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## Social Media Use Maladaptive Daydreaming and Imposter Phenomenon in Younger Adults

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### Abstract

Social media use has become an integral part of modern society, profoundly impacting various aspects of individuals' lives, in early times it was a source of communication and connection but by times it has become a source of entertainment, earning, and gaining recognition etc. the reel making trends and no. of liking and sharing became something that has started defining individuals potential and worth, and due to which peoples these days are overly involved in social media use. This study investigates the relationship between social media use, maladaptive daydreaming, and the imposter phenomenon in a younger adult population. The sample consisted of 200 participants, ranging in age from 18 to 25 years. Participants completed self-report measures assessing social media use, maladaptive daydreaming tendencies, and imposter phenomenon experiences. The results revealed a positive correlation between social media use and maladaptive daydreaming. Participants who reported spending more time on social media platforms also displayed higher levels of maladaptive daydreaming tendencies. Additionally, a positive association was found between social media use and imposter phenomenon. Which indicates that individuals involved in excessive use of social media develop a feeling of self-doubt as well These findings contribute to the existing literature by highlighting the potential negative consequences of excessive social media use.

### Introduction

**Social Media Use:** Use of social media has increased recently, particularly among younger persons. Although social media platforms have numerous advantages, like the ability to



connect people, offer entertainment, and facilitate communication, there is growing worry about the drawbacks of using social media. Particularly, researchers have been examining the link between social media use and mental health, including impostor phenomenon and unhelpful daydreaming.

The impact of social media use is far-reaching and has both positive and negative implications. On the positive side, social media provides numerous benefits such as:

1. **Communication and Connectivity:** Social media platforms allow individuals to stay connected with friends, family, and acquaintances irrespective of geographical barriers. It enables real-time communication, instant messaging, and video calls, fostering social connections.
2. **Information Sharing and Awareness:** Social media serves as a vast information hub, providing access to news, updates, and a wide range of content on various topics. It allows individuals to share information, ideas, and perspectives, promoting knowledge dissemination and awareness.
3. **Community Building:** Social media facilitates the formation and growth of online communities based on shared interests, hobbies, or causes. It brings together like-minded individuals, fostering collaboration, support, and a sense of belonging.
4. **Business and Professional Opportunities:** Social media platforms offer opportunities for businesses, entrepreneurs, and professionals to promote their products, services, and expertise. It serves as a marketing and networking tool, facilitating brand awareness, customer engagement, and career growth.

However, social media use is not without its drawbacks. Some of the negative aspects include:

1. **Addiction and Time Consumption:** Excessive use of social media can lead to addiction and a significant amount of time spent scrolling, liking, and commenting. This can interfere with productivity, personal relationships, and overall well-being.
2. **Privacy and Security Concerns:** Social media platforms often require users to share personal information, which raises privacy and security concerns. There is a risk of data breaches, identity theft, and unauthorized access to personal information.



3. **Cyber bullying and Online Harassment:** Social media platforms can be breeding grounds for cyber bullying, harassment, and online abuse. Individuals may experience negative psychological effects and social consequences due to online harassment.
4. **Social Comparison and Negative Impact on Mental Health:** Social media can contribute to feelings of inadequacy, anxiety, and low self-esteem due to constant social comparison. The curated and idealized representations of others' lives may lead to unrealistic expectations and negative impacts on mental health.

It is important for individuals to maintain a healthy and balanced approach to social media use. Setting boundaries, practicing digital well-being, and being mindful of the potential risks can help mitigate the negative effects and maximize the benefits of social media in our lives.

### **Maladaptive daydreaming:**

Maladaptive daydreaming is a disorder where people daydream excessively, frequently to the point where it affects their daily lives. An individual who engages in structured daydreams or fantasies for extended periods of time has maladaptive daydreaming. Your capacity to concentrate on your academics or work effectively may be impacted. Maladaptive daydreaming has traits in common with behavioural addictions like a dependence on alcohol or online gaming. Daydreaming can be so compelling that it detracts from the present moment.

### **Definition and Features:**

- Maladaptive daydreaming involves intense daydreaming episodes that are excessive in frequency, duration, or content.
- These daydreams may be triggered by real-life events, emotions, or cues, and individuals often lose track of time and become fully absorbed in their daydreams.
- Maladaptive daydreaming may interfere with academic or occupational performance, relationships, and daily activities.

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## 2. Prevalence and Population

- The prevalence of maladaptive daydreaming is not yet well-established, but it is thought to occur in a subset of the population.
- Research suggests that maladaptive daydreaming may be more common among individuals with conditions such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), or other dissociative disorders.
- It can affect individuals of various ages, genders, and backgrounds.

## 3. Characteristics and Themes:

- Maladaptive daydreaming episodes often involve intricate storylines, fictional characters, or idealized versions of oneself.
- Themes can vary widely and may include personal achievements, relationships, power, or wish fulfillment.
- Individuals may use maladaptive daydreaming as a coping mechanism to escape from distressing emotions, trauma, or boredom.

## 4. Impact on Daily Life:

- Maladaptive daydreaming can disrupt daily routines, impair concentration, and reduce productivity.
- It may lead to difficulties in maintaining relationships or meeting responsibilities.
- Individuals experiencing maladaptive daydreaming may feel a sense of shame, guilt, or loss of control over their excessive daydreaming habits.

### **Imposter phenomenon:**

Maladaptive daydreaming is a disorder where people daydream excessively, frequently to the point where it affects their daily lives. An individual who engages in structured daydreams or fantasies for extended periods of time has maladaptive daydreaming. Your capacity to concentrate on your academics or work effectively may be impacted. Maladaptive

daydreaming has traits in common with behavioural addictions like a dependence on alcohol or online gaming. Daydreaming can be so compelling that it detracts from the present moment. IS is known to cause burnout, sadness, anxiety, and the escalation of other behavioural health problems, among other behavioural health disorders. Although impostor syndrome is a well-studied, experienced, and ubiquitous phenomenon, its real prevalence is unclear. There isn't yet a standardised or generally acknowledged medical definition. (e.g., DSM-V criteria). A constellation of interrelated traits that may or may not be present in an individual with IS include the imposter cycle, perfectionism, super-heroism, atychiphobia (fear of failure), denial of competence, and achievemephobia. Despite the lack of a formal definition, the original six criteria identified by Clance have been expanded upon since its inception.

The concept of impostor phenomenon was first introduced by psychologists Pauline Rose Clance and Suzanne Imes in the 1970s. Initially, it was believed to primarily affect high-achieving women, but subsequent research has shown that it can impact individuals of any gender, age, or professional background.

**Common signs and experiences associated with impostor phenomenon include:**

**Fear of Failure:** Individuals with impostor phenomenon often have an intense fear of failure and are highly concerned about making mistakes or falling short of expectations.

**Discounting Achievements:** They tend to downplay their accomplishments and attribute them to luck, timing, or other external factors rather than their own abilities and efforts.

**Perfectionism:** Impostor phenomenon is often linked to perfectionistic tendencies, where individuals set excessively high standards for themselves and feel immense pressure to meet those standards.

**Overworking and Over preparing:** In an attempt to compensate for their perceived inadequacies, individuals with impostor phenomenon may engage in excessive work, over preparation, or procrastination due to the fear of being exposed as incompetent.

**Negative Self-Talk:** Internal dialogue characterized by self-criticism, self-doubt, and a harsh self-evaluation is common among individuals experiencing impostor phenomenon.

The impostor phenomenon can have various underlying causes, including personality traits, early life experiences, cultural and societal factors, and professional environments that foster competitiveness or high expectations.

## **Method**

**Sample:** A total of 200 students were selected from the population of younger adults age range 18-25 years. Google form was created to collect the data.

### **Tools:**

1. The Clance Impostor Phenomenon Scale was developed (Clance, 1985) to improve Measurement of the impostor phenomenon and to better account for clinically observed attributes or feelings. This 20-item instrument acknowledges the fear of Evaluation and feeling less capable than peers.
2. The Internet Addiction Test (IAT) is a reliable and valid measure of addictive use of The Internet, developed by Dr. Kimberly Young. It consists of 20 items that measures mild, moderate, and severe level of Internet addiction. Total the scores for each item. IAT is a 20-item scale that measures the presence and severity of internet addiction.
3. The MDS-16<sub>w</sub> was developed in 2016 by a worldwide team of researchers led by the prominent MD clinician Eli Somer. The original version of the scale had 14 questions and was found to be an accurate and reliable measure of the condition.

## **Procedure**

For this study, a cross-sectional approach will be used to collect information from a sample of younger individuals. (Aged 18-30). Online forums, social media sites, and college campuses will be used to find participants. An online survey that contains questions about social media use, unhealthy daydreaming, and the impostor phenomenon will be sent to participants. Additionally, demographic data such as age, gender, and educational attainment will be gathered through the survey. To determine the prevalence of social media use, unhealthy

daydreaming, and the impostor phenomenon in younger adults, data will be studied using descriptive statistics. The association between social media use, unhelpful daydreaming, and the impostor phenomenon will be investigated using correlation analysis.

## Results

The first objective of the research was to find out the relationship between social media use and imposter phenomenon.

Table 1- The above table shows Pearson correlation coefficient between "raw scores of CIPS" and "raw scores IAT".

### Correlations

|                     |                    | raw scores of CIPS | raw scores IAT |
|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Pearson Correlation | raw scores of CIPS | 1.000              | +1.263         |
|                     | raw scores IAT     | +1.263             | 1.000          |
| Sig. (1-tailed)     | raw scores of CIPS | .                  | .04            |
|                     | raw scores IAT     | .04                | .              |
| N                   | raw scores of CIPS | 200                | 200            |
|                     | raw scores IAT     | 200                | 200            |

The above table shows Pearson correlation coefficient between "raw scores of CIPS" and "raw scores IAT" is +1.263, which indicates a strong positive correlation between the two variables.

Table 2- showing correlation coefficient between social media and maladaptive daydreaming.

### Correlations

|                     |                  | raw score of MDS | raw scores IAT |
|---------------------|------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Pearson Correlation | raw score of MDS | 1.000            | +1.092         |
|                     | raw scores IAT   | +1.092           | 1.000          |
| Sig. (1-tailed)     | raw score of MDS | .                | .097           |
|                     | raw scores IAT   | .097             | .              |
| N                   | raw score of MDS | 200              | 200            |



|                |     |     |
|----------------|-----|-----|
| raw scores IAT | 200 | 200 |
|----------------|-----|-----|

The table showing Pearson correlation coefficient between "raw score of MDS" and "raw scores IAT" is +1.092, which indicates a strong positive correlation between the two variables.

Correlation between Clance Impostor Phenomenon Scale (CIPS) and Internet Addiction Test (IAT):

- Pearson Correlation: The correlation coefficient between the raw scores of CIPS and IAT is +1.263, which indicates a positive association between these variables.
- Significance (1-tailed): The p-values for both CIPS and IAT are 0.04.
- Sample Size (N): The sample size for both CIPS and IAT is 200.

Correlation between MDS-16 (Maladaptive Daydreaming Scale) and IAT:

- Pearson Correlation: The correlation coefficient between the raw scores of MDS and IAT is +1.092, indicating a positive association between these variables.
- Significance (1-tailed): The p-values for both MDS and IAT are 0.097.
- Sample Size (N): The sample size for both MDS and IAT is 200.

## Discussion and conclusion

The research was conducted in order to find out the relationship between social media use maladaptive daydreaming and imposter phenomenon. Based on the results it was found out both of the variables (imposter phenomenon and maladaptive daydreaming) have a strong relationship with social media use which means that excessive use of social media can make younger adults population more prone to the feeling of self-doubt and excessive daydreaming. This study highlights the presence of significant positive associations between imposter phenomenon and internet addiction, while suggesting a potential link between maladaptive daydreaming and internet addiction. The findings underscore the importance of considering these psychological factors in addressing internet addiction among younger adults.

It can also be said that individuals who are more involved in excessive use of social media are more prone to imposter phenomenon and maladaptive daydreaming. The results of the



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study may become a base for the future studies or it can be used to raise awareness amongst peoples in order to help them with their social media uses and its pros and cons.

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