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ОСОБИСТІСНІ ПОКАЗНИКИ СХИЛЬНОСТІ ІНДИВІДУУМА ДО ПЕРЕЖИВАННЯ ПОЗИТИВНОГО ЕСКАПІЗМУ І ФОРМИ ЇЇ ПРОЯВУ PERSONALITY PRECURSORS AND FORMS OF MANIFESTATION OF THE POSITIVE ESCAPISM

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На матеріалі порівняльного аналізу особистісних характеристик студентів коледжу дизайну й образотворчого мистецтва та студентів-першокурсників факультетів психології, філософії, економіки, права встановлено, що характерними ознаками особистості представників креативних професій є: схильність до позитивного ескапізму, відкриття нового досвіду, схильність до інтроверсії, нейротизм. Виявлено також, що вони недостатньо чітко усвідомлюють свої сенсожиттєві орієнтації, характеризуються більш високими рівнями реактивності до стресу і навіть ознаками схильності до депресії. Результати дослідження можна застосувати для покращення індивідуальної роботи викладачів зі студентами.

Ключові слова: особистісні передумови, позитивний ескапізм, відкритість досвіду, нейротизм, інтроверсія, стресовразливість, схильність до депресії.

In the conditions of COVID-19 Pandemic and quarantine regulations. when escapism has become, in fact, a major means of protecting students from getting infected, the individuals, prone to escapism, both

positive and negative, reacquire special attention of the educationists. In this paper we have analyzed the personality precursors of proneness to the positive escapism of the students mastering the creative professions (like design and visual arts) and non-creative (conventionally) professions (like philology, psychology, economics, sociology). This allowed to single out the following personality precursors of proneness to the positive escapism: higher level of neuroticism, low level of extraversion, higher level of openness to experience, low level of awareness of the creative individuals of the sense of their life orientations, higher levels of the vulnerability to stress and even to the light depression.

We used a number of techniques to assess dispositional traits; coping strategies preferred, sense of the life – orientations questionnaire, tests for assessing vulnerability to stress and the proneness to depression; as well as the Big Five personality inventory to assess dispositional traits.

It was found out that there exist statistically significant differences practically in all the personality characteristics, chosen for the research, between the individuals, prone to the positive escapism and non-escapists. First of all, the positive escapists are characterized by higher levels of such dispositional traits, as neuroticism, introversion and openness to experience. They choose in case of problems, that arise in their activity, two predominant coping strategies – avoidance (distancing) and rarely the emotion-focused strategy. Positive escapists experience statistically higher proneness to stress and even to slight depression.

The results obtained can be used for making individual programs for the escapists on how to increase the efficacy of their functioning as the subjects of higher education acquisition and life in general.

Keywords: personality precursors, positive escapism; openness of experience; neuroticism; introversion; stress vulnerability; predisposition to depression.

Problem identification. Like other researches of the problem of escapism (Evans, 2001; Hagström & Kaldo, 2014; Kolesnikova. 2016; Kardapoltseva, 2012), the authors of this paper conceptualize positive escapism as a form of the coping strategy, chosen consciously by the individual, who performs the activity, which is considered to be highly significant, demonstrating high level of involvement into it. At some culminating point of the performance of the significant activity the individual might experience the state of flow, subjective state characterized by complete task involvement and high quality of performance. The major personality

precursor of the positive escapism is high level of the creative abilities in that field of knowledge, with which the activity is related. Thus, to help students under contemporary quarantine regulations to continue studying successfully it is reasonable to suggest them attainable creative assignments, which might stimulate interest and facilitate complete task involvement.

As the contemporary researches point out, the phenomenon of positive escapism is determined by the value orientations of the individual (Volochnikov & Ermolenko, 2004). There are three major types of value orientations or value vectors, as they are referred to by the authors, who suggested this term.

The first type of the personal value orientations is the orientation to the “existential escapism”, manifested by the avoidance of the active life and active solution of the existential problems. It has negative influence on the sense-of-the-life activity of the individual.

The second type of value orientations (the active one) is characterized by behavioral flexibility, self-confidence, self-respect, positive attitude to other people, orientation on the self-actualization and high level of activity in different spheres of life, which signals about high level of the sense of the life activity.

The third type of the individual value orientations is characterized by the choice of the value of cognition and creativity (at the expense of many other values of self-actualization).

The last mentioned type of value-orientations vector was chosen by us as the object of this research, intended to attract the attention of the educationists to the necessity of seeking ways to make the self-access type of learning more oriented towards developing creative abilities of the students and wake interest to the learning in the conditions of the Pandemic caused by COVID-19. This might divert the attention of the students on the course studies from wasting their time on the role-playing activities in the Internet, which help them to enhance their real self-image at the expense of the Virtual self. That is why in this paper we present empirical results of our research of the personality predictors of the positive escapism that might attract students’ attention or the performing creative assignments based on the material of their academic courses.

Brief review of the state of the research. The form of the positive escapism has not been studied in the aspect of its likely personality precursors, especially among young people – students of university, although, in our opinion, the problem of “escapism” has acquired great significance in the conditions of the COVID-19 Pandemic and quarantine regulations introduced for the full-time students, there appeared unfavorable conditions for preventing the tendency of some students to demonstrate proneness to negative escapism. Those students, who used to miss classes without favorable excuses earlier, began considering the possibility not to attend classes as a legitimate opportunity not to fulfill assignments presented to them in the form of the “computer-assisted” (distant) learning.

In our previous paper, published in this journal in 2020 (Nosenko & Arshava, 2020), we described the evident shortcomings of the computer-assisted learning for some of those students, who became “negative” escapist in the

conditions of the deficit of the direct student-teacher interaction. So, in this paper we present below a brief review of the personality traits (both dispositional and dynamic) of the individuals, who can be referred to as positive escapists, using the same techniques which had been used for assessing proneness of other students to negative escapism.

Knowing those differences, we can substantiate the major conceptual hypothesis of this research, namely: “since the necessity of escapism appeared to be lasting for an unpredictably long period of time and, in fact, has become the major means of protecting young people acquiring education, from getting infected by COVID, it is worthwhile trying to help negative escapists to become positive ones by making the assignments for their self-access educational activities more creative, stimulating the learners to get involved into the process of the self-access knowledge acquisition instead of playing computer-assisted games in the Internet, which might give them chances to experience a unique state of flow and strive to experience it not predominantly while playing computer-assisted games in the Internet.

Personality traits of the creative individuals had been studied predominantly with reference to the musicians and rarely artists. Nevertheless, it is generally recognized by now, that the major dispositional trait of the individuals of the creative professions appeared to be neuroticism, which as a rule intensifies the emotional and dramatic aspects of the musical performance (Dyce & O'Connor, 1994; Cribb & Gregory, 1999).

Gillespie W. & Myers B. (2000) also demonstrated on a sample of musicians that introversion was more pertinent to the professional musicians, who performed classical music. They explained this postulate by the necessity for the musicians playing classical music, to isolate frequently from other people to confirm high level of their performance quality by regular training sessions.

In our opinion, a very interesting kind of explanation of the relationship between the personality traits and the quality of the musical performance was suggested by foreign research (Yöndem, Yöndem & Per, 2017). With the help of the Big-Five Personality Inventory by McCrae & Costa they compared the personality trait of musicians and artists and came to the conclusion that musicians were more prone to neuroticism, while artists were found to possess such dispositional traits as conscientiousness and agreeableness. Though both groups of the above mentioned individuals (musicians and artists) did not differ in pertinence to them of two personality traits: extraversion and openness to the new experience.

Nevertheless, based on the above reviewed research findings, it is possible to hypothesize that for the individuals prone to the positive escapism, the following personality traits might be pertinent (both dynamic and dispositional): positive attitude to life, which is manifested by higher level of adaptability to its likely problems; higher interest in the new information, they perceive in the course of knowledge acquisition, quick mastering of the new material, but, at the same time, disregard of the necessity to repeat the material learned earlier (to make knowledge systematically arranged); certain inconsistency of the perception of the real life, when the individuals rely more on one's feelings and intuition, rather than on the

convictions and on the sense-of-the life-orientations; avoiding systematic work; emotionality, which is combined with the well-formed esthetic taste.

Thus, there are reasons to postulate, that the hypothesis of the intended empirical research, that the individuals prone to positive escapism are likely to possess such traits as agreeableness and openness to the new experience is likely to be confirmed as valid.

For testing next empirical hypothesis, which is based on the postulate, that the individuals, prone to positive escapism, do not distinctly comprehend their sense of-the-life orientations, which was assessed with the help of D. Leontyev's sense of-the-life orientations inventory, we expected to find differences in practically all the sub-scales of this test in the individuals, prone to positive escapism, similar to those, we earlier identified on the sample of the negative escapist.

At present in the psychology the research of the relationships between the phenomenon of positive escapism and creative activity of the individuals, prone to this form of escapism, is based on the studies of the theory of flow. The most significant contribution into this theory had been made by M. Csikszentmihalyi, an outstanding positive psychologist. Even when he was a post-graduate student and observed the creative process of artists, he made an observation that they in the course of drawing a picture, became totally involved into their activity, forgetting about thirst, hunger and time. They did not think about the possible awards for the results of their activity. He described the role of the state of flow as the most optimal emotional state intensifying the process of creating a work of art. That state resulted in the appearance of the inner motivation, characterized by the complete involvement in to one's creative activity (Csikszentmihályi & Nakamura, 2005). In co-authorship with J. Nakamura the state of flow was characterized by: an intensive and focused concentration of attention on the present moment of one's activity; as the fusion of the activity and the awareness of it; as the loss of the personal control over the situation of the activity; as the loss of awareness of the time passed.

All of the above mentioned characteristic features are relevant for the description of the state of flow.

Based on the above described research findings J. Nakamura and M. Csikszentmihalyi, K. Cherry has singled out three additional components of experiencing the state of flow, namely: individual's awareness of having a potential for achieving success in a definite type of activity; feeling of the availability of a feedback; feeling of the real potential of achieving success in the activity owing to the complete involvement into the process of the activity, which allows to ignore the satisfaction of the basic psychological needs, including: sleep, food, water (K. Cherry 2021).

Thus, it became possible to claim, that the state of flow could be described as a psychic state, in which the individual, who performs some activity, is completely involved into the state of the active concentration on the activity and receives satisfaction of the process of its fulfillment, rather than of its results.

It is possible to state in this connection, that the individuals, who are prone

to experience the state of flow, are also prone to experience positive escapism.

The researchers Y. Kuzgun & D. Deryakulu (2004) postulated, with reference to the typology by Young, that the individuals with the intuitive type of thinking were more inclined to choose the sphere of professional activity, connected with visual art.

B. Eiduson (1958) on a sample of the individuals, inclined to the creative activity, demonstrated that artists possessed a specific type of thinking and a manner of decision-making. Researchers claim as well, that artists were more prone to adventure-seeking. R. Dutta (1996) found out, that artists were more self-centered, independent and vulnerable. G. Feist (1998) with the help of the personality inventory, designed by R. McCrae and P. Costa, has found out, that artists are more open to the new experience, less conservative and more self-confident; highly motivated and ambitious, prone to dominating, impulsive and aggressive. In view of the above described we have conducted our empirical research to check whether the above mentioned results are relevant for our participants, which represent a different culture and age-group of the students of the Ukrainian university.

The purpose and the organization of the empirical research. The conceptual hypothesis, chosen for our research, stated that escapism as a form of the individual's activity appeared as a result of the absence of the balance between the real and desired value structures of the individuals and was manifested by the involvement of the individual into some alternative subjective reality for the sake of achieving the inner balance. In case of positive escapism this reality was claimed to be creative activity, into which the individual was highly involved as related to one's future profession. Creative activity stimulates striving for experience self-satisfaction and the feeling of harmony.

We conducted the research on a sample of 60 individuals: 30 students of Dnipro college of design and visual arts and 30 students acquiring specialties, not related directly to visual art or design, such as philology, law, psychology, economics.

The techniques, used for the empirical research, included: the inventory, designed by T. Savchenko & O. Teslavskaya for assessing the proneness to escapism, a short form for assessing the experience of the state of flow, designed by F. Reinderg & R. Wallmayer, translated into Ukrainian language and adapted by I. Arshava & V. Kutepova-Bredun; the Big Five personality inventory, designed by R. McCrae & P. Costa and adapted by A. Khromov; the test of the Sense of-the-life orientations by D. Leontyev; the questionnaire for assessing the proneness of the individuals to stress by O. Prochorov; the depression scale by A. Beck and the questionnaire for assessing the individual's choice of different coping strategies, designed by Endler & Parker and adapted by T. Krukova.

The empirical data obtained showed the existence of the statistically significant differences between the individuals, prone to escapism and non-escapists in all of the above described personality dispositions and forms of their manifestation in behavior (see Table 1).

Table 1

Differences in the values of proneness to escapism by the individuals acquiring creative professions and students, majoring in other professions

Compared Scales	Mean of values		Student t-criterion	The level of significance of differences, p
	Group 1 with proneness to escapism (n=30)	Group 2 non-escapists (n=30)		
Non-satisfaction with life and the search for avoidance	37,8	36,2	-0,975	
Orientation to a different social reality	36,8	35,4	-1,111	
The level of experiencing the state of flow	41,9	38,1	2,471*	$p \leq 0.05$
Overall value of proneness to escapism	116,6	109,7	2,578*	$p \leq 0.05$

On the basis of the presented above results it is clear, that the differences in proneness to escapism, assessed with the help of the chosen inventory, designed by Savchenko and Teslavskaya (2018), are valid between the chosen groups of subjects for the overall value of proneness to escapism and for the Scale, demonstrating the levels of proneness to experience the state of flow.

Table 2 shows the proneness of the individuals to experience the state of flow specifically. It is demonstrated as assessed by a short-form for measuring the proneness to this state, adapted by one of the authors of this research (Table 2).

The empirical data presented show that there are significant differences between the values of two scales: involvement into the activity and the individual significance of the activity. Thus the individuals, prone to positive escapism, are more prone than non-escapists to experience unique state of flow, which shows that they enjoy their activity and are satisfied with the results of its performance.

Table 2

Differences in the values of proneness to escapism by the individuals acquiring creative professions and other conventionally less creative professions

Compared scales	Mean of values		Student t-criterion	The level of significance of differences, p
	Group 1 with proneness to escapism (n=30)	Group 2 non-escapists (n=30)		
Level of the efficacy of the activity	24,5	22,2	1,680	
Involvement into the activity	20,7	17,9	2,623**	$p \leq 0.05$
Individual significance of the activity	17,2	15,1	2,845*	$p \leq 0.01$

In the next Table 3 we have presented the information about the

dispositional traits of the individuals, who were the participants of our research. These results are quite explanatory.

Table 3

Differences between the groups of escapist and non-escapist in the Big Five dispositional traits

Compared scales	Mean of values		Student t-criterion	The level of significance of differences, p
	Group 1 with proneness to escapism (n=30)	Group 2 non-escapist (n=30)		
Extraversion	47.1	52.6	-2.429**	$p \leq 0.05$
Agreeableness	55.5	56.1	-0.254	
Conscientiousness	52.5	54.6	-0.989	
Neuroticism	54.1	54.1	0.217	
Openness to experience	60.9	53.8	3.701*	$p \leq 0.01$

In accordance with this data it seems evident, that the individuals, prone to the positive escapism, are more introverted, than non-escapists, and highly open to the new experience as creative personalities. Sort of unexpected is the finding that dispositionally they are not prone to escapism. On the other side, creative individuals are satisfied with their activity and highly enjoy the process of it even more than its results.

In the next Table 4 we have presented the results of our analysis of the sense-of-the-life orientations of the creative individuals which deserve special comments.

Table 4

Differences in the sense of the life orientations of the individuals, prone to positive escapism and non-escapists

Compared scales	Mean of values		Student t-criterion	The level of significance of differences, p
	Group 1 with proneness to escapism (n=30)	Group 2 non-escapist (n=30)		
Aims of life	27,7	29,6	-0,973	
Life process	27,1	31,7	-2,388*	$p \leq 0.01$
Life efficacy	21,9	25,5	-2,547*	$p \leq 0.01$
Locus of self-control	17,9	20,9	-2,453*	$p \leq 0.01$
Locus of life control	24,1	32,1	-4,272**	$p \leq 0.05$
Overall value	86,5	102,1	-3,474**	$p \leq 0.05$

As one can see, in fact, positive escapist significantly differ from non-escapists in five out of six aspects of the meaningfulness of their levels, which clearly explain the meaning of the term “escapism”, no matter which – positive or negative. Probably, as most of the talented individuals they can’t adequately realize and determine the meaningfulness of their lives.

That is why, as it seems, positive escapist are more vulnerable to stress than non-escapists. We assessed the differences of this type of the state with the help of the inventory for diagnosing vulnerability to stress.

Table 5

Differences in the levels of proneness to experience stress

Compared scales	Mean of values		Student t-criterion	The level of significance of differences, p
	Group 1 with proneness to escapism (n=30)	Group 2 non-escapists (n=30)		
Proneness to stress	6,5	5,5	2,094*	$p \leq 0.05$

No wonder that we have also found out in the personality differences between the individuals, prone to escapism, and non-escapists, not only in the higher level of proneness to stress of the escapists, but also in some indicants of proneness of the escapists to depression. In Table 6 below those differences are assessed with the questionnaire, designed by A. Beck.

Table 6

Differences in the indicants of depression between the individuals, prone to escapism and non-escapists

Compared scales	Mean of values		Student t-criterion	The level of significance of differences, p
	Group 1 with proneness to escapism (n=30)	Group 2 non-escapists (n=30)		
The Cognitive-affective subscale of depression	8,4	5,6	2,059*	$p \leq 0.05$
Subscale of the somatic forms of depression manifestation	4	2,4	2,118*	$p \leq 0.05$
Overall value of depression scale	12,4	8	2,256*	$p \leq 0.05$

The results, presented above, suggest that differences between the creative individuals, prone to positive escapism, are expressed as more serious, than expected, since they determine an inclination of the individuals to experience only situationally determined stress, but more constant internal proneness to depression.

In the concluding part of the paper we present also the results of assessing the coping efficacy of our subjects. See data in Table 7.

Table 7

Differences in the coping strategies chosen by escapists and non-escapists

Compared scales	Mean of values		Student t-criterion	The level of significance of differences, p
	Group 1 with proneness to escapism (n=30)	Group 2 non-escapists (n=30)		
Problem-focused coping	53,6	60,2	-2,532**	$p \leq 0.05$
Emotion - focused coping	60,7	52,9	-3,545*	$p \leq 0.01$
Avoidance coping	60,9	56,2	1,664	
Distancing	20,8	21	-0,098	
Seeking social distraction	7,8	8,6	-1,360	

The data, presented in Table 7, quite convincingly show that positive escapists are less prone to using in their activity, accompanied by positive difficulties or impediments, the appropriate problem-focused coping and resort either to the emotion-focused coping or to avoidance and distancing. Being escapists, they do not seek social support and thus lose chances of achieving success in their activities.

The results obtained allow to state that there exist essential differences both: in the dispositional resources of escapists and in their activities to overcome problems.

Conclusion. The personality traits, pertinent to the positive escapists, can be summed up as follows. First of all, positive escapists are more introverts than extraverts, they are characterized by neuroticism, openness to the experience, autonomy, distancing. They are capable to self-regulate one's activity, but they are vulnerable to stress and even prone to depression.

They are also prone to experience the state of the highest involvement into their activity, enjoy the process of it more than its results, to which they seem to lose interest when the activity is completed.

The prospects of further research we connect with comparing our findings with similar research conducted on the representatives of different cultures, nationalities, professional occupations, which are not numerous enough at the moment. We think, our data might evoke interest of further researchers of this problem in the aspect of the sense of the life orientations of escapists, which appear to be less investigated on Ukrainian samples at the moment than on the sample of other nationalities and cultures.

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