

ILLUZÓRIKUS EGÉSZSÉG VAGY POZITÍV ILLÚZIÓK? AZ IRRACIONÁLIS POZITÍV PERCEPCIÓK SZEREPE A MENTÁLIS EGÉSZSÉG FENNTARTÁSÁBAN

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Abstract: Prominent traditional theorists argued that realistic and accurate perceptions are essential for mental health and irrationality leads to mental disease. In challenge, a new raising paradigm, mainly represented by the Taylor and Brown formulation (1988) state, that positively biased perceptions are characteristic for the majority of us and they promote mental health. This tendency to perceive ourselves and the world through “rose colored glasses” was labeled in the literature: positive illusions. The positive illusion theory is criticized in many aspects. A growing body of evidence suggests that widely used self report mental health scales suffer from a serious limitation in terms they can not distinguish between genuine mental health and the facade of mental health created by psychological defense called in the literature illusory mental health (Shedler and col., 1993). The aim of the present study was to investigate the implication of positive illusion in mental health in a Transylvanian sample, considering three subpopulations: those with genuine health, illusory health and manifested distress and considering in the same time the cultural theory of positive illusions with respect to the collectivist history of Transylvania. Participants were 79 psychology students. Three aspects of positive illusions were considered: self aggrandizement, illusion of control and optimistic illusion about the future. Results indicated that there are no differences between those with genuine or illusory mental health regarding the quantity of illusions and both groups are characterized by the presence of positively biased perceptions, but in the case of the illusory health group illusions are related to negative irrational cognitions. Those with manifested distress in compliance with the Taylor and Brown formulation presented more realistic and accurate perception about the self, control and optimism. There was no difference between the present sample and samples of former studies in Western European or North American cultures regarding positive illusions. Implications of findings in cognitive behavioral therapy are discussed.

Keywords: illusory mental health, positive illusions, mental health, irrational beliefs, cognitive behavioral therapy