

Daydreaming Under Psychological Prospective: A Mini Review Article

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Abstract

Background: Humans are the only creatures distinctly known to have the ability to daydream. The daydreaming phenomena is a common daily mental activity in which person's mind initiate thoughts and imagination in the waking hours that are not related to current task or present momentum. It is a pattern of inner mental experience, that is particular to every human being, reflecting the person's unique self. Despite its known throughout human history, the precise reason behind this human behavior is not fully understood. Many psychiatrists had tried to explore idiosyncratic nature of this phenomena and subtract its unconscious purpose based on their clinical observations on human psychology and specifically about this phenomena, they had settled down many interpretations for it. This article is a minireview that explores how daydreaming holds different prospective according to psychologists.

Keywords: Day Dreaming, Mind wandering, Fantasy.

1. Introduction

Daydreaming before psychology was seen as simple distraction. However, in eyes of psychology it is seen as an important cognitive activity that should be given its deserved attention [1]. It is defined as a mental activity that nearly all people experience on a daily basis. It is a normal spontaneous brain function in which the person's mind flies off from the current task and absorbed inside thoughts and imagination. It facilitates creativity, goal-direction and planning for future [2].

It wildly differs from night daydreaming in which daydreaming happens spontaneously with the of presence of consciousness and at waking hours. It involves redirecting attention toward internal environment within self, in which mental stimulations drift attention into different realm and time [3]. This internal stream of thoughts is maintained for purpose of cognitive dissociation from reality. It is estimated that 50% of humans' waking hours are occupied with this mental activity [4]. The imaginative activity of daydreaming is an emerging concept in psychology. However, literature critically lacks reviews in that regard. Therefore, this study aims to provide an overview of psychological prospective on this phenomenon.

2. Methodology

This paper is a mini review article that represents how daydreaming holds different prospective according to psychologists. The analysis is based on a review of relevant theoretical and empirical literature. We conduct a systematic search of relevant literature in databases such as Google Scholar, Archive, PubMed and Web of Science using these keywords: daydreaming, daydream and mind wandering, not limited to any specific date. However, the search was limited to English language only.

3. Discussion

The first rudimentary description of daydreaming concept as a psychological status was given by the American psychologist William James in 1890 in their book 'The Principle of Psychology' [5]. They elucidate that in waking hours' consciousness of humans consists of succession of thoughts that the author describes as "continuous stream of thoughts". Interruption of this flow of thoughts is named "gap" which is another thought generated in current momentum and enter the consciousness. Also, they clarify imagination phenomenon as when an experience happens, after hours human's mind caught to repeat an echo of that experience in a compulsory manner [6].

However, daydreaming term first appearance in the scientific literature context was at the work of the father of psychoanalysis Sigmund Freud 'Creative Writers and Daydreaming' and 'The Interpretation of Dreams' which he describes people who daydream as "dreamer in broad daylight". As well, Freud likens this mental process with how the child initiates an imaginary world, that differs from reality and invests in with various tremendous emotions for purpose of play. The child distinguishes the play world from the real one, consciously. Also, writers use daydreaming and imitate childish play to create their works. Daydreaming like dreams may result from the human desire for wish-fulfillment, especially those desires that are not socially acceptable where it may manifest as Oedipus Rex. From a psychoanalytic perspective, such unconscious conflicts have been symbolically illustrated in classical literature such as Sophocles' Oedipus Rex, where forbidden desires and fate-related conflicts are expressed through narrative symbolism rather than direct awareness [7].

The German psychologist Alfred Adler in his compensation theory believed that people with inferiority complex resort to daydreaming or what they called "guided fiction" to compensate their weaknesses and unconscious feeling of inadequacy [8]. Furthermore, Carl Jung believed that daydreaming arises as a result of human psychological complexes, and excessive daydreaming may disrupt the continuity of consciousness [9]. While Ernest Hartmann saw daydreaming as a mental process that serves as a mediator between focused waking thought and night dreams. Waking thoughts are highly structured, in contrast night dreams are highly loosed, and daydreaming is located between them and make connection by using emotions, paving the way for new experiences to be absorbed in the consciousness and unconsciousness particularly traumatic or distressed experiences.

While Viktor E. Frankl; the psychiatrist who survived the Holocaust; saw daydreaming as a cognitive process that directed toward creating inner life which humans use it to go to their former existence. Daydreaming is bestowed to humans by nature, and it is a deep form of freedom that cannot be taken from them. It helps tolerate the agony, facilitates hope and escape from the moment [10].

Of equal importance, Jerome Singer, regarded as the father of daydreaming research, conceptualized daydreaming as having two directions: guilty-dysphoric daydreaming and positive-constructive daydreaming. The guilty- dysphoric daydreaming represents the fantasy that is negative, holds depression and anxiety feelings and includes difficulty sustaining attention. On other hand, positive-constructive daydreaming is the shining face of daydreaming in which it reflects restricted daydreaming experience that the person plans for future, invest in creativity and wisely create enjoyment [11].

Eli Somer introduced a scheme of pathological daydreaming called maladaptive daydreaming. It is defined as excessive and exaggerated engagement in inner scenarios and fantasia most time of waking hours associated with dysfunction of professional, social and personal areas of life [12]. Maladaptive daydreaming differs from mind wandering or normal daily daydreaming in its structured narrative nature [13].

4. Conclusion

Daydreaming is a mental activity that holds many psychological prospective, it is not merely a distraction from current or mind-wandering. Some psychiatrists describe it as continuous stream of thoughts and others see it as an inner life that reflects former existence. Thereafter, clinical and neurological studies are further essential to discover the psychology of daydreaming.

Conflict of Interest

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Author Contributions

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2. **Sa, Fa:** Drafting and critically revising the manuscript.

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