

The Relations of Friendship to Apathy and Narcissism in Adolescence

– A dilemma regarding interpersonal distance and coping –

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Keywords: Apathy, narcissism, friendship relations

Abstract

In recent years, the promotion of apathy in adolescence is suggested as a factor for student and youth worker maladjustment. In studies regarding student apathy, a support mechanism for relationships with people around those in question is proposed. Further, it is indicated that, as apathetic adolescents have a grandiose self-image, while they are vigilant against self-expression, they are narcissistic in their interpersonal consciousness. In studies regarding narcissism and interpersonal relationships, it is suggested that narcissism causes a dilemma regarding interpersonal distance for moderate relationships to good friends. In adolescence during which the social environment changes, friendship relations may have an assisting role concerning maladjustment from apathy. Then, in this study, it is hypothesized that interpersonal consciousness in narcissism causes apathetic tendencies, along with a dilemma regarding interpersonal distance in friendships and the coping relating to these processes.

In this study, a hypothesis was examined through a questionnaire given to graduate and undergraduate students, and the co-variance structure was analyzed. In hyper-vigilant interpersonal consciousness, “suppression to self manifestation” and “vigilance toward evaluation” factors positively influenced “apathy,” the “dilemma of approach” to friends, and “withering” as coping mechanisms for the dilemma. Moreover, “suppression to self manifestation” positively influenced the “distrust of others” through “self-defense affection,” and “vigilance to evaluation” positively influenced “self-confirmations to friends” as coping methods. Meanwhile, in a grandiose consciousness, the “assertiveness” factor negatively influenced “apathy” and “withering.”

Therefore, in a narcissistic interpersonal consciousness, self-recognizing depending on others causes apathetic tendencies and negative coping in regard to dilemmas concerning friendship relations. Thus, authentic self-recognition and evaluation may relieve the distrust of one’s self and others regarding apathetic tendencies, and may enhance orientation toward positive coping mechanisms regarding dilemmas concerning friendship relations.