

Analysis of Narcissism in Young People's Wechat Circle of Friends

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Abstract

Network virtual space breaks down the barriers of time and space, enabling people to create exhibitions to perform with the help of various fragmented information and commercial symbols. As the most used social software in recent years, WeChat, an acquaintance interaction circle, provides a field for young people to observe the evaluation and reaction of "acquaintances". In this new field, users represented by young people borrow characters, images, expressions and other symbols in their circle of friends to present themselves differently from real life. With the deconstruction of narcissism in the new media era, narcissism is not only a pathological personality disorder, but also a common personality trait with performance characteristics. Starting from narcissism, this paper discusses the characteristics, internal and external causes and consequences of narcissism among young people in the circle of friends, and puts forward some suggestions to help young people maintain a moderate degree of narcissism.

Keywords

Friends circle; Narcissism; Parody theory; Mirror self theory; Consumerism.

1. The Narcissistic Psychology of Young People in the Circle of Friends and Its Characteristics

Narcissists' narcissistic objects are not limited to their external image, but also include their own abilities, such as shooting skills or narrative methods behind pictures or videos in the dynamic circle of friends released by them. From the research and daily life observation in recent years, it is not difficult to find the characteristics of narcissism among young people in the circle of friends.

1.1. Attach Great Importance to the Shaping and Maintenance of External Image

The most obvious manifestation of narcissism is sunshine. According to Pound and others' research, the first motive of exposure is "selective self-presentation". A variety of self-portraits and landscape photos decorated with beautiful pictures are not only used to show off the capital, but also to build the ideal self of the sunbather. Every photo needs careful consideration of its composition, hue, angle and filter style. In order to achieve the most perfect effect, they will carefully select one or two photos from dozens of photos, and then use different Mito software for portrait beauty, filter selection and sticker decoration, and then enter the ready-to-send state. They complete a perfect performance by projecting their idealized works onto the public stage of cyberspace, and at the same time prove their uniqueness and superiority by the positive comments and praises of the audience. In addition to photos, their carefully selected and modified texts, videos, links and even WeChat avatars and personalized signatures are all consistent with their own images.

1.2. Try Your Best to Get High Attention

In the era of attention economy, not only commercial companies focus on attracting the audience's attention, but also narcissistic young people. Compared with sincere emotional interaction, they pay more attention to others' praise and attention, and "friend" is only the sender of praise symbols. They value the number of people who like and comment. If their behavior in the circle of friends is not enough to respond or fails to reach the expected response value, they will feel anxious and angry. Narcissists who are unwilling to be mediocre believe that they should win the audience's attention in whatever form, whether it is applause or sighs. As long as the audience's attention can be effectively attracted, the narcissistic psychology can be satisfied.

Ordinary forms of text expression or image expression can no longer attract users' eyes, so there are constantly curious hunters or adventurers who attract attention in various novel and bold ways, and even put all kinds of vulgar, false and even ethical information on their performance stage. For narcissistic young people, it doesn't matter whether they get the attention of others because they are really excellent. All the efforts to dress up and find a new way are just to gain attention, and the cheers of these audiences are the biggest affirmation to them.

1.3. The Group after Isolation Is Selected to Be Visible

In 2016, a survey was conducted on 2003 people by the China Youth Daily Social Survey Center. The survey showed that 78.1% of the respondents used the function of "grouping visible" when publishing their friends circle, and only 16.9% of the respondents never used this function. In recent years, the use of "group visible" user data has also continued to grow. The "group visible" function of wechat friend circle provides the soil for the growth and development of narcissism of many young people. The ideal management can be realized by grouping, which will drive away the information that is not conducive to the usual impression management and does not meet the image expectation before dissemination.

Through screening friends, the young people fully control the initiative of narcissism and set up an effective protection mechanism for themselves. Most of the screened audience are those who think they can respond to their own performance, while some of the isolated audience are the objects that young people try to avoid being attacked or try to maintain another image. Grouping shows that the shaping and transformation of multiple images of individuals can be realized.

1.4. Gradually Lost Historical Continuity

The rapid development of economy and technology not only greatly improves people's happiness in life, but also brings irresistible confusion to young people. Contemporary young people are becoming more and more enthusiastic about performing on online social platforms, and their self-identity construction in cyberspace and real space will become more and more chaotic, and gradually they will break away from reality and indulge in the illusion of partial or complete virtuality. Young people living in this era have lost not only traditional media, but also traces back to tradition. Information explosion and information cocoon house have brought great impact on young people's values and lifestyles. The post-90s and post-00s are different from the simplicity of their ancestors, but they are not completely deviant and postmodernists. On the one hand, they believe in their own values, and constantly receive conflicting information. This prompted them to constantly try to interpret the world from their own perspective and create their own spiritual culture. The brand left by history on them is denied, and the uncertainty of the future makes them confused. Therefore, they can not connect the past, the present and the future, and they can not face the continuity of history.

2. An analysis of the Internal and External Causes of Narcissism in Young People

In psychology, narcissism is regarded as a kind of personality with self-centered and good self-feeling. On the clinical level, narcissism is a general psychological behavior pattern that needs praise from others and lacks empathy. Narcissism has always existed as an invisible fact. Nowadays, with the development of the times and people's general psychological changes, narcissism has already evolved into a giant dominant existence. This is not only based on the growth and development of narcissistic personality in young people's psychological state, but also closely related to the empowerment of young people's self-performance to shape their ideal self-image.

2.1. Narcissistic Personality in Psychology

Many psychologists regard narcissism as a universal personality trait. Freud proposed in *On Narcissism* that narcissism originated from Libido. Melanie Klein thought that narcissists idealized themselves as a nearly perfect personal image, and denied and opposed anything that affected their image, and they thought that the real self was the perfect image after idealization. In narcissism culture, social critic LASCI once pointed out that narcissistic personality exists widely in the crowd. Narcissists are highly self-centered and self-centered. They need the continuous attention and admiration of others. They have a sense of uniqueness and superiority, and they repeatedly fantasize about power, success and reputation. Hu Kete, the founder of self-psychology, thinks that narcissistic people must survive and healthy narcissism is composed of mirror image, confirmation reflection, sense of belonging and love for others. If these conditions can be basically met, this healthy narcissism will develop in the direction of creativity and empathy. Nowadays, many researchers also believe that narcissistic personality is only one of the common personality traits in human society, which only exists in different degrees.

2.2. Goffman's Theory of Parody

The parody theory put forward by Goffman in *Self-Presentation in Daily Life* analyzes people's social behavior in dramatic language, covering "foreground and background" and "impression management". He compared the world to a big stage, and everyone in society is an actor. In the process of interpersonal communication, they will carry out various packaging designs for themselves according to the needs of impression management, so as to present the image that meets the expectations of the role to the audience. The virtuality and concealment of the network season change provides a bigger stage for individual self display. Individuals can update and optimize the self displayed in front of the audience by constantly recognizing and correcting their self cognition.

WeChat friends circle has created a new mode of interpersonal communication. Young people can communicate with each other through words, sounds or images behind the screen. This empowers them to manage their impressions, and at the same time, they can weaken their shortcomings as much as possible. They will carry out a series of psychological activities and selectively present the release time, expression way and presentation effect of the content in their circle of friends, thus realizing protective impression management. For those friends' circle content that nobody cares about or whose evaluation is inconsistent with their own expectations, it will be modified and deleted, and this type of performance will be subconsciously avoided in the future. Young people's self-presentation in the front desk of WeChat is determined by the existence of both performers and audience. Actors should not only be responsible for their performances, but also consider the acceptance of the audience to a certain extent.

2.3. Cooley's Theory of "Self in the Mirror"

The theory of "self in the mirror" put forward by American sociologist Charles Horton Cooley holds that human behavior depends largely on self-awareness, which is mainly formed by social interaction with others. The evaluation and attitude of others is a mirror of self, through which individuals know and grasp themselves. Nowadays, young people are used to identifying the people who can resonate with themselves by praising and commenting, and gradually evaluate their own people by the amount of praise and comments given by others. High praise has evolved into "many friends", "high sense of identity" and even a symbol of personal value to be reflected and satisfied.

The technical characteristics of wechat circle of friends give the theory of "I in the mirror" subjective initiative. Young people no longer simply understand themselves from the mirror, but instead devote themselves to beautifying or modifying the information of "mirror", so as to change the seriousness and evaluation of others and themselves to themselves. When young people interact in the circle of friends, they have habitually predicted others' attitudes and evaluations of themselves, examined themselves through others' attitudes and evaluations, and constantly reflected and adjusted to further build their ideal self.

2.4. Technology Empowerment

The evolution of media tools promotes the diversification of communication methods between people, and the evolution of technology opens up the possibility of new interactivity. The WeChat circle of friends is characterized by openness and low threshold. All these provide a platform for young people to use their own information arrangement and combination and decorate them with the help of network technology until they construct a satisfactory image. Scholars Buffardi and Campell believe that narcissists especially favor online communication, because they can control the social media environment highly, and are endowed with the right and platform of self-presentation by the Internet.

In the era of information fragmentation, people are more willing to accept convenient and entertaining information. This provides a large number of potential audiences for young people who have a strong desire to express themselves in the circle of friends. Take the following picture as an example. Only some concise or novel and unique words, well-decorated pictures and even a few simple emoticons can satisfy young people's narcissism and vanity after being praised.

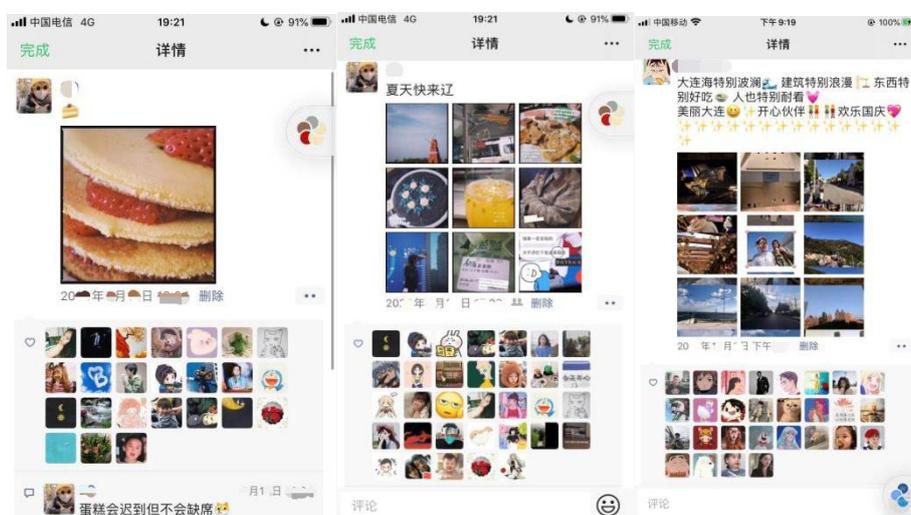


Figure 1. Three young people's Wechat moments

3. Cultural Examination Behind Narcissism

3.1. The Positive Side of Moderate Narcissism

Fromm believes that the ideal narcissism, rather than the strongest narcissism, is conducive to survival. He divided narcissism into benign and malignant, and benign narcissism, which can be controlled in a moderate range, is conducive to individuals' grasping of self-cognition and maintaining their enthusiasm for the world, gaining affirmation and appreciation from external resources and increasing positive emotional experience, so it is also a necessary value tendency. According to the research of the School of Psychology of the University of England, young people who are moderately narcissistic are more resilient to some extent. Compared with other groups, narcissism can also be a positive personality attribute.

In addition, self-esteem and narcissism are different but related forms of self-concept. The narcissistic self-operating component emphasizes exaggerated self-esteem. Self-esteem is related to individual's positive view of self and social easygoing. Some researchers think narcissism is one of the extreme forms of self-esteem. Based on such high self-esteem, moderate narcissists care more about the eyes of others and society, so they will accept the external value standards and moral constraints and avoid going to extremes.

3.2. Pornography of Communication Content

One of the objects of narcissism is one's own body. Human body is the external beauty of human beings. Artists express their praise and love for life and existence by using the beauty of life and outline of human body language, but the boundary between art and pornography is always blurred. It not only requires artists to create with an appreciation and purity of mind, but also requires viewers to look at it with a great vision of worshiping human body and art.

Originally, everyone has the absolute right to dispose of his own body. However, when entering the field of public communication, the social impact brought by the individual's body display and the purity of the media environment need to be taken into account. Otherwise, when narcissistic young people find high attention under "exposure", they will imitate and publish similar content. Even if some of them don't expose themselves on the platform of the circle of friends, their strong desire for attention will drive them to post news on other social platforms or websites. This not only distorts the praise of the artistic beauty of the human body, but also makes it more difficult to manage the media environment and modify the Internet ethos.

3.3. Self indulgence and Identity Anxiety

The narcissistic communication based on constructing ideal self-image in the circle of friends will encourage the narcissistic tendency of individuals. Young people's long-term addiction to the virtual self-image created by relying on scripts will cause a big gap between reality and fantasy, thus affecting the overall state of individuals. Their affirmation of themselves basically depends on the recognition and applause of the public, and all the beauty displayed in the circle of friends only hopes to get praise and envy. Narcissists tend to ignore their true feelings in the long run, and even lose the ability of self recognition and self-examination in the false image made up by themselves and the praise of others that may not be true.

Narcissists rely on others, but refuse to establish a real long-term and intimate relationship with others. Their social integration and understanding are superficial and superficial. Over time, narcissistic young people will gradually lose contact with horizontal social culture and vertical historical context, and be in a self-enclosed island. At the same time, narcissists must spend a lot of time in the circle of friends if they want to maintain their image at any time, which will cause them to constantly receive external stimuli and feedback. When this feedback disappears or delays, it will cause them to become anxious and then lead to a series of psychological problems such as lack of security.

3.4. Information Consumerism

People's pursuit of personal dreams is the essence of consumer society, and the satisfaction of consumer psychology comes not only from the purchase and use of goods, but also from having specific symbols to get pleasure. Narcissists are happy to present their self-image visually or acquire things symbolically in their circle of friends. Narcissists project their fascination with food, travel and commodities into their self-presentation in the circle of friends, and try to create their own high-end image through high-end consumption to satisfy the ever-expanding "superiority". However, the details, openness and expansion of this kind of performance, even comprehensive, did not bring some valuable and in-depth information, but more impetuous and superficial consumption behavior and concept exposure. In addition, narcissists use wechat circle of friends with high viscosity, which may cause self materialization.

At the same time, some young people see the conspicuous effect brought by "network display", and they are easy to follow suit when they lack judgment. This further accelerates the spread of narcissistic culture, and makes the trend of comparison and decorative consumption popular, which is not conducive to the harmonious operation of society in the long run.

4. Realistic Ways to Overcome Excessive Narcissism

Narcissism, as a psychological state, is difficult to eliminate, and it is not necessary to eliminate in essence. A proper degree of narcissism is beneficial to both individuals and the whole society. However, how to grasp the critical point of moderate "degree" and how to establish and spread moderate narcissistic psychology and narcissistic culture in the whole society are urgent problems to be solved at present. To some extent, the health of the overall media environment will play a certain role in restraining and regulating the individual's behavior. The relevant departments and the media can spread the correct values and give full play to the subjective initiative of the young people. They can also contribute to the reconstruction of narcissism culture by changing their own ideas and influencing others.

4.1. Media Health Shaping

Young people are active in thinking and trendy in ideas, and the media form of self-media enables them to give full play to their own personality characteristics or make maverick actions. WeChat circle of friends is a relatively private field based on strong user contact, but it belongs to the emerging media and semi-open field after all. If we want to achieve long-term stable development, we must create a harmonious and healthy media environment. WeChat can use its censorship mechanism and reporting function to purify its cultural atmosphere. We should punish malicious acts such as using vulgar pornographic information in an appropriate amount and in a timely manner. The system audit of wechat friends' circle content should not only set up restricted vocabulary, but also strengthen the audit of friends' circle content, so as to avoid the phenomenon of choking and restricting the normal freedom of speech. At present, the link audit in wechat circle of friends is mainly manual audit. After reporting, the link is checked by the manual audit team. If the link has the characteristics of induced sharing or obscene pornography, it is necessary to speed up the accuracy and speed of processing the title. Relevant news media should also make use of their own communication advantages to actively establish a new fashion of media culture, and promote the dissemination of healthy and upward core values while maintaining the relaxed and free atmosphere of wechat friends circle.

4.2. Guide Correct Value Orientation

The growth of young people goes hand in hand with the development of the Internet. They are highly information dependent on the Internet, and at the same time, they are more skilled and efficient in obtaining information. In addition, their high acceptance of fresh information makes young people the inventors and leavers of the flow discourse system, and they are also

followers of trend information. Narcissistic young people complete their social activities and image construction through WeChat friends circle. However, the superficial external content under this performance only brings some illusory praise and praise, and this illusory success cannot realize self-worth. Therefore, it is necessary to create positive and healthy values and cultural concepts in the whole society, advocate moderate narcissism in Chengdu, and avoid the "self-centered" narcissistic social network ecology to separate the relationship between individuals and society and forget their existence in real life. At the same time, the media also need to create a perfect communication environment, promote narcissistic young people to improve their empathy ability, learn to explain the rationality of behavior from the other side's point of view and accept the existing and potential negative emotions, so as to realize the perfection of their mature personality.

4.3. Exert Subjective Initiative

Many self-media such as WeChat friends circle are still in the stage of gradual development, and the network information is mixed. Therefore, young people should improve their media literacy and strictly grasp the boundaries between the media environment and the real environment. When young people use media such as WeChat friends circle, they should pay special attention to its reasonable, legal and moderate use. In the face of massive expansion of information, young people should screen out effective and valuable information and improve their ability to identify, analyze and criticize information. In the era of social media, young people, as information producers, also have the obligation to maintain the order of communication. Therefore, they should release information and speech responsibly and re disseminate information responsibly. In addition, the social communication literacy in new media is also worthy of attention. Young people should not only respect other people's basic rights, but also protect their own rights.

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