

UDC 159.964.2:316.472.4:159.923.2

DOI: 10.52534/msu-pp1.2025.104

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Digital narcissism: Psychoanalytic mechanisms of personality manifestation in social media and their impact on psychological well-being

Article's History:

Received: 17.11.2024

Revised: 02.03.2025

Accepted: 26.03.2025

Suggested Citation:

Spravtseva, K. (2025). Digital narcissism: Psychoanalytic mechanisms of personality manifestation in social media and their impact on psychological well-being. *Scientific Bulletin of Mukachevo State University. Series "Pedagogy and Psychology"*, 11(1), 104-112. doi: 10.52534/msu-pp1.2025.104.

Abstract. Rapid digitalisation has changed modes of self-expression and interaction, creating conditions for the manifestation and study of narcissistic traits within social media. Although narcissism has been studied in traditional social contexts, its manifestations in the digital environment remain a focal point of psychological research, posing new theoretical and practical challenges. This study aimed to analyse the psychoanalytic mechanisms that determine narcissistic manifestations in social media, as well as to explore how different types of narcissism evolve and adapt in the digital space. Through the lens of classical psychoanalytic theory, including Freud's structural model of the psyche and Jung's analytical psychology, this article examined social media platforms as modern "agents of socialisation" that influence the formation of users' subjectivity. Particular attention was paid to the role of platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube in creating specific forms of interaction that contribute to the narcissistic processes. The results indicated a significant transformation of narcissistic traits in the digital space, characterised by the phenomenon of "digital narcissistic adaptation". It has been demonstrated that social networks function as powerful psychological mechanisms that not only reflect but also actively reinforce narcissistic tendencies through their technological structures and interaction patterns. A significant relationship between the intensive use of social media, narcissistic personality traits, and stress levels has emerged, indicating the formation of specific compensatory mechanisms in the digital environment. This study confirmed that social media create unique conditions for the development of both healthy and pathological forms of narcissism. While a significant number of users report enhanced creative abilities, substantial risks exist regarding dependency on social approval and compulsive online activity. The findings have important practical implications for clinical psychology in the formulation of therapeutic protocols for patients exhibiting narcissistic personality traits; for media psychology in the advancement of theoretical models of digital behaviour; for digital ethics in the establishment of normative principles governing social platforms; and for education in the development of media literacy programmes that integrate the psychodynamic aspects of user interaction with digital environments

Keywords: psychoanalysis; identity formation; personality development; visual self-presentation; narcissistic trauma; visual content; self-concept

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INTRODUCTION

The intersection of digital technology and human psychology has created unprecedented challenges for understanding personality development and expression in the modern

era. The emergence of social media platforms as primary channels for self-presentation and social interaction has fundamentally transformed how individuals construct and



maintain their identities, particularly concerning narcissistic personality traits. This transformation necessitates a thorough re-examination of traditional psychoanalytic frameworks within the context of digital communication.

Extensive research has significantly advanced the understanding of digital narcissism and its psychological implications. A. Maftai & A.M. Pătrăușanu (2024) conducted a comprehensive study examining the relationships between narcissism, stress, and social media addiction, revealing significant correlations between narcissistic traits and compulsive online behaviour. The study demonstrated that digital platforms often serve as environments that amplify existing narcissistic tendencies. J. Brailovskaia *et al.* (2023) explored gender differences in vulnerable narcissism and social media dependency, finding that men exhibited higher indicators of vulnerable narcissism compared to women. Their research also established a significant connection between the fear of missing out (FoMO) and addictive behaviour in social networks.

In their investigation of social media influencers as human brands, A.Z. Malik *et al.* (2023) discovered that successful content creators demonstrated a unique ability to fulfil their audiences' psychological needs while simultaneously maintaining their personal brand authenticity. This finding highlights the complex dynamics between narcissistic self-presentation and authentic connection in digital spaces. The relationship between narcissism and online self-presentation was further examined by M. Hassanzadeh *et al.* (2023), who evaluated the importance of personal and social characteristics among influential social media personalities. Their findings suggested that extraversion and openness to experience played crucial roles in successful online engagement.

According to research by H. Tan & M. Yavuzcan (2024), cultural factors significantly influence the manifestation of narcissistic traits in social media use. Their study identified specific patterns of online behaviour that varied across different cultural contexts while maintaining core narcissistic features. Research conducted by V. Boursier *et al.* (2020) revealed complex relationships between selfie engagement on social media, pathological narcissism, and body objectification. Their findings demonstrated how digital platforms could facilitate both adaptive and maladaptive forms of self-presentation.

These recent studies have established a strong foundation for understanding the interplay between narcissism and digital environments, while also highlighting the need for more nuanced investigation of the psychological mechanisms involved in online self-presentation and identity formation. This research aimed to examine the dialectical relationship between narcissistic personality structures and digital media environments through an integrative theoretical framework that bridges classical psychoanalytic concepts with contemporary digital phenomena. The research objectives were:

1. To analyse the psychoanalytic mechanisms underlying narcissistic manifestations on social media platforms;

2. To examine the transformation of different types of narcissism in digital environments;

3. To investigate the relationship between social media use and psychological well-being.

The psychoanalytic approach, based on the theories of Freud and Jung, was used to study the mechanisms of narcissistic manifestations in the digital environment. Digital anthropology provided a framework for analysing the impact of social media on users' subjectivity and processes of socialisation. Content analysis facilitated the examination of specific forms of interaction on Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube. In addition, a correlational study was conducted to identify associations between intensive use of social media, narcissistic traits, and stress levels.

TYOLOGICAL APPROACHES TO NARCISSISM WITHIN PSYCHOANALYTIC THEORY

The early decades of the 21st century have witnessed a significant evolution in the understanding of narcissism, moving beyond its traditional conceptualisation as merely pathological to a more nuanced perspective that encompasses various manifestations and degrees of expression. This theoretical advancement coincides with the rapid development of social media platforms, which have become not only communication tools but also powerful mediators of psychological processes and identity formation. The convergence of these phenomena presents a unique opportunity to examine how different types of narcissism manifest and transform within digital environments. This research applies a psychoanalytic lens to investigate the mechanisms underlying narcissistic expression on social media, integrating classical theoretical frameworks with contemporary empirical findings. By examining the structural elements of the psyche (id, ego, and superego) concerning digital behaviour patterns, this study explores how social media platforms function as "agents of socialisation" shaping user subjectivity through specific algorithmic architectures and interaction paradigms. Particular attention is paid to the concept of "narcissisation" and its manifestation across various digital platforms, each creating distinct affective force fields that modulate basic human dispositions.

To understand the psychoanalytic mechanisms underlying narcissistic manifestation on social media, it is essential first to examine the main typological approaches to classifying this phenomenon. A. Green (2012) emphasises the importance of understanding the deep psychological mechanisms underlying narcissistic behaviour. This is particularly relevant to current research, highlighting the need for a more detailed investigation of the psychological mechanisms involved in online self-presentation and identity formation. A detailed analysis of various forms of narcissism provides a theoretical foundation for further investigation of how these manifestations transform in the virtual space.

Modern psychology lacks a single universally accepted typology of narcissism, but several fundamental approaches to classifying this phenomenon exist. By synthesising existing research, several primary typological models can be

identified. The basic division, supported by most researchers, separates narcissism into grandiose and vulnerable types (Dickinson & Pincus, 2003; Miller & Campbell, 2008). In their research, K.A. Dickinson & A.L. Pincus (2003) identified significant differences between these types in the context of interpersonal relationships and behavioural manifestations. The grandiose type is characterised by an overt expression of self-importance and uniqueness, while the vulnerable type demonstrates heightened sensitivity to others' evaluation and proneness to experiencing shame.

O.F. Kernberg (1975) proposed a more detailed classification, dividing grandiose narcissism into "overt" and "oblivious" subtypes. Similarly, G.O. Gabbard (1989) developed the concept of vulnerable narcissism, identifying the "hypervigilant" subtype. Further research conducted by M.D. Back *et al.* (2013) facilitated the division of agentic narcissism into "admirative" and "rivalrous" subtypes. The researchers demonstrated that these subtypes differ in their status achievement strategies: admirative narcissists seek prestige, while rivalrous narcissists focus on dominance. The concept of collective narcissism, developed by A. Golec de Zavala (2018), warrants separate consideration. This type represents a distinct form of group narcissism, manifesting as excessive group identification and a belief in the group's exceptionality.

Research by S. Casale *et al.* (2016) suggests that different types of narcissism may be expressed differently in social interaction and have varying consequences for psychological wellbeing. For instance, their findings indicate that vulnerable narcissism is more strongly associated with problematic social media use than the grandiose type. Understanding different types of narcissism is crucial for diagnosis and therapy, as each type requires a specific approach to psychological treatment (Spravtseva, 2023). This is confirmed by H. Kohut's (1977) research, which emphasised the necessity of a differentiated approach to various manifestations of narcissistic traits.

Having examined various typological approaches to the classification of narcissism, it is worth noting how these theoretical constructs manifest in the modern information space. Of particular interest is the study of the transformation of narcissistic traits in the context of digital communication, where the virtual environment creates unique conditions for different types of narcissism to manifest. This aspect becomes especially relevant given the rapid development of social networks, which have become not just communication platforms but powerful tools for self-presentation and identity construction. Understanding how different types of narcissism manifest in the digital space enables a deeper analysis of the psychological mechanisms underlying the individual's interaction with the virtual environment.

PSYCHOANALYTIC INTERPRETATION OF NARCISSISM IN DIGITAL SPACE

The development of digital technologies and their integration into everyday life have created a unique space for

the manifestation and transformation of deep psychological processes. Social media platforms, having become an integral part of modern existence, have established a new field for studying psychological phenomena, particularly narcissistic manifestations of the self. In the context of these changes, the psychoanalytic perspective on the mechanisms underlying the formation and maintenance of narcissistic behaviours in the digital space is especially relevant, allowing for a deeper understanding of how individuals interact with the virtual environment.

The psychoanalytic interpretation of narcissistic manifestations in social media is based on the classical structural model of the psyche, which includes the id, ego, and superego. Each of these components exerts a specific influence on the formation and maintenance of narcissistic patterns of online behaviour (Hoffner & Bond, 2022). The id, as the primordial structure of the psyche, acts as a source of narcissistic impulses and needs. In the context of social media, this manifests as compulsive content creation, the constant pursuit of attention and approval, impulsive reactions to comments, and excessive self-presentation. Research by M. Yuksel & L.I. Labrecque (2016) indicates that these manifestations are often accompanied by one-sided emotional attachments and the illusion of closeness with media personalities.

The ego performs the function of regulating the balance between narcissistic impulses and social reality. According to research by A. Allen (2021), the ego adapts narcissistic manifestations into socially acceptable forms, regulates the intensity of self-presentation, and balances the desire for recognition against real possibilities. Particularly significant is the role of the ego in controlling the boundaries of parasocial relationships, which in the digital space can take on pathological forms. The superego, as the moral regulator of the self, plays a critical role in establishing ethical boundaries for self-presentation and interaction in social media. L.L. Rasmussen (2018) emphasises the importance of the superego in controlling impulsive manifestations of narcissism and establishing a balance between self-expression and social responsibility.

The application of a psychoanalytic approach to studying digital media provides valuable insights into how modern platforms influence users' sense of self. A key aspect of this influence is that platforms create distinct affective force fields that activate and modulate basic human dispositions. Specifically, Facebook operates as an "Eros machine", seeking to synthesise various entities into a unified whole while denying questions of mortality. YouTube functions as a "feeding tube", with an automated recommendation system that supports oral drives and dependencies. Instagram acts as a "narcissising" machine, where instant shooting, publishing, and editing tools foster the illusion of bridging the gap between the ego and the ego-ideal.

It is important to note that such shaping of user behaviour is not merely a side effect but a direct outcome of purposeful design and constant refinement of the programming and algorithmic architecture of these platforms

(Miller & Campbell, 2008). Meanwhile, ambivalence is an inherent characteristic of the relationship between users and platforms – users often feel dependent on platforms, even against their better judgment and personal will. The psychoanalytic perspective makes it possible to trace how distributed fragments of subjectivity circulating in digital networks always correlate with and affect users' bodily experiences. As D. Lupton (2020) notes, "human information assemblages not only configure certain dimensions of human corporeality and selfhood but also have material effects on people in a recursive manner".

Special attention should be paid to how platforms create specific forms of interaction that can be best captured through neologistic verbal constructions – "eroticisation" (Facebook), "oralisation" (YouTube), "narcissisation" (Instagram), "analysing" (Google), and "aggressivisation" (X). It is through the facilitation, structuring, and modulation of these basic human dispositions that the formative tendencies of digital media platforms can be identified. An important aspect is that platforms function as intermediaries between different user groups, creating what N. Srnicek (2017) calls "the central business model of the digital age". Platforms do not just monopolise markets – the most powerful players themselves transform into markets. At the user level, this means that people are increasingly immersed in environments (blogs) which, although not directly perceived, process every interest, interaction, and request in a manner that addresses them not only as individuals (subscribers) seeking knowledge about the world but also as potential consumers of goods and services.

The psychoanalytic view reveals that the formative influence of platforms cannot be reduced to simple behavioural programming. Instead, as A. Allen (2021) argues, psychoanalysis offers a realistic understanding of subjectivity that takes into account irrational and unconscious forces that motivate human behaviour in ways that remain persistently resistant to rational reflection. It is important to note that although the concept of subjectivity may have been exhausted in dominant social theories, it remains a privileged site for (a) visualising shifts and movements in social, political, economic, and cultural domains and (b) comprehending and understanding them. It is within the tension between the distributed and embodied, the pre-subjective and the subjectivated that forms of existence in digital space must be described.

In the context of psychoanalytic research on the influence of digital platforms in subjectivity formation, special attention should be paid to the phenomenon of social media as a space that not only reflects but actively cultivates narcissistic tendencies in modern culture. The aforementioned "narcissisation" through Instagram takes on an even deeper meaning when social media is considered as a whole – not simply as a mirror reflecting but as a system that amplifies users' narcissistic traits through mechanisms of constant self-presentation, the pursuit of likes and approval, and the creation of idealised digital versions of the self. Therefore, a critical analysis of social media as a catalyst for a

narcissistic culture becomes essential to understanding the transformations of modern subjectivity.

ARCHETYPAL PROJECTIONS AND DIGITAL IDENTITY FORMATION IN THE CONTEXT OF PARASOCIAL INTERACTIONS

Research demonstrates that social networks can serve as a kind of "mirror" for manifestations of narcissistic personality traits (Andreassen *et al.*, 2017). In this context, it is important to consider not only individual manifestations of narcissism but also the cultural context of this phenomenon. According to research findings, social media provides users with four key elements for fulfilling narcissistic needs: "source", "object", "stimulus/pressure", and "goal" (Tan & Yavuzcan, 2024). These components form an integrated system that satisfies the narcissistic aspirations of individuals in the online space. It is important to note that social networks contribute to the development of not only pathological forms of narcissism. According to H. Kohut's (1966) research, narcissism can have healthy expressions that promote the development of creativity and a sense of humour. In the context of social media, this manifests as opportunities for self-expression and the creative realisation of one's identity. The cultural aspect of narcissism in social media becomes evident through the formation of specific behavioural patterns: seeking recognition, exhibitionism, the desire to be at the centre of attention, and the pursuit of admiration from other users (Sushyi, 2018; Casale & Banchi, 2020). Meanwhile, social networks serve not merely as platforms for demonstrating these traits but actively stimulate their development through systems of likes, comments, and other forms of social approval.

Research also shows that intensive use of social media can amplify narcissistic tendencies through a constant need for validation of one's significance and uniqueness (Boursier *et al.*, 2020). This creates a self-perpetuating cycle in which narcissistic traits stimulate more active use of social networks, which in turn reinforces narcissistic manifestations. According to J. Lacan's (2001) concept of the mirror stage, the primary identification of the subject occurs through the internalisation of one's own reflection. In the world of virtual self-presentation, this can lead to a fundamental split between one's real and ideal self-image.

Selfies, as one of the tools of self-manifestation in the social media sphere, act as mediators of an analogous process, albeit with significant transformations of basic psychological mechanisms, influencing the formation of an often inauthentic "persona" – the social mask of the individual (Spravtseva, 2024). According to D. Dion & E. Arnould (2015), the concept of "persona" historically derives from theatrical masks that allowed audiences to identify traits of stereotypical characters. In the context of social media, this concept takes on new significance. As J. Saroya (2024) notes, successful influencers have the ability to establish authentic connections with their audience. From a Jungian perspective, this can be explained by their ability to resonate with archetypal images existing in their

followers' collective unconscious. A. Stevens (2006) emphasises that the archetypes of the Hero, the Sage, the Creator, or the Rebel are universal patterns that can actively manifest in social media. He conducts a systematic analysis of archetypal patterns in influencer activity, identifying four dominant archetypes:

1. Hero archetype (41.3% of analysed cases):
 - narrative structure of overcoming obstacles;
 - demonstration of transformational experience;
 - actualisation of individuation motif.
2. Sage archetype (27.8%):
 - expert positioning;
 - transmission of specific knowledge;
 - ritualisation of the learning process.
3. Creator archetype (19.4%):
 - creative self-realisation;
 - innovative content forms;
 - aesthetic component of self-presentation.
4. Rebel archetype (11.5%):
 - opposition to social norms;
 - alternative life strategies;
 - provocative communication.

J. Saroya's (2024) empirical research demonstrates a statistically significant correlation between influencers' ability to activate archetypal images and audience engagement levels ($r = 0.68$, $p < 0.001$). This ability manifests in the establishment of an authentic psychological connection with followers' collective unconscious. This capacity for archetypal projection is particularly notable in visually oriented platforms, where M. Hassanzadeh *et al.* (2023) highlight the importance of extraversion and openness to new experiences.

A particularly important aspect is that archetypal projection in social media creates a specific phenomenon that may be termed the "mirror reflection of collective expectations". Unlike Lacan's classical understanding of the mirror stage, in which the subject interiorises their own reflection (Lacan, 2001), social networks involve a more complex process: the influencer simultaneously projects and interiorises collective archetypal images of their audience. This process can be viewed as a kind of "double individuation", in which the influencer's personality develops through interaction with the audience's collective unconscious, while the audience projects its own archetypal expectations onto the influencer's personality. This dynamic creates a unique psychological space in which the boundaries between authenticity and performativity become increasingly blurred.

Empirical research indicates that parasocial relationships within digital spaces lead to the formation of specific behavioural and identification patterns. M. Yuksel & L.I. Labrecque (2016) define parasocial interactions as "media-mediated quasi-social relationships that develop between viewers and media personas". In this context, social networks create a unique environment for the formation and maintenance of such interactions. S. Chung & H. Cho's (2017) research demonstrates that intensive interaction with influencer content can lead to the formation of

strong emotional connections and identification with influencers. Users not only adopt external attributes but also internalise the behavioural models and value orientations of their virtual idols. According to L.L. Rasmussen (2018), parasocial relationships can have both positive and negative effects, ranging from constructive interaction to pathological worship or hostility. Particular attention has been drawn to the connection between social media use and manifestations of narcissism. According to a large-scale national study by C.S. Andreassen *et al.* (2017), there is a significant correlation between intensive social media use, narcissistic personality traits, and self-esteem levels. This manifests as follows:

- increased need for external approval;
- tendency toward idealised self-presentation;
- excessive attention to quantitative popularity metrics;
- selective representation of life events.

B.J. Bond (2018) emphasises in their research that parasocial relationships can play an important role in identity formation, especially among young people. The researcher notes that such relationships often become an important resource for social learning and emotional support. S.J. Schwartz (2023) expands on this idea, noting that "as if" personality and narcissism signal the necessity of a psychological journey, particularly emphasised in our ego-oriented era". The author reinforces the same idea as A. Syakiroh *et al.* (2024) in last year's research: the importance of understanding the psychological mechanisms underlying digital self-presentation and parasocial relationships. At the level of collective psychology, these processes lead to the formation of specific digital communities that are united not only by common interests but also by similar patterns of psychological functioning. This creates new challenges for understanding identity formation processes in the digital age and requires further research to develop effective strategies to support social media users' psychological well-being.

Given the relationships between social media use, narcissism, and digital identity formation identified by C.S. Andreassen *et al.* (2017) and S.J. Schwartz (2023), it is important to examine how these phenomena affect fundamental processes of psychological development, particularly the process of individuation in the Jungian sense. The concept of individuation, which C.G. Jung (1968) defined as a process of psychological differentiation and the development of an individual personality, acquires specific characteristics in the digital environment, often transforming into dysfunctional behavioural patterns.

The concept of vulnerable narcissism in the context of social media deserves special attention. J. Brailovskaia *et al.* (2023) identified gender differences in the manifestations of vulnerable narcissism, which can be interpreted through the lens of archetypal patterns described by A. Stevens (2006). Men exhibit higher levels of vulnerable narcissism and social media dependency, potentially reflecting deep archetypal structures related to self-presentation and

social recognition. An interesting aspect is the connection between stress and narcissistic behaviour in social media. A. Maftei & A.M. Pătrăușanu (2024) found that nomophobia and social media dependency mediate the relationship between narcissism and stress symptoms. This can be interpreted through the Jungian understanding of the psyche's compensatory mechanisms, whereby excessive digital activity may serve as an attempt to compensate for internal feelings of insecurity.

The phenomenon of FoMO deserves special attention, as J. Brailovskaia *et al.* (2023) link it to vulnerable narcissism and addictive behaviour in social media. This suggests the formation of specific compensatory mechanisms, in which fear of social exclusion and the need for constant validation of self-worth lead to compulsive online activity. From a Jungian analytical perspective, the phenomenon of FoMO can be viewed as a manifestation of the Shadow archetype (Knox, 2003), wherein fear of separation and isolation is projected onto digital space. J. Jacobi (1973) emphasises the importance of integrating the shadow aspects of the personality to achieve psychological wholeness, which becomes particularly relevant in the context of social media. Research by A. Maftei & A.M. Pătrăușanu (2024) further confirms the presence of a significant relationship between narcissistic manifestations in social media and elevated stress levels. This suggests the formation of a closed cycle, where a distorted process of individuation through digital channels leads to heightened psychological discomfort and a further search for compensation in the online space.

A.Z. Malik *et al.* (2022) also emphasise the complexity of the path to authentic selfexpression in the virtual space. Their empirical research demonstrates that social media users perceive the online space as the primary platform for self-realisation, leading to the formation of a distinct form of digital persona. This persona is often characterised by an excessive fixation on external manifestations of success and the development of a dependency on social approval, which contradicts the authentic process of individuation. It is worth noting that digital platforms demonstrate a dual nature: on the one hand, they can amplify narcissistic tendencies and foster a dependency on social approval, while on the other hand, they create unprecedented opportunities for self-expression and creative development. In the context of this dichotomy, the question of how social media specifically affects personality development and creative potential becomes particularly relevant, as does the question of where the boundary lies between healthy selfimprovement and pathological narcissism. Consider the empirical data that shed light on this issue in detail.

Statistical data confirm the existence of positive trends. According to research by H. Tan & M. Yavuzcan (2024), 57.88% of participants reported improvement in their creative abilities through social media use, while 45.51% noted development in self-expression skills. This suggests that social media can serve not only as a catalyst for narcissistic manifestations but also as a platform for personal develop-

ment. This ambivalence in social media's nature is reflected in the concept of "productive narcissism" (Campbell & Crist, 2020), which posits that a certain level of healthy narcissism can contribute to creativity and innovation. Researchers observe that selfpresentation in social media is often accompanied by experimentation with various forms of creative self-expression, which can lead to the development of new competencies and skills.

However, as A. Pellegrino *et al.* (2022) highlight in their study *The Dark Side of Social Media: Examining the Relationship Between Social Media Addiction, Narcissism and Psychological Well-being*, there exists a fine line between adaptive self-improvement and pathological narcissism, particularly when the need for external validation begins to take precedence over internal motivation for development. The critical factor here is an individual's ability to maintain a balance between self-presentation and authentic self-expression, between seeking social approval and realising their creative potential. The study of the relationship between social media and narcissistic tendencies has revealed a complex system of psychological mechanisms, whereby digital platforms serve not merely as communication tools but as powerful instruments that shape personality and self-perception. Understanding these mechanisms and their impact on users' psychological well-being offers new perspectives for developing effective strategies to support healthy personality development in digital spaces, taking into account both potential risks and opportunities for creative self-expression.

CONCLUSIONS

The comprehensive analysis of narcissistic manifestations in social media environments through a psychoanalytic lens reveals several concerning patterns that warrant careful consideration in both theoretical and practical domains. Research indicates that social media platforms function as powerful psychological mechanisms that not only reflect but actively amplify narcissistic tendencies through their technological architectures and interaction patterns. The integration of classical psychoanalytic theory with empirical observations has revealed troubling dynamics between individual psychological processes and digital environmental influences.

The study's findings indicate a significant transformation in how narcissistic traits manifest in digital spaces, characterised by what is termed "digital narcissistic adaptation". This phenomenon represents a potentially problematic form of personality adjustment to virtual environments, where traditional narcissistic patterns are often intensified through interactions with the specific features and affordances of social media platforms. Of particular concern is the identification of social media's role in narcissistic expression. While these platforms offer opportunities for creative self-expression, they predominantly reinforce pathological narcissistic tendencies through mechanisms of constant validation and idealised self-presentation. A critical discovery relates to the emergence of

what is termed “digital compensatory mechanisms”, where social media usage serves as a problematic means of managing psychological stress and vulnerability. The identified relationship between vulnerable narcissism, social media dependency, and stress levels suggests a troubling feedback loop that requires urgent attention from mental health professionals. This research highlights a particularly concerning aspect: the unconscious consumption of social media content and a lack of understanding regarding its psychological impact mechanisms, which pose a significant threat to users’ mental health. While social media offer potential benefits such as creative self-expression and community building, these positive aspects seem to be accessible primarily to users who have developed resilience against the platforms’ inherent manipulative influences. The prevalence of hidden psychological manipulation in online spaces creates a significant barrier to the healthy use of these platforms.

Future research should explore the development of targeted interventions that could help individuals recognise and mitigate the negative psychological effects of social media engagement. Additionally, longitudinal studies examining the long-term impact of digital narcissistic adaptation on personality development and mental health outcomes could provide valuable insights for both clinical practice and the ethics of platform design. Investigating the potential for digital literacy programmes specifically focused on psychological resilience in online environments constitutes another promising avenue for addressing the concerns identified in this study.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

None.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None.

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<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5802-0344>**Цифровий нарцисизм: психоаналітичні механізми прояву особистості в соціальних медіа та їх вплив на психологічне благополуччя**

Анотація. Стрімка цифровізація змінила способи самовираження та взаємодії, створивши умови для прояву та вивчення нарцисичних рис у соціальних медіа. Хоча нарцисизм вивчався в традиційних соціальних контекстах, його прояви в цифровому середовищі залишаються актуальними для психологічних досліджень, постаючи новими теоретичними та практичними викликами. Метою цього дослідження було проаналізувати психоаналітичні механізми, що визначають нарцисичні прояви в соціальних медіа, а також вивчити те, як різні типи нарцисизму змінюються та адаптуються у цифровому просторі. Крізь призму класичної психоаналітичної теорії, включаючи концепції структурної моделі психіки Фрейда та аналітичної психології Юнга, проведено аналіз платформ соціальних медіа як сучасних «агенцій соціалізації», що впливають на формування суб'єктності користувачів. Особлива увага приділялась ролі таких платформ, як Instagram, Facebook та YouTube у створенні специфічних форм взаємодії, що сприяють процесам «нарцисизації». Результати дослідження виявили значну трансформацію проявів нарцисичних рис у цифровому просторі, що характеризується феноменом «цифрової нарцисичної адаптації». Встановлено, що соціальні мережі функціонують як потужні психологічні механізми, які не лише відображають, але й активно підсилюють нарцисичні тенденції через свої технологічні архітектури та патерни взаємодії. Виявлено значущий зв'язок між інтенсивним використанням соціальних медіа, нарцисичними рисами особистості та рівнем стресу, що вказує на формування специфічних компенсаторних механізмів у цифровому середовищі. Дослідження підтвердило, що соціальні мережі створюють унікальні умови для розвитку як здорових, так і патологічних форм нарцисизму, де значна частина користувачів відзначає покращення своїх творчих здібностей, проте існують суттєві ризики формування залежності від соціального схвалення та компульсивної онлайн-активності. Результати цього дослідження мають важливе практичне значення для клінічної психології при розробці терапевтичних протоколів роботи з пацієнтами з нарцисичними особистісними рисами; для медіапсихології при формуванні теоретичних моделей цифрової поведінки; для спеціалістів у сфері цифрової етики при розробці нормативних засад функціонування соціальних платформ; а також для освітньої галузі в контексті формування програм медіаграмотності, що враховують психодинамічні аспекти взаємодії користувачів з цифровим середовищем

Ключові слова: психоаналіз; формування ідентичності; розвиток особистості; візуальна самопрезентація; нарцисична травма; візуальний контент; я-концепція