

MALADAPTIVE DAYDREAMING: UNVEILING THE INNER WORLD OF VISUAL ARTISTS AND IMPACT ON ARTISTIC EXPRESSION OF CREATIVITY

-Asmitha. R* & Nagaraj, M.*

ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the relationship and impact of maladaptive daydreaming and creativity among visual artist at Madurai district, TamilNadu. The study comprised 84 visual artists and their age range from 19 to 40. Maladaptive Daydreaming scale (MDS-16) by Somer, Lehrfeld, Bigelsen, and Jopp, (2016), and Kaufman Domains of Creativity Scale (K-DOCS) by Kaufman (2012). The data were analyses by using SPSS, the gender differences on maladaptive daydreaming and creativity. It shows that there is a significant difference among gender. The female visual artist ($M = 54.34$) had higher mean than male visual artist ($M = 44.14$) in maladaptive daydreaming. In creativity they don't have any significant differences. But female visual artist ($M = 168.90$) had higher mean than male visual artist ($M = 163.53$). Further the correlation analysis shows maladaptive daydreaming and creativity had a positive correlation ($r = .308$) with each other among visual artist.

Keywords: *Maladaptive Daydreaming, Creativity, Visual Artists*

*M.Sc Applied Psychology, coimbatore.

*Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, Thiagarajar College, Madurai-625009

MALADAPTIVE DAYDREAMING: UNVEILING THE INNER WORLD OF VISUAL ARTISTS AND IMPACT ON ARTISTIC EXPRESSION OF CREATIVITY

1. INTRODUCTION

Excessive daydreaming is referred to as maladaptive daydreaming. It involves excessive mind wandering and more fantasies that are so severe that they negatively affect the person's life. In another way is a coping mechanism to address previous trauma or social anxiety (Benisek, n.d.). Maladaptive Daydreaming (MD) is a recently identified clinical condition: Subjects fantasize extensively and vividly, developing a Compulsive psychological dependence on dreams that can compromise important obligations in life and substitute for human interaction (Brenner, Somer, and Abu-Rayya, 2022). Because excessive daydreaming, beginning in childhood and persisting into adulthood, may form a significant part of the daydreamer's personality. According to Huba et al. (1981) have proposed three factors of day dreaming, that is Positive Constructive Daydreaming (PCD), Guilty-Dysphoric Daydreaming (GDD), and Poor Attentional Control (PAC). PCD refers to vivid daydreams oriented toward the future and problem-solving, while GDD refers to maladaptive daydreams oriented toward the past and unpleasant experiences. PAC is the tendency to be distracted and bored (Li et al., 2020a, 2020b). The three Factors of daydreaming can affect one's thinking pattern; sometimes the past and unpleasant Experiences may affect one's thinking and creativity. Daydreaming, which is traditionally associated with inattention, has been argued to be a source of creativity. Therefore, the mental states that can lead to inattention include boredom, fatigue, and ADHD. The brain's default network is associated with low-level brain activity.

1.1 Creativity: According to Robert E. Franken: Creativity is defined as, "*The tendency to generate or recognize ideas, alternatives, or possibilities that may be useful in solving problems, communicating with others, and entertaining ourselves and others*". There are three reasons why people are motivated to be creative: the need for novel, varied, and complex stimulation, the need to communicate ideas and values, and the need to solve problems. Sternberg, Lautrey and Lubart (2003) propose that creativity is associated with personality, intelligence, knowledge, thinking style, motivation, and environment. According to Sternberg and Lubart thinking style is associated with creativity; our level of thinking (e.g, excessive thinking) may affect our creativity. According to the Torrence (1964), only a certain level of intelligence is required to emerge creativity, from the study of individual traits, intelligence is necessary but not an efficient condition for creativity. The Amabile componential model proposes creativity is influence of the environment in the three

components; dominant – relevant skills, creativity processes, and intrinsic task motivation. According to the systematic model, creativity results from an interaction between the domain, the field, and the person. Several studies found that high-ability students Scored higher on dimensions like fluency. Intelligence was found to be positively correlated with creativity and scientific creativity. Researchers like Torrance, Guilford, Rhodes, Renzulli, and Sternberg contributed definitions and theories around creativity.

1.2 Visual Artist: Here the selected population are visual artist who's novel art works are in 2D and 3D form; visual arts include painting, drawing, Printmaking, sculpture, ceramics, photography, video, filmmaking, design, crafts, and Architecture. Visual artist are one kind of creative population, who wants their works should be novel, their thinking and imagination plays a crucial role in their work.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Somer (2024) conducted a study on “impact of music on the experience of compulsive fantasizing” The aim of this study is to knowing the role of music in Maladaptive Daydreaming. The study revealed that the music is an instrumental factor in Maladaptive Daydreaming by distancing individual from their reality and from altered state of consciousness

Soffer-dudek and Oh, (2024) Conducted a study on Maladaptive daydreaming (MD) and mental health among United States samples. This study aims to develop a brief version of MD among non-selected US samples. Surveys are collected using Qualtrics panel (online survey). This study concluded that Maladaptive Daydreaming is vital and its should be addressed by the Mental health professionals

Another study by Thomson and Jaque (2023a, 2023b) explored the relationship among creativity, emotional regulation, and maladaptive daydreaming. The study found that there is 23% of variance in Maladaptive Daydreaming for difficulty in emotional regulation and for difference in creativity. And also creative processing skills and optimal emotional regulation may help with maladaptive daydreaming. In contrast, West and Somer (2020) states that highly immersive daydreaming is not always maladaptive, and immersive characteristics of daydreaming may benefit emotional regulation, empathy, and creativity. They found that the maladaptive component of MD is high for affective empathy and low for emotional regulation and creativity. Immersive and maladaptive daydreaming and divergent thinking in autism spectrum disorders” this study aims to explore the daydreaming experience

in adults with ASD daydreaming experiences in adults with ASD, with a focus on immersive daydreaming and its relation to divergent thinking abilities. (West, Somer & Eigsti, 2023).

3. RESEARCH METHOD

The aim of this study is to explore the relationship between the maladaptive daydreaming and creativity among Visual Artists. This chapter deals with the objectives, hypotheses, sampling, sampling method, and tool description of the study.

3.1 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To measure the maladaptive day dreaming (MD) levels experienced by male and female visual artist.
- To assess the creativity by male and female visual artist.
- To measure the maladaptive day dreaming (MD) level experienced by visual artist based on their age.
- To assess the creativity level experienced by visual artist based on their age.
- To examine the relationship between maladaptive day dreaming and creativity among visual artist.

3.2 HYPOTHESES

1. There is a significant difference in maladaptive day dreaming based on their gender
2. There is a significant difference in the creativity based on their gender.
3. There is a significant difference in maladaptive day dreaming based on their age among visual artist.
4. There is a significant difference in the creativity based on their age among visual artist.
5. There is a significant relationship between the maladaptive day dreaming and the creativity among visual artist.

3.3 SAMPLE AND SAMPLING METHOD

The sample of this study comprises 84 visual artists and their age range from 19 to 40 at Madurai district. The non-probability sampling method were used to collect the data, purposive sampling technique was adopted. This ensured that participants were selected from both male and female, with 45 male visual artist and 39 female visual artist..

3.4 TOOL DESCRIPTION

3.4.1 Maladaptive Daydreaming Scale (MDS)

The 16-item Maladaptive Daydreaming scale (MDS-16) by Somer, Lehrfeld, Bigelsen, & Jopp, (2016) is used to assess the level of MD. It has 11-point likert type self-reporting scale, ranging from 0 (never / no distress at all) to 100 (extremely frequent / extreme distress) in increments of 10. This questionnaire consists of 16 items. Higher mean score indicate higher level of MD.

3.4.2 Creativity Scale

Kaufman Domains of Creativity Scale (K-DOCS) by Kaufman (2012) is used to assess the individual differences in creativity behaviour. It is a 5-point likert type scale, containing 50 items. The items divided into 5 domains: Self/Everyday Creativity, Scholarly, Creativity, Performance Creativity (encompassing writing and music), Mechanical/Scientific Creativity, and Artistic Creativity.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

In this part, the researcher used Mean, Standard Deviation, “t” test, and Correlation method was used to analyses the data.

TABLE 4.1

Comparison of Mean scores of the Maladaptive Daydreaming and Creativity based on the gender.

VARIABLES	GENDER	N	M	SD	t
MALADAPTIVE DAYDREAMING	Male	45	44.14	21.14	2.38*
	Female	39	54.34	17.58	
CREATIVITY	Male	45	163.53	25.27	0.87 ^{NS}
	Female	39	168.90	30.24	

Note: *Significant at the level of 0.05, NS = Not Significant. N = Number of samples. M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation

Table 4.1, explains the gender differences on maladaptive daydreaming and creativity. It shows that there is a significant difference among gender. The female visual artist ($M=54.34$) had higher mean than male visual artist ($M=44.14$) in maladaptive daydreaming. In creativity they don't have any significant differences. But female visual artist ($M=168.90$) had higher mean than male visual artist ($M=163.53$). Thus the hypotheses H1 (There is a significant difference in maladaptive day dreaming based on their gender) was accepted and H2 (There is a significant difference in the creativity based on their gender) was not accepted.

TABLE 4.2

Comparison of Mean scores of the Maladaptive Daydreaming and Creativity based on the age.

VARIABLES	AGE	N	M	SD	t
MALADAPTIVE DAYDREAMING	19-25	50	48.69	20.70	0.10 ^{NS}
	26-40	34	49.15	19.51	
CREATIVITY	19-25	50	165.18	27.94	0.33 ^{NS}
	26-40	34	167.26	27.59	

Note: *Significant at the level of 0.05, NS = Not Significant. N = Number of samples. M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation

Table 4.2, explains the age differences on maladaptive daydreaming and creativity. It shows that there is a no significant difference on age. Meanwhile the visual artist from the age group of 26-40 had had higher mean ($M=49.15$) than visual artist from the age group of 19-25($M=48.69$) in maladaptive daydreaming. In the same way, the visual artist from the age group of 26-40 had had higher mean ($M=167.26$) than visual artist from the age group of 19-25($M=165.18$) in creativity. Thus the hypothesis H3 (There is a significant difference in maladaptive day dreaming based on their age among visual artist.) and H4 (There is a significant difference in the creativity based on their age among visual artist) was not accepted.

Table 4.3

Correlation between Maladaptive Daydreaming and Creativity

VARIABLE	MALADAPTIVE DAYDREAMING
CREATIVITY	.308*

Note: *Significant at the 0.01 level

Table 4.3 explains the correlation between maladaptive daydreaming and creativity. It can be seen that maladaptive daydreaming and creativity had a positive correlation ($r = .308$) with each other among visual artist. Thus, the hypothesis H5, there is a significant relation between the maladaptive daydreaming and creativity among visual artist was accepted.

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study is to find the relationship between maladaptive daydreaming and creativity among visual artists. Eighty four visual artists were agreed to participate in this study. The results greatly supported the hypothesis (H1) that there is a significant relationship between maladaptive daydreaming and creativity among visual artists. This study demonstrates that there is positive correlation between maladaptive daydreaming and creativity among visual artists (i.e, if the maladaptive daydreaming increases than creativity increased). It also shows that there is a significant difference between male and female samples in maladaptive daydreaming. It also shows that there is no significant difference between male and female samples in creativity and age differences. In contrast to previous studies, this study shows a positive correlation between the maladaptive daydreaming and creativity. In compared to previous studies that the maladaptive daydreaming can lead to the psychological distress; this study proves that the maladaptive daydreaming can also lead the doors for creativity. In Brenner et al., study childhood has been the beginning of daydreaming and it persists to adulthood, here young adults who have Different thinking styles, dreams, and fantasies may play a major crucial role in one's Creativity that the daydreaming can influence one's creativity. Here the selected population are the visual artist whose creativity plays a major role in their works. Hence maladaptive daydreaming contributes to the creativity of visual artists. The excessive amount of maladaptive daydreaming may also lead to the psychological distress and deviant in thinking process and creativity.

RECOMMENDATION:

Future studies should target different population other than young adults. Using large size of samples can strengthen the more generalized results.

COMPETING INTEREST

No conflicts of interest exist.

REFERENCE

- Benisek, A. (n.d.). What Is Maladaptive Daydreaming? WebMD. Retrieved January 4, 2024, from <https://www.webmd.com/mental-health/maladaptive-daydreaming>
- Brenner, R., Somer, E., & Abu-Rayya, H. M. (2022). Personality traits and maladaptive daydreaming: Fantasy functions and themes in a multi-country sample. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 184, 111194. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2021.111194>
- Li, Y., Xie, C., Yang, Y., Liu, C., Du, Y., & Hu, W. (2022a). The role of daydreaming and creative thinking in the relationship between inattention and real-life creativity: A test of multiple mediation model. *Thinking Skills and Creativity*, 46, 101181. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tsc.2022.101181>
- Soffer-Dudek, N., & Oh, H. (2024). Maladaptive daydreaming: A shortened assessment measure and its mental health correlates in a large United States sample. *Comprehensive Psychiatry*, 129, 152441.
- Somer, E. (2024). Calling the tune in maladaptive daydreaming: The impact of music on the experience of compulsive fantasizing. *Psychology of Music*, 03057356231222290. <https://doi.org/10.1177/03057356231222290>
- Thomson, P., & Jaque, S. V. (2023a). Creativity, Emotion Regulation, and Maladaptive Daydreaming. *Creativity Research Journal*, 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10400419.2023.2230022>
- Thomson, P., & Jaque, V. (2023b). Maladaptive Daydreaming, Overexcitability, and Emotion Regulation. *Roeper Review*, 45(3), 195–205. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02783193.2023.2212634>
- West, M. J., & Somer, E. (2020). Empathy, Emotion Regulation, and Creativity in Immersive and Maladaptive Daydreaming. *Imagination, Cognition and Personality*, 39(4), 358–373. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0276236619864277>

- West, M. J., Somer, E., & Eigsti, I.-M. (2023). Immersive and Maladaptive Daydreaming and Divergent Thinking in Autism Spectrum Disorders. *Imagination, Cognition and Personality*, 42(4), 372–398. <https://doi.org/10.1177/02762366221129819>
- Kaufman, J.C. (2012). Counting the muses: Development of the kaufman domains of creativity scale (K-DOCS). *Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity, and the Arts*, 6, 298–308; doi: [10.1037/a0029751](https://doi.org/10.1037/a0029751).
- Somer, E., Lehrfeld, J., Bigelsen, J., & Jopp, D. S. (2016). Development and validation of the Maladaptive Daydreaming Scale (MDS). *Consciousness and cognition*, 39, 77-91
- Torrance, E. P. (1964). The Minnesota studies of creative thinking: 1959-1962. *Widening horizons in creativity*, 125-144.
- Sternberg, R. J., J., & Lubart, T. I. (2003). *Where are we in the Field of Intelligence, How did we get here, and Where are we Going?*. American Psychological Association.
- Huba, G. J., Aneshensel, C. S., & Singer, J. L. (1981). Development of scales for three second-order factors of inner experience. *Multivariate Behavioral Research*, 16(2), 181-206.