

Running Head: NARCISSISTIC FRAGILITY

**Implicit Self-Esteem and Narcissism:
Rethinking the Link**

Aiden P. Gregg

Constantine Sedikides

University of Southampton

Abstract

Several studies have found that explicit and implicit self-esteem interact to predict narcissism. These findings have been interpreted as supporting the hypothesis that narcissists have high but fragile self-esteem. However, we contend that these findings are neither empirically consistent nor conceptually coherent. We instead hypothesize that explicit and implicit self-esteem should predict narcissism independently, respectively in a positive and negative direction. In a large multi-session study, we examined the interrelationships between narcissism, explicit self-esteem, and three indices of implicit self-esteem (showing good psychometric properties and some convergent validity). No evidence emerged that explicit and implicit self-esteem interacted to predict narcissism. However, as predicted, two measures of implicit self-esteem were inversely related to narcissism. Potential explanations for divergent findings are considered.

(This manuscript is current under review. If you would like a preliminary copy, please email << aiden@soton.ac.uk >>.)