

The Narcissistic Ways to the Existential Self-Fulfillment

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Introduction. Social processes are increasingly heading to the points of culture of individuality and personal efficiency in the last decade. Personal achievements, being initiative and competitive, aspiration of the well-being, happiness, self-values, self-senses and life orientations, self-realization and development of own competences are becoming more actual and publicly approved. So that the self-care, adequate and stable high self-esteem, assertiveness, feeling that one can fulfill personal ambitions, can compete in modern, some kind, hedonized XXI century society, are more perceived as normal, even desirable, forms of traits in the personality structure.

Purpose. Therefore, we stand in front of the question: how healthy narcissism influences on the sense-forming human activity and on the feeling and awareness of existential inclusion into the life essence in particular.

Methodology. Nineteen undergraduate students of Lviv high schools participated in the present study (46 female and 44 male students). Each of them was given an anonymous questionnaire package, which included tests: the narcissism evaluation test “Self” (F. Deneck and B. Hilzhenstock), “The Scale of Existence” (A. Lengle), “Satisfaction with the Life Scale” (E. Diner).

The narcissism evaluation tests “Self” (F. Deneck and B. Hilzhenstock) is directed to study various aspects of the narcissistic regulation system as the phenomenon that can be introspected. It includes 163 items and the scale from 1 to 5 for expressing the opinion. “The Scale of Existence” (A. Langle) is an approach to assess the ability to find personal meaning in life and to reach existential fulfillment. It consists of 46 items and the scale from 1 to 5 for answers. “Satisfaction with the Life Scale” (E. Diner) is a 5-item scale designed to measure cognitive judgments of one’s life and every item has the scale from 1 to 7 that allows people to agree or disagree with statements more variatedly.

The next step was to process the data using methods of multivariate statistics: cluster, comparative, correlation, regressive analysis. And for the qualitative data analysis was also used Excel. The consolidated data analysis is briefly presented in this paper.

Results. Normal narcissistic self-regulation functions on the maintaining the emotional balance, feelings of internal stability, self-worth, self-confidence, personal well-being, sense of life. In general it makes person’s Self congruent and able to adapt to changing conditions of the reality, it protects, fulfills and preserves structural integrity of Self. Positive perception of one’s personality, actually the self-worth, is supported by psychodynamic processes that base their work on the system of self-coordinated self-dynamism.

The study of the healthy narcissism refers to the psychoanalytic paradigm: theory of object relations, existential-psychoanalytic theory, Ego-psychology in particular. This work is based on theories of Z. Freud, H. Kogut, O. Kernberg, J. Miller, K. Morf, D. Foster and K. Kambell, R. Raskin, A. Lengle [5].

Healthy narcissism is seen as normal personal trait that is inherent for all people in some average intensity manifestation and its deficit actually produces pathological conditions, which are revealed in exact narcissistic pathology.

Specifying: narcissistic self-regulation is a specific system of self-regulation, aimed at protecting, filling and preserving structural integrity, temporal stability and positive perception of oneself [1].

Another focus of this study pays our attention to self-fulfillment. Self-fulfillment is a multi-faceted construct, the definition of which exists in modern psychology in different manifestation of self-realization, sense of life, life orientations, and experience of happiness or life satisfaction. Literally it is an act of fulfilling one’s ambitions, desires, personal senses, life ideas or even it can be defined as a state that one can feel at the moment of life [8]. A. Gewirth uses this concept for the fundamental “testing of the good and welfare of human life” [2].

In this work self-fulfillment is considered in the ideas of existential-analytical paradigm, which says that self-fulfillment is:

- A deep understanding of one’s Self and the world around;
- An understanding of personal values and the life senses;
- An understanding of all the overcoming contradictions in human existence [7].

So, healthy narcissism gives you the ability to accept the admiration of others and ability to admire others; gives a solid sense of self-worth, adequate self-esteem, a healthy sense of pride and the capacity to feel self-love as idea of self-protection [3]. Healthy narcissism is something that opens up to us our authentic Self, makes it possible to connect to other people authentic personalities [6]. This Self dynamism is responsible for feeling the confidence and acting according to life sense, which can only be found through the prism of personal self-worth. is a source of “self-realization”, manifestation of “healthy” traits: ambitions, inspiration, ideals [4]. People with healthy narcissism have their hopes, dreams and ambitions, they are coping with the anxiety that life produces,

they are able to accept failures and deal with fears and uncertainty, and they can approve themselves and withstand the disapproval of others.

Self-value plays role of the indicator for person's regulatory processes, it shows exactly how those processes work. A high and adequate self-value, which needs to be crystallized internally and established externally – is the source of integrated and coherent self-experience [7].

In the context of above described theory, an introductory study was conducted. That had given such empirical conclusions:

1. Healthy narcissism, or effective narcissistic self-regulation, stays in positive connections with almost all indicators of self-fulfillment: personality (as the ability to stay more open to the own personality and the world); self-transcendence (as the ability to be emotionally connected with values and meanings of life), experience of freedom (as the ability to see different branches of life and make among them personal choices), responsibility (as a feeling that every personal choice has its values in the existence), existentiality (as personally willed the inclusion in existence) and the general comprehension of oneself as a person who is fulfilled.

2. The factors of self-fulfillment in the context of narcissistic self-regulation are: the meaningful sense Self, the self-sufficiency, the feeling of Self-power, a less tendency to devalue objects, and the desire to have an interiorized or exterior object that inspires.

Limitations and strengths of the study. The strengths of the research are its novelty and relevance. Meaningfulness of life usually has an impact on its quality, sense of well-being and mental health. Our personal senses are usually formed through perception the world as full of values and we feel our value in it as well. Limitations are about the size of sample (test sample included 90 investigated persons) and the need for more in-depth study of individual value orientations.

Practical value. The results can be used for trainings or consulting work in order to improve the quality of life of people who have problems with self-value.

Conclusions. So, adequate, or in other words, “healthy” narcissism is associated with higher rates of existential self-fulfillment. Such individuals are more inclined to stay in dialogical exchange with the world and to get closer to evocation of their essential personal life sense. It was empirically confirmed that narcissistic self-regulation, which was investigated as the general manifestation of Self's power, stays in statistically significant relations to subscales of personal self-fulfillment and life satisfaction indicators. That says: the more adequate narcissistic self-regulation is – the more effective is disclosure of human's personality, ability to transcend and experience freedom; such people are more able to take responsibility on their “being” and “living”, life feels as more meaningful and filled with individual vital senses and values.

Narcissistic self-regulation may have an impact on the authentic perception of one's Self, may assist in opening up the opportunity to see and feel values in life and integrating them into personal experience.

Keywords: narcissism, narcissistic self-regulation, psychoanalysis, self-fulfillment, self-system, self-value, existentiality, personal life senses.

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