

1 **Running head: NARCISSISM AND CONTROLLING COACHING**

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3 **Narcissism, Beliefs about Controlling Interpersonal Style,**

4 **and Moral Disengagement in Sport Coaches**

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24 **Narcissism, Beliefs about Controlling Interpersonal Style, and Moral Disengagement in**
25 **Sport Coaches**

26 **Abstract**

27 We tested the relations among narcissism (including both its adaptive and maladaptive facets),
28 effectiveness and normalcy beliefs about controlling interpersonal style, controlling coach
29 behaviours, and moral disengagement in sport coaches. Participants were 210 sport coaches,
30 representing a variety of sports and levels of coaching. Coaches completed a multi-section
31 questionnaire assessing the study variables. Path analyses revealed that global narcissism and
32 maladaptive narcissism were positively associated with controlling coach behaviours.
33 Furthermore, effectiveness and normalcy beliefs about controlling interpersonal style were
34 positively associated with controlling coach behaviours, while controlling coach behaviours were
35 positively associated with coach moral disengagement. Finally, adaptive narcissism had an
36 indirect effect on controlling coach behaviours via effectiveness beliefs about a controlling
37 interpersonal style. These findings contribute to the literature on antecedents and outcomes of
38 controlling coach behaviours, as reported by coaches.

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43 *Keywords:* adaptive narcissism, maladaptive narcissism, controlling coach behaviours, self-
44 determination theory, coaching

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47 Introduction

48 Coaches are key authority figures in sport, hence, the interpersonal styles they utilise when
49 communicating with their athletes can play a critical role in shaping athletes' psychological
50 experiences in sport. Although some interpersonal styles can be beneficial in that they support
51 athletes' psychological needs, other styles can be controlling and have the potential to undermine
52 athletes' psychological needs and well-being (Bartholomew, Ntoumanis, Ryan, Bosch, &
53 Thøgersen-Ntoumani, 2011). A theoretical framework for studying a controlling interpersonal
54 communication style is self-determination theory (SDT; Ryan & Deci, 2017). According to SDT,
55 such a style reflects a set of behaviours whereby the agent (e.g., coach) acts in pressuring or
56 coercive ways, imposing ways of thinking, feeling, and behaving upon their athletes
57 (Bartholomew, Ntoumanis, & Thøgersen-Ntoumani, 2009). A controlling interpersonal style has
58 been associated with negative athlete outcomes, such as psychological need frustration, ill-being,
59 and athlete moral disengagement (Curran, Hill, Ntoumanis, Hall, & Jowett, 2016; Healy,
60 Ntoumanis, van Zanten, & Paine, 2014; Hodge & Gucciardi, 2015). Although considerable
61 research efforts have expended on how controlling coaching can shape athletes' experiences,
62 there is limited evidence on the role of personality antecedents of a controlling coach
63 interpersonal style (Occhino, Maller, Ryanne, & Carlisle, 2014). We focus on this putative
64 antecedent category, and in particular on coach narcissism.

65 Narcissism is a personality trait that can be distinguished between grandiose and
66 vulnerable types (Thomaes, Brummelman, & Sedikides, 2018). Our study focuses on grandiose
67 narcissism, as it is mostly relevant to the coach population and has been extensively addressed in
68 the leadership literature (Schoel, Stahlberg, & Sedikides, 2015; Sedikides & Campbell, 2017).
69 Grandiose narcissism (hereafter narcissism) is a self-centred, arrogant, and manipulative

70 interpersonal orientation (Arthur, Woodman, Ong, Hardy & Ntoumanis, 2011; Roberts,
71 Woodman, & Sedikides, 2018). Of potential importance from a sport coaching perspective,
72 narcissistic leaders strive to assume leadership positions and engage in situations that provide
73 them with opportunities for admiration and self-enhancement (Mathieu & St-Jean, 2013;
74 Woodman, Roberts, Hardy, Callow, & Rogers, 2011). Further, narcissists take credit for
75 successes, but displace blame for failures on others (Campbell, Reeder, Sedikides, & Elliot,
76 2000). They also crave validation and seek out situations involving social interaction where they
77 can exhibit their superiority over others (Morf & Rhodewalt, 2001). In addition, they exploit
78 others for personal gain (Sedikides, Campbell, Reeder, Elliot, & Gregg, 2002), are unwilling to
79 treat others respectfully (Campbell, Hoffman, Campbell, & Marchisio, 2011), and lack moral
80 sensibility due to a preoccupation with the self (Roberts, 2007).

81 Perhaps unsurprisingly, narcissism has been linked with negative leadership qualities and
82 lack of leadership effectiveness (Grijalva, Harms, Newman, Gaddis, & Fraley, 2015; Schoel et
83 al., 2015; Sedikides & Campbell, 2017). Narcissistic leadership has also been recently explored
84 within the coaching domain. Matosic et al. (2017) recruited coaches from a variety of sports
85 (e.g., swimming, football) and levels (e.g., national, international). Coaches responded to
86 scenarios in which they experienced self-threat. Coaches higher (compared to those lower) in
87 narcissism reported that they would implement more often controlling behaviours toward their
88 athletes, such as yelling, belittlement, or guilt-inducement. In another study, Matosic,
89 Ntoumanis, Boardley, Stenling, and Sedikides (2016) also sampled coaches and athletes from a
90 variety of sports and levels. Coaches higher in narcissism were perceived as more controlling by
91 their athletes. In line with literature on narcissistic leaders (Schoel et al., 2015), Matosic et al.
92 explained their results by arguing that coaches high in narcissism behave in an authoritarian

93 manner, take advantage of others, are hypersensitive to criticism, and use guilt-inducing tactics
94 to express their disappointment to seemingly underperforming athletes. These coaches
95 implement the abovementioned controlling strategies in order to gain self-enhancement benefits,
96 such as admiration and reflected glory, as well as to establish authority and superiority over their
97 athletes (Mathieu & St-Jean, 2013; Woodman et al., 2011).

98 Matosic et al. (2016, 2017) examined narcissism at the global level. However, narcissism
99 has also been differentiated in terms of its adaptive and maladaptive facets (Barry & Malkin,
100 2010). Adaptive narcissism pertains to viewing oneself as authoritative and self-confident,
101 whereas maladaptive narcissism pertains to feeling entitled, being motivated to gain status over
102 others, and seeking attention or admiration. More relevant to the objectives of the current study,
103 adaptive narcissism is unrelated to social misconduct (e.g., aggression) when controlling for the
104 “effects” of maladaptive narcissism, whereas maladaptive narcissism is positively related to
105 social misconduct (Barry, Frick, & Killian, 2003; Barry, Pickard, & Ansel, 2009). As such, it is
106 possible that maladaptive, but not adaptive, narcissism is associated with controlling coach
107 behaviours. In addition, global narcissism could be associated with controlling coach behaviours
108 due to its maladaptive facet.

109 Extending the work of Matosic et al. (2016, 2017), in this study we tested potential
110 relations between narcissism and controlling behaviours via coaches’ effectiveness and normalcy
111 beliefs about controlling interpersonal style, respectively. Such beliefs have been previously
112 examined as potential antecedents of controlling behaviours (Reeve et al., 2014), and, as such,
113 may constitute an explanatory mechanism for coaches’ use of controlling behaviours.
114 Effectiveness beliefs (Reeve et al., 2014) refer to how successful or impactful an interpersonal
115 style is judged by individuals in positions of authority (e.g., coaches, teachers). Normalcy beliefs

116 refer to how normative (i.e., common, accepted, or expected) an interpersonal style is judged by
117 individuals in positions of authority. Both effectiveness and normalcy beliefs about controlling
118 interpersonal style are positively associated with use of controlling behaviours by teachers
119 (Reeve et al., 2014). One reason for this association is that teachers think controlling behaviours
120 (e.g., offering rewards) promote students' engagement (Boggiano, Barrett, Weiher, McClelland,
121 & Lusk, 1987). Another reason is that teachers — especially those in schools characterized by
122 competition, external evaluation, and strict time constraints — regard controlling behaviours as
123 the norm (Barett & Boggiano, 1988). What is considered as normative may also be considered
124 effective, and therefore teachers who endorse normalcy and effectiveness beliefs about
125 controlling interpersonal style view controlling strategies as acceptable (Reeve et al., 2014). By
126 implication, coaches who consider controlling interpersonal style as effective may also consider
127 it as a norm, and will therefore be likely to enact controlling behaviours when interacting with
128 their athletes.

129 We examined whether effectiveness and normalcy beliefs about controlling interpersonal
130 style represent mechanisms through which narcissism may be associated with coaches' use of
131 controlling behaviours. This process has the potential to explain why coaches high in narcissism
132 report more frequent engagement in controlling behaviours (Matosic et al., 2016, 2017).
133 Specifically, coaches high in narcissism may hold favourable effectiveness and normalcy beliefs
134 regarding controlling interpersonal style, and this allows them to view controlling behaviours as
135 legitimate and justifiable. Consistent with this contention, higher levels of global, adaptive, and
136 maladaptive narcissism have been positively related to normalcy beliefs regarding aggression
137 and bullying (e.g., social exclusion, verbal threat), and these beliefs have been linked to stronger
138 engagement in such behaviours (Blinkhorn, Lyons, & Almond, 2016; Onishi, Kawabata,

139 Kurokawa, & Yoshida, 2011). For example, in a school setting, narcissistic individuals are more
140 likely to be aggressive when perceiving higher levels of classroom norms for aggression (Onishi
141 et al., 2011). Additionally, adaptive and maladaptive narcissists engage in more aggressive and
142 bullying behaviours, respectively, because they believe these behaviours are acceptable and
143 normative (Ang, Tan, & Mansor, 2011; Blinkhorn et al., 2016). However, although adaptive
144 narcissism appeared to be positively linked to antisocial behaviour, the effects may be due to the
145 confluence of this construct and that of maladaptive narcissism (i.e., maladaptive narcissism was
146 not covaried out from adaptive narcissism). A recent meta-analysis of the narcissism and
147 leadership literature further bolsters the relevance of effectiveness beliefs (Grijalva et al., 2015).
148 The meta-analysis reported positive relations among global, adaptive, and maladaptive
149 narcissism with self-reported leadership effectiveness. It also showed that global narcissists
150 engaged in aggressive behaviours as a means of influencing and guiding others. Given the
151 established links between aggressive and bullying behaviours and controlling coach behaviours
152 (Bartholomew et al., 2009), we surmise that a similar process operates between narcissism
153 (global, adaptive, maladaptive) and controlling coach behaviours via effectiveness and normalcy
154 beliefs about controlling interpersonal style.

155 As well as aiming to understand more deeply antecedents of controlling coach
156 behaviours, we investigated coaches' moral disengagement as a potential outcome of controlling
157 coach behaviours. SDT literature has found that controlling coach behaviours may lead to
158 detrimental outcomes (Ntoumanis, 2012). A group of detrimental outcomes that has been
159 scarcely examined refers to morality-related, and, as such, we focus on coach moral
160 disengagement.

161 Moral disengagement is a collective term for eight psychosocial mechanisms (e.g., moral
162 justification, displacement of responsibility, attribution of blame) that allow people to justify or
163 rationalize inappropriate behaviour (Bandura, 2002). These mechanisms facilitate such conduct
164 by reducing or eliminating the emotional consequences that normally follow one's untoward
165 action, and would ordinarily deter it. Importantly, moral disengagement can be used socially to
166 justify or rationalize one's harmful conduct to others (Bandura, 2016). As such, coaches who
167 behave in a controlling manner may engage in moral disengagement to justify or rationalise their
168 controlling behaviours to others. Thus, higher frequency of controlling coach behaviours may be
169 associated with increased moral disengagement. To date, researchers have reported a positive
170 relation between athletes' perceptions of controlling coach behaviours and athlete moral
171 disengagement (Hodge & Gucciardi, 2015), but the relation between controlling coach
172 behaviours and coach moral disengagement has not been addressed.

173 *Hypotheses*

174 We first tested a model in which global narcissism predicted controlling behaviours via
175 effectiveness and normalcy beliefs about controlling interpersonal style. This model expands on
176 Matosic et al. (2016, 2017) who obtained a positive link between global narcissism and
177 controlling coaching behaviours. Similar to Barry et al. (2003) and Barry and Malkin (2010), we
178 report the results for overall narcissism first, followed by a more elaborate version of that model
179 that differentiates between adaptive and maladaptive narcissism. In these two models, we
180 hypothesised that global and maladaptive, but not adaptive, narcissism would be positively and
181 directly associated with controlling coach behaviours. We also hypothesised that effectiveness
182 and normalcy beliefs about controlling interpersonal style would be positively associated with
183 controlling coach behaviours, and that controlling coach behaviours would be positively

184 associated with coach moral disengagement. Finally, we hypothesised that global, adaptive, and
185 maladaptive narcissism would be positively linked with controlling coach behaviours indirectly,
186 via both effectiveness and normalcy beliefs about controlling interpersonal style (Figure 1 and
187 2). [Figure 1 and 2 near here]

188 **Method**

189 *Participants*

190 Participants were 210 coaches (164 men, 46 women) from a variety of team (e.g., football,
191 rugby) and individual (e.g., swimming, athletics) sports, as well as levels of competition (e.g.,
192 national, international, regional). Coaches' ages ranged from 18 to 88 years ($M = 35.76$, $SD =$
193 13.53 ; 23 participants did not report their age). Coaches had on average 12.99 ($SD = 9.59$) years
194 of coaching experience and were predominantly White British (83.10%).

195 *Measures*

196 *Narcissism*

197 We assessed coach (global) narcissism with the 40-item, forced-choice Narcissistic Personality
198 Inventory (NPI; Raskin & Terry, 1988). We opted for the NPI over other measures of narcissism
199 (e.g., Narcissistic Admiration and Rivalry Questionnaire; Back, Kufner, Dufner, Gerlach, &
200 Rauthmann, 2013), because the NPI is the standard scale to assess grandiose narcissism
201 (Boldero, Bell, & Davies, 2015; Miller, Lynam, & Campbell, 2016a, 2016b), and this would
202 allow us to compare our results with relevant findings in the literature. For each item,
203 participants chose between a narcissistic (e.g., "I think I am a special person") and a non-
204 narcissistic (e.g., "I am no better or no worse than most people") statement. Scores range from 0
205 to 40, with higher scores reflecting higher levels of narcissism. Evidence support the NPI's

206 construct validity and internal consistency in the sports domain (Roberts et al., 2018; Woodman
207 et al., 2011).

208 Narcissism has been subdivided into two facets, adaptive and maladaptive (Barry et al.,
209 2003; Barry & Malkin, 2010). As per Barry et al. (2003) and Barry and Malkin (2010), we
210 calculated adaptive narcissism scores by averaging items of the Authority (e.g., “I like to have
211 authority over others”) and Self-sufficiency (e.g., “I always know what I am doing”) subscales of
212 the NPI. Further, we calculated maladaptive narcissism score by averaging items from
213 Exploitativeness (e.g., “I can make anybody believe anything I want them to”), Entitlement (e.g.,
214 “I expect a great deal from other people”), and Exhibitionism (e.g., “I really like to be the centre
215 of attention”) subscales of the NPI (Barry et al., 2003; Barry & Malkin, 2010). All subscales
216 have good construct validity and internal consistency (Barry et al., 2003; Barry & Malkin, 2010).

217 *Controlling Coach Behaviours*

218 We assessed controlling coach behaviours using the 15-item Controlling Coach Behaviors Scale
219 (CCBS; Bartholomew, Ntoumanis, & Thøgersen-Ntoumani, 2010). Responses ranged from 1
220 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*), with higher scores reflecting more controlling
221 behaviours. For the purposes of this study, we modified the CCBS to refer to coach self-
222 perceptions (e.g., “I try to control what athletes do during their free time;” for a similar approach,
223 see Stebbings, Taylor, & Spray, 2011) rather than athlete perceptions (e.g., “My coach tries to
224 control what I do during my free time”). Evidence supports the modified scale’s construct
225 validity and internal consistency ($\alpha = .83$; Stebbings et al., 2011).

226 *Controlling Interpersonal Style Beliefs*

227 For each of the controlling coaching behaviours items (CCBS; Bartholomew et al., 2010), the
228 participants were asked to answer two questions about how effective and two questions about

229 how normative the behaviour captured by this item was. The effectiveness and normalcy beliefs
230 regarding controlling interpersonal style were assessed via a questionnaire developed by Reeve
231 et al. (2014). Two items measured coaches' effectiveness beliefs about a controlling
232 interpersonal style (i.e., "How effective would this approach to coaching be in terms of
233 motivating and engaging your athletes?" and "If you coach this way, how much would your
234 athletes benefit in terms of learning and achievement?"). For effectiveness beliefs, responses
235 ranged from 1 (*extremely ineffective, it would not work at all*) to 7 (*extremely effective, it would*
236 *certainly work*) for the first item, and from 1 (*no benefit at all*) to 7 (*a great deal of benefit*) for
237 the second item. Additionally, two items measured coaches' normalcy beliefs about controlling
238 interpersonal style (i.e., "Does this approach describe what the other coaches you know and work
239 with do as coaches?" and "How typical or common is this approach to coaching for the coaches
240 you know and work with?"). For normalcy beliefs about controlling interpersonal style responses
241 ranged from 1 (*no, not at all*) to 7 ("yes, very much") for the first item, and from 1 (*extremely*
242 *atypical, uncommon*) to 7 (*extremely typical, common*) for the second item. The scale has good
243 construct validity and internal consistency (e.g., Reeve et al., 2014).

244 *Moral Disengagement*

245 We assessed moral disengagement using the 8-item Moral Disengagement in Sport Scale-Short
246 (MDSS-Short; Boardley & Kavussanu, 2008). A sample item is: "Shouting at the opponent is
247 okay as long as it does not end in violent conduct." Responses ranged from 1 (*strongly disagree*)
248 to 7 (*strongly agree*). Evidence supports this scale's construct validity and internal consistency
249 ($\alpha = .87$; Hodge & Gucciardi, 2015). As the scale was originally validated with athletes, we
250 examined its factorial validity with the present sample of coaches using confirmatory factor
251 analysis. Initial specification of the 8-item unidimensional model from Boardley and Kavussanu

252 (2008) resulted in poor fit, $\chi^2(20) = 78.7, p = <.01, CFI = .84, RMSEA = .12, SRMR = .07$.
253 However, specification of a model that accounted for a significant correlation between the error
254 terms of two items identified through model misfit statistics resulted in very good model fit, χ^2
255 $(19) = 35.1, p = <.05, CFI = .96, RMSEA = .06, SRMR = .06$. Specifying correlated errors when
256 present is important to prevent possible inaccurate parameter estimates (see Kline, 2015).

257 *Procedures*

258 Following approval from the ethics committee of the first author's institution, we recruited
259 coaches via national governing bodies, sport club websites, social media, and personal contacts.
260 We explained the purpose and procedure of the study to coaches via email or in person. We
261 emphasised that their participation was voluntary and all information would be confidential.
262 Prior to completing the 15-min online (collected via the Lime Survey online application) or
263 hardcopy (collected in person) multi-section questionnaire, we provided coaches with a consent
264 form (online or face-to-face). We received 204 online and 11 hardcopy responses. Out of 215
265 participants, three were duplicates, one was not based in the United Kingdom, and one requested
266 withdrawal. Thus, the final data set consisted of 210 participants (199 online and 11 hardcopy
267 responses). Upon completion of the survey, participants were able to enter a prize draw. We
268 randomly selected two participants to win a £50 Amazon voucher each as compensation.

269 *Data Analyses*

270 In preliminary analyses, we calculated means, standard deviations, correlations, and tested for
271 internal reliabilities, as well as univariate and multivariate normality (i.e., skewness and
272 kurtosis), using SPSS 22.0 software. We averaged scores in all subscales we used. We then
273 evaluated the main study hypotheses by conducting path analyses with maximum likelihood
274 (ML) estimation using Mplus 7.2 software (Muthén & Muthén, 1998-2014). We assessed model

275 fit using the χ^2 goodness-of-fit index, root mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA),
276 comparative fit index (CFI), Tucker-Lewis index (TLI), and square root mean residual (SRMR).
277 CFI and TLI values exceeding .95 are indicative of good fit, while SRMR and RMSEA values \leq
278 .08 and .06, respectively, are considered satisfactory (Hu & Bentler, 1999). We calculated
279 indirect effects using bias-corrected (BC) bootstrapped 95% confidence intervals (CIs) with 5000
280 resamples, as recommended by Preacher and Hayes (2008). We report the standardised version
281 of specific indirect effects and their BC-CIs. A 95% CI not containing zero indicated a
282 statistically significant indirect effect (Preacher & Hayes, 2008).

283 **Results**

284 We present descriptive statistics, Cronbach Alpha's (α) coefficients, and inter-correlations for all
285 study variables in Table 1 [Table 1 near here]. All the variables had high internal consistency and
286 were normally distributed (skewness range: - .238 to .706, kurtosis range: - 1.36 to -.001).
287 Correlation coefficients were in the expected direction (see Table 1) and ranged in effect size
288 from small to large (Cohen, 1988).

289 *Direct and Indirect Effects*

290 We conducted path analyses to test our models (Figures 3 and 4). The fit indices for our first *a*
291 *priori* hypothesised model indicated good model fit: $\chi^2(3) = 3.27, p = 0.35, CFI = 1.00, TLI =$
292 $.99, RMSEA = .02, SRMR = .03$. As shown in Figure 3 [Figure 3 near here], global narcissism
293 was positively associated with controlling coach behaviours, but not to effectiveness and
294 normalcy beliefs about controlling interpersonal styles. Effectiveness and normalcy beliefs about
295 controlling interpersonal styles were positively associated with controlling coach behaviours.
296 Finally, controlling coach behaviours was positively associated with coach moral disengagement.
297 In the first model, the proposed indirect effect between global narcissism and controlling

298 behaviours via effectiveness and normalcy beliefs about controlling interpersonal style was not
299 significant (Table 2). Additionally, the indirect effects of narcissism on moral disengagement via
300 effectiveness belief and controlling behaviours, as well as via normalcy beliefs and controlling
301 behaviours, were tiny and not significant $b = .01$ (BC CI $-.00 - .02$), and $b = .00$ (BC CI $-.01-$
302 $.01$), respectively.

303 The fit indices for our second *a priori* hypothesised model also indicated good model fit:
304 $\chi^2(4) = 6.28, p = 0.18, CFI = .98, TLI = .94, RMSEA = .05, SRMR = .03$. As shown in Figure 4
305 [Figure 4 near here], adaptive narcissism was positively associated with effectiveness beliefs, but
306 was unrelated to normalcy beliefs about controlling interpersonal style. Also, adaptive narcissism
307 was not directly related to controlling behaviours. Maladaptive narcissism was not associated
308 with either of the beliefs, but had a direct significant positive link with controlling behaviours.
309 Additionally, effectiveness and normalcy beliefs about controlling interpersonal style were
310 positively associated with controlling coach behaviours. Finally, controlling coach behaviours
311 was positively associated with coach moral disengagement. In the second model, the total
312 indirect effect between adaptive narcissism and controlling coach behaviours via effectiveness
313 and normalcy beliefs about controlling interpersonal style was statistically significant. The
314 indirect effect accounted for 81.58% of the total effect (Preacher & Kelley, 2011). In addition,
315 the specific indirect effect between adaptive narcissism and controlling coach behaviours via
316 effectiveness beliefs about controlling interpersonal style was statistically significant. This
317 specific indirect effect explained 56.58% of the total effect (see Table 2). No other significant
318 indirect effects emerged [Table 2 near here].

319 **Discussion**

320 We advanced prior research on coaching from a SDT perspective by testing models that linked
321 antecedents (global, adaptive, and maladaptive narcissism; effectiveness and normalcy beliefs
322 about controlling interpersonal style) and consequences (moral disengagement) of coaches'
323 controlling behaviours. We obtained support for all our direct-effect hypotheses such that: (a)
324 global and maladaptive, but not adaptive, narcissism were positively associated with controlling
325 coach behaviours, (b) effectiveness and normalcy beliefs about controlling interpersonal style
326 were positively associated with controlling coach behaviours, and (c) controlling coach
327 behaviours were positively associated with coach moral disengagement. However, only the
328 indirect effect of adaptive narcissism on controlling coach behaviours via effectiveness beliefs
329 about controlling interpersonal style was supported. Stated otherwise, adaptive narcissism was
330 positively associated with controlling behaviours through effectiveness beliefs about controlling
331 interpersonal style. Indirect effects of maladaptive narcissism on controlling coach behaviours
332 via effectiveness beliefs about controlling interpersonal style, and adaptive and maladaptive
333 narcissism on controlling coach behaviours via normalcy beliefs about controlling interpersonal
334 style, respectively, were not supported.

335 *Antecedents of Controlling Coach Behaviours*

336 As expected and also previously found by Matosic et al. (2016, 2017), coach global narcissism
337 was moderately positively associated with controlling coaching behaviours. In line with literature
338 on narcissistic leaders (Grijalva et al., 2015; Schoel et al., 2015; Sedikides & Campbell, 2017),
339 such coaches may pressure their players to the limit in order for the coaches to gain self-
340 enhancement benefits, such as admiration and reflected glory (Mathieu & St-Jean, 2013;
341 Woodman et al., 2011). As hypothesised with regard to the direct effects, maladaptive, but not
342 adaptive, narcissism was associated with controlling coach behaviours. Put otherwise,

343 entitlement, exhibitionism, and exploitativeness, but not authority or self-sufficiency, are likely
344 to explain the frequency of controlling coach behaviours. For example, coaches who feel entitled
345 to demand a great deal from their athletes, require unconditional praise and admiration from
346 them, are comfortable in “using” them, and pressurise hard their athletes to the limit of their
347 performance in order to achieve their own (i.e., coaches’) desired ends. Adaptive narcissism was
348 not directly associated with controlling behaviours, as expected, when controlling for the effects
349 of maladaptive narcissism (Barry et al., 2003).

350 Adaptive narcissism – but not global or maladaptive narcissism – was positively
351 indirectly associated with controlling behaviours via coaches’ effectiveness beliefs about a
352 controlling interpersonal style. Higher levels of adaptive narcissism in coaches were associated
353 with stronger effectiveness beliefs about controlling interpersonal style, which in turn was
354 associated with more frequent controlling behaviours. According to Barry and Malkin (2010),
355 adaptive narcissists evaluate situations before taking action to ensure that they are confident of
356 their success. Thus, it is possible that coaches with higher levels of adaptive narcissism tend to
357 use controlling behaviours when they believe those behaviours are effective. In contrast, most of
358 the effect of global and maladaptive narcissism on controlling behaviours was direct;
359 effectiveness beliefs about controlling interpersonal style did not have unique predictive ability
360 over and above narcissism. This could be because coaches high in maladaptive narcissism feel
361 that they are entitled to use controlling behaviours over their athletes (in a demonstration of
362 power over them), irrespectively of whether such behaviours are deemed as effective.

363 There were no significant indirect effects of global, adaptive, and maladaptive narcissism
364 on controlling coach behaviours via coaches’ normalcy beliefs about controlling interpersonal
365 style, although those beliefs were positively associated with controlling behaviours, in line with

366 findings from the education literature (Reeve et al., 2014). The non-significant indirect effects
367 could be explained through global, adaptive, and maladaptive aspects of narcissism being linked
368 with the need to be different from others (Raskin & Terry, 1988), making individuals high in
369 these traits less inclined to be influenced by beliefs about norms. For example, coaches who
370 believe they are extraordinary (i.e., adaptive trait) and who like to be the centre of attention (i.e.,
371 maladaptive trait) are disinclined from following the norm, as this practice may not benefit them
372 directly.

373 *Controlling Coach Behaviours and Moral Disengagement*

374 As hypothesised, controlling coach behaviours were positively associated with coach moral
375 disengagement. In other words, coaches who reported using more controlling coach behaviours
376 were more inclined to morally disengage. Controlling coaches may use moral disengagement to
377 justify and rationalise athletes' engagement in aggressive and transgressive behaviours, because
378 they see the potential for competitive advantage stemming from such athlete behaviour. This
379 novel finding is consistent with past research that has linked coaches' controlling behaviours
380 with athletes' moral disengagement (Hodge & Gucciardi, 2015; Hodge, Hargreaves, Gerrard, &
381 Lonsdale, 2013; Hodge & Lonsdale, 2011). Integration of relevant theory (Bandura, 2016) with
382 the findings from the present research and those of Hodge and Gucciardi (2015), Hodge et al.
383 (2013), and Hodge and Lonsdale (2011) is consistent with the possibility that controlling coaches
384 promote athletes' moral disengagement through their own use of it. Further investigations that
385 expand our model to examine whether coaches' use of moral disengagement fosters athlete
386 moral disengagement are therefore encouraged.

387 *Limitations and Future Directions*

388 Our study was based on coach self-reports, which could have been influenced to some degree by
389 socially desirable responding. However, broadly similar findings were reported by Matosic et al.
390 (2016), who collected data from both coaches and athletes. Nevertheless, follow-up research may
391 incorporate alternative or additional methods of assessing coach behaviours, including
392 observational techniques (i.e., blind rating of coach behaviours), to guard against such influences
393 (Smith et al., 2015). Also, our study used a cross-sectional design and hence our findings do not
394 allow causal inferences. Longitudinal designs are needed to help identify the temporal
395 sequencing of relations between variables. Another way forward would be to implement
396 interventions designed to influence coach effectiveness beliefs and ensuing controlling
397 behaviours in samples of coaches with varying levels of narcissism.

398 Interestingly, researchers have distinguished between narcissism admiration (e.g., striving
399 for uniqueness, charmingness) and narcissism rivalry (e.g., striving for supremacy,
400 aggressiveness) as the bright and dark sides of narcissism, respectively (Back et al., 2013).
401 Arguably, these concepts are complementary to adaptive and maladaptive narcissism
402 components (Back et al., 2013). The adaptive component of narcissism (e.g., “I have a natural
403 talent for influencing people”) is highly comparable to narcissism admiration (e.g., “Mostly, I am
404 very adept at dealing with other people”), and the maladaptive component of narcissism (e.g., “I
405 get upset when people don’t notice how I look when I go out in public”) is highly comparable to
406 narcissism rivalry (e.g., “I react annoyed if another person steals the show from me”). The
407 admiration-rivalry distinction is new in the narcissism literature, and its conceptual and
408 operational overlap with adaptive-maladaptive narcissism should be explored in future research.

409 Future work could also investigate the relations between grandiose and vulnerable forms
410 of narcissism and controlling interpersonal style (cf. Sedikides, Ntoumanis, & Sheldon, 2018).

411 Our study has addressed the relations between grandiose narcissism (i.e., narcissistic personality
412 trait) and its facets (i.e., adaptive and maladaptive narcissism) with controlling interpersonal
413 style. No research, however, has examined pathological form of narcissism (i.e., vulnerable
414 narcissism; Thomaes et al., 2018) within sport context. Such research on vulnerable narcissism
415 (using the hypersensitivity narcissism scale; Hendin & Cheek, 1997) may provide new insights
416 into narcissism in sport coaches. Finally, assessment of additional “dark” personality traits, such
417 as psychopathy and Machiavellianism (Paulhus & Williams, 2002), as antecedents of controlling
418 coach behaviours would be useful. Psychopathy and Machiavellianism share maladaptive
419 characteristics with narcissism, such as striving for self-promotion, lacking empathy, engaging in
420 aggressive behaviours, and failing to show organisational success (Eisenbarth, Hart, &
421 Sedikides, 2018; Muris, Merckelbach, Otgaar, & Meijer, 2017).

422 *Conclusion and Implications*

423 Our research makes several unique contributions to the literature, particularly in regards to
424 understanding antecedents of a controlling interpersonal style. First, we replicated and extended
425 previous findings by showing that global narcissism and its maladaptive facet qualify as
426 antecedents of controlling coaching behaviours. Second, we illustrated a positive indirect effect
427 between adaptive narcissism and controlling coaching via effectiveness beliefs about controlling
428 coaching. Finally, we demonstrated that controlling coaching behaviours were positively
429 associated with coaches’ reports of moral disengagement.

430 Extending on Matosic et al. (2017), our findings could inform coach-focused education
431 programs that aim to promote adaptive coaching environments in sport. From a motivational
432 perspective, literature identifies specific examples of controlling coach behaviours and ways in
433 which they can be substituted by autonomy-supportive ones (Ntoumanis, Quested, Reeve, &

434 Cheon, 2018). From a narcissism perspective, evidence outside sport indicates that increasing
435 empathy (Hatcher et al., 1994; Hepper, Hart, & Sedikides, 2014) or self-affirmation (Thomas,
436 Bushman, Orobio de Castro, Cohen, & Denissen, 2009) can reduce narcissistic tendencies. Our
437 findings showcase the potential for combining the two perspectives. One could develop coach-
438 education programs that reduce narcissistic tendencies, challenge beliefs regarding the
439 effectiveness of controlling coaching behaviours, and train coaches to replace such behaviours
440 with autonomy-supportive ones. In doing so, one might curtail coach moral disengagement, in
441 light of evidence that moral disengagement is positively linked to antisocial sport behaviour
442 (Boardley & Kavussanu, 2011).

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Table 1. *Descriptive Statistics and Correlations between Study Variables (N = 210)*

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Global narcissism	.86						
2. Adaptive narcissism	.81**	.71					
3. Maladaptive narcissism	.89**	.53**	.74				
4. Effectiveness beliefs	.12	.18**	.05	.95			
5. Normalcy beliefs	.05	.09	.03	.41**	.87		
6. Controlling coach behaviours	.31*	.21*	.30**	.30**	.30**	.84	
7. Moral disengagement	.18*	.10	.22**	.23**	.16*	.43**	.82
Possible Range	0-40	0-1	0-1	1-7	1-7	1-7	1-7
<i>M</i>	14.25	.52	.26	4.18	3.85	2.43	2.46
<i>SD</i>	6.76	.21	.18	2.00	1.47	.89	1.06
Skewness	.47	.06	.77	-.24	-.19	.35	.45
Kurtosis	-.21	-.56	-.00	-1.36	-.53	-.62	-.60

Note. Cronbach Alpha's (α) coefficients are in bold on the diagonal. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Table 2. *Total and Indirect Effects of Global, Adaptive, and Maladaptive Narcissism on Controlling Behaviours via Effectiveness and Normalcy Beliefs about Controlling Interpersonal Style*

Independent variable	Criterion variable	Total indirect effect (95% CI)	Specific indirect effect	
			Effectiveness Beliefs (BC 95% CI)	Normalcy Beliefs (BC 95% CI)
Global narcissism	Controlling behaviours	.03 (-.01 to .07)	.02 (-.00 to .05)	.01 (-.02 to .03)
Adaptive narcissism	Controlling behaviours	.06 (.01 to .11)*	.04 (.01 to .08)*	.02 (-.01 to .05)
Maladaptive narcissism	Controlling behaviours	-.02 (-.06 to .03)	-.01 (-.04 to .02)	-.00 (-.03 to .02)

Note. * $p < 0.05$. Standardised beta coefficients are presented with biased-corrected 95% confidence intervals.

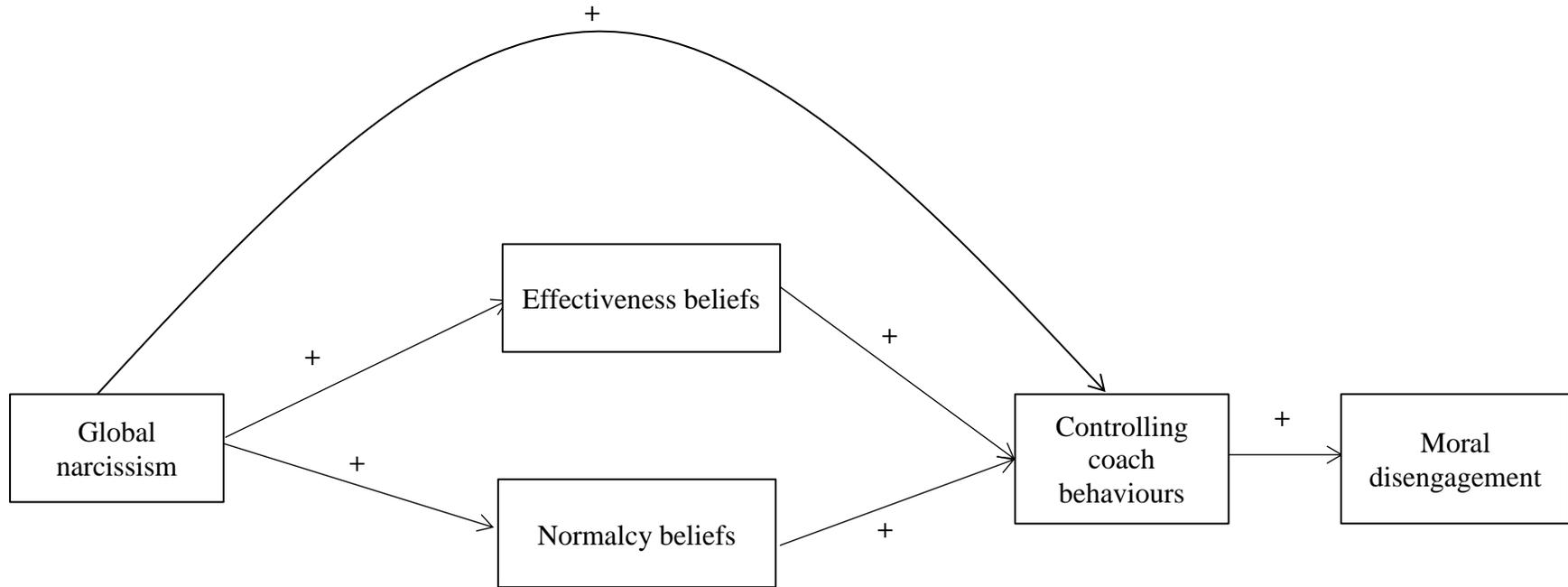


Figure 1. Hypothesised model linking global narcissism, effectiveness and normalcy beliefs about controlling interpersonal style, controlling coach behaviours, and moral disengagement.

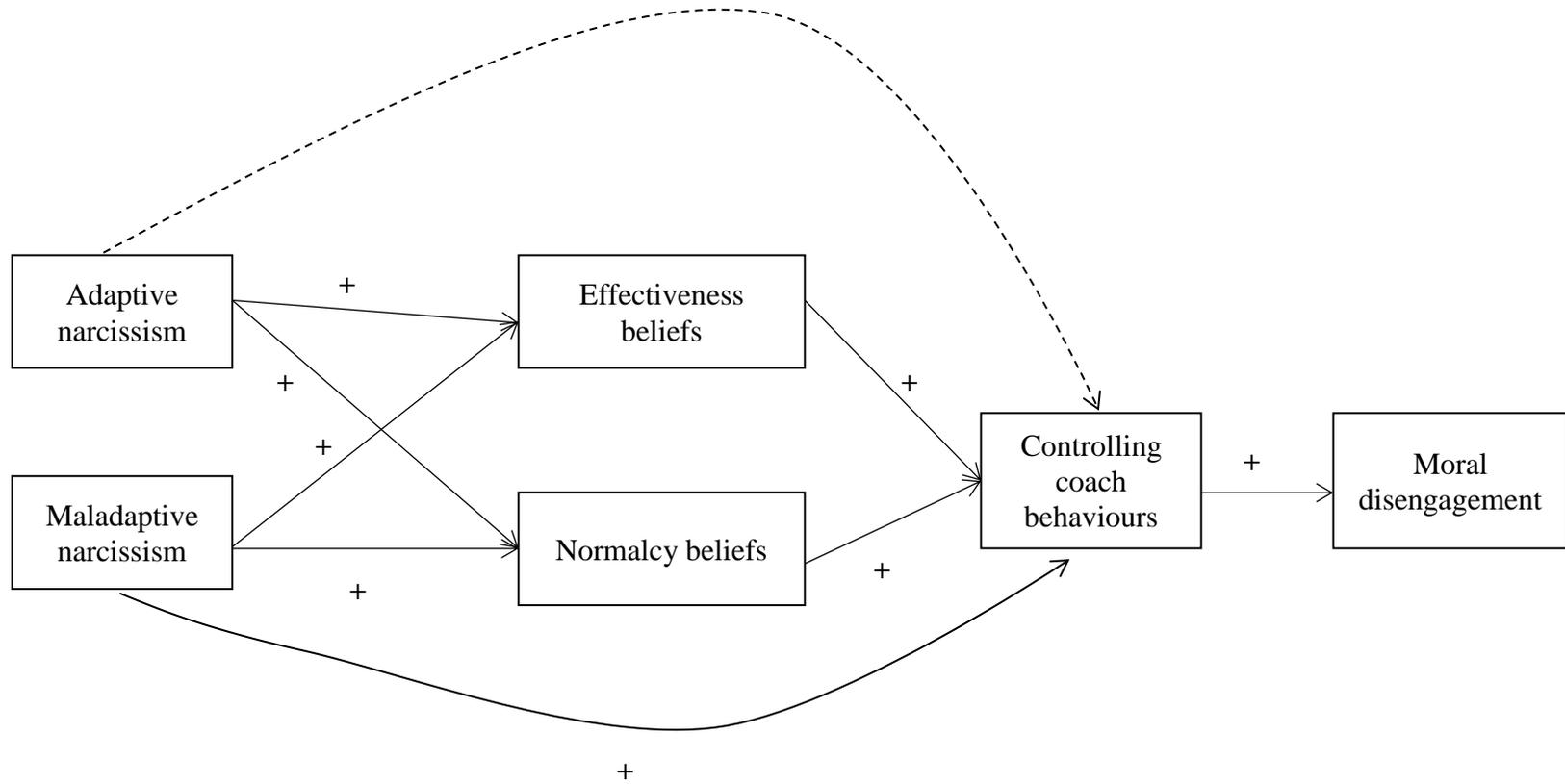


Figure 2. Hypothesised model linking adaptive and maladaptive narcissism, effectiveness and normalcy beliefs about controlling interpersonal style, controlling coach behaviours, and moral disengagement.

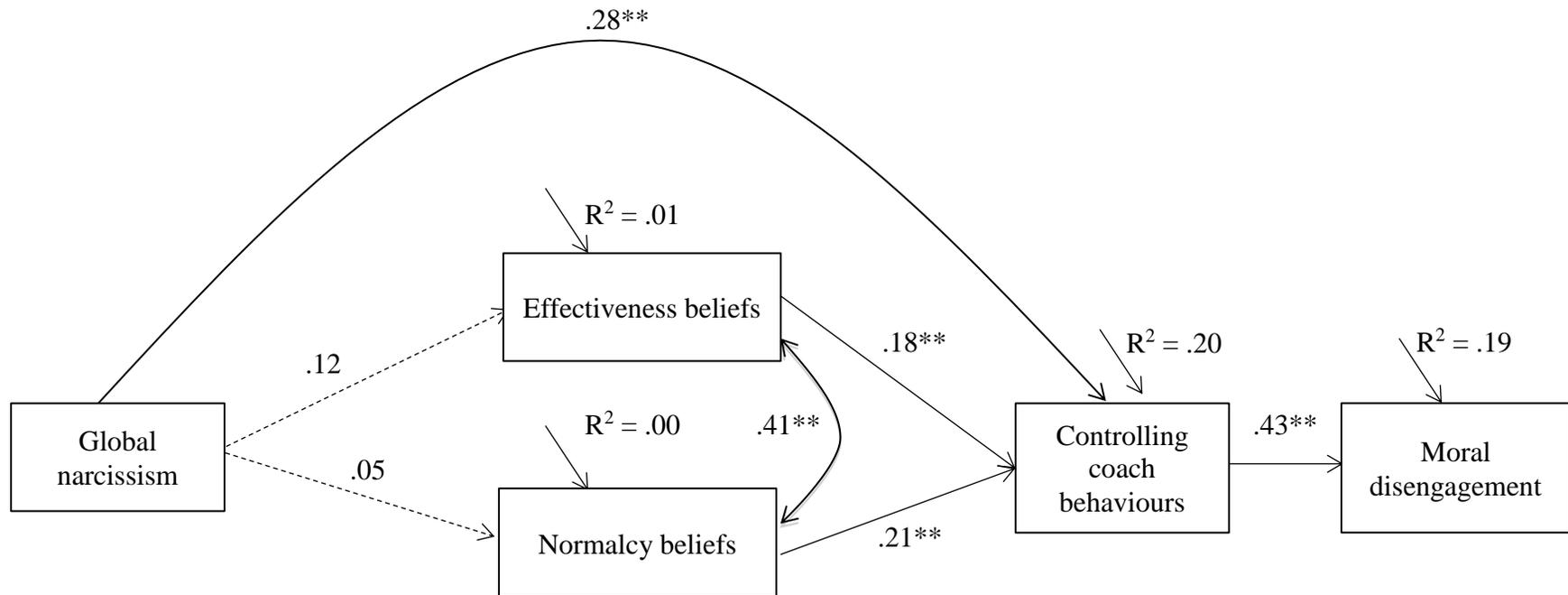


Figure 3. Path analysis of a model linking global narcissism, effectiveness and normalcy beliefs about controlling interpersonal style, controlling coach behaviours, and moral disengagement.

Note: We present standardised regression coefficients. Dashed lines represent non-significant paths. $^{**}p < .01$

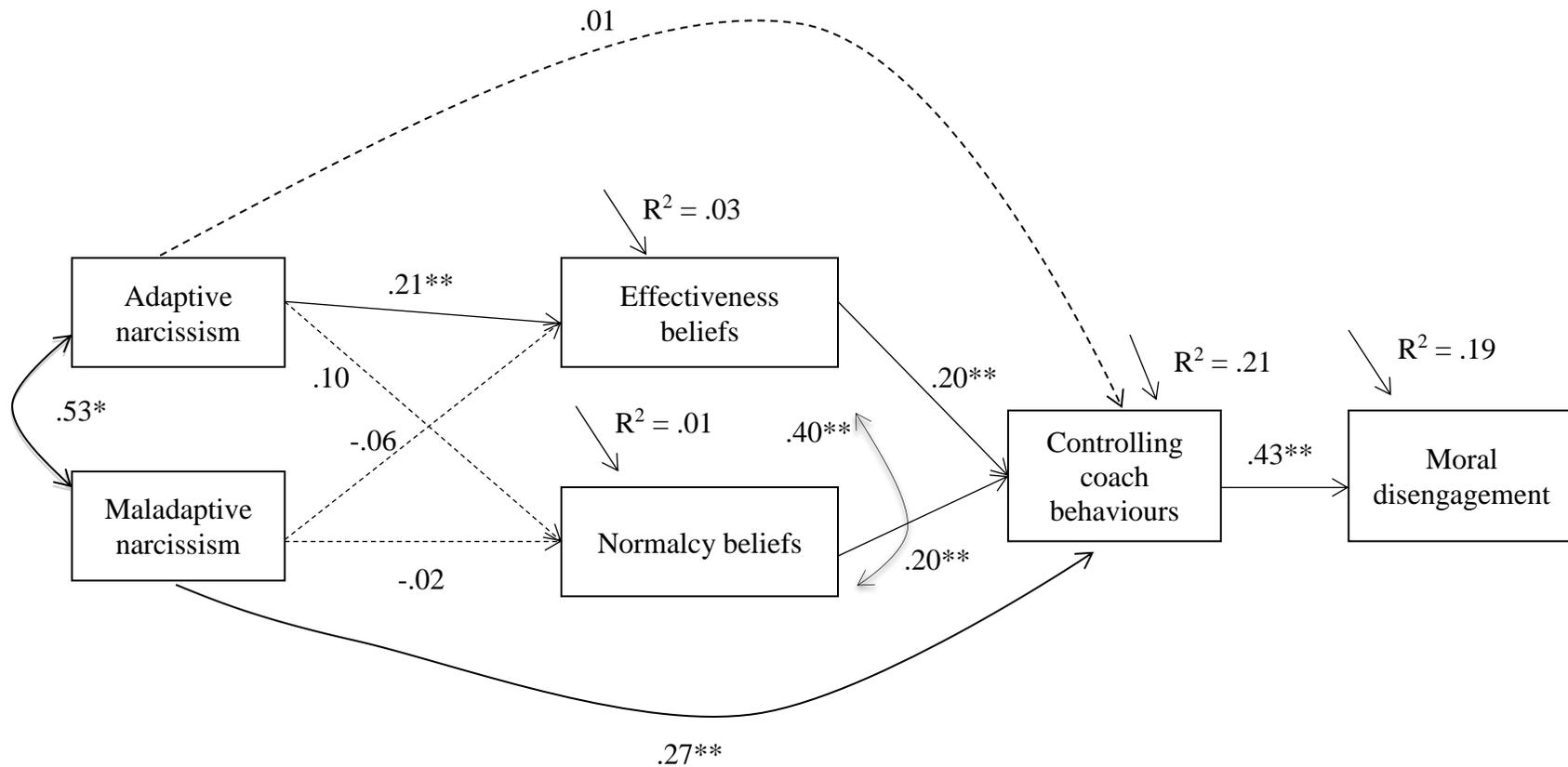


Figure 4. Path analysis of a model linking adaptive and maladaptive narcissism, effectiveness and normalcy beliefs about controlling interpersonal style, controlling coach behaviours, and moral disengagement.

Note: We present standardised regression coefficients. Dashed lines represent non-significant paths. $^{**}p < .01$