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## **Personality determinants of inclination to the cynicalness**

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**Abstract.** This paper is the presentation of the results of empirical study of the cynicalness in the system of wide range of personality traits. The urgency of the study subject is due to the growing attention to the problem of cynicism and cynicalness and the importance of study of the psychological characteristics of cynicalness as personality trait. The following was chosen as diagnostic tools: Freiburg personality inquirer (FPI) and the procedure "Self-placing on the cynicalness scale". A number of significant connections was found between the parameters of inclination to cynicalness and personality factors under FPI: neurosality, spontaneous aggression, irritability, balance, openness, depression, reactive aggression. It was established that non cynical individuals differ by compliant behavior, restraint, cautious behavior, lack of aggressive attitude to social environment, responsibility; they have respectful attitude to moral standards, seek assertion of general human values. It is shown that cynical persons demonstrate a lack of social conformity, the desire to satisfy their desires immediately in their behavior without thinking about the consequences of their actions; they differ by over talkativeness, self-confidence, lack of restraint, variability, anxiety. It is established that such personalities elect conflict behavior as a form of protection from traumatic experiences, treat disparagingly moral values for their own benefit.

**Keywords:** range of personality traits, susceptibility to cynicalness, psychological characteristics

**The urgency** of the study subject is due to several reasons: first, the growing attention to the problem of cynicism and cynicalness by the researchers of different professions - psychologists, sociologists, pedagogues, reflecting the social needs of the Ukrainian society; secondly, the importance to study the psychological features of the cynicism as personality's traits; Thirdly, the practice requirements aimed at psychological support of the personality in order to avoid destructive behavior.

The term "cynicism" is derived from the name of the ancient Greek philosophical school of the Cynics, which representatives (Antisthenes, Diogenes of Sinope, Crates) preached contemptuous view on generally accepted moral norms and values which were not expedient, according to them. Subsequently, cynicism designated personality attitude which denies the importance of public opinion and shame [6]. If cynicism is sufficiently studied by many authors, the cynicalness, as a stable personality trait (inclination to cynicism, cynical behavior, etc.) is studied at lesser extent. The analysis of the psychological literature shows that some authors, who studied the relationship between the concepts "cynicism" and "cynicalness", identify them, noting some differences. Sergiy Rubinstein, Abraham Maslow define cynicism as openly contemptuous, barefaced attitude to the generally accepted norms of morality and ethics, to anything that is generally acknowledged, respected as brazen, shameless behavior, as gross disregard to the rules of morality. Peter Sloterdijk finds that cynicism, in its modern sense, is primarily a moral phenomenon, rather open immoralism and manipulation of people by reasoning on moral issues. Obviously, the problem of cynicism becomes more relevant in today's society. Its mass expansion rises a particular danger, since it leads to moral confusion.

This paper considers cynicalness as rather stable personality trait manifested in a shameless, even brazen behavior (incontinence, unscrupulousness, immorality, shamelessness etc.), accompanied by *thoughts and considerations* negative towards other people (distrust of others, rejection of the other position, disdainful thoughts) and specific *feelings and emotions* (barefaced attitude to-ward the others, annoyance, disgust, anger, aggression etc.).

It is well-known that each personality may have the situations which at certain points provoke the emergence of so-called "situational cynicalness" (we understand that the

"dose" of such "provocative" situations is individual for each person). However, there are people whose cynical behavior and thoughts and emotions accompanying it, is often displayed in various situations. Such a person responds to the most situations, such as the situations arising in communication, by a behavior similar to the behavior of cynical person. Therefore, the tendency to cynicalness (inclination to cynicism) is displayed as a stable personality quality.

Such authors as Raymond Cattell, Abraham Maslow, Erich Fromm explained cynicalness by the fact that the negation of conventional values, lack of recognition of the inner world of another person, the disregard of universal moral principles underlying the formation of such traits that define the destructive side of ethical component of personality [3].

In the literature, cynical behavior, cynicalness is often associated with such personality traits as flakiness, intemperance, unscrupulousness, rudeness, infidelity, aggression, immorality, demagoguery, cruelty, i.e. is quite pronounced manifestation of the destructive nature.

Therefore, the objective of this paper is to present the results of empirical study of cynicalness in the system of wide range of personality traits. The psychological characteristics of the individuals with high and low inclination to cynicalness have been specifically studied.

To diagnose the cynicalness of the personality, the procedure "Self-placing on the cynicalness scale" (the procedure of Tamara Dembo and Suzanne Rubinstein was modified) based on self-assessment was used.

Freiburg personality inquirer (FPI) as developed by Albert Krylov and Tatyana Ronginska was selected to study the psychological characteristics of the individuals inclined to cynicalness. The inquirer's scales are formed on the basis of factor analysis and represent a set of interrelated factors. The inquirer is intended to diagnose mental conditions and personality traits being the most significant to the process of social adaptation and behavior regulation. The inquirer has 12 scales: neurosality (N), spontaneous aggression (SA), depression (D), irritability (I), sociability (S), balance (B), reactive aggression (RA), shyness (Sh), openness (O), extraversion- introversion (EI), emotional lability (EI), masculinity - femininity (MF) [1].

The study was performed at the State institution "Southern National Pedagogical University named after

Ushinski." The sample included 80 persons (the students of Professional development department, specialty «Psychology», Faculty of Graduate Education and Foreign Students) aged 22 to 50 years old.

The data was processed using quantitative and qualitative analysis and computer software SPSS 17. 0 for Windows.

Before proceeding to the analysis of the results, it should be recalled that the correlation analysis provides an accurate quantitative assessment of the degree of change (variation) coherence of two or more traits. The degree of change coherence is characterized by connection closeness, i.e. absolute value of correlation factor. The presence of the correlations between two results means essentially that when you change one result, the another one changes as well. Thus, there is a connection between the results. It is important to note the following: the correlation itself does not mean the cause-and-effect

relations. The presence of correlation evidences that the connection between two variables, but not the fact that one variable is the cause, and the other is the effect. The existence of the cause-and-effect relations is established by other methods. Therefore, the conclusion of the cause-and-effect relations dependence between the studied phenomena based only on the statistical significance of the connection between relevant signs (i.e. based on the correlation factor) cannot be drawn. Thus, the space of the given characteristics is grouped in our paper with the help of correlation analysis and relationship between them is ascertained.

Thus, the correlation analysis has revealed a number of significant connections between the parameters of inclination to cynicalness and personality factors under Freiburg personality inquirer FPI. In Table 1, the results of the correlation analysis between cynicalness scale parameters and personality factors.

**Table 1.** Significant correlation factors between cynicalness scale and FPI factors

Total cynicalness factor	FPI factor					
	N	SA	I	RA	B	EL
Cynicalness	198*	255**	186*	341**	271**	155**

Note: 1) zeros and commas are omitted; 2) a sign \* is the significance of connection at the level  $p \leq 0,05$ ; 3) \*\* is correlation significance at the level  $p \leq 0,01$

The results presented in the table indicate the presence of significant connections between cynicalness with the following personality factors by FPI: neurosality (N) ( $p \leq 0,05$ ); spontaneous aggression (SA) ( $p \leq 0,01$ ); irritability (I) ( $p \leq 0,05$ ); reactive aggression (RA) ( $p \leq 0,01$ ); balance (B) ( $p \leq 0,01$ ); emotional lability (EL) ( $p \leq 0,01$ ).

According to the procedure "self-placing on the scale of cynicalness", two groups of the studied persons were found: the first group consisted of the persons (12 persons) with high cynicalness level, the other one of the person with minimal cynicalness level.

The next step of our study was to conduct a qualitative analysis by "profiles" method. Comparative analysis of the profile configuration and location in relation to the

middle line of a row showed that each group of the studied persons is characterized by a kind of quantitative combination of the factors under study. The groups differ by the following parameters: spontaneous aggression (SA), irritability (I), reactive aggression (RA), extroversion – introversion (EI), masculinity - femininity (MF). Each of the compared groups is characterized by a kind of factors set that showed the biggest deviation from the mean values towards both poles, each of which has its own meaning, which allowed to identify the specific psychological portraits of the persons who differ by cynicalness level. The analysis of the factors listed in the table has allowed to describe the psychological characteristics of cynical and not cynical personalities.

**Table 2.** Personality factors grades in the groups with various levels of cynicalness

Grades	Groups with high cynicalness level	Groups with low cynicalness level
1.	SA+ (spontaneous aggression)	SA <sup>-</sup> (spontaneous aggression)
2.	I+ (irritability)	RA <sup>-</sup> (reactive aggression)
3.	B <sup>-</sup> (balance)	O+ (openness)
4.	RA+ (reactive aggression)	MF <sup>-</sup> (masculinity - femininity)
5.	EI <sup>-</sup> (extraversion- introversion)	

The persons being studied with a high propensity to cynicalness are characterized by affliction to exquisite affective experiences, need for stimulation and desire to satisfy their desires immediately in direct behavior, without thinking seriously about the consequences of their actions, impulsive and misbegot actions - that's why they do not benefit from their negative experiences and they often have complications of the same nature. During superficial contacts, they are able to make a good impression on others due to freedom from the limitations, disinhibition and self-confidence. They are talkative, willing to participate in collective activities, vividly respond to any events that take place, find novelty even in everyday small things. However, lack of reserve and prudence may lead to various excesses (neglect of their duties) (SA +). Such persons are often not able to

perform the works that require some efforts, high level of control over the actions, will efforts, concentration, level-headedness. They are easily lost, fall into despair. Suffering badly from their lack of success, they may, together with self- conviction reactions, demonstrate hostility to the surrounding people. Conflict behavior is, as a rule, the most often form of defense from the experiences that hurt. The representatives of this group are prone to volatility, evade their duties, ignore generally acknowledged rules without making efforts to comply with the requirements of social and cultural norms, disregard moral values , for the sake of their own benefits, they are able to be dishonest and lie. High scores on the scale "irritability" (I+) are characteristic of the individuals with stable range of neurotic reactions, but can be found in asocial psychopaths and delinquents (I +).

Low scores by the factor "balance" (B<sup>-</sup>) evidence the status of deadadaptation, anxiety, pronounced disorganization of behavior. The stories about themselves are dominated by the complaints of insomnia, chronic fatigue and exhaustion, their own inferiority and inadaptability, helplessness, lack of energy, inability to concentrate, to understand their own feelings, sense of unbearable loneliness. Such people are described as conflict, stubborn, separated and unbalanced in their behavior. Lack of conformity and discipline is the most common external characteristics of their behavior.

High score the scale "reactive aggression" (RA<sup>+</sup>) is evidence of moral inferiority. The feeling of pride, duty, love, shame are empty words for such people. They are indifferent to praise and punishment, neglect their duties, moral and ethical standards. Such persons being studied seek immediate, urgent satisfaction of their desires, regardless of the circumstances and desires of others. They perceive criticism and comments addressed to them as infringement of their personal freedom. They experience hostile feelings towards those who is trying to some extent to control their behavior, forcing them to stay in socially acceptable limits. It is a special pleasure for such people to show their power. Extreme egoism and selfishness determine all their actions and behavior. To satisfy their own desire and ambitions, they are ready to take a lot of effort and energy, but does not consider necessary to perform their duties towards other people.

Low grades on the scale "introversion" (EI<sup>-</sup>) evidence a desire for the activities not associated with communication. Such persons in the situations of forced communication easily lose their psychical equilibrium. Perhaps for this reason, they tend to keep a distance in the relationships, but appreciate the individuality and uniqueness in people, believe that everyone has the right on his own opinion. They pay a lot of attention to their work, they consider the work to be a meaning of life, they appreciate professionalism and expertise.

Next, we consider the psychological characteristics of not cynical people. Low grades on the scale "spontaneous aggression" (SA<sup>-</sup>) evidence elevated identification with social demands conformity, compliancy, restraint and caution. Such persons consider everything to be boring and uninteresting, they are indifferent. They see nothing attractive in the surrounding events, have no hobbies. They do not like changes, they treat everything new cautiously, with prejudice. The representatives of this group have low scores on the scale "reactive aggression" (RA), and this evidences elevated identification with social norms, compliancy, modesty, dependence, may be narrow range of interests, constraint, timidity, gentleness. In their activities, they lack assertiveness and perseverance, especially in pursuing their personal goals. They are obedient, compliant, assent too easy to

the power and authority, always ready to listen and take advice from elder or more experienced person, their own activity is insufficient.

The persons being studied with low cynicalness are sensitive, prone to anxiety, soft, compliant, modest in their behavior, but not in self-assessment. Imagination, thirst for fantasy and aesthetic activities are developed in them. They demonstrate interest in philosophical, ethical and philosophical issues and sometimes show excessive preoccupation with their own problems, they are prone to self-analysis and self-criticism. They lack the courage, determination and perseverance in their behavior. They avoid competition, they easily cede, receive assistance and support. They are able to feel minutely other people, they can emotionally express their thoughts, motivate others with their problems, to persuade them to be on their side gently, without pressure.

Having analyzed the results of empirical study, we came to the following **conclusions**:

1. In this article, the concepts of "cynicism" and "cynicalness" are rendered concrete. Cynicalness is considered as a personality trait manifesting itself in a shameless, even brazen behavior (incontinence, unscrupulousness, immorality, shamelessness etc.), accompanied by *thoughts and considerations* negative towards other people (distrust of others, rejection of the other position, disdainful thoughts) and specific *feelings and emotions* (barefaced attitude toward the others, annoyance, disgust, anger, aggression etc.).

2. To diagnose the cynicalness level, the modified procedure "Self-placing on the cynicalness scale" (the procedure of Tamara Dembo and Suzanne Rubinstein modified by us) based on self-assessment was used. Freiburg personality inquirer (FPI) as developed by Albert Krylov and Tatyana Ronginska was selected to study the psychological characteristics of the individuals inclined to cynicalness.

3. Correlation analysis revealed a number of significant connections between the parameters of susceptibility to cynicalness and personality factors under Freiburg inquirer FPI: neurosality (N) ( $p \leq 0,05$ ); spontaneous aggression (SA) ( $p \leq 0,01$ ); irritability (I) ( $p \leq 0,05$ ); reactive aggression (RA) ( $p \leq 0,01$ ); balance (B) ( $p \leq 0,01$ ); emotional lability (EL) ( $p \leq 0,01$ ).

4. Based on the analysis of the profiles of personality traits of the preselected groups being studied with various levels of cynicalness, the following facts have been found: cynical persons are characterized by the affliction to exquisite affective experiences, need for stimulation, unstable emotional state, elevated irritability, aggressive attitude towards the social environment, expressed desire for domination, lack of restraint, conflict behavior, selfishness, impulsive and ill-considered actions, disdainful attitude towards moral values.

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**Топалова И.П. Личностные детерминанты склонности к циничности**

**Аннотация.** Данная статья является презентацией результатов эмпирического исследования циничности в системе широкого спектра черт личности. Актуальность темы исследования обусловлена возрастающим вниманием к проблеме цинизма и циничности, а также важности изучения именно психологических особенностей циничности как свойства личности. В качестве диагностического инструментария были выбраны: Фрайбургский личностный опросник (FPI) и процедура «Размещение себя на шкале циничности». Был выявлен ряд значимых связей между параметрами склонности к циничности и факторами личности по опроснику FPI: невротичность, спонтанная агрессивность, раздражительность, уравновешенность, открытость, депрессивность, реактивная агрессивность. Установлено, что нециничные личности отличаются уступчивостью, сдержанностью, осторожностью поведения, отсутствием агрессивного отношения к социальному окружению, ответственностью; с уважением относятся к моральным нормам, стремятся к утверждению общечеловеческих ценностей. Показано, что циничные личности демонстрируют отсутствие социальной конформности, стремление удовлетворить свои желания сразу же в поведении, не задумываясь о последствиях своих поступков; отличаются разговорчивостью, уверенностью в себе, несдержанностью, непостоянством, тревожностью. Такие лица выбирают конфликтное поведение, как форму защиты от травмирующих переживаний, пренебрежительно относятся к моральным ценностям ради собственной выгоды.

**Ключевые слова:** *спектр черт личности, склонность к циничности, психологические характеристики*