

Copyright is owned by the Author of this thesis. Permission is given for a copy to be downloaded by an individual for the purpose of research and private study only. The thesis may not be reproduced elsewhere without the permission of the Author.

**INTROSPECTIVENESS DURING ADOLESCENCE:
AN INVESTIGATION OF A PERSONALITY TRAIT
AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH
PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING**

A thesis
submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements of the Degree of
Doctor of Clinical Psychology

Ψ

Massey University
Wellington, New Zealand

ANNA CLAIRE REYNOLDS

2013

ABSTRACT

Historically, introspectiveness as a personality trait has been treated as a uni-dimensional and simplistic process that operates the same way for everyone. Consequently, the relationship between introspectiveness and psychological well-being has been treated as equally simplistic and universally uniform. This is in spite of research examining other self-focus processes suggesting that this relationship is likely to be considerably more complex. Therefore, the aim of this thesis was to explore introspectiveness more thoroughly and broadly than prior research has, in order to more adequately understand this complex phenomenon and its relationship with psychological well-being. An adolescent sample group was selected given the propensity for introspectiveness during this developmental period.

The first study investigated a 12-item introspection instrument (Hansell, Mechanic and Brondolo, 1986, Introspection Scale) to ascertain whether there are distinct types of introspection embedded within it, and whether they would be associated with different types and amounts of self-reported symptoms. A factor analysis revealed three reasonably distinct factors or ‘types’ of introspection, which were identified as Self Analysis, Egocentrism, and Psychological Awareness. These broad types of introspection, as well as individual items on the Introspection scale, were associated with differing types and amounts of self-reported problems, providing support for the hypothesis that introspectiveness is a multi-faceted process with varying implications. In particular, some aspects of Psychological Awareness were generally associated with adaptive attributes, and Self Analysis (or reflecting on the ‘whys’ of life) was associated with problematic attributes.

Investigating how these types of introspection relate to emotional symptoms in the context of three important psychological resources (mindfulness, cognitive flexibility and emotional clarity), was investigated in a second study. Path analysis techniques were used to examine these relationships. Support was found for an indirect relationship between introspection and emotional symptoms, through the three psychological resources. This suggested that the relationship between introspection and psychological well-being depends on other intrapersonal or contextual factors, and that therefore, adaptive levels of psychological resources may influence the relationship between introspection and psychological well-being.

The implications of this research for both empirical understanding of cognitive processes potentially specific to adolescence, as well as broader clinical and therapy contexts, are discussed.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First of all, to my participants. Without you I would have no thesis! Thank you for sharing your inner worlds with me. Also to the staff at the local city high school who kindly helped me with my data collection.

My gratitude and appreciation is indebted to my first supervisor, Professor Ian Evans. I appreciated your challenging me and your inspirational ideas, your optimism, your patience with me, and your encouragement; always at the moments when I needed it.

In addition, my second supervisor, Dr Ruth Tarrant - thank you for your practicality, thoughtfulness, sensibleness and for helping me write with my reader in mind.

Thank you Harvey Jones, for advice and technical help regarding electronic data collection. Also to Flaviu Hodis for statistical advice regarding structural equation modelling.

As always, to my family, for your supportive enquiries regarding my research progress, for your understanding, your interest in my work and your patience - I know it's been a while but I'm finally done.

To Chris and Taryn, thank you for your loyalty and believing in my ability to come as far as I have with my studies. You helped me believe enough in myself to persevere. Also to Celia, for her unwavering patience in helping me with the technical side of formatting a thesis. Lucia K, thank you for your teacher-quality editing skills.

Finally, to my colleagues at the CHERUBS research laboratory. Without you I don't think I'd have made it through this challenging qualification and accompanying research thesis. Whether it was having a coffee with me, or dispensing valuable advice and your own experiences along the way, every moment you shared with me meant a lot. Thank you.

CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	vii
CONTENTS	ix
LIST OF TABLES	xiv
LIST OF FIGURES	xv
LIST OF APPENDICES	xvi
FOREWORD	xvii
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	1
General Overview of this Thesis	1
Ecological Context	3
Psychological Context	4
Types of Self-focus	5
Maladaptive types of self-focus.	6
Adaptive types of self-focus	7
Self-focus processes that can be either maladaptive or adaptive.	7
<i>Self-Focussed Attention</i>	8
Why Introspectiveness is Important	10
Adolescence	12
Introspectiveness and Psychological Well-being	15
Adaptive Aspects of Introspectiveness	15
Maladaptive Aspects of Introspectiveness	16
Attempts to account for opposing arguments	18
Introspectiveness and Psychological Resources	19
Mindfulness and introspectiveness.	20
Cognitive flexibility and introspectiveness	22

Emotional clarity and introspectiveness.....	24
Summary	26
Overall Aim of this Thesis	28
Aims of Study 1.	28
Aims of Study 2.	28
Hypotheses	28
CHAPTER TWO: ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS	29
CHAPTER THREE: METHOD STUDY 1	30
Participants.....	30
Recruiting of participants.....	30
Materials and Procedure.....	30
Positive and Negative Affect Scale (PANAS, Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988).	31
Introspection Scale (Hansell et al., 1986).	31
Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965).....	31
Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (Goodman, 2001).....	32
CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS STUDY 1	33
Introspection Scale (Hansell et al., 1986)	33
Positive and Negative Affect Scale (Watson et al., 1988).	34
Positive affect domain.....	34
Negative affect domain.	34
Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (Goldman, 2001).....	35
Emotional symptoms domain.....	35
Peer problems domain.....	36
Prosocial behaviour domain.....	36
Total difficulties domain.....	37
Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965).....	37

Factor Analysis	41
Multiple regression.....	44
CHAPTER FIVE: STUDY 1 DISCUSSION.....	47
Adaptive types of Introspection	48
Maladaptive types of Introspection.....	49
CONCLUSION.....	52
CHAPTER SIX: STUDY 2 METHOD	54
Participants.....	54
Recruiting of participants.....	54
Materials and Procedure.....	54
Child and Adolescent Mindfulness Measure (CAMM, Greco et al., 2011).	54
Cognitive Flexibility Inventory (Dennis & Vander Wal, 2010).	55
Emotional Symptoms – the “Emotional Symptoms” Domain of the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (ES, Goodman, 2001).	55
Introspection Scale (IS, Hansell et al., 1986).	55
Emotional Clarity Measure (from the Trait Meta-Mood Scale, Salovey et al., 1995).	56
CHAPTER SEVEN: STUDY 2 RESULTS.....	57
Preliminary Data Review	57
Mindfulness - Children’s Acceptance and Mindfulness Measure (CAMM, Greco et al., 2011).	58
Cognitive flexibility – Cognitive Flexibility Inventory (CFI, Dennis & Vander Wal, 2010).	58
Emotional symptoms – the “Emotional Symptoms” Domain of the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (ES, Goodman, 2001).	59
Introspection Scale (Hansell et al., 1986, IS).	59
Emotional Clarity Scale (ECS, Salovey et al., 1995).	60

Factor Analysis	60
Correlations	63
Aim 1: To Investigate how Psychological Resources in Combination with Introspectiveness Relate to Emotional Symptoms.....	65
Aim 2: To compare how general Introspectiveness relates, indirectly and directly, to Emotional Symptoms.....	66
Path Analysis.....	66
Fit indices.....	67
The path analysis procedure.....	68
Aim 3: To investigate how the different factors of the Introspection scale relate to Emotional Symptoms, compared to general Introspectiveness.....	70
Summary of Main Findings – Study 2	72
CHAPTER EIGHT: DISCUSSION, STUDY 2	74
First Aim of Study 2: To Investigate how Psychological Resources in Combination with Introspectiveness Relate to Emotional Symptoms.....	74
Second Aim of Study 2: To compare how general Introspectiveness relates indirectly and directly, to Emotional Symptoms	77
Third Aim of Study 2: To investigate how the different factors of the Introspection scale relate to Emotional Symptoms, compared to general Introspectiveness	78
Psychological Awareness.....	79
Self analysis.	81
Conclusion	81
CHAPTER NINE: GENERAL DISCUSSION.....	83
Clinical Implications	84
Limitations and Future Research	86
Conclusion	89
REFERENCES.....	91
APPENDICES	103

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 Zero Order Correlations between variables	38
Table 2 Inter-correlations in the Introspection Scale	39
Table 3 Correlations between Variables and Introspection Scale Items	40
Table 4 Factor Analysis of the Introspection Scale	41
Table 5 Introspection Scale items contributing to each Factor	42
Table 6 Correlations Between Variables and the Self-Analysis Factor	42
Table 7 Correlations between Variables and the Psychological Awareness Factor	43
Table 8 Correlations between Variables and the Egocentricity Factor	43
Table 9 Multiple Regression Analysis for predicting Emotional Symptoms	44
Table 10 Multiple Regression Analysis for predicting Peer Problems	45
Table 11 Multiple Regression Analysis for predicting Total Difficulties	45
Table 12 Multiple Regression Analysis for predicting Self-esteem	46
Table 13 Multiple Regression Analysis for predicting Negative Affect	46
Table 14 Confirmatory Factor Analysis of the Introspection Scale	61
Table 15 Exploratory Factor Analysis of all Five Scales	62
Table 16 Correlations between variables and total Introspection scores	63
Table 17 Correlations between variables and Introspection factors	64
Table 18 Standard Multiple Regression of Psychological Resources on Emotional Symptoms	65

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 Frequency distribution of Hansell et al.'s (1986) Introspection Scale.	33
Figure 2 Frequency distribution of positive affect domain of the Positive and Negative Affect Scale.	34
Figure 3 Frequency distribution of negative affect domain of the Positive and Negative Affect Scale.	34
Figure 4 Frequency distribution of emotional symptom domain of the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire.	35
Figure 5 Frequency distribution of conduct problem domain of the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire.	35
Figure 6 Frequency distribution of Peer Problem domain of the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire.	36
Figure 7 Frequency distribution of prosocial domain of the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire.	36
Figure 8 Frequency distribution of the Total Difficulties domain of the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire.	37
Figure 9 Frequency distribution of the Rosenberg (1965) Self-Esteem Scale.	37
Figure 10 Children's Acceptance and Mindfulness Measure (CAMM) scores	58
Figure 11 Cognitive Flexibility (CFI) scores	58
Figure 12 Emotional Symptom Scale (ESS) scores	59
Figure 13 Introspection Scale (IS) scores	59
Figure 14 Emotional Clarity Scale (ECS) scores	60
Figure 15 Hypothesised path model for the relationship between variables and general Introspectiveness.	68
Figure 16 Hypothesised outcome path model for variables and general introspectiveness.	69
Figure 17 Final path model for variables and general introspectiveness.	70
Figure 18 Final path model, with the different types of introspection included.	71

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix A Study 1 Permission Slip for School Participants.....	104
Appendix B Study 1 Information Sheet.....	105
Appendix C Study 1 Recruitment Advertisements on Websites.....	107
Appendix D Study 1 Questionnaire.....	108
Appendix E Study 1 Consent form for School Participants.....	111
Appendix F Study 2 Information Sheet.....	112
Appendix G Study 2 Questionnaire.....	115
Appendix H Study 2 Recruitment – Facebook Advertisement.....	118

FOREWORD

During my work as an intern psychologist at a child and adolescent mental health setting, I was simultaneously but separately working with two teenagers. They were both admirable and talented young men, both aged 15 years, who incidentally both had the same first name, but that was where the similarities ended. Their difficulties were quite different, as well as their personalities. One would talk the proverbial leg off a donkey, and at times it was difficult to direct him, while the other was quite the opposite, and was extremely quiet. While the second young man never missed a session, always seemed grateful for the work I did with him, and made gradual progress over time, I often wondered where his mind went. Of course at times I asked him to reflect on things he'd thought about during the week, and had an idea of the nature of his anxious thoughts, but I never once thought to ask him about his inner dialogue in general. I didn't ask him about whether he thought a lot about himself and his life and reflected, or whether he daydreamed or ruminated or where his mind went when he was sitting in class, or in the long car ride home after our sessions. After finishing my work with him, and reflecting on the case, I thought about how much better I might have known him and the background to his emotional difficulties had I asked about these things. What role if any, did his quiet nature have to do with his anxiety? Was it just a 'normal' symptom of adolescence? Was he a young man whose tendency to be introspective lead him to ruminate and become unhealthy self-conscious? Or was he not particularly introspective at all and simply a person who preferred to stand back and observe those around him and therefore was externally rather than internally motivated?

This young man was someone I thought of often during the writing of this thesis, one of the many inspirations behind this work, and an example of where its findings have practical application for the many adolescent clients like him.