Research Paper

Maladaptive Daydreaming Among the Indian Youth: A Qualitative and Quantitative Analysis

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ABSTRACT

Today's youth is one of the most depressed, anxious and lonely generations to exist within this social reality. The present study aims to understand the prevalence and effects of Maladaptive Daydreaming (MD) among the Indian youth in relation to their perceived stress and satisfaction with life. For this purpose, a quantitative and qualitative analysis was conducted on the young adults in the age bracket of 18-25 years. The Sample size collected for the study was 250 participants (145 Females & 105 Males). Further 10 participants were interviewed for qualitative analysis based on their scores falling within the bracket of high maladaptive daydreaming. Three scales used in the study were namely: Maladaptive Daydreaming Scale (Somer et al, 2016), Perceived Stress Scale (Cohen, S. 1983) and Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener, E., Emmons, R. A., Larsen, R. J., & Griffin, S. 1985). A semi-structured interview schedule was designed to conduct a one-on-one interview which was further interpreted through Braun and Clark's (2006, 2013) thematic analysis technique. The findings showcased a statistically significant positive correlation of MD with perceived stress along with a negative significant correlation with life satisfaction. Additionally, the qualitative data explored various subjective interpretations and experiences of daydreaming by the participants.

Keywords: *Maladaptive Daydreaming (MD), Stress, Life Satisfaction, Indian Youth, imagination, correlation*

S tudies have showcased that today's youth is one of the most depressed, anxious and lonely generations to exist and within this social reality, the pandemic has only amplified the symptoms across the world (The Lancet, 2021). With this isolation and cut off from the physical reality, a significant section of the population has taken to extensive maladaptive daydreaming as a strategy to deal with the pressing concerns of stress and isolation being faced by the young people of India.

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The topic of maladaptive daydreaming has been introduced and extensively researched by E. Somer, (2002). Literature contains that that many people may engage in daydreaming as a coping strategy to deal with their distress (Winnicott, 1971), post a certain limit, if used excessively it may become maladaptive and cause social withdrawal (Somer, 2002).

Somer et al, (2002) defined Maladaptive daydreaming (MD) as an extensive fantasy activity that replaces human interaction and/or interferes with academic, interpersonal, or vocational functioning. He saw it to be an excessive and vivid fantasy activity that interferes with an individual's normal functioning and can result in severe distress.

Somer initially theorized that MD is a coping strategy gone awry, originally aimed at attenuating feelings of emotional pain and loneliness, and mentally escaping from adverse environments (2002; Somer and Herscu, 2017). Study conducted saw that MD was developed as a strategy to cope with distress but led to uncontrollable absorption in fantasy, social withdrawal, and neglecting aspects of everyday life.

Although daydreaming could be a positive and pleasant activity, as a coping strategy it can generate a vicious cycle of social isolation and distress, and become dysfunctional. This in turn may further increase the need to self-soothe by daydreaming (Bigelsen and Schupak, 2011). Growing evidence indicates that MD is a valid, reliable, and distinct clinical construct characterized by repeated and unsuccessful efforts to control fantasy activity, intense shame, and exhaustive efforts to conceal this behaviour. This usually leads to impairment in social, family, and other work-related activities (Somer et al., 2017b).

MD is a relatively known topic among the generation due to the extensive social media use, it has relatively significant and recurrent background in which people used various means to escape their realities and pacify their need for physical and social intimacies.

Escapism and the need to escape are extremely common tendencies that are a common response to stress and anxiety (Yi fu twan, 1998). Yi fu twan explained escapism in terms of being a natural phenomenon as long as it remains brief, if it remains chronic it may transition into a self-deluding behaviour.

The purpose of the study is to understand the presence of maladaptive daydreaming within the Indian youth, their idea and narrative behind its need. Keeping in line with the literature review done in the west on this pertinent topic we wished to substantiate the findings within the Indian context. The initial idea was to create an underlying link between stress, life satisfaction and MD.

Reports pubished by Delhi-based The Center of Healing (TCOH, 2020) suggests that stress and anxiety during the pandemic has gone up catastrophically during the covid 19 pandemic, a preventive healthcare platform, the study noted that stress and anxiety levels have been on the rise with 74 percent and 88 percent Indians suffering from stress and anxiety respectively. The financial, physical and social stress experienced by people in lieu of the pandemic has left people vulnerable to an extreme mental health crisis. Selye in 1936, defined stress as "the non-specific response of the body to any demand for change."

According to Weiten and Lloyd (2015), Stress is any circumstance that threatens or is perceived to threaten one's well-being and thereby tax one's coping abilities.

Keeping this debilitating understanding in mind, studies have shown stress to be correlated to MD, as a way of creating an unhealthy coping strategy of distraction and dissociation from reality. In a similar study conducted in Italy, where the correlation between the 16-item Maladaptive Daydreaming Scale (MDS-16), and Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scales-21 Items (DASS-21), was explored. Seçer and Ulaş (2020) showed that COVID-19-related avoidance responses, such as distraction or denial, may play an important role in the development and maintenance of negative psychological outcomes. People living in an isolated space due to quarantine regulations may also be more likely to employ mental escapism in response to a distressful external reality, by becoming absorbed in their inner worlds (Mucci et al., 2020).

Further the relation between stress, life satisfaction and MD was understood. Sousa & Lyubomirsky, (2001) defined Satisfaction with one's life implies a contentment with or acceptance of one's life circumstances, or the fulfilment of one's wants and needs for one's life as a whole. In essence, life satisfaction is inherently an evaluation and a subjective assessment of the quality of one's life. Judgments of life satisfaction usually have a large cognitive component.

Ruut Veenhoven (1996) "Life satisfaction is the degree to which a person positively evaluates the overall quality of his/her life as a whole. In other words, how much the person likes the life he/she leads"

Studies show that life satisfaction decreases as perceived stress increases as well as that perceived stress can be used as a predictor of life satisfaction. In the Indian context a study verified the inverse relation between the 2 variables. The obtained findings are consistent with research findings, which indicated an inverse correlation between perceived stress and life satisfaction.

There is a lack of literature when it comes to maladaptive daydreaming in India, even across the world it's a relatively novel topic that has left various domains unexplored. Hence the study identified the need to explore this among the context of the non-clinical young population.

The aim of the present study was to understand the prevalence and effects of maladaptive Daydreaming among the Indian youth in relation to their stress and satisfaction with life.

METHODOLOGY

Objectives

Quantitative Objectives
To assess the prevalence of Maladaptive Daydream among the Indian youth
To assess perceived stress among the Indian youth
To assess life satisfaction among the Indian youth
To create a correlation between Maladaptive Daydreaming with Perceived Stress and Satisfaction with life Scale.

Qualitative Objectives
To understand Maladaptive Daydreaming among the Indian youth
To understand the participant's subjective meaning and experience of daydreaming
To understand the Positive and Negative effects of Daydreaming
To understand the reasons for engaging in daydreaming and its subsequent management

Hypothesis
The research hypothesis is that there is a correlation between Maladaptive Daydreaming (MD), Perceived Stress and Satisfaction with life among the Indian youth falling in the age bracket of 18-25 years.

Participants
The inclusion criteria for the participants of the present study were Indian youth belonging to the age bracket of 18-25 years. The Sample size of the current study was 250 participants (145 Females & 105 Males). Further 10 participants were interviewed for qualitative analysis based on their scores, falling within the bracket of high maladaptive daydreaming. The sampling Technique used in the current study was convenient and purposive sampling.

Material
Quantitative Measure
Three scales were used in the study namely Maladaptive Daydreaming Scale (Somer et al, 2016), Perceived Stress Scale (Cohen, S. 1983) and Satisfaction with life Scale (Diener, E., Emmons, R. A., Larsen, R. J., & Griffin, S. 1985).

Maladaptive Daydreaming Scale (Somer et al, 2016) is a 16 item self-report measure designed to assess maladaptive daydreaming on a 10 point likert scale presented as percentages (0% to 100%). It demonstrated sound internal gas consistency and temporal stability (test retest reliability, R equals to 0.192: average time in between the administration was 21.17 weeks: SD, 5.62 weeks).

Perceived Stress Scale (Cohen, S. 1983) is a classic stress assessment instrument to measure the self-reported degree stress appraisals by situations in one's life. It understands the feelings and emotional effects of different situations in relation to the perceived stress. The psychometric properties of the PSS-10 demonstrated adequate internal consistency reliability ($\alpha = .78$); moderate concurrent criterion validity with the amount of stress experienced during an average week ($r = .39$, $p < .001$) and the frequency of stressful life events within the past year ($r = .32$, $p < .001$). The PSS has shown evidence for validity; the predictive validity is expected to fall off rapidly after four to eight weeks since the levels of appraised stress are influenced by life events, hassles or changes in coping resources.

Satisfaction with life Scale (Diener, E., Emmons, R. A., Larsen, R. J., & Griffin, S. 1985) is a 5-item scale designed to measure global cognitive judgments of one's life satisfaction. Normative data of the scale shows good convergent validity with other types of assessments of subjective well-being. Life satisfaction as assessed by the SWLS shows a degree of temporal stability (e.g., .54 for 4 years). The scale shows discriminant validity from emotional well-being measures. Further, the scale has also shown to be a highly reliable measure of life satisfaction, showing a strong internal consistency reliability and moderate temporal stability which is suited for use with different age groups and populations. Participants indicate their agreement or disagreement with each of the 5 items using a 7-point scale that ranges from 7 strongly agree to 1 strongly disagrees.

Qualitative Measure
The qualitative analysis was conducted on 10 participants who scored high on Maladaptive Daydreaming Scale (Somer et al, 2016). A semi- structured interview schedule was designed to conduct one-on-one interviews which were then analysed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clark 2006, 2013).

Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clark 2006, 2013) is an approach to analysing qualitative data to answer general or limited research questions about people's experiences, views, and perceptions, as well as representations of a particular phenomenon. Themes are conceptualized based on data, and research question which can be developed and lead to a new analytical process. The themes express the meanings and representations of the participants interpreted by the researcher.

Scoring

The scoring for *Maladaptive Daydreaming Scale (Somer et al, 2016),* is taken as the mean of the scores (sum of the 16 items divided by 16). For the English version, a score of 40 or higher is indicative of probable MD.

Perceived Stress Scale (Cohen, S. 1983), a total score ranging from 0 to 40 on PSS score is obtained by reversing responses (e.g., 0 = 4, 1 = 3, 2 = 2, 3 = 1 & 4 = 0) to the four positively stated items (items 4, 5, 7, & 8) and then summing across all scale items. Scores ranging from 0-13 would be considered low stress, Scores ranging from 14-26 would be considered moderate stress and Scores ranging from 27-40 would be considered as high perceived stress. A higher level of stress is indicated by higher scores on this scale.

Satisfaction with life Scale (Diener, E., Emmons, R. A., Larsen, R. J., & Griffin, S. 1985), the scoring is kept continuous (sum up scores on each item). The scores ranging from 31 - 35 interprets Extremely satisfied, 26 - 30 Satisfied, 21 - 25 Slightly satisfied, 20 Neutral, 15 - 19 Slightly dissatisfied, 10 - 14 Dissatisfied and 5 - 9 Extremely dissatisfied.

Procedure

The aim and objective of the present study was to understand the prevalence and effects of Maladaptive Daydreaming among the Indian youth in relation to their stress and satisfaction with life. For this purpose Data was collected from 250 participants without any gender bias within the demographic. A Quantitative survey encompassing three scales, the Maladaptive Daydreaming Scale, Perceived Stress Scale (Cohen, S. 1983) and Satisfaction with life Scale (Diener, E., Emmons, R. A., Larsen, R. J., & Griffin, S. 1985) was administered. The consent for the present study was obtained from all participants and confidentiality of the data was assured.

The raw data was calculated using the scoring procedure of the respective scales. The results were then calculated using statistical tools to derive the mean, standard deviation and Pearson correlation after which they were verified using the SPSS statistical tool.
For the qualitative analysis, a semi structured interview schedule was designed to acquire information from the participants scoring high on the Maladaptive Daydreaming scale (Somer et al, 2016) which was then further interpreted using Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clark 2006,2013). Debriefing of the participants was ensured.

Data
Table 1: Total Scores on the three Scales

Total Sample Size	Total Maladaptive Daydreaming Score	Total Perceived Stress Score	Total Satisfaction with life Score
250	9789.375	5149	5325

The above table depicts the total scores calculated on the three scales for the total sample size of 250 participants.

RESULTS

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics

Scales	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Perceived Stress Scale	250	20.596	6.80062
Satisfaction with life scale	250	21.3000	6.45793
Maladaptive Daydreaming Scale	250	39.1575	20.59058

The result Table 2 depicts the statistical description of the scores of the three scales, the maladaptive daydreaming scale (Somer et al, 2016), Perceived stress scale (Cohen, S. 1983), and satisfaction with life scale (Diener, E., Emmons, R. A., Larsen, R. J., & Griffin, S. 1985). For the total sample size, The mean was 20.59 and standard deviation was 6.8 for Perceived Stress Scale (Cohen, S. 1983), the mean for Satisfaction with life Scale (Diener, E., Emmons, R. A., Larsen, R. J., & Griffin, S. 1985) was 21.3 with the standard deviation of 6.4 and on the Maladaptive Daydreaming Scale (Somer et al, 2016) the mean calculated was 39.1 and standard deviation calculated was 20.5.

Table 3: Correlation between the three scales

Correlation	Perceived Stress	Satisfaction with life	Maladaptive Daydreaming
Perceived Stress Scale	1	-3.29**	0.243**
Satisfaction with life Scale	-3.29**	1	-0.033**
Maladaptive Daydreaming Scale	0.243**	-0.033**	1

*Notes: ** indicates correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed)*

Referring to the result table 3, it can be inferred that there is a Positive significant correlation between Maladaptive Daydreaming and Perceived Stress along with a Negative significant correlation with Life Satisfaction.

Table 4: Thematic analysis
Objective 1: Meaning of daydreaming according to the participants of the study

VERBATIM	INITIAL CODES	SUB THEMES	MAIN THEMES
For me daydreaming is basically imagining scenarios inside your head, imagination and its daydreaming so it's during the day and you have control over it, as compared to at night when you don't have the freedom to choose what is happening.	Imagining scenarios inside your head, control over it	Control, imagination	Imagination
I start thinking about other things, things related to my future or if i wasn't here i would be	Other things, things related to my future, imagining another world or	Imagining alternative	Imagination

doing this, things like that. I start imagining another world or another scenario.	another scenario		
It is the increased tendency to think and imagine. I feel I myself have an extreme tendency to imagine and be in that situation alive. Matalb muje toh aisa lagta hai that im living or you can say present in that dream at that particular point of time too. Basically daydreaming i would say is imagination or illusions.	Dreaming with open eyes, tendency to imagine, living the dream in real life, imaginations and illusions	Dreaming, Imaginations, illusions	Imagination
Daydreaming is basically letting you mind explore hypothetical situations when you are awake, so it's a lot more conscious than actual daydreaming.	Exploration, hypothetical situation, more conscious	Exploration, more conscious	Conscious Exploration
Daydreaming for me is good, beneficial, makes me realise my goals and should always be goal oriented, what am I up to, what I wanna do. Daydreaming helps me realise my reality and my present dreams which pushes me hard, it can really motivate me to achieve my targets my goals.	Good practice, Benefiting, goal oriented, positive manifestation, bridge the gap between reality & future, boost self-satisfaction	Set Goals, positive manifestation, future aspirations, satisfaction	Target oriented
A person needs desires and aspirations to become something in life that results from daydreaming. I would define daydreaming as both entertainment and aspirations.	About desires and aspirations, future goals, aspirations	Future goals, aspirations	Aspirational
I don't know much but it's like aage kya krna hai and all.	What to do in the future	Future, Imagination	Ideal Future
Daydreaming for me is self-satisfaction. It is	Self-Satisfaction, positive manifestation,	Manifestation, self-satisfaction	Manifestation

basically positive manifestation which bridges the gap between reality and future, thats how i believe every billionaire has become one.	bridge gap between reality and future		
Daydreaming for me is escaping from a boring life. I enjoy daydreaming.	Escaping the boring life, enjoy,	Escaping, enjoy	Escaping
My daydreams are very unintentional and I don't do it consciously.	Unintentional and I don't do it consciously.	Unintentional, not conscious	Unintentional
Daydreaming for me is something which gives satisfaction but never the pressure, to be honest.	Satisfaction, no pressure	Satisfaction	Satisfaction
To me it means thinking about stuff that is not going to happen anytime soon or maybe never.	Thinking about things that will not happen, Longer Duration	Imagination/ Hypothetical Longer duration	Unrealistic
Maybe overthinking, something parallel to overthinking or dreaming high	Overthinking Dreaming high	Overthinking	Overthinking

Objective 2: To explore the Content of the daydreams experienced by the participants

VERBATIM	INITIAL CODES	SUB THEMES	MAIN THEMES
"They can be quite absurd, but as a child i thought i'd go into a more creative field, so my mind goes there a lot', "when i'm watching a show i imagine myself as the writer of the show, i imagine myself going on different interviews to come up with my own interpretation, which might be different from the original or just add to it. This is the most recent one, otherwise usually I might be a musician or any kind of artist, these are the most frequent.	Wanted to get into a more creative field, imagines oneself as a writer of a story to expand the plot, musician, artist	Occupational aspirations of a creative field, unfulfilled	Occupational aspiration
So I want to become IAS officer, and I want to motivate myself to love books, so while studying I don't take it as a weight, so I imagine that I will	Don't fantasise IAS Officer Imagine	Career Imagination Routine	Career aspirations

have an office with a nameplate of mine, when it will be my first day I will call my parents and take them there, click pictures, just normally it revolves around.			
So I am preparing for defence, aspirant for defence, mai lieutenant ki job ki preparation krrhi hu aur mai Rotaract club of delhi me director of vocational services me work krrhi hu, so I think about it all the time	Defence Rotaract Vocational services	Career oriented Future plans	Career aspirations
Ya, like when it is about career, or something uncertain, or when I don't know how it will go so it affects me	Career Something uncertain	Career oriented Uncertainty	Career aspiration
So a daydream I would like to take you to, I was into my graduation. One day I sat with my friends and in general discussed Bollywood stars. Honestly, my friends used to mock me a lot. I took it as a very personal comment because i was confident about my speaking skills i had to just figure out a way with time and finally when i was in my second year 2017, i made it up till there, i finally have sat with Mouni Roy, Remo d'souza, varun sharma, more. Then I realized that daydreaming is good at times, it really charges me up.I mean it takes a lot of effort, brain and resources to fulfill self-desires. Even my friends were shocked, it feels like target accomplished.	Dreaming about a particular situation, make it the goal, achieving it, self satisfaction and proud, applying brain and using most available resources to fulfill it	Achievement of a goal, self satisfaction, using resources, putting in efforts	Achievement, satisfaction
so I am over ambitious so probably thinking will I be able to take responsibilities, like the college stuff like will I be able to work on the position that I got	Over ambitious Thinking about responsibilities and my position	roles , responsibilities	Ambitions

Maybe career or people around me, relationships.	Career , relationships	Priorities	Ideal life
I start imagining conversations with my friends where I think about what I would say to them if certain things happen. My conversations can at times become aggressive which I'm certainly not in real life.	Conversations with friends, can be aggressive, my outlet	Emotional expression, Unrealistic self	Emotional expression
Ya I have actually fallen down, had weird things going around while daydreaming. Okay so like I like the sport football, so I am mostly daydreaming about my favourite players like messi. So I have fallen down and got my head bumped in the door	Fallen down, Daydreaming about favourite player, Bumped into the door	Physical dissonance, Unrealistic, football player	Sports Fantasy
Yes, for sure, my favourite genres are fantasy and fiction. Non fiction never interested me and even though I have expanded my taste, I still prefer fantasy to any other genre. I feel really really attracted to any kind of media, shows etc that talks of magic or superheroes etc?	Preference for fiction and fantasy	Preference for fiction and fantasy	Fiction and fantasy
I enjoy dreaming about it, thinking about how it feels to be that person and more. I have also dreamt about playing a movie character like someday ill be playing iron man, being like tony stark. I mean these are all weird but then these are only and only my imagination Mine are fiction. They don't really have any sort of relevance but do have some fsort o self-satisfaction.	Satisfaction, play a role while dreaming, fictional dreams	Fictional role play	Fictional role play

My daydreams range from lusts to becoming the richest person. However, I feel they are unrealistic too sometimes.	Range from lusts to being rich,	Satisfaction, Lust Ambition	Lust
For me, it is a bit of both as it is usually based on something that is happening around me like if i have watched a movie or series or something like that, so my daydreams are automatically based on that. Anything happening around me or any situation I am in will still be in my head	Based on something happening around me, movie or series, automatically	Based on fiction, immediate environment	Alternate reality
I am also a K-pop fan so basically that's something that you can't help getting obsessed with as it has so much stimuli. There is a lot of content there to start imagining myself with this idol. For me personally, I used to daydream about educating the ideology, like talking to them about music tastes. Most common daydreams would be where I am explaining some movie or song interests to them, telling them what it means and bridging the gap between languages.	K-pop, educating the ideology, music tastes, bridging the gap between languages	Pop culture, exchange of culture	Fiction/ exchange of culture
I recently saw a horse in a movie, now i have started imagining ki mere pass sach mai ek horse and im ridding it, keep it as a pet, grow with the horse and then pet the kids of the horse as well and mere bache bhi usko karenge whenever i have kids. Basically I and horse will grow together, our kids will play together. I start imagining everything. I'll visualise each and every detail too. Apart from that i start researching too jaise sari breads ke bare mai read karna, unko pet karne ke liye kya kya chahiye and more like all	Movie, imaginations, relationship with horse, kids, father, visualisation, serach content	Imagining relationships with horse, future kids, father	Fantasising Relationships

details. Also jaise abhi recently i had an argument with my father. Toh maine uske baad i imagined each and every scenario of it, could even heard all conversation exchanged. Yaha tak ki mai unki sari cheeze imagine karne lagjaunga. Like his relationship with his father, will i also be a similar kind of father or will my relation with my kids also be the same.			
Recently we have been planning a trip for my college society and i've been daydreaming about that a lot, like what i'll wear, we'll have these conversations etc. I'm already planning those things in my mind.	College trip, planning	Planning, travel	Travel

Objective 3:- Time spent daydreaming in a day by the Participants

VERBATIM	INITIAL CODES	SUB THEMES	MAIN THEMES
when i am a little free. Its hard to quantify it as I can't pin - point when I slip into it, but let's say I have an hour wherein i have to work, I would probably say in total about 20 minutes, like I work for 5, then daydream and then work. (like 30% of the time)	I slip into it, 20 minutes before working, 30% of the time,	automatic , 30% of the time	30% of the day
2-3 hours, and it's extremely unconscious and I have to tell myself to stop.	2-3 hours, unconscious	2-3 hours	2-3 hours
sabse zada mai defence ka sochti hu, ki kaise achieve krna hai which approximately say 7 hours	7 hours, Defence, Achieve goals	7 hours	7 hours
So I spend a lot of time daydreaming, it's safe to say about 8-10 hours because there is always a parallel daydream going on in my head. Like I don't know if I'm exaggerating but for me there is always something parallely	8-10 hours, parallel daydream going on, extremely	A consistent and parallel daydream,	Constant

going on in my head.			
mostly at nights, 1 hour approx.	Nights, 1 hour	At night, 1 hour	Night
Very honestly i daydream the whole day but i stop myself after a point and then focus on the goal.	Full day, stop after a point focus on goal,	Full day, focus on goals,	Full day
whenever I'm free or whenever I have time when I'm not occupied with anything major, or whenever I am not occupied with any primary work. Whenever i'm sitting free I automatically start thinking or daydreaming about the same.	Daydreaming in free time, dont remember daydreams, automatically start dreaming,	Automatically dreaming in free time	Down time
honestly i feel i daydream the whole day, i start overthinking on each and every thing around me, agar koi pen bhi rakha hoga samne toh usse related ek puri sitauion create karna, uski history dekhna and more. If i have to give a percentage then i think 98% of my day goes dreaming about everything and also 1 dream leads to another and aisa ek puri story ya imagination create ho jati hai diamg mai.	98% of day spent on daydreaming, imagining situations about each and every object, learn about history, 1 dream leads to another	Most of the day, research, dream leads to another dream	Entire day

Objective 4- Negative effects of Daydreaming as experienced by the participants

VERBATIM	INITIAL CODES	SUB THEMES	MAIN THEMES
I feel it does take me a lot more time to finish tasks because i am daydreaming, like during boards when everyone would compare how much time they took to finish a particular chapter, i remember taking significantly longer as compared to them and they would be confused	Significantly longer time to finish tasks, daydreams may take a negative turn, make her anxious, cannot sleep,	Provokes anxiety, hinders sleep	Anxiety
Maybe it's because I'm not a very optimistic person that something tends to go wrong even in most of my	Not optimistic person, something tends to go wrong, anxious	Anxious	Anxious

fabulous daydreams. Like I will be some musician who is doing very well but suddenly gets cancelled. Then I genuinely get anxious			
I was so stressed, I was trying hard to tackle everything, how can I cut my distractions, like when you can control its okay but its not a switch that you can turn it on and off but when that control goes away then it completely takes away your mental health on a toss. I was stressed so I daydream and after that I was even more stressed so it was like a vicious cycle i fell into.	Stressed Distractions hard to tackle everything takes away your mental health on a toss vicious cycle	Stress Loss of control Mental health Vicious cycle	Stress
i feel negatively it does take a troll on me cause i can never live my fictions in a realistic way which cause stress too.	unrealistic so cant achieve, added stress,	Unachievable, fiction, stressfull	Stress
honestly i think i day dream a lot, I think mai har situation ko 2-3 times itna imagine karne lagta hu ki ussi situation ki bohot sare situations sochne lagta hu which i feel can be an added stress at times.	Imagining every scenario, added stress	Imaginations leading to stress	Stress
A lot, people around me are always kinda annoyed that I'm always zoned out and make fun of me cause they notice I'm randomly smiling. Like I'm very expressive and you can see it in my face when I'm daydreaming.	Expression during daydreaming, zoned out and making fun of me cause they notice the random smile.	Expressive, zoned out, made fun of	Outwardly Expressive
At times my daydreams can lead to negative thoughts like what will happen if i can't achieve things i want in my life, in that sense it takes me to a negative slope. It depends but these	negative thoughts, imagining scenarios, more negative recently	Negative daydreams, negative thoughts,	Negative Thoughts

days it has been directed more towards the negative.			
At times my daydreams can lead to negative thoughts like what will happen if i can't achieve things i want in my life, in that sense it takes me to a negative slope. It depends but these days it has been directed more towards the negative.	negative thoughts, it's fun to do, imagining scenarios, more negative recently	Negative daydreams, fun	Negative Affects
I can't sleep because of something that went wrong in the daydream.	can't sleep if something wrong happens in daydreams	Can't sleep	Negative effects on Sleep
Honestly, it sometimes distracts me from my daily routine that it keeps shifting my goals, one day i wanted to be to media industry now i daydream about being a travel influencer and earn money from it. daydreaming adds to the confusion cause then it makes me imagine my life in that particular job.	Distraction from goals, many dreams lead to different goals, confusion	Shifting career goals	Occupational Confusion
It does at times delay my assignments and stuff.	Delay in assignment	Negative effect on productivity	Lack of Productivity
That depends, it sometimes negatively impact as it leads to overthinking and loss of productivity, so both	Loss of productivity, overthinking	Reduced productivity	Reduced Productivity
Haan it happens ki Rotaract ki wajah se other things suffer	Other things suffer	Hindrance in daily life	Hindrance
I feel like as I have grown older I have become extremely distracted, so even if I'm attending a class I might be listening to it but there is mostly something parallely going on in my head.	Distracted, not completely listening, parallely going on in my head.	effects listening skills, distracted	Distraction
it's because my mind wanders a lot so that's why it takes me a lot more time. Like I do find it hard to finish tasks and finish deadlines, definitely.	mind wanders, it takes me a lot more time, deadlines	Wandering mind, delays in deadlines	Distraction

Ofcourse yes as I told I have bumped my head in the door. Otherwise also yes, because I get distracted very easily, I am working on something and probably see a picture of Messi and start imagining things and leave things which I was actually doing, my focus shifts very easily and I want to get rid of this	Distracted easily Start imagining and leave other things	Distraction, focus shifts	Distraction
If something doesn't let me do what i think of doing for example, if i think of reading a newspaper or something at 8am but my thoughts or my morning imaginations makes me lost in it in such a way that i end up wasting my time. Sometimes its a distraction	Hindrance in daily routine, imaginations leads to time wastage, distractions	hindrance, time wastage, distractions,	Distraction
Thoda dhyaan nhi de paate baaki chizo pe jaise college classes	Dhyaan nahi de paate	Unable to focus	Distraction

Objective 5- Positive effects of Daydreaming as experienced by the participants

VERBATIM	INITIAL CODES	SUB THEMES	MAIN THEMES
At the same time it is the only thing that gives me temporary happiness	Temporary happiness	Temporary happiness	Happiness
It is a good outlet, whenever I am feeling something I end up imagining some scenario with it, like when I'm sad or angry, i don't even realise but end up daydreaming about something where I am mad, and someone is trying to console me or I'm lashing out. When I'm sad, I'll imagine a scenario where I am dramatically sad in my head and someone is trying to comfort me and honestly I do drift from that emotion to another emotion and that's how I settle down most of my emotional outbursts.	good outlet for when sad or angry, satisfying emotional needs and human connection, settle down most of my emotional outbursts.	Emotional outlet, human connection	Emotional outlet
Yes I do, like at times they can	Outlet for emotions,	Outlet for	Emotional Outlet

be my outlet. (an outlet for my emotions), I enjoy it	enjoy it	emotions	
I am the person who believes in treating yourself gently like we are always engaged in thoughts, educating ourselves sensitizing ourselves towards others and we forget to like sooth ourselves first like you are your own priority, so you should be your first priority to soothe yourself physically and emotionally so if I daydream, it penetrates into my life, it intrudes every sphere of my life	treating yourself gently sooth ourselves physically and emotionally	Gently Sooth	Emotions
It does help me a lot emotionally, especially since we're in the lockdown, we don't get to go out as much so I don't have a lot of external stimuli in my life or anything that is actually happening in my help.	Emotional benefits, Lack of external stimuli in life	Emotional benefits	Emotional benefits
I am the person who believes in treating yourself gently like we are always engaged in thoughts, educating ourselves sensitizing ourselves towards others and we forget to like sooth ourselves first like you are your own priority, so you should be your first priority to soothe yourself physically and emotionally so if I daydream, it penetrates into my life, it intrudes every sphere of my life, study time goes on a toss everything becomes so distorted and I also feel guilt, like I feel guilty after daydreaming	treating yourself gently, sooth ourselves physically and emotionally, everything becomes so distorted, Feel guilty	Gently Sooth Distortion Guilt	Emotional outlet
It definitely feels good, it helps me live in my fantasy in unrealistic world which i would probably not be able to live ever in reality. It works as a getaway for me from daily stress and hassles. It definitely adds joy and entertainment.	Feels good, able to live his fantasies, getaway from daily stress, joy, entertainment	Fantasy, joy and entertainment	Source of Entertainment
So it really works well for me as I end up improving my	Works well, improves	Improves vocabulary,	Linguistic Improvement

vocabulary and working poetically. It's pretty good for me.	vocabulary, working poetically. Good for me	working poetically. good	
sometimes it's a positive effect because my productivity increases	Positive- Affects productivity,	Increases productivity	Productivity
yes ki if I think itna kaam krna hai day me and nhi ho pata toh it affects, but try my best to do. Hoga ya nhi hoga, hum best krrhe hai ya nhi	finishing work, deadlines	Making goals and plans, questioning decisions, deadlines	Fulfil Goals/ productivity
It feels dam good but jab bohot zyada hone lagta hai toh it gives a little stress to achieve cause i know mai vahi dream karta hu jo mai kar sakta hu. i have full confidence ki kabhi na kabhi fullfill hojaiga. I feel meri imagination power bohot strong like even if u say a word i can imagine a lot keeping that word as my main subject. Kabhi kabhi toh muje pata bhi nai chalta that im dreaming but i actually am. Kyuki when it happens in real life toh it feels like a deja vu which then makes me realise that i have dreamt about the same a lot in my head.	Good feeling, stress to achieve, powerful imaginations, build up a story about an object, deja vu, able to achieve dreams	Imagining Goal confidence on achievement, story building,	Positive Manifestation
If you achieve even if 2% of what you dreamt about it leads to a big sense of achievement and satisfaction. It makes you feel successful and grows your confidence too. It keeps me motivated and close to my dreams. It even distracts from the pressures. If you take daydreaming positively it is a big motivational driving force towards accomplishing tasks.	keeps the motivation high, sense of achievement and satisfaction, grows confidence, distracts from pressure, accomplishing tasks	motivating , achievement, satisfaction, increase confidence	Source of Motivation
I feel very satisfied while dreaming. It helps me set my goals too. i have faith to complete all my daydreams cause i feel it's all realistic even if it's a tiniest of a dream. It gives me a positive sense of life. I feel amazing while	Confidence to fulfil dreams, satisfaction, set goals, realistic dreaming, positive sense of life, gives a positive vibe for that task.	realistic, positive vibe, positive sense of self	Positive Perspective

dreaming. It just gives me a positive vibe. It also helps me learn a lot of things I always dream before working.			

Objective 6- Reasons for engaging in daydreaming

VERBATIM	INITIAL CODES	SUB THEMES	MAIN THEMES
Satisfied, content as if like aaj ho gaya ho YES, I mean it's not like koi time pe karna hai, but if I get a thought and then I start daydreaming and if some time I am not able to then its like karna hi karna hai, I will do something but I will make sure I daydream.	Satisfied Content Fulfilled Urge to daydream Make sure to daydream	Satisfied, relief, Urge to daydream	Satisfaction
this actually gives me satisfaction because for me this is the only way to get away from the daily thick life that we have followed since the pandemic. Or real me kuch acha nahi hota toh I feel dissatisfied.	Satisfaction, Get away Different from real life	Satisfaction, perceived ideal life	Satisfaction
it just gives me a lot of satisfaction. it does give a strong reality check. it has a positive impact as it gives a feeling of satisfaction.	Sense of satisfaction,gives reality check,	Self-satisfaction, idea vs real self	Satisfaction
I think a lot of it stems from this vague feeling in my life, like maybe i am settling in my life (I know a lot of people struggle with this idea) Also I have grown up not being very social at all, I have become more social over the years, I spent a lot of time with myself and it has become a coping mechanism. Sometimes, my life can feel a lot plain as compared to what i had in mind as a kid. It's definitely a coping mechanism but not one that can help me in the long run I guess.	Feels like is settling in life, unsatisfied, introverted kid, coping mechanism but negative in the long run	Coping mechanism that is unhealthy in the long run, unsatisfied with life	Coping mechanism

I spent a lot of time with myself and it has become a coping mechanism. Sometimes, my life can feel a lot plain as compared to what i had in mind as a kid. It's definitely a coping mechanism but not one that can help me in the long run I guess.	coping mechanism,	Dealing	Coping Mechanism
so initial response is kya krdia, I should not have done this, why could not I stop myself but when I think about it I can crib about it the whole day, cry for whole night, say that it is okay, I sooth myself and try not to engage in self-criticism, you should give yourself a true feedback	I should not have done this not to engage in self-criticism give yourself true feedback	Self-criticism, feedback	Self-Criticism
ye feel hota hai ki next day better karna hai, aur zada acha karna hai	To do better, To improve	Self Enhancement	Self Enhancement
yes, I feel stressed	stressed	Stressed	Stress
So, then I realized that I only do it when I am stressed. Any time that I am stressed or I know I have some task to do, my immediate reaction is to start daydreaming. I remember clearly that when I used to try to do my assignments, I used to write 2 lines and immediately my brain would start playing some sort of scenario or something. Covid and lockdown did amply it alot, it's not like we have anything else.	Stressed, some tasks to do, covid	stressed, covid	Stressed
so, I will give you an example: like I have to work on a speech or any objective, so when you are pressurized, you work better, that's how it helps, also negatively as sometimes it gives unnecessary stress	Pressurize you to work better Unnecessary stress	Creates pressure Unwanted stress	Stress
so, it's like a routine	Routine, Natural	Routine, Natural	Natural Habit

VERBATIM	INITIAL CODES	SUB THEMES	MAIN THEMES
so, as I told its natural, like when I am answering your question, I am thinking about it previously I never thought that it's a routine, it just happens.	Engraved in my schedule, habit	habit	

Objective 7 – ways to control daydreaming in a daily routine

VERBATIM	INITIAL CODES	SUB THEMES	MAIN THEMES
I manage it by controlling myself, At the current time, my daydreams are related to my current self so I feel I can manage to achieve it. I plan accordingly and dream about it which i feel is fair enough for me and keeps me motivated.	Self-Control, current self, planning fulfilling dreams, self-motivation to achieve	planning, satisfaction, self-control	Self-control
it never impacts my daily life cause i maintain that thin line of working and daydreaming. I have a strong sense of control over my thoughts	it never impacts my daily life cause i maintain that thin line of working and daydreaming, self-control	No hindrance, self-control	Self-control
I don't even realise that I'm daydreaming, it's just so ongoing. When it comes to managing it though, I'm not very good at managing the amount of daydreams but I definitely try to shift to more rational thinking and consciously try to end a certain negative daydream and bring myself to actual reality. I try to give myself a stronger reality check, that this is what your life actually is and this is what you need to do to get over the day/ week.	Does not realise, not good at managing it, shift to more rational thinking, consciously try to end a negative daydream, reality check, integral part of life	Unconscious, Conscious effort to manage it, rational thinking	Conscious effort
When i realise that i've wasted a lot of time thinking about stuff that isn't really happening or like a deadline is coming closer.	Time wastage, Deadline, conscious realization of time	Deadline, track on time	Conscious effort
I think it depends upon days,	I feel thoughts are	Meditation	Meditative

I just feel some days come on which you just can't focus, the thoughts hit you bad, I feel thoughts are calling me ki mere baare me socho, why are you not thinking about me, sometimes it happens, but I have meditated a lot so I can control now, like to mark my boundaries, not that regular but I try to meditate to cope with it, now its intruding my life a lot	calling me ki mere baare me socho, why are you not thinking about me Meditated, mark my boundaries	Self-provoking Techniques thoughts Marked boundaries

DISCUSSION

The aim of the current study was to understand the prevalence and effects of Maladaptive Daydreaming among the Indian youth in relation to their perceived stress and satisfaction with life, for this purpose the quantitative data was collected from 250 participants which encompass the three scales namely, Maladaptive Daydreaming Scale (Somer et al, 2016), Perceived Stress Scale (Cohen, S. 1983) and Life Satisfaction Scale (Diener, E., Emmons, R. A., Larsen, R. J., & Griffin, S. 1985). To understand their subjective interpretation of Maladaptive Daydreaming, qualitative data was collected from 10 participants scoring high on MD which was analysed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clark 2006,2013).

Somner et al, (2002) defined Maladaptive Daydreaming (MD) as an extensive fantasy activity that replaces human interaction and/or interferes with academic, interpersonal, or vocational functioning. Referring to *Result Table 2*, the scores calculated on the 16-item Maladaptive Daydreaming Scale (Somer et al, 2016) reveal the statistical description (N=250) with (mean= 39.1) and (SD= 20.5). It can be statistically interpreted that 112 participants met the cut-off score of 40 & higher indicating a high prevalence of MD, 138 participants scored below 40 and hence did not fall within the bracket of maladaptive daydreaming. The current study also suggests that participants reflecting scores of high maladaptive daydreaming endorse high levels of perceived stress with an inverse correlation to satisfaction with life, which was proved by the correlation calculated using the SPSS tool shown in *Result Table 3*. The table indicated a positive statistical significant correlation between MD and perceived stress signifying a direct relationship among the variables along with statistically negative significant correlation between life satisfaction, MD and stress.

The findings suggest that high levels of psychological symptoms like stress, anxiety, self-criticism, and others are the probable reasons for engaging in MD. Referring to *Result Table 2*, the statistical description of 10- item Perceived Stress Scale (Cohen, S. 1983) is (N=250) with (mean= 20.5) and (SD= 6.8). The interpretation of the calculated scores stipulates 159 participants scoring in the range of 14-26 show moderate levels of stress, 42 participants scoring in the range of 0-13 depute low levels of stress and usually do not engage in maladaptive daydreaming, whereas 49 participants scoring in the range of 27-40 show high perceived stress possibly because of the uncontrollability and unpredictability of life circumstances or dealing with daily hassles which further leads to their engagement in maladaptive daydreaming as means of distractions and coping mechanism.

Quoting the participants, the above association of daydreaming as means of coping mechanisms leads to satisfaction and self-enhancement. Calculating the scores on the 7-item Satisfaction with life Scale, (Diener, E., Emmons, R. A., Larsen, R. J., & Griffin, S. 1985), *Result Table 2* shows the statistical description which is (N=250) with (mean= 21.3) and (SD= 6.4). The *Result Table 2*, depicts a negative significant correlation between satisfaction with life and Maladaptive daydreaming which simplifies an inverse relationship. The present study interprets that slightly dissatisfied 71 participants scoring in the range of 15 - 19 along with Dissatisfied 53 participants scoring in the range of 10 - 14 and extremely dissatisfied 16 participants scoring in the range of 5 - 9 engage in daydreaming because of the positive effects like momentary happiness, an emotional outlet, productivity, positive manifestation, motivation, source of entertainment, and more as learned from the subjective interpretations. Subsequently, the 18 participants scoring 20 depict a neutral satisfaction towards life from which only 5 engage in maladaptive daydreaming. Having said that, the 32 satisfied participants scoring in the range of 26 – 30 along with slightly satisfied 49 participants scoring in the range of 21 - 25 and the extremely satisfied 11 participants scoring in the range of 31 - 35 avoids extensive maladaptive daydreaming as they usually experience negative affects occupational confusion, hindrance in work, reduced productivity or distraction which they self-control through meditation or conscious efforts of avoiding maladaptive daydreaming.

The qualitative objective of the study was to gain a supportive narrative around the quantitative scores of maladaptive daydreaming, stress and satisfaction with life. For this purpose, participants scoring high on the maladaptive daydreaming scale (Somer, et al. 2006) were chosen and an interview pertaining their understanding and experience with daydreaming was designed, along with questions relating to its effects, time spent on it, impact and management.

The initial question inquired from the participants was about their subjective understanding of daydreaming. Referring to *Table 4*, the main themes that emerged included 'Imagination', 'ideal future', 'aspirations' and 'conscious exploration'. They felt daydreaming to be the practice of picturing a parallel existence that helped them imagine a different future and/or an alternate self within a more controlled medium, that is daydreaming. Participants saw daydreaming to be a "hypothetical situation", that encompassed their 'desires' and 'aspirations'. Another main theme that emerged spoke about the solace offered by daydreaming providing "an escape from their boring everyday life". Hence, themes of escapism and satisfaction emerged where they saw daydreaming to be a gateway from their 'boring lives' which provided them satisfaction without encompassing the pressure to be realistic.

A participant saw daydreaming as a way of manifesting their dreams, as a bridge between 'reality and future'. While some used daydreaming as a means to picture their goals and ideal selves, others saw daydreaming to be 'unintentional' and 'unrealistic', and perceived it as overthinking. They knew that their daydreams were unlikely to become reality, as they described it as "thinking about stuff that will not happen"

On enquiring about their nature of daydreaming the participants revealed their daydreaming content to include career/occupational aspirations, ambition and themes of an ideal life, for example a participant revealed a childhood hope of entering a more creative field and having not achieved that she often end up daydreaming about her alternate self, Another revealed preparing for IAS exams and uses her daydreams to motivate themselves by picturing its

existence. This is in line with Somer's research (2002) where participants described the pleasure they took in picturing themselves as the persons they would have liked to be. Similarly, in our research, a participant repeatedly spoke about how they were much more outgoing in their daydreams and succeeded in careers which they wished to pursue but no longer could.

Another theme that emerged was that a few participants saw daydreaming as a way of gaining emotional catharsis, where they can be freely aggressive or sad without having to face the social consequences of such emotions. They described emoting anger in their daydreams while not doing so in reality.

Further, themes of lust, fiction and fantasy also emerged, here the participants revealed their sexual desires and indulgence in fictional role play. They pictured characters like 'tony stark' and fantasised about meeting their favourite sports player. A participant also revealed imagining interactions with 'K-pop' stars and interest in engaging and interacting with their Korean culture. A lot of the participants expressed the influence of tv/ movies in their daydreams, they imagined playing their favourite characters and preferring fantasy as a genre to consume while engaging with media. They reiterated that their daydreams were often influenced by the media that they were consuming. Research shows a strong association between daydreaming and media use, findings show that maladaptive daydreamers who are being triggered more by media are more severely maladaptive daydreaming. (Uslu, 2015)

Another main theme that emerged focused on familial structure and relationships, where they imagined having pets and kids, in an example they described thinking about relationships with father and daydreaming about how they would be as one. Lastly, the main theme of travel was evident in a participant's narration of their constant planning and hypothetical imagination of what their upcoming trip would look like.

These themes that emerged in our study pertaining to the nature of daydreams were in line with existing literature. In a research study conducted by Pietkiewicz (2018) similar themes were observed like fantasy, regret over missed opportunities, and lust and sexual fantasies. An example discussed in the study spoke of Political news to trigger delusional fantasies in which the participant saw themselves as a multimillionaire who would never let that situation happen. This is concurrent with our data where participants often spoke about imagining their ideal selves or alternate existence triggered by social media, tv shows and movies.

The next objective of the qualitative inquiry was to assess the amount of time that the participants spent daydreaming, answers varied from 2-3 hours to constant all day indulgence in daydreaming, participants described it as a 'parallel' narrative, where simple things like a pen could trigger whole story lines extending across the whole day. Others mainly daydreamt during the night before they slept, while for others a stressful/important task could trigger it. A participant also described using daydreaming as a way to occupy their free time. There was a mention of automatic daydreaming when not occupied with tasks or sitting freely.

Another objective of the qualitative study was to understand the positive and negative effects of daydreaming as experienced by the participants. The data supported the belief that

daydreaming had both negative and positive effects on the participants' daily lives and mood.

The negative effects majorly included Stress, anxiety, outward expressiveness, negative thoughts and affects, negative effects on sleep, occupational confusion, distraction and reduced productivity. Participants complained of "being anxious" and "zoned out", additionally all the imaginations and fictions increased their levels of stress due to their unrealistic nature and consequent disappointment. The participants considered it as a "vicious cycle" which affected their sleep, thoughts and emotions. One of the participants mentioned being unable to sleep "if something wrong happens in daydreams". Not only that, it led to occupational confusions, there was a constant shift in goals as mentioned by a participant "daydreaming adds to the confusion cause then it makes me imagine my life in that particular job". One major complaint was that daydreaming led to reduced productivity which then hindered their daily life. As mentioned by a few participants, daydreaming led to delayed assignments and work, consequently delaying productivity in general.

Distraction was another major effect faced by many participants. They constantly lived in a parallel existence and expressed concern over the fact that their mind constantly wandered, keeping them away from the task at hand. One of the participants even mentioned, " I have bumped my head in the door and I get distracted very easily, I am working on something my focus shifts very easily". This led to time wastage and delayed deadlines.

This is in line with the idea that even though daydreaming was initially theorised to be a coping strategy has now led to an uncontrollable absorption in fantasy, social withdrawal, and neglected aspects of everyday life. It can become dysfunctional and generate a vicious cycle of social isolation and distress, which in turn may further increase the need to self-soothe by daydreaming (Bigelsen and Schupak, 2011).

For many participants, daydreaming was also associated with positive effects. There were many themes derived like momentary happiness, emotional outlet and benefits. Participants mentioned it "gives me happiness", "I settle down most of my emotional outbursts", another participant mentioned that they enjoy daydreaming as it soothes them physically and emotionally.

Another theme that emerged was a source of entertainment as a participant mentioned that, "it adds to entertainment and joy, being able to live fantasies", it also leads to linguistic improvement like a participant said that, "I end up improving my vocabulary and working poetically". Additionally, themes like daydreaming affect productivity, lead to positive manifestation, act as a source of motivation and give a positive perspective also emerged in the present study. Participants mentioned that, "It helps me set my goals too. I have faith to complete all my daydreams "and "If you take daydreaming positively it is a big motivational driving force towards accomplishing tasks" which clearly shows that daydreaming acts as a positive factor for them in order to reduce stress and anxiety faced due to daily hassles.

On enquiring about the reasons for engaging in daydreaming, major themes which emerged were satisfaction as the participants mentioned that, "I feel content", "it gives me feeling of satisfaction" and "this actually gives me satisfaction because for me this is the only way to get away from the daily thick life", this is in line with an already existing research by Sugiura & Sugiura (2020) which revealed a positive relationship between daydreaming and

life satisfaction. In addition, it showed a positive relationship between daydreaming and subjective well-being (life satisfaction/positive mood).

Another was that it acts as a coping mechanism for the participants. A participant while narrating her incidence told that, "I have grown up not being very social at all, I have become more social over the years, I spent a lot of time with myself and it has become a coping mechanism" while another said that, "my life can feel a lot plain as compared to what I had in mind as a kid. It's definitely a coping mechanism".

The next theme which emerged while finding out the reasons for daydreaming was stress, participants said that they daydream while they are stressed. A participant mentioned, "I realized that I only do it when I am stressed. Any time that I am stressed or I know I have some task to do, my immediate reaction is to start daydreaming". Another reason is self-enhancement as it helps them accomplish their goals. For a few participants, daydreaming has become a natural habit and there is no reason for it as told by a participant that "I never thought that it's a routine, it just happens".

Lastly, the next objective of the study was to find ways to control daydreaming by the participants in daily life. The major theme was self-control, mediation and conscious effort to control daydreaming. Participants expressed their ways of controlling their daydreaming as mentioned by them, " I definitely try to shift to more rational thinking and consciously try to end", "I have a strong sense of control over my thoughts" and "I manage it by controlling myself". Another theme which emerged while understanding the ways was meditation, as a participant mentioned "I have meditated a lot so I can control now, like to mark my boundaries, not that regular but I try to meditate to cope with it".

Maladaptive daydreaming has not been officially classified as a medical disorder but has frequent relations to other psychological problems (Somer et al, 2017), Regardless, from a clinical point of view, studies support that prevention and tailored interventions for people engaging in maladaptive daydreaming should take into account the relationship between social isolation, depression, and anxiety, variables that effect their indulgence in maladaptive daydreaming. (Musetti et al, 2021)

The *limitations* observed in the study were, there is a severe lack of literature that exists in India when it comes to maladaptive daydreaming as a potential mental health concern. The present study is based on a scale designed for a non-Indian population and hence may lack certain cultural context. The nature of maladaptive daydreams are also personal hence participants may be reserved while answering the interview questions as there is lack of intimate relationship and between the participant and interviewer. The study is preliminary in its nature as it provides initial and foundational data in the field. The present study also does not depict a gender bias within its data. It is evident that an in depth analysis of the topic needs to be initiated especially taking into account different cultural contexts.

CONCLUSION

The present study aims to understand the prevalence and effects of Maladaptive Daydreaming among the Indian youth in relation to their perceived stress and satisfaction with life concludes that there is a statistically direct correlation of MD with perceived stress along with an inverse significant correlation with life satisfaction. The qualitative data explored various subjective interpretations and experience of daydreaming by the participants with an objective to understand its duration, positive and negative impact,

reasons for engagement in daydreaming as well as its consequent management in daily life. For future researches we would suggest that there should be an in depth analysis of the topic to be initiated especially taking into account different cultural contexts.

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