PHILOSOPHICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL ROOTS OF THE NARRATIVE APPROACH

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https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18373827

Abstract. *This article examines the philosophical and psychological foundations of the narrative approach as a contemporary paradigm in the human and social sciences. The study analyzes narrative as a means of understanding human experience, identity formation, and emotional meaning-making. Particular attention is paid to the influence of existential philosophy, phenomenology, and hermeneutics on the development of narrative thinking, as well as to the role of narrative approaches in modern psychology and education. The article highlights the significance of narrative methods in understanding emotional intelligence and professional development.*

Keywords: *narrative approach, narrative thinking, identity, emotional experience, reflection, emotional intelligence.*

Introduction

In modern social and human sciences, there is a growing tendency to understand the individual not only through objective behavior or cognitive processes, but also through life experience, emotional states, and personal stories. From this perspective, the narrative approach has emerged as an important methodological paradigm that interprets human life as a meaningful sequence of events. The narrative approach serves as a significant theoretical framework for understanding an individual's inner world, emotional experience, and identity.

The philosophical foundations of the narrative approach are primarily associated with existential philosophy. Thinkers such as Søren Kierkegaard, Martin Heidegger, and Jean-Paul Sartre viewed human life not as a predetermined essence, but as a phenomenon created by the individual through processes of meaning-making. Human beings understand their lives through chains of events and assign meaning to these experiences.

Phenomenology, developed by Edmund Husserl, represents another important philosophical source of the narrative approach. In phenomenology, human experience is explained through subjective perception and lived experience. Similarly, the narrative approach seeks to reveal personal experience in the form of stories, emphasizing the individual's subjective interpretation of reality.

In addition, hermeneutics (H.-G. Gadamer, P. Ricoeur) constitutes the methodological foundation of the narrative approach. Paul Ricoeur interpreted narrative as a mechanism that connects time, memory, and identity, and introduced the concept of *narrative identity* into academic discourse. According to Ricoeur, individuals understand themselves through storytelling and construct their sense of self ("I") through narrative.

In psychology, the narrative approach developed in the second half of the twentieth century. In particular, **humanistic psychology** (A. Maslow, C. Rogers) placed the individual's inner world and subjective experience at the center of analysis. This orientation created a favorable psychological foundation for the emergence and development of the narrative approach.

Jerome Bruner conceptualized narrative thinking as one of the fundamental modes of human cognition. According to him, people understand the world not primarily through logical-scientific reasoning, but through stories. Narrative thinking enables individuals to express emotional experience, values, and social relationships in an integrated and meaningful form.

The **life story theory** developed by **Dan P. McAdams** is considered one of the most significant models of the narrative approach in personality psychology. According to this theory, individuals construct their lives as narratives, and these narratives influence their identity, emotional states, and professional self-understanding.

In recent years, the concept of **professional-emotional intelligence** has become a subject of extensive discussion in education and upbringing processes. Professional-emotional intelligence can be defined as a set of abilities that enable an individual, within the context of professional and pedagogical activity, to recognize and understand their own emotions and those of others, to regulate them effectively, and to apply them constructively in interpersonal relationships.

The concept of **professional-emotional intelligence** was introduced into academic discourse in the late twentieth century. In 1990, **P. Salovey and J. Mayer** defined emotional intelligence as *"a form of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and others' emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions."* Subsequently, **D. Goleman** and other scholars popularized the concept of professional-emotional intelligence, emphasizing that it can be an even more important factor for personal and professional success than intellectual ability (IQ).

According to **Goleman's model**, professional-emotional intelligence consists of several core components.

1. Self-awareness

Self-awareness is a complex cognitive-emotional process that occupies a central place in an individual's psychological development. It is characterized by a person's ability to accurately perceive their current emotional states, understand the causes of these emotions, and consciously evaluate their influence on behavior and decision-making. This process represents one of the key components of the professional-emotional intelligence system and plays a significant role in professional activity, everyday life, and interpersonal communication.

An individual with a well-developed capacity for self-awareness is able to realistically assess their strengths and weaknesses, observe their professional-emotional reactions, and work with them consciously. The ability to analyze one's own emotions begins with recognizing the physiological and cognitive indicators of emotional processes. These include changes in heart rate, irregularities in breathing, feelings of nervousness, excitement, or depression. A person who can correctly interpret these signals is able to clearly identify their emotional state.

Conversely, the inability to accurately recognize one's emotions often leads to irrational behavior, impulsive decision-making, communication difficulties, and challenges in managing psychological stress.

Self-awareness also plays an invaluable role in the decision-making process. Understanding the influence of emotional states on decisions enables individuals to analyze situations more effectively, distance themselves from subjective factors, and make more objective choices. When a person recognizes that they are experiencing a depressed mood, they may decide to postpone important decisions or seek additional information before making them. Similarly, an overly excited individual, aware of the increased risk of impulsive decisions, may deliberately

apply self-calming strategies. A high level of self-awareness is an indicator of psychological maturity. Such individuals tend to appear stable, balanced, and reliable in social relationships. Because they are capable of managing their emotions in social situations, they act more effectively in conflicts, uncomfortable interactions, and situations that require complex decision-making.

2. Self-regulation

Self-regulation refers to a complex set of competencies that are of critical importance in the process of psychological development. The ability to self-regulate is characterized by an individual's capacity to control internal experiences, emotional states, and affective reactions. At the core of this ability lies the individual's conscious response to negative emotions, as well as the regulation of affective reactions such as anger, irritability, fear, anxiety, and tension.

The development of self-regulation is influenced by multiple factors, including age-related psychological characteristics, social skills acquired through upbringing, emotional experiences, family environment, learning activities shaped within the education system, and interactions with social groups. One of the key components of self-regulation is the skill of **self-soothing**. Self-soothing enables individuals to stabilize their emotional state in stressful situations, reduce emotional strain, and restore cognitive balance that allows for accurate evaluation of circumstances.

This process reflects a high level of psychological control mechanisms. When individuals are able to calm themselves, they assess situations not through irrational reactions but through logically grounded thinking. As a result, they are better equipped to address stressful situations in a constructive and adaptive manner.

Another component directly related to **self-regulation** is **goal orientation**. Goal orientation refers to an individual's ability to consistently accomplish assigned tasks, demonstrate perseverance in their implementation, and continue purposeful activity despite failures or difficulties. This characteristic requires a process of **self-motivation**. Self-motivation is associated with an individual's internal needs, values, and ideals; through this process, a person encourages themselves, consciously regulates their activity, and assumes responsibility for outcomes.

An individual's capacity for **social awareness or empathy** is considered one of the core components of the professional-emotional intelligence system. Empathy is the ability to sense others' emotions, understand their psychological states, and resonate with them emotionally. Empathy involves not only perceiving others' feelings, but also the ability to place oneself in another person's position, imagine their inner experiences, and consciously comprehend their needs, moods, and thoughts. Students with a high level of social awareness are able to accurately interpret nonverbal cues during interpersonal communication. They correctly decode emotional signals conveyed through facial expressions, body movements, tone of voice, and pauses in interaction. Empathy serves as a crucial psychological mechanism that enhances the effectiveness of social relationships. Empathic individuals work more productively in teams and establish positive social connections through cooperative interaction.

3. Social awareness

Social awareness also encompasses the concept of **social consciousness**. Social consciousness refers to the ability to perceive and understand others' needs, moods, attitudes, the dynamics of interpersonal relationships, and psychological processes within groups. It requires individuals to perceive the social environment deeply and comprehensively, analyze social situations logically, and identify the motives underlying others' behavior. This process represents an important factor of social adaptability and manifests itself in the functioning of social

institutions, group psychology, and leadership processes. Empathy and social awareness create broad opportunities for the healthy development of social relationships. Individuals possessing these qualities easily establish rapport with others, contribute to a positive psychological climate within groups, and play a significant role in preventing conflicts. Therefore, the development of empathy is considered one of the key directions of psychological education and upbringing.

4. Relationship management

Relationship management competence encompasses a set of psychological skills that determine an individual's ability to function effectively in a social environment. This competence is characterized by the ability to engage in constructive communication, collaborate within teams, demonstrate leadership qualities, and resolve disagreements rationally. Relationship management requires communicative competence, emotional control, social-perceptive skills, and awareness of conflict dynamics.

One of the most important aspects of relationship management is the ability to **manage conflicts**. Conflict management is defined by an individual's capacity to analyze situations, identify the causes of disagreements, propose solutions acceptable to all parties, and resolve problems constructively. This process demands a high level of professional-emotional culture, patience in communication, skills of compromise, and a well-developed listening culture.

Conclusion

The philosophical and psychological roots of the narrative approach determine its significance in contemporary education and psychological science. While existentialism, phenomenology and hermeneutics constitute the philosophical foundations of the narrative approach, humanistic and personality psychology provide its psychological basis. The narrative approach offers substantial methodological opportunities for understanding emotional experience, shaping identity, and developing professional-emotional intelligence.

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