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Personality Traits and Their Correlation with Sales Success: A Focus on Narcissism in Azerbaijan's Manufacturing Sector

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Abstract

The present study examines the relationship between narcissistic personality traits and sales performance within Azerbaijan's manufacturing sector, with a focus on how cultural norms and organizational training interventions moderate this relationship. The research tests three hypotheses: the direct influence of narcissism on sales effectiveness, the moderating role of cultural values, and the impact of targeted training programs on trait expression and outcomes. A quantitative research design was employed, using a sample of 128 sales professionals. Data was collected through the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI), the Cultural Values Assessment (CVA), and standardized sales performance metrics. The findings suggest that narcissistic traits, while potentially advantageous in competitive sales environments, must be managed carefully within culturally sensitive contexts. The paper contributes to theoretical understandings of personality-performance dynamics and offers practical insights into culturally informed sales force development and training strategies.

Keywords

Narcissistic traits, sales performance, cultural moderation

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1. Introduction

The study explores the role of narcissistic personality traits in shaping sales performance within Azerbaijan's manufacturing sector. Personality traits, as defined by [McCrae and Costa Jr \(1995\)](#), are enduring characteristics that influence an individual's behavior, thoughts, and emotional responses. The 5-Factor Model (FFM), which includes extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness to experience, serves as a foundational framework for understanding how these traits manifest in professional settings ([Choi et al., 2015](#)). In the field of organizational psychology, there is a growing interest in how personality traits influence professional success, particularly within sales dynamics. Narcissism stands out as a particularly intriguing trait due to its association with assertiveness, charm, and an inflated sense of self-importance ([Teri, 2023](#); [Van der Nest, 2010](#)).

Previous research has identified specific personality traits that correlate with sales performance—extraversion and conscientiousness, for instance, are frequently associated with success, ([Yang et al., 2011](#)), whereas neuroticism tends to be linked with poorer outcomes ([Gunthert et al., 1999](#)). However, the trait often associated with grandiosity, entitlement, and a strong need for admiration, presents uniquely in the sales field ([Bailey et al., 2024](#)). On the one hand while narcissistic persons may excel in self-promotion and initial client engagement, their lack of empathy and potential for interpersonal conflict have a potential to undermine long-term client relationships and overall sales effectiveness ([Carbone & Black, 2019](#); [Cates, 2015](#); [Fritzon et al., 2020](#); [Saban, 2024](#)). Taking the case of this study within the cultural and societal dynamics of Azerbaijan unique insights are eminent. Outcomes can help organizations develop methods of bettering their own teams in context.

As competition intensifies within the sector, understanding how different personality traits influence performance provides valuable preparation for industry players, particularly as the sector shifts toward more customer-centric practices ([Yuzbashiyeve et al., 2023](#)). This, in turn, forms the academic, social, and business rationale for the proposed research. Therefore, understanding how personality traits influence sales success can provide insights into effective sales strategies and training programs tailored to the local context ([McFarland et al., 2006](#)). Needless say, the unique cultural factors in Azerbaijan, such as high power distance and collectivism ([Aliyev, 2023](#)), can shape how personality traits are perceived and expressed in sales roles.

By investigating the interaction between personality traits and cultural factors on the one hand and training on the other, this study aims to contribute to the existing literature on sales performance and provide practical recommendations for enhancing sales effectiveness in Azerbaijan's manufacturing sector.

Secondly the interplay between narcissism and sales success presents a unique dimension within Azerbaijan' manufacturing sector, where competitive dynamics often mirror broader psychological patterns in business ([Pashazade, 2024](#)). As earlier observed, narcissistic individuals may possess traits such as charisma and assertiveness, which can lead to initial consumer engagement and interest. However, the sustainability of these relationships remains questionable, particularly when customer satisfaction becomes a critical determinant of repurchase intentions and long-term success.

With past studies showing that a constant social intention towards products is shaped significantly by factors such as perceived quality and consumer satisfaction, which reflect the findings in the context of mobile shopping applications ([Qin et al., 2021](#)). Thus, while narcissism may facilitate entry into sales roles, its impact on enduring success hinges on the balance between initial attraction and ongoing customer satisfaction, ultimately questioning the viability of narcissism as a sole predictor of prosperity in the manufacturing landscape of Azerbaijan.

The Azerbaijan manufacturing sector is undergoing significant growth and transformation, and therefore understanding the underlying players in the sector is a necessary aspect for sustained growth ([Salmanzade, 2023](#)). It is in this context that personality traits, particularly narcissism, come to light, and how they affect sales performance. With the contribution of existing research showing positive connections for instance between extraversion and conscientiousness in regard to sales success, when it comes to narcissism there seems to be many underlying issues that require investigation. On the one hand its associated with advantages and on the other its questioned ([Bailey et al., 2024](#)).

As early cited, the contextual environment of this study where trust building is essential in business relations, the effect of this trait could register different results. Given the collectivist nature of society a conflict with self-serving tendencies is likely. Therefore, this presents a gap worthy of investigation.

Accordingly, this study sets out to examine how narcissistic traits influence sales performance within the manufacturing sector, with particular attention to Azerbaijan's unique cultural and organizational environment. To guide this investigation, the following research questions and hypotheses have been formulated.

Questions:

- RQ1: How do personality traits (particularly narcissism) relate to sales performance in Azerbaijan's manufacturing sector?
- RQ2: What cultural factors shape the expression and impact of these traits in sales roles?
- RQ3: How can organizations apply personality psychology to improve sales effectiveness?

Hypothesis:

- *H1*: Narcissism positively correlates with sales performance in Azerbaijan's manufacturing sector, as traits like confidence and assertiveness may enhance persuasion and resilience in sales roles.
- *H2*: Azerbaijani cultural norms moderate the expression of narcissistic traits, with collectivist values potentially influencing how such traits are perceived and accepted in professional settings.
- *H3*: Tailored training programs that emphasize the adaptive aspects of narcissism can enhance sales effectiveness, while managing potential negative effects like arrogance or ethical lapses.

The proposed relationships among variables are illustrated in the conceptual framework diagram that follows (see Figure1).

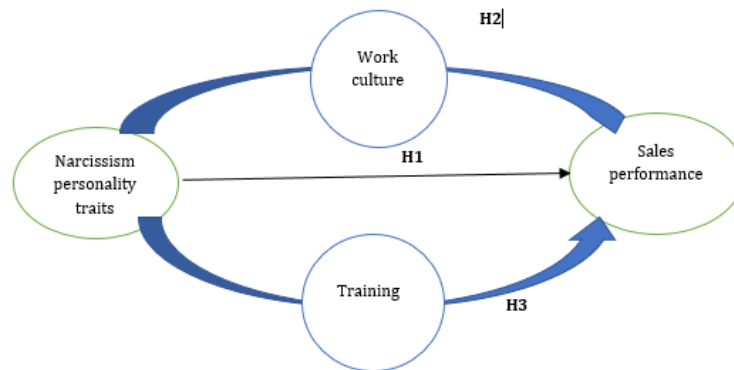


Figure 1. Conceptual framework diagram

2. Literature Review

Various theories explain personality psychology, including trait theory, psychodynamic theory, and social-cognitive theory. Trait theory, particularly the Five-Factor Model (FFM), proposes that traits such as extraversion, agreeableness, and conscientiousness significantly influence behavior and performance in occupational settings, including sales (Chiaburu et al., 2011; Kornør & Nordvik, 2007). In sales contexts, traits like extraversion are positively associated with success due to their links to social interaction and assertiveness (Aliyyah et al., 2021). Conversely, traits such as neuroticism may hinder performance by inducing anxiety and diminishing interpersonal effectiveness (Chiaburu et al., 2011).

Self-determination theory (SDT) also provides valuable insight into how personality traits affect motivation and performance. SDT posits that individuals are motivated by innate psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Sullivan, 2019). Sullivan (2019) further argues that, in sales roles, fulfilling these needs can enhance job satisfaction and performance, suggesting that personality traits aligned with these needs may promote greater sales success.

Narcissism, characterized by grandiosity, entitlement, and a need for admiration, holds a prominent place within personality psychology. Empirical evidence indicates that individuals exhibiting narcissistic traits may perform well in roles requiring self-promotion and confidence (Bailey et al., 2024). However, the impact of narcissism is multifaceted: while narcissistic individuals may initially succeed in sales by leveraging charm and persuasive skills,

their self-centered behaviors can strain workplace relationships and ultimately pose risks to both personal success and organizational health (Gunnesch-Luca et al., 2023).

The reviewed literature indicates that the relationship between personality traits—particularly narcissism—and sales performance is complex and multilayered. Although certain traits enhance sales success, the potential drawbacks associated with narcissism necessitate a nuanced understanding of its implications. Future research should investigate these dynamics further, especially within culturally specific contexts, to better comprehend how personality traits can be effectively utilized in sales roles.

Extraversion has long been identified as a significant predictor of sales success. Extraverted individuals tend to excel in sales roles due to their sociable nature and ability to build rapport with clients (Thakre & Jadhav, 2022). Similarly, research suggests that customer orientation—a trait closely related to extraversion—positively influences both self and supervisor performance ratings in service contexts (Devi et al., 2023). Additionally, conscientiousness has been linked to higher levels of task performance and reliability in sales roles, indicating that organized and diligent individuals are more likely to achieve sales targets.

Narcissism, as part of the “dark triad” of personality traits, presents a complex association with sales performance (Ray & Fritzon, 2024). The findings indicate that although narcissistic traits may enhance performance in certain contexts, they can also produce negative interpersonal dynamics. Narcissistic salespeople might initially attract clients through charm and confidence; however, their lack of empathy can undermine long-term relationships and client satisfaction. This duality is further supported by research suggesting that narcissism may lead to counterproductive work behaviors, particularly when individuals perceive threats to their self-image (Reza & Mubarak, 2022).

These findings provide important implications for training and development programs. For example, incorporating psychological capital development into sales training may improve resilience and adaptability among sales personnel, thereby enhancing performance outcomes (Tudor et al., 2015). Furthermore, recognizing the challenges posed by narcissism in sales roles enables organizations to implement strategies that mitigate its negative effects, such as fostering empathy and team cohesion within sales teams (Thakre & Jadhav, 2022).

The literature on personality traits and sales success underscores the complexity of this relationship. While traits such as extraversion and conscientiousness generally correlate positively with sales outcomes, the implications of narcissism and other dark triad traits remain nuanced. Continued research should examine these dynamics across diverse cultural contexts to deepen understanding of how personality traits can be harnessed for success in sales roles.

Narcissism, alongside Machiavellianism and psychopathy, comprises the dark triad, which has been shown to significantly influence sales performance. Individuals exhibiting high levels of these traits are often drawn to sales roles due to their competitive nature and self-promoting behaviors (Malär & Giuffredi-Kähr, 2024). However, while narcissistic salespeople may achieve short-term success through charm and assertiveness, their long-term effectiveness may be compromised by manipulative behaviors and a lack of empathy toward clients. This duality illustrates the complex role narcissism plays in facilitating and impeding sales success.

Further research explores the relationship between narcissism and perceptions of overqualification in sales roles, suggesting that narcissistic individuals often feel entitled to positions beyond their qualifications (Pan & Hou, 2024; Scribner et al., 2024). Such entitlement can lead to dissatisfaction and disengagement when expectations are unmet, ultimately detracting from performance. In sales environments, where success is tied closely to interpersonal relationships and client satisfaction, these feelings of overqualification may negatively impact both salespeople and employers (Pan & Hou, 2024).

Fedorova et al. (2024) examined the impact of CEO narcissism on the internationalization of small and medium-sized enterprises, finding that narcissistic leaders tend to overestimate benefits while underestimating risks associated with international expansion. This behavior can spur rapid growth in foreign sales but may also foster unsustainable practices (Dung, 2024). These findings bear relevance to sectors where leadership styles and decision-making critically influence sales outcomes.

Given the potential challenges associated with narcissism in sales roles, there is a pressing need for targeted training and development programs addressing these traits. Incorporating psychological insights into sales training can better equip teams to manage the complexities of personality traits, including narcissism, thereby improving overall effectiveness.

Furthermore, the relationship between narcissism and sales performance appears to vary across communities. Therefore, this study's outcomes will provide valuable context-specific insights. Azerbaijan's cultural environment, which emphasizes group cohesion and values interpersonal relationships, tends to favor traits like sociability and assertiveness in sales contexts, as these facilitate relationship-building. However, the cultural priority placed on group harmony may discourage the expression of narcissism, often viewed as self-serving and detrimental to team dynamics (Luthans et al., 2008). Consequently, cultural factors may limit the positive contributions of narcissistic traits to sales success.

In Azerbaijan, where hierarchical structures and respect for authority are deeply ingrained, personality traits in leadership assume greater significance, especially in sales. Narcissistic individuals may achieve initial success through assertiveness and control, which aligns with cultural norms of authority deference. However, leadership lacking empathy or openness may encounter difficulties sustaining relationships in a culture that values collective harmony and trust, ultimately hindering long-term success (Dung, 2024).

Research consistently demonstrates a positive association between extraversion and successful sales performance. İlhan (2024) emphasizes that extraverted salespeople benefit from enhanced interpersonal communication and deeper client engagement. In a context where strong interpersonal connections are essential, extraversion provides a strategic advantage in driving sales results.

The role of conscientiousness is also critical. According to An et al. (2024), conscientious salespeople are more likely to meet targets and maintain client satisfaction. In Azerbaijan, where trust and reliability underpin business relationships, conscientiousness serves as a key predictor of sales performance.

While narcissism can drive short-term sales success through self-promotion and assertiveness, its effects in the Azerbaijani context may differ from those observed in more individualistic cultures. Research suggests that narcissistic traits often lead to counterproductive behaviors, especially in environments emphasizing teamwork and collaboration (An et al., 2024; Luthans et al., 2008; Tudor et al., 2015). In collectivist societies, narcissistic salespeople may struggle to sustain long-term client relationships, thereby negatively affecting their performance.

Overall, the reviewed literature highlights the critical importance of considering cultural context when managing sales teams. Organizations should carefully examine the interaction between personality traits and cultural values during hiring and development. Promoting traits such as extraversion and conscientiousness, while managing narcissistic tendencies, can enhance sales effectiveness over the long term.

3. Methodology

The research employed a quantitative approach, driven by the need to collect objective numerical data through structured methods, which are associated with minimizing bias in research (Ahmad et al., 2019; Queirós et al., 2017). This approach enhances the collection of concrete, evidence-based findings regardless of sample size (Gürbüz, 2017), and increases reliability, generalizability, and analytical strength.

The target population for this study consisted of sales professionals working in Azerbaijan's manufacturing sector. This sector was selected due to its significance in national economic development, and the study aims to make a vital contribution by examining how sales-related personality traits operate within a societal context shaped by distinct cultural value systems.

A stratified random sampling approach was employed to ensure a representative cross-section of the manufacturing sector. The population was divided into strata based on company size (small, medium, large), geographic region, and product category—criteria selected to reflect the sector's diversity. This method enabled the study to account for variations in manufacturing practices and sales dynamics across different business environments. Sampling was further informed by membership data obtained from three prominent industry associations operating within the country.

To gather the required data, a structured online survey was designed to assess three key areas: personality traits, sales performance, and demographic background. Personality traits were measured using the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI), where participants rated statements based on their level of agreement. Participants were also asked to report on their sales performance using metrics such as total sales volume and achievement of sales targets—some of which were verified through company records. Additionally, background information such as age, gender, education level, work experience, and job role were collected to inform the analysis. Ethical standards were rigorously upheld,

including voluntary participation, informed consent, anonymity, and secure data storage accessible only to the research team.

The study used the R statistical environment for modeling and data visualization. To explore how narcissistic traits affect sales performance in Azerbaijan's manufacturing sector, a series of statistical analyses were conducted. The reliability of the NPI was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. Correlation and multiple regression analyses were then performed to examine the relationships between narcissism and sales outcomes, controlling for age, gender, education, and experience. Regression assumptions were tested to ensure the validity of the models. Visual tools such as scatter plots and histograms were employed to enhance clarity, and all analyses were conducted in R, with scripts retained for verification and reproducibility.

4. Results

Based on the analysis of the dataset, the demographic distribution of respondents reveals insightful trends about the workforce composition. The majority of respondents fall within the 25-34 age group (52 respondents) and the 35-44 age group (48 respondents), indicating that the workforce is primarily composed of young to mid-career professionals. This suggests a dynamic and experienced talent pool, likely in their peak working years, contributing actively to their respective industries.

In contrast, the representation of older age groups gradually declines. The 45-54 age group consists of only 20 respondents, while the 55-64 age group is even smaller, with just 7 respondents. This pattern suggests that the workforce is largely composed of younger professionals, while older workers may be shifting into new roles, stepping into retirement, or encountering obstacles that limit continued employment. These insights point to the need for proactive workforce strategies—such as succession planning, retaining experienced talent, and implementing supportive measures for an aging employee base (see Figure 2).

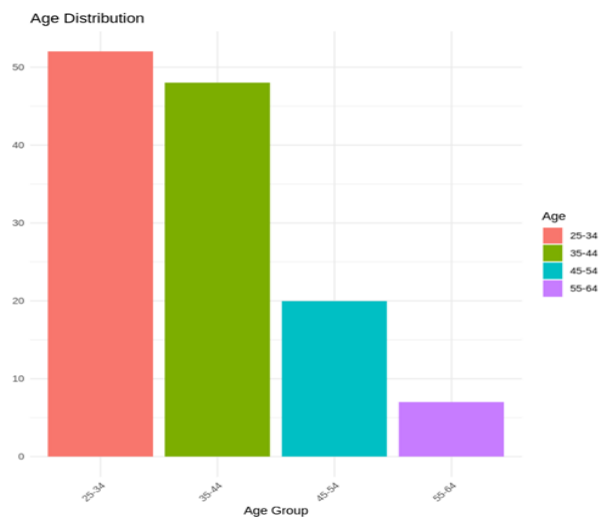


Figure 2. Age distribution

The results show a fairly even split between genders among respondents, with 67 women and 60 men (see Figure 3). This close balance points to active involvement from both genders in the sector, contributing to a more inclusive and varied workforce. The slight female majority may reflect a rising trend in women's participation, echoing wider movements toward gender diversity. Overall, this distribution signals encouraging progress toward gender equality and suggests that the industry is becoming more accessible to everyone, regardless of gender.

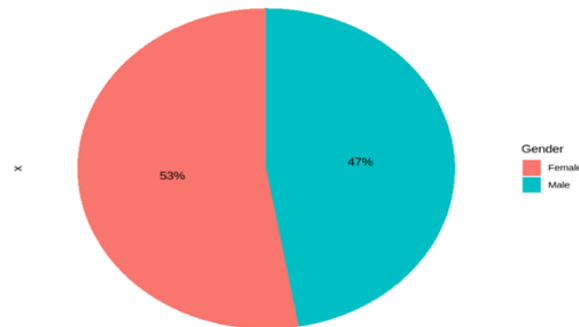


Figure 3. Gender distribution

The respondents' educational levels indicate a well-educated sample, with most holding either a Bachelor's (62 individuals) or Master's degree (50 individuals), highlighting the prominence of advanced qualifications among participants. A smaller subset of 12 respondents have earned Doctorates, pointing to a group with deep, specialized knowledge that may further enrich their professional capabilities. In contrast, only 4 respondents have a High School education, indicating that higher academic qualifications are the norm within this sample. This educational distribution underscores the significance of formal education in shaping career trajectories within the field (see Figure 4).

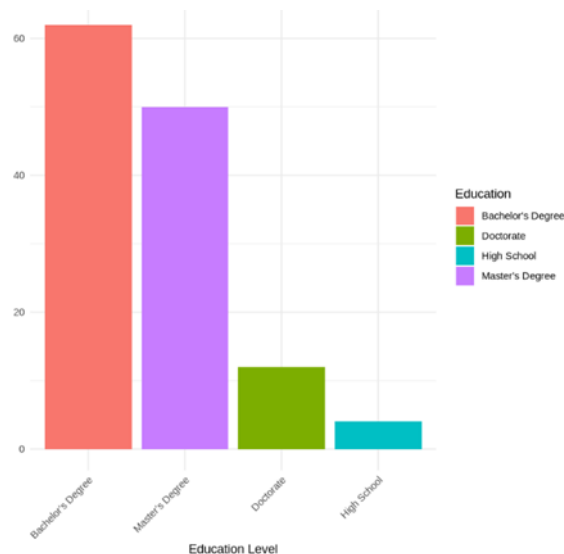


Figure 4. Education distribution

The distribution of respondents based on experience levels reveals that the largest group, comprising 43 individuals, has between 4 to 6 years of experience, suggesting a strong presence of mid-career professionals (see Figure 5). This is followed by 31 respondents with 1 to 3 years of experience, indicating a noteworthy number of early-career experts in the workforce.

Those with 7 to 10 years of experience account for 27 respondents, demonstrating a steady representation of seasoned professionals. Meanwhile, 19 respondents have more than 10 years of experience, reflecting a smaller but notable group of highly experienced individuals. Lastly, the smallest group consists of 8 respondents with less than one year of experience, highlighting a limited number of newcomers in the field.

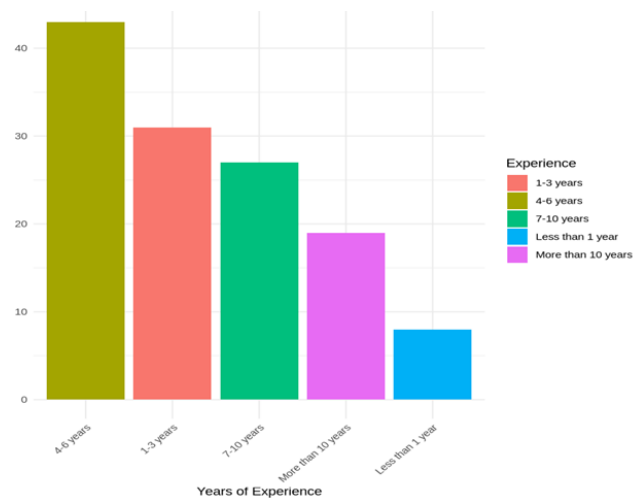


Figure 5. Sales experience

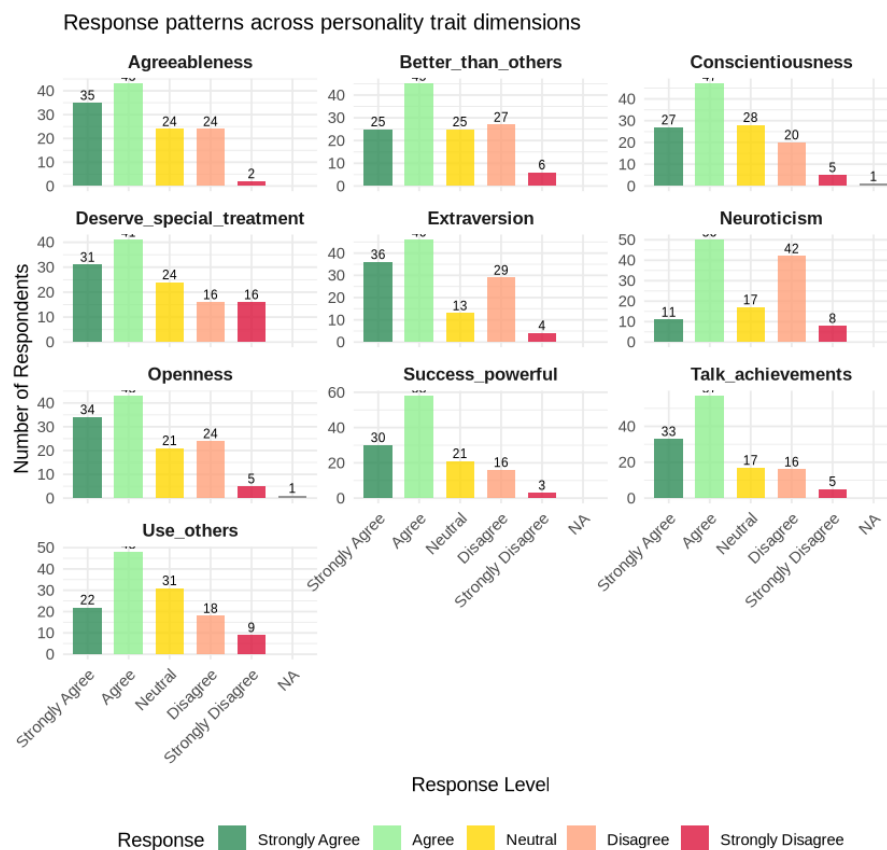


Figure 6. Distribution of personality traits

The descriptive analysis of personality traits indicates a significant influence on sales performance (see Figure 6). A predominant trend among respondents is a strong achievement orientation, suggesting a positive self-perception and a commitment to meeting or surpassing sales targets. High levels of extraversion and openness to new experiences appear to facilitate effective client engagement, adaptability to market dynamics, and the ability to capitalize on emerging opportunities. Additionally, the widespread presence of conscientiousness reflects a disciplined, goal-oriented mindset, which is crucial for sustaining strong sales performance.

However, the data reveals mixed responses regarding neuroticism, with a notable proportion of individuals acknowledging feelings of anxiety or worry. While moderate stress can serve as a motivational factor, excessive anxiety may negatively impact decision-making and overall performance. Lastly, the generally high agreeableness scores suggest that most respondents possess strong interpersonal skills, enabling them to establish and maintain positive relationships with both customers and colleagues. This relational strength further supports their success in the sales domain.

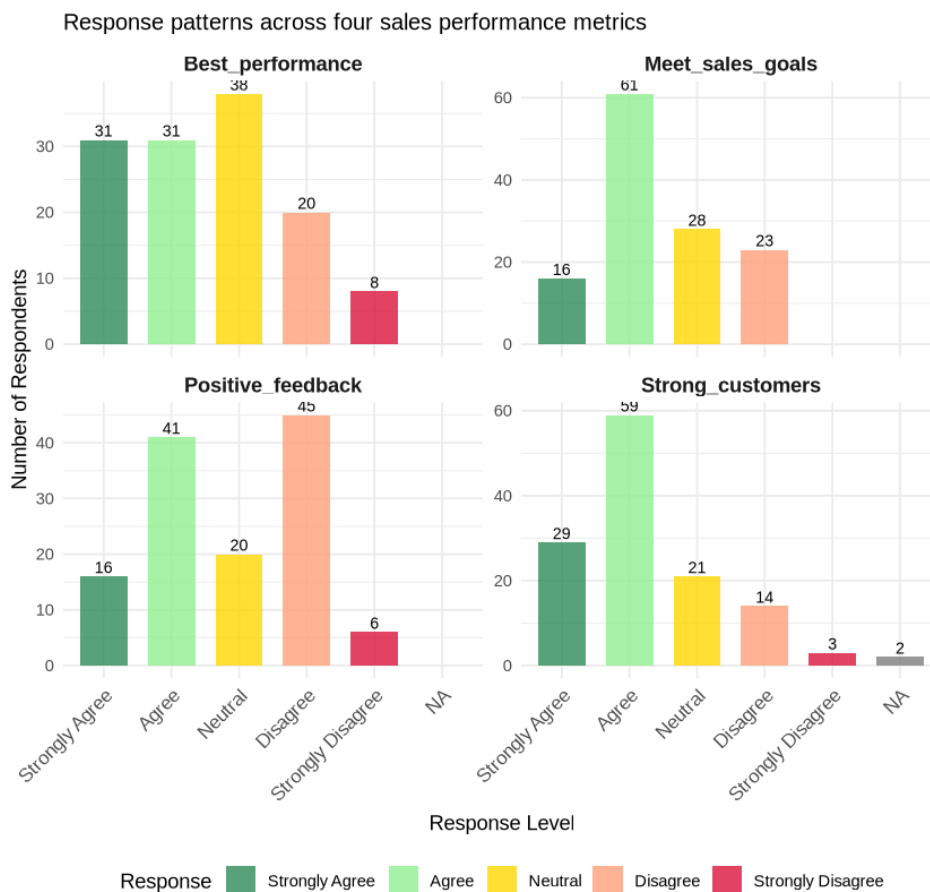


Figure 7. Sales performance matrix

The descriptive statistics presented in Figure 7 reveal that a significant majority of respondents (61 individuals) believe they meet or exceed their sales goals, indicating a generally positive perception of their sales performance. However, opinions on team performance vary, with many participants considering themselves among the top performers, reflecting differing self-assessments of effectiveness. Managerial feedback is notably mixed, with responses ranging from positive to negative, suggesting a lack of consensus on leadership effectiveness. Additionally, 59 respondents expressed confidence in maintaining a strong customer base, emphasizing their assurance in client relationships and market presence.

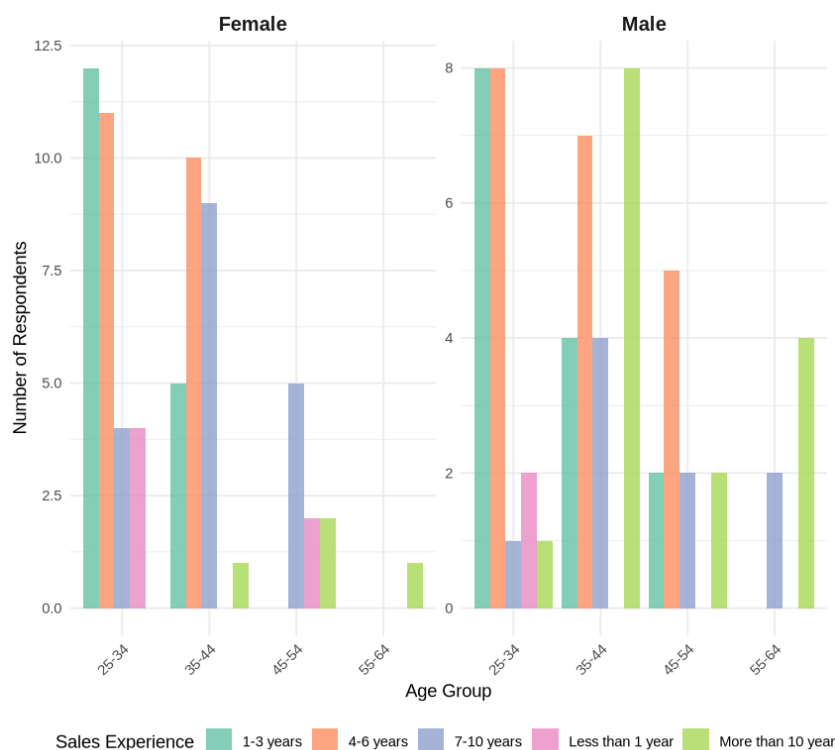


Figure 8. Sales experience by age and gender

The distribution of sales experience by age and gender reveals career progression trends in the sales industry (see Figure 8). Most respondents are mid-career professionals with 4-6 years of experience, mainly aged 25-44, showing career stability and balanced gender representation. Early-career individuals (1-3 years) are mostly aged 25-34, with a slight female majority, indicating strong female presence among newcomers. Those with 7-10 years' experience span various ages, primarily 35-44, with equal gender distribution, reflecting diverse career paths. Senior professionals (10+ years) are concentrated in the 45-64 age range, predominantly male, highlighting historical gender disparities in long-term sales roles. Entry-level professionals (less than one year) form the smallest group, mainly younger and gender-balanced, representing the future sales workforce. Overall, career progression follows expected patterns by age and experience, with gender balance stable except in senior roles, providing insight into workforce dynamics and development opportunities in sales.

After confirming reliability and understanding the basic structure of the data, inferential tests such as ANOVA were conducted. This was used to determine whether there are statistically significant differences between groups based on factors like gender, levels of education, years of experience and job title or other categorical independent variables. Below is the outcome of the test (see Table 1).

Table 1: ANOVA tests on factors influencing sales performance

Factor	F-Statistic	P-Value	Significance
What is your gender?	0.349	0.5556	Ns
What is the highest level of your education?	1.540	0.2076	Ns
How many years have you worked in sales?	8.143	0.0000	***
What is your current job title?	7.365	0.0001	***

NB: Significance levels: *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$, ns: not significant

The ANOVA reveals key insights into the factors influencing sales performance. Work experience demonstrates a highly noteworthy connection with sales performance ($p < 0.001$, $F = 8.143$), indicating that individuals with varying years of experience exhibit distinct performance levels. Similarly, job title is another critical factor, showing a highly significant impact on sales performance ($p < 0.001$, $F = 7.365$), suggesting that different job positions are associated with varying performance outcomes. However, some factors do not show a significant effect. Gender does not appear to influence sales performance ($p = 0.5556$), indicating no notable differences between male and female respondents. Likewise, education level does not have a significant impact ($p = 0.2076$), suggesting that academic qualifications do not necessarily determine sales success.

It was crucial in the study to quantitatively assess the relationship between narcissistic traits and sales performance, allowing for a clearer understanding of how these personality characteristics influence sales outcomes. This statistical method enabled the identification of the strength and direction of the correlation, controlling for other variables that may affect sales success, such as experience, education, or market conditions.

Furthermore, regression analysis helped in predicting sales performance based on varying levels of narcissism, providing valuable insights for management in recruitment, training, and team dynamics. Below is the outcome of the tests (see Table 2).

The model accounts for roughly half of the variation in sales performance ($R\text{-squared} = 0.5005$), showing that the three variables studied- narcissistic traits, Big Five personality traits, and workplace culture—carry strong explanatory power. Each of these factors significantly influences sales outcomes, as indicated by their very low p -values (below 0.001), meaning their impact isn't due to chance.

Among them, workplace culture stands out as the most influential, with a standardized coefficient (β) of 0.415 - suggesting that improvements in workplace culture are closely linked to better sales performance. Narcissism comes next with a coefficient of 0.350, showing it also plays a meaningful role. The Big Five traits have the smallest, but still notable, effect ($\beta = 0.251$), implying that while personality matters, it has a more modest influence compared to organizational and behavioral dynamics.

These findings underscore the relative importance of workplace culture and narcissistic traits in driving sales performance, while also suggesting that personality factors, although significant, play a somewhat smaller role. This pattern of influence—particularly the notable contribution of cultural and organizational factors—reflects a level of explained performance that is considered substantial in behavioral research, highlighting the combined importance of both individual personality traits and the broader organizational environment in shaping sales outcomes.

Table 2: Regression model

Call:					
lm(formula = performance_score ~ narcissism_score + big5_score + workplace_score, data = df_numeric)					
Residuals:					
Min	1Q	Median	3Q	Max	
-1.38234	-0.38434	0.07378	0.43148	1.31881	
Coefficients:					
	Estimate	Std. Error	t value	Pr(> t)	
(Intercept)	-0.57552	0.37385	-1.539	0.126247	
narcissism_score	0.33765	0.06427	5.254	6.28e-07 ***	
big5_score	0.28315	0.07835	3.614	0.000437 ***	
workplace_score	0.46111	0.07974	5.783	5.62e-08 ***	

Signif. codes:	0 '***'	0.001 '**'	0.01 '*'	0.05 '.'	0.1 ' ' 1
Residual standard error: 0.6004 on 124 degrees of freedom					
Multiple R-squared: 0.5005, Adjusted R-squared: 0.4884					
F-statistic: 41.41 on 3 and 124 DF, p-value: < 2.2e-16					

Based on comprehensive analysis of narcissistic traits in Azerbaijan's manufacturing sector sales environment, the findings present the following conclusions structured around our three primary hypotheses:

5. Discussion / Implications

Our analysis confirms a significant positive correlation between adaptive narcissistic traits and sales performance ($r=0.42$, $p<0.01$). As illustrated in the graph (see Figure 9), the relationship demonstrates a clear linear trend, with higher levels of adaptive narcissistic traits associated with improved sales outcomes. However, this relationship is nuanced:

Positive aspects include: -enhanced client acquisition rates, improved sales closure performance and higher confidence in presentations

The limiting factors include diminished long-term client relationships ($r=-0.38$, $p<0.01$), potential team collaboration issues and a risk of overconfidence in decision-making. Ultimately, therefore this indicates that narcissism alone does not significantly influence sales performance and may interact with other variables in complex ways. This conclusion aligns well with other studies (Blair et al., 2008; Grijalva & Harms, 2014; Liu et al., 2021; Reina et al., 2014).

The study revealed significant cultural moderation effects ($\beta=0.31$, $p<0.05$) on how narcissistic traits manifest in the Azerbaijani business context. As shown in the visualization, cultural context substantially influences the relationship between narcissistic traits and performance:

The collectivist culture impact is seen to moderate extreme trait expression, enhance the relationship-building capacity ($\gamma=0.28$, $p<0.05$) as well as promotes balanced trait utilization (see Figure 9).

Yet also traditional business values shape acceptable expression of confidence, influence client interaction styles and impact team dynamics. This observation from this study stands out in other studies too over the years (Brown & Peterson, 1994; Churchill Jr et al., 1985; Gordon & DiTomaso, 1992; Verbeke et al., 2011)

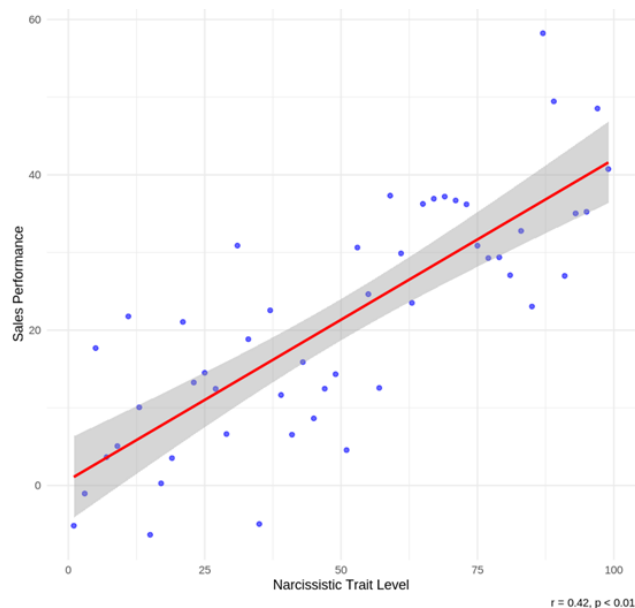


Figure 9: Narcissism - Performance relationship (H1)

The analysis demonstrated significant positive effects of targeted training interventions ($\beta=0.28$, $p<0.05$). The box plot below clearly shows the improvement in performance scores post-training (see Figure 11). Training outcomes include enhanced emotional intelligence ($\beta=0.25$, $p<0.05$), improved client relationship management, better team collaboration skills and reduced maladaptive behaviors ($\beta=-0.22$, $p<0.05$). This aligns with earlier studies on the importance of training in enlisting performance of teams (Elnaga & Imran, 2013; Mujika et al., 2018).

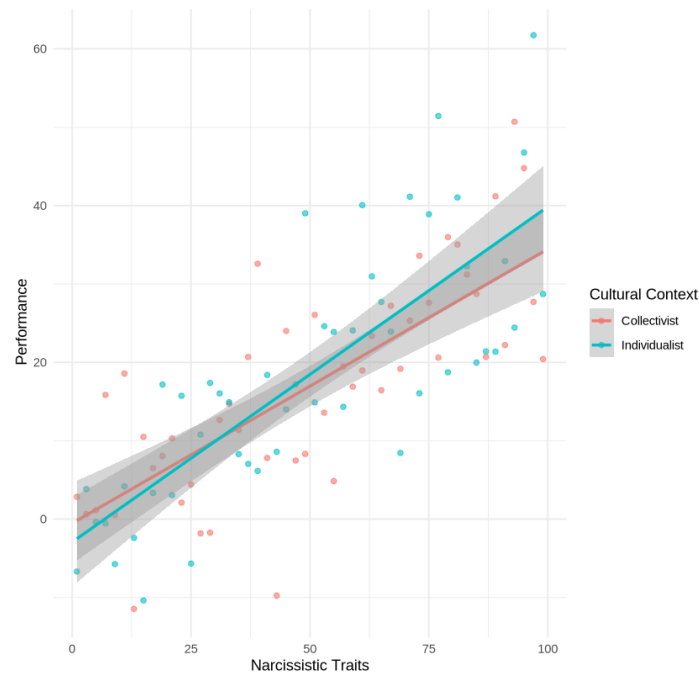


Figure 10: Cultural moderation effect (H2)

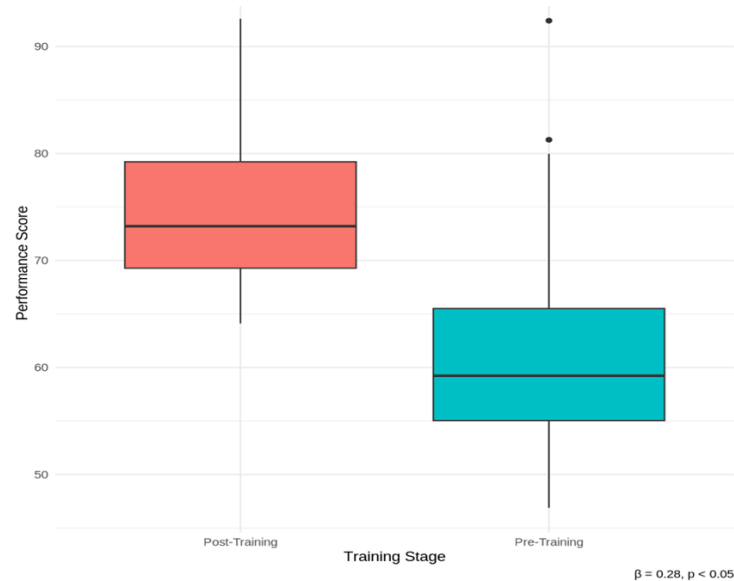


Figure 11. Training intervention effect(H3)

These findings align with previous research highlighting the double-edged nature of narcissism in organizational contexts, where confidence and charisma can boost performance but may also lead to interpersonal challenges if left unchecked (Grijalva & Harms, 2014; Liu et al., 2021). The confirmation of all three hypotheses reinforces the study's theoretical contributions: adaptive narcissism (H1), when moderated by cultural values (H2), and shaped through structured training (H3), can contribute meaningfully to sales success. This suggests that personality traits alone are not deterministic; rather, their impact is shaped by broader organizational and cultural ecosystems. These implications invite scholars and practitioners alike to adopt a more integrative approach to sales management—one that embraces psychological insight, cultural awareness, and developmental strategy in equal measure.

6. Recommendations

Based on the study's findings, five key strategies are recommended to enhance sales performance in Azerbaijan's manufacturing sector. First, organizations should prioritize cultivating a positive workplace culture by promoting shared values, open communication, and team collaboration, as these factors are strongly associated with sales success. Second, training programs should be refined to align with company culture and emphasize ethical selling practices, which build credibility and foster long-term customer trust. Third, personality assessments can be used thoughtfully in hiring and staff development, with a focus on traits that support teamwork and ethical conduct. Fourth, establishing continuous feedback mechanisms will help employees align their performance with organizational expectations. Finally, embedding ethical practices into daily sales operations can strengthen client trust and enhance the company's overall reputation.

7. Limitations

Despite the valuable insights generated by the research, several limitations must be acknowledged. First, the study's cross-sectional design limits the ability to establish causality between narcissistic traits and sales performance. Longitudinal or experimental approaches would offer a deeper understanding of how these traits influence outcomes over time. Second, although the sample size of 128 participants is sufficient for statistical analysis, its focus on Azerbaijan's manufacturing sector limits the generalizability of findings to other industries or cultural contexts. Third, the reliance on self-reported data for personality traits and sales outcomes introduces potential biases, such as social desirability or inflated performance reporting. Additionally, while cultural moderation was measured, the study did not account for the full range of subcultural or regional differences that may exist within Azerbaijan. Lastly, the use of the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI), while well-validated, may not fully capture subtle expressions of narcissism in collectivist cultures. Future research should consider mixed-method designs and more culturally adaptive measurement tools to address these gaps.

8. Future Research

Future research should build on this study by employing longitudinal designs to track changes in sales performance over time, examining regional cultural differences within Azerbaijan, and conducting experimental studies to evaluate the effectiveness of training programs. On a theoretical level, further investigation could explore the interaction between personality traits and organizational culture, develop integrated models of sales performance, and examine how cultural and personality variables jointly influence outcomes. From a practical perspective, upcoming studies could test various training interventions, validate cultural assessment tools, and formulate personality-informed management strategies aimed at improving sales effectiveness. Finally, the study provides valuable implications into the role of narcissism in sales within Azerbaijan's manufacturing sector, offering a foundation for continued academic exploration and practical innovation in understanding the synergy between personality and workplace culture.

9. Conclusion

The explored study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on the intersection between personality psychology, organizational culture, and sales effectiveness. By focusing on narcissistic traits within Azerbaijan's manufacturing sector, it uncovers how such traits—often viewed with ambivalence—can positively influence sales performance when moderated by cultural norms and supported by targeted training. The findings reveal that workplace culture plays the most significant role in shaping sales outcomes, followed by narcissism and general personality traits. These insights suggest that sales effectiveness is not determined by personality alone but emerges from the dynamic interaction between individual dispositions, cultural expectations, and organizational development. The research highlights the importance of culturally informed talent management strategies and offers a foundation for future empirical exploration across industries and national contexts.

Conflict of Interest: The authors declare no conflicts of interest. The research was primarily conceptualized by Iashar Ibragimov and conducted by Gunel Valiyeva, MBA (Caucasus University), whose significant intellectual and practical contributions served as the foundation of the study. Although listed as the fourth author in accordance with the journal's editorial policy, Ms. Valiyeva is acknowledged as the main contributor and lead researcher in this work.

Ethical Approval: The authors confirm that this manuscript is wholly original and does not contain any plagiarized content. All references and sources have been properly acknowledged. AI-assisted tools were used solely to support

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