place where there are fewer distractions to increase the probability of me learning the content; (A) Leaving right after class to do

something I enjoy, even if it means possibly not understanding the content for the test / (B) Staying after class to ask the teacher for explanations about the test content I didn't understand; (A) Choosing a professor for this course who is fun even if he/she doesn't do a good job explaining the content / (B) Choosing a professor for this course who isn't as fun, but does a good job explaining the content.

Analysis of the Correlation between Narcissism and the Postponement of Academic Gratification

Before conducting correlation tests to verify if non-pathological narcissistic personality traits in undergraduate students from the Accounting Sciences and Controllershship and Finance courses are related to these students' difficulty in delaying gratifications, normality tests were carried out to check if the variables of interest – total score on the NPI and total score on the ADOGS – approximated a normal distribution. Given that the p-values found, both in the Shapiro-Wilk and Shapiro-Francia tests, were below the established significance level (0.05), leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis of normality, it was decided to perform the non-parametric Spearman correlation test. Table 6 shows the results of the test mentioned above.

Through the Spearman correlation test and considering the sample analyzed in this study, it was observed that there is a negative and statistically significant correlation between narcissism and the postponement of academic gratification, as presented in Table 6. This is evident when analyzing the students from the Accounting Sciences course separately (-0.4038), the students from the Controllershship and Finance course (-0.4171), and the total sample (-0.4010).

Table 6
Spearman correlation between narcissism and postponement

Accounting Sciences:		
	NARC	ADOGS
NARC	1,00	
ADOGS	-0,4038***	1,00
Controllershship and Finance		
	NARC	ADOGS
NARC	1,00	
ADOGS	-0,4171***	1,00
TOTAL		
	NARC	ADOGS
NARC	1,00	
ADOGS	-0,4010***	1,00

Nota: *** p < 0,01

Discussion of Results

Regarding the first variable, measured based on the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI), it was generally found that the students analyzed in this study mostly exhibit some behaviors coined as narcissistic – such as having a talent for influencing people, considering themselves as good leaders, enjoying being praised, and looking at themselves in the mirror, among others – although it is not possible to infer whether such behaviors are at a level considered normal or excessive. This is because, in this study, following the line of work of Miller and Campbell (2010), Avelino, Lima, Cunha, and Colauto (2017), and Lima, Avelino, and Cunha (2017), it was chosen not to set a cutoff point to segregate individuals with higher levels of narcissistic personality traits from those with lower levels. Although such a procedure has been carried out in previous research (Morf & Weir; Davidov, 2000; Bogart, Benotsch & Pavlovic, 2004), there is no standardization in this regard.

As for the postponement of academic gratification, a behavior evidenced based on the Academic Delay of Gratification Scale (ADOGS), it was noted that, in general, among the ten choice alternatives, eight showed a tendency of the students towards decisions that lead to the postponement of academic gratification. Only about questions 2 and 9 did the majority of respondents' choices not refer to decisions involving the delay of gratification: spending more time with my friends, and studying as much as I can just before the exam, and leaving right after class to do something I enjoy, even if it might mean possibly not understanding the content for the exam, respectively.

Thus, it is verified that, on average, the respondents tend to delay available opportunities in favor of pursuing academic goals that are temporally remote yet more valuable, corroborating the findings of the scale's creators, Bembenutty and Karabenick (1998).

Based on the Spearman correlation test and considering the sample analyzed in this study, it was observed that there is a negative and statistically significant correlation between

narcissism and the postponement of academic gratification. Thus, these variables relate in such a way that the higher the score on the Narcissistic Personality Inventory, the lower the respondents tend to score on the Academic Delay of Gratification Scale. In other words, individuals in the sample who present higher levels of narcissistic personality traits also tend to prioritize immediate pleasure and adopt fewer strategies for postponing academic gratification. This supports the idea that being considered more impulsive and more prone to seeking immediate pleasures (Hudson, 2012), narcissistic students would have greater difficulties in delaying gratifications.

Final Considerations

This study aimed to analyze whether non-pathological narcissistic personality traits in undergraduate students from Accounting Sciences and Controllershship and Finance courses were related to these students' difficulty in postponing gratifications. In general, it is concluded that the results obtained corroborate the idea that students with higher levels of narcissistic personality traits would have greater difficulties in delaying gratifications, considering that impulsivity and the search for immediate pleasure are characteristics present in individuals who exhibit such levels. In this sense, a negative and statistically significant correlation was observed between the variables analyzed in this study: the total score on the NPI, which identifies non-pathological narcissistic personality traits, and the total score on the ADOGS, a scale proposed by Bembenutty and Karabenick (1998) that assesses individuals' propensity to postpone gratifications.

Bembenutty and Karabenick (2004) suggest that postponing gratification in academic situations is necessary for students to guide their behavior in learning activities without an external coercive stimulus. For Pressley et al. (1983), this can facilitate learning and information processing among students, significantly impacting education and academic performance. That is, students who have difficulties in postponing gratifications may be disadvantaged throughout the teaching-learning process.

As a contribution, it is hoped that this study will foster discussions about personality traits and behaviors that may harm the teaching-learning process. Teachers, for example, by knowing their students' profiles, could encourage them to prioritize higher rewards over a more extended period, more pointedly highlighting the benefits of this attitude. Pressley (1983) even recommends that students should be trained to postpone gratification and exercise self-control. Students, together with individual efforts, educators, and educational institutions, could see improvements in the teaching-learning process, which could ultimately positively impact their academic performance. The research also contributes by exploring, in addition to the Accounting Sciences course, the Controllershship and Finance course, broadening the multidisciplinary of the study.

Among the study's limitations, it is highlighted that the results found are limited to the researched sample. Furthermore, pathological narcissism was not addressed, treating the concept only from a social perspective.

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