

Daydreaming in Relation with Loneliness and Perceived Social Support among University Undergraduates

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The aim of present research was to investigate the relationship among daydreaming, loneliness and perceived social support. The current study was conducted on a random sample of undergraduates taken from University of Sargodha (N = 177). The sample comprised of boys (n = 74) and girls (n = 103). In order to measure daydreaming, perceived social support and loneliness, Urdu translated Short Imaginal Processes Inventory, Interpersonal Support Evaluation List and Urdu translated UCLA Loneliness scale were used respectively. Linear regression analysis portrayed that loneliness was a significant and positive predictor of daydreaming while perceived social support appeared as a non-significant correlate of daydreaming. Data analysis also revealed that perceived social support is a significantly negative predictor of loneliness. Moreover, the analysis revealed that girls scored significantly higher on daydreaming while non-significant gender differences were found in loneliness and perceived social support.

Keywords: Daydreaming, Perceived social support, Loneliness, relationship, University Students.

Daydreaming is a universal phenomenon, which is considered as the diversion of attention from the present physical or cognitive task toward those patterns, which are not a part of present state, or it can be an engagement in the external environment in response to internal stimuli. There are three styles of daydreaming: positive constructive daydreaming, which is characterized by enjoyment and acceptance of daydreaming, positive thoughts, positive emotions and realistic problem solving. The guilt and fear of failure accompanied by negative-depressive character and anxieties adds to it. These individuals try to strive for achievement through heroic activities, yet they also have considerable fear of failure and anger for others. Also, poor attentional control reflects an inability to maintain a prolonged inner-orientation without distraction from the external environment (Singer, 1975).

Daydreaming represents the activities of routine life furthermore it depicts the living style of individuals that is why it can be a culturally relevant experience. Sound body of researches speculated daydreaming as a negative activity and associated it with poor concentration

abilities (Riby, Smallwood, & Gunn, 2008); and depressive and lonely feelings (Nolen-Hoeksema et al., 2008; Watkins, 2008).

According to De Jong-Gierveld (1998), loneliness is characterized by a situation experienced by the individual as one where there is an unpleasant or inadmissible lack in quality of certain relationships. This includes situations, in which the number of existing relationships is smaller than is considered desirable or admissible, as well as situations where the intimacy one wishes for has not been realized. Franklin and colleagues (2013) did collective work on a sample of adults regarding the relation between frequency of daydreaming and its relation with daily patterns of life. Findings presented that imagination or off task thinking is more likely linked with more undesirable feelings (loneliness) than positive ones. Moreover, many researches demonstrated that daydreaming is linked with higher level of lonely feelings and with deprivation of social support group (Killingsworth & Gilbert 2010, 2013; Smith & Alloy, 2009; Smallwood et al., 2009).

The influential work of Mar and his colleagues (2012) on a sample of undergraduates suggested

that daydreaming is highly linked with perceived social support and loneliness depending upon the content of daydreaming. The results of their study indicated distressing content is positively linked with loneliness while, positive content of daydreaming is negatively related with loneliness and highly linked with social support. It is also said that types of daydreaming plays an important role in effecting the relation between available support and feeling of deficiency regarding care and respect from relations (Klinger & Cox, 2004).

Perceived social support is considered the most important variable in relation with loneliness and daydreaming. A study conducted on a sample of undergraduates depicted that higher level of social support produce higher level of enthusiastic and problem solving content of daydreaming; while the absence or deficiencies in social support goes inverse with more constructive daydreaming. It has also been presented that lower level of perceived social support is inversely related with loneliness; as loneliness is inversely related with more social and encouraging content of daydreaming and linked with more negative and depressing daydreaming yielding negative effects on relations and sound life (Mar et al., 2012).

Similarly, a research highlighted the relation between loneliness and social support. It was intended to investigate the relations among two sources of social support, various aspects of loneliness, and anxiety from two different cultural groups. Results presented significant inverse correlations between social support and loneliness; significant, positive relation between loneliness and anxiety (Ginter, Glauser, & Richmond, 1994).

The literature on gender differences in daydreaming yielded mix results. Giambra (1980) conducted research on a diverse sample (N = 471) of different age groups and concluded that females are more prone to daydreaming as they get bored with their external environment, which provide them more opportunities for daydreaming. Gold and Gold (1982) found no sex differences in the content of daydreams recorded by college students (n = 52) over a two-week period. Gold, Andrews and Minor (1986)

found, contrary to previous studies, that males (not females) reported more positive reactions to their daydreams.

Similarly, huge meta-analysis study using one-dimensional loneliness scale shows that 19 of the 31 studies presented no significant gender differences. In remaining 12 studies, nine studies showed boys were significantly lonelier than girls, two studies showed girls were significantly lonelier than boys, and one study did not report gender differences (Mahon, Yarcheski, Yarcheski, Cannella, & Hanks, 2006). Similarly, work of Tariq and Masood (2011) on Pakistani students affirmed that there are non-significant gender differences in loneliness.

It has also been claimed that males tend to perceive lower social support because they are more likely to feel that they have no one to express their feelings to. Moreover, Kendler, Myers and Prescott (2005) who studied on 1,057 opposite-sex dizygotic twin pairs stated that females tend to have larger social contacts as compared to males. They also emphasized that the females have higher social support because they seek emotional support in their relationship.

On the basis of available literature, the current study aimed at finding the relationship among daydreaming, loneliness and perceived social support. In addition, examination of gender differences in all variables of study is also an objective of the study.

Method

Sample:

A random sample of 177 participants' from twenty three departments of University of Sargodha was drawn. Boys (n = 74) and girls (n = 103) both were given representation in the sample. Total number of respondents from faculty of Social Sciences (n = 97); faculty of Management Sciences (n = 36); and faculty of Pure Sciences (n = 44) were part of the study. Their age range falls between 19-35 years with (M = 22, SD = 1.4).

Instruments:

Short Imaginal Processes Inventory (SIPI; Huba, Singer, Aneshensel, & Antrobus, 1982). It was administered for measuring daydreaming,

which was translated by (Yousaf & Ghayas, 2013). This scale was a self-report measure of affective patterns of daydreaming as well as attention to inner experience. It was validated on adolescents and adults. The SIPI consist of 45 items that represent three patterns of daydreaming. Each subscale of daydreaming comprised of 15 items. Positive constructive daydreaming contains item numbers 2, 4, 7, 10, 15, 17, 19, 22, 26, 28, 31, 36, 38, 40, and 43 (10 positive and 5 negative; $\alpha = .80$). Second subscale of guilt and fear of failure daydreaming restrain item numbers 3, 6, 9, 12, 14, 18, 21, 24, 27, 30, 32, 34, 37, 41, and 44 (13 positive and 2 negative; $\alpha = .82$). Last subscale of poor attentional control having item number 1, 5, 8, 11, 13, 16, 20, 23, 25, 29, 33, 35, 39, 42, and 45 (8 positive and 7 negative; $\alpha = .83$).

Each statement was rated using a 5-point response scale, where 1 = definitely untrue or strongly uncharacteristic of me, 2 = moderately untrue uncharacteristic of me, 3 = neither particular characteristic or nor characteristic of me, 4 = moderately true or characteristic of me, 5 = very true or strongly characteristic of me. Convergent validity of SIPI was ensured with the original imaginal processes inventory; displaying greater level of convergent validity (Huba, Singer, Aneshensel, & Antrobus, 1982; $\alpha = .70$).

UCLA Loneliness Scale (Russell, 1996): Urdu translated University of California Los Angeles Loneliness Scale was used for assessing loneliness (Batool, 2001). Its response format was Likert type, where 1 = never, 2 = rarely, 3 = sometimes, and 4 = always. Scores for each item are summed together. Higher scores indicate greater degree of loneliness and vice versa. It was validated on college students, teachers, military hospital nurses, and on elders as sample. The measure was highly reliable, both in terms of internal consistency (coefficient alpha ranging from .89 to .94) and test-retest reliability over a period of one year ($r = .73$).

It originally consisted of total of 20 items, but during its translation and validation in Pakistani culture, item number 8 was split in to two halves (as suggested by majority of teachers). So, now scale of 21 items was administered. There

were 11 negative worded (lonely) items and 10 positively worded (non-lonely) items. Item number 1, 5, 6, 10, 11, 16, 17, 20 and 21 were reverse coded. These were positive items and reverse coded as 1 = 4, 2 = 3, 3 = 2, and 4 = 1. Its scores range from 24 to 84, maximum score show high level of loneliness. The scale was found highly valid in terms of convergent validity with the differential loneliness scale ($r = .72$). However, it was negatively correlated with social provisions scale ($r = -.68$), which ensured its discriminate validity (Russell, 1996).

Interpersonal Support Evaluation List (ISEL; Cohen, Mermelstein, Kamarck, & Hoberman, 1985): An Urdu translated version of 12 items ISEL was used for assessing perceived social support (Yousaf & Ghayas, 2013). It comprised of three different subscales. The domain of Appraisal Support contain item numbers 2, 4, 6, and 11; subscale of Belonging Support included item numbers 1, 5, 7, and 9; and subscale of Tangible Support comprised of item numbers 3, 8, 10, and 12.

It has Likert type 4-point rating response format ranging from 1 = definitely false to 4 = definitely true. Its reliability with undergraduate students was .77 to .86 and with general population ranging from .88 to .90. Respondents were requested to indicate on each sentence the level of availability of different types of social support in their lives. The scores range from 12 to 48. The following items 1, 2, 7, 8, 11, and 12 were reverse scored.

Procedure:

In order to collect the data all formal departmental permission and list of enrolled students was obtained by the head of departments. On random basis students were personally contacted in their departments. They were briefed regarding the nature and objectives of the study. Also, informed consent of the students was taken. Before administering the instruments of the study, the required personal information was obtained through the demographical sheet and the confidentiality of their information was ensured. The participants of study were appreciated for their cooperation and support in the study.

Table 1. Mean, Standard Deviation, Internal Consistency and Correlation Matrix for all the Variables Used in the Study (N = 177)

Variables	M	SD	α	2	3	4	5	6
1 Loneliness	45.21	10.24	.85	.27**	-.10	.23**	.33**	-.48**
2 Daydreaming	145.9	17.06	.70	--	.46**	.78**	.71**	-.04
3 Positive DD	51.65	7.20	.60		--	.19**	-.10	.29**
4 Guilt and Fear	46.74	8.43	.62			--	.34**	-.14
5 Poor Attentional	47.51	10.11	.67				--	-.16*
6 Perceived Social Support	36.96	5.85	.67					--

**p < .01, *p < .05

Results

Table 1 postulates the mean, standard deviations and internal consistency index (alpha coefficients) of all the variables analyzed in the present study. It also describes inter-correlations among all the study variables. Results revealed that loneliness is positively correlated with daydreaming while it is negatively correlated with perceived social support. Furthermore, results also revealed that perceived social support is a non-significant correlate of daydreaming, but positive constructive daydreaming and poor attentional control appeared as significant, positive and negative correlate of perceived social support, respectively.

Table 2. Linear Regression Analysis of Loneliness as a Predictor of Daydreaming (N = 177)

Predictor Variable	B	β	S.E	R ²	F
Loneliness	.45	.27	.12	.07	13.65***

***p < .001

Regression analysis is computed by taking loneliness as predictor and daydreaming as criterion variable. Results of regression analysis reveal that loneliness significantly and positively predict daydreaming. The model is found significant {F (2, 175), β = .27, t = 3.69, p < .001} and it indicates that 7% variance in daydreaming is contributed by loneliness (R² = .07).

Table 3. Perceived Social Support as a Predictor of Loneliness (N = 177)

Predictor Variable	B	β	S.E	R ²	F
Perceived social support	-.84	-.48	.12	.23	52.17***

***p < .001

Results of regression analysis revealed that perceived social support is negative, but is a significant predictor of loneliness {F (2, 175) = 52.17, β = -.48, t = -7.2, p < .001}. It indicates that 23% variance in loneliness is caused by perceived social support (R² = .23).

Table 4. Mean, Standard Deviation and t-test Analysis for Daydreaming, Loneliness, and perceived social support (N = 177)

Variables	Boys (n = 74)		Girls (n = 103)		t(175)	95% CI		Cohen's d
	M	SD	M	SD		LL	UL	
Daydreaming	143.86	19.38	150.22	16.10	-2.38**	-11.63	-1.08	-.36
Loneliness	45.87	10.85	44.72	9.81	.74	-1.93	4.23	.11
Perceived SS	36.20	6.39	37.50	5.41	-1.46	-3.05	.45	-.22

**p < .01

Table 4 presents independent sample t-tests for exploring gender differences in daydreaming, loneliness, and perceived social support. Significant gender differences are evident in daydreaming as it is revealed that girls scored high on daydreaming as compared to boys. Furthermore, non significant gender differences appeared in perceived social support and loneliness.

Discussion

This research was an attempt to investigate the relationship among daydreaming, loneliness and perceived social support among university undergraduates. Analysis of data showed that loneliness is a significant, positive predictor of daydreaming (see Table 2). These results are in support of the previous study, which presented that daydreaming is caused by loneliness and other negative dispositions (Smallwood, Fitzgerald, Miles, & Phillips, 2009). Loneliness provides significant grounds for daydreaming and leads people toward a state of imagination. Since, daydreaming plays a role of wish-fulfilment (Klinger, 1990), it may be justified that in the phase of unavailability of worthy and meaningful relations daydreaming acts as a defence mechanism to cope with the loneliness period. In addition to this, it can also be justified that when a person feels his present life is without any quality of relationships and bonds, either being rejected and excluded then he/she ultimately resorts to daydreaming. On the other side, a life, which is full of joys and has the presence of people who are caring and loving, then the need for daydreaming gradually decreases.

Results of the present study showed that perceived social support was not correlated with daydreaming, but further analysis on the subscales of daydreaming yielded important results. Interestingly results revealed that perceived social support is a significant, positive correlate of positive constructive daydreaming subscale and a significant and negative correlate of poor attention control daydreaming. In contrast, a non-significant relation was found with the subscale of guilt and fear of failure daydreaming subscale. It is said that almost everyone reports to have daydreaming daily and

daydreamers can have various level of perceived social support. Therefore, results of current study are supported by previous research, which revealed that relationship between daydreaming and perceived social support is very complex and the nature of relationship is dependent upon the content of daydreaming (Mar, Mason, & Litvack, 2012) and the scale used in the current study is measuring three different types of daydreaming. Therefore, the total score of the scale appeared as a non-significant correlate of perceived social support, but positive constructive daydreaming and poor attention control subscales are found to be correlated with the perceived social support.

It demonstrated the fact that for more positive, vivid and enhanced abilities of problem solving daydreaming, factor of social support is very crucial. These practices are common in everyday life that perception of social support is highly linked with more enjoyable, enthusiastic and positive patterns of daydreaming (Mar, Mason, & Litvack, 2012). It is naturally known that the perception of the world and its belongings does have an influential effect on the level of happiness, joyfulness and wish fulfilment. As, the tendencies of human being is to be accepted by the society, the perception of this acceptance leave warm and stimulating feelings with the courage of solving enormous problems. The courage of these pleasant thoughts is gained through imaginations, which further lead toward constructive part of a person's life.

Similarly, significant, negative relation with poor attentional control daydreaming also depicts that the unavailability of support group leads a person toward strong distractibility without any productive and fruitful ideas. It is clearly validating that social support is necessary for psychological well-being; it buffers the impact of psychological stress and traumas (Pugliesi & Shook, 1998). On the contrary, lack of psychological well-being is directly related with poor attentional daydreaming (Stawarczyk, Steve Majerus, Van der Linden, & D'Argembeau, 2012).

Furthermore, analysis revealed that perceived social support is a significant and negative predictor of loneliness and these results are in line with the hypothesis of the study (see

Table 3). Similarly, Genco"z and O"zlale (2004) found significant, inverse relation between perceived social support and loneliness. It is obvious that when a person feels the need to be connected with the people and perceives the availability of social relationships then he/she ultimately leads towards the low level of loneliness. By means of this, loneliness is marked with deficiencies of close companions and affection required for survival (Baron & Byrne, 2003).

The reason for these results could be that with the growing trends of change and materialistic attitude, the level of depression also exceeds. In these circumstances people consistently want someone to discuss about their personal matters for advice (appraisal support). Also, there is a continuous need for someone to help them with their daily chores (tangible support); thus, the perception about availability of support group definitely acts as a buffer against loneliness. With regards to the same, loneliness does not always mean the unavailability of social relationships in a person's life; rather it talks about valuable relations. Hall (2007) justified that loneliness can be experienced by an individual even while being in the presence of a large gathering. Loneliness signals a painful awareness that one is not feeling connected to others along with the deficiencies in meeting with the important needs of life.

Results of current study showed a high level of daydreaming among women as compared to men. It signifies that women are more disposed to daydream, as they are more disappointed with their existing lives. Moreover, specific activities of household chores, which demand little intellectual stimulation, favour the process of daydreaming in females (Sutherland, 1971). One plausible explanation can be offered in the reasoning that girls easily get bored with their current situations, which offers them more chances for daydreaming (Giambra, 1980).

Another important reason might be that, because of lesser resources for enjoyment for girls (parks, hotels) than boys, they are restricted within the boundaries of their homes without any source of delight. So, daydreaming is the only source, which gives them a relief from their boring and constant, routine life. In this

manner, daydreams allow girls to fantasize about imaginary situations, which are not feasible in the reality. In the same context, for not having any joyful practical resources they excessively read novels, monthly digests for the fulfilment of their desires, which ultimately results in daydreaming.

Data analysis revealed that non-significant gender differences are present in perceived social support and loneliness. Many researchers have supported similar results about non-significant gender differences present in loneliness and perceived social support (Adel, 2004; Bas, 2010; Pfeifer & Asberg, 2011, Tariq & Masood, 2011). When the data was collected from university students where co-education system is practised; it clearly displays the changing trends in our society. It exhibits that those girls who enter in co-education system also belong to those families, which do accept the modernization with open minds. Secondly, these changes also support the non-significant gender differences as mutually receiving and sharing of similar information under the same environment happens. In the context of Pakistani culture, mostly women perceive low social support and loneliness after their marriages because at their parents home they lived a carefree life and without any responsibilities. However, it can be said that marital status might play an important role in bringing differences in perceived social support and feeling about loneliness.

Limitations, recommendation and implications of the Study

The present cross-sectional study has exposed very important findings; however it has also carried many concerns, which should be considered in future. Moreover, relying only on one method of data collection can deteriorate the findings. Also, in the current study no consideration was taken for checking the comparative influence of education sector (private/public), which may also play a vital role on the interested variables. For a more comprehensive picture of findings, personality characteristics should be controlled or treated as variable for further research.

Findings of present research would be helpful for social psychologists, educational

psychologists and family counsellors in dealing with different type of students who are victims of loneliness and deprived of social support.

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