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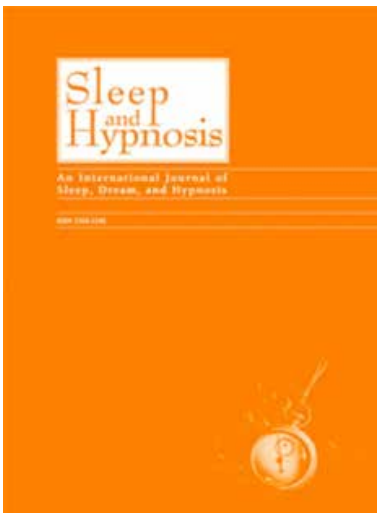

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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Dream Motif Scale – Short Form

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ABSTRACT
The Dream Motif Scale is a retrospective measure devised for assessing 15 predispositions that modulate the formation of dream narratives. It requires respondents to rate their lifetime frequencies with which they have dreamed about 100 themes. The Dream Motif Scale can be utilized not only as a psychometric measure but also as a classification system for analyzing themes in dream reports. Moreover, the 15 predisposition scores have been shown to be associated with a wide range of personality and psychopathological factors. A major drawback of the Dream Motif Scale, however, is that it is relatively time-consuming for respondents to read through 100 dream themes and rate each of them. In this study, therefore, I developed two shorter versions of the Dream Motif Scale. The Dream Motif Scale–Short Form–15 consists of only 15 items measuring the Ego Ideal, Grandiosity, and Persecution predispositions. The Dream Motif Scale–Short Form–20 contains the same 15 items and 5 additional items for assessing the Appetite-Instinct predisposition. Both versions were demonstrated to have good psychometric properties. Nevertheless, because they were developed based on a previous sample (N = 1186), they should be tested on other samples in the future.
Keywords: Delusions, dream motifs, paranoia, self-rating scales, typical dream themes

INTRODUCTION

Since there are typical dream motifs experienced by most people from different cultural backgrounds, dream content can be compared across individuals using a predetermined list of dream themes. On the strength of previous studies on typical dream themes (e.g., Griffith, Miyagi, & Tago, 1958; Nielsen et al., 2003; Schredl, Ciric, Götz, & Wittmann, 2004; Yu, 2008, 2009a, 2009b 2010, 2011a), I designed the Dream Motif Scale (DMS; Yu, 2012), which evaluates the intrinsic predispositions that modulate the formation of dream narratives. The DMS consists of 100 dream themes, various combinations of which form 15 scales, each measuring a dream predisposition.

The DMS has a theoretically driven, empirically supported factor structure for classifying typical dream themes and measuring dream predispositions. The DMS theme list was constructed based on the prevalence rates of dream themes and repeated psychometric testing. It also reflects the neuroscientific understanding that dream consciousness can be conceived as a psychotic or psychotomimetic state activated by the appetitive-motivational center of the brain. Of the 100 DMS themes, 60 can be classified into the categories of Grandiosity, Persecution, and Ego Ideal. Three scale scores can be computed by adding up the frequency scores of 20 dream themes for each category.

Dream themes subsumed under the first category, such as "having a superior status" and "having magical powers," are prototypes of a grandiose delusion. Dream themes grouped into the second category, such as "some people plotting against you" and "encountering a devil in

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some form," can be largely compared to those of persecutory delusions. The Ego Ideal category does not directly involve psychotic delusions but is concerned with issues surrounding dreamers' falling short of social expectations and paranoid suspiciousness, such as "being blamed or punished" and "some people spying on or talking about you." In addition to the three major categories, based upon psychometric statistics, I designed 12 other scales to supplement the assessment of the content of typical dreaming (Yu, 2010, 2012, 2016a). For instance, the Appetite-Instinct scale, which is assumed to be the key component of the Grandiosity, is devised for examining basic desires or foraging, consummatory activities in dreams.

According to the neurostructural model of dreaming, dreams are actively generated by the neural circuitry that connects the mesolimbic–dopaminergic pathway, the ventromesial–orbitofrontal cortex, and the inferomesial temporal–limbic pathway as a consequence of widespread disengagement of the prefrontal convexity (Yu, 2001a, 2001b, 2003, 2005, 2006a, 2006b, 2007). The 15 predispositions are congruent with the neuroscientific understanding of dreaming and can be mapped onto the constituents of the neurostructural model. Specifically, the Grandiosity category, the Persecution category, and the Ego Ideal category can be seen to correspond respectively to the mesolimbic-dopaminergic system, the inferomesial temporal-limbic pathway, and the ventromesial–orbitofrontal cortex (see Yu, 2016b, 2016c, for details).

The DMS is potentially useful in clinical settings. The classification system built upon the DMS has been employed to analyze dream content (Yu, 2015, 2016c). The DMS scale scores have also been demonstrated to be correlated negatively with superego functions as operationalized by social desirability or repression defensiveness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness (Yu, 2013b, 2013c) and positively with a variety of psychopathological factors, such as traumatization (Yu, 2014b), sleep problems (Yu, 2016a; Yu & Thompson, 2016), negative emotions (Yu, 2013b, 2013c), neuroticism or emotional stability (Yu, 2012, 2013b, 2013c, 2014a, 2014b), hysterical conversion and dissociation (Yu, 2011b, 2014a, 2014b), obsessive-compulsion (Yu, 2013a, 2014a, 2014b), and schizotypal tendency signified by magical ideation (2013a). A major drawback of the DMS is that for various reasons, respondents may not be able to read through 100 dream themes and rate their frequencies. In the study presented here, therefore, I attempted to create two shorter versions of the DMS that can be completed in just a few minutes, yet its scores still being sensitive to personality and affective variables.

The three major DMS categories are mostly concerned with delusional or paranoid dream themes. However, appetitive motives, which play an important part in dream formation, do not necessarily manifest in the form of delusion or paranoia. Therefore, the Appetite-Instinct scale was selected as a supplementary scale in the development of the short forms of the DMS. In view of the previous evidence that dream experiences are facilitated by emotions experienced during the daytime and suppressed by superego functions (Yu, 2013b, 2013c), valid dream scales are expected to correlate with affective and superego characteristics. Furthermore, given the neuropsychological homology between dreaming and psychosis, they should also show an association with schizotypal tendency.

METHOD

Participants

The study presented here involved a sample which was initially reported in Yu's (2012) study. It contained 398 (33.6%) male and 788 (66.4%) female participants, with the average age of 19.28 (*SD* = 1.143, range = 17–25).

Instruments

All 1186 participants completed the Dream Motif Scale. In addition to the Dream Motif Scale, a subsample of 611 participants (males = 219, females = 392; mean age = 19.27, *SD* = 1.067, range = 18–25) were required to complete also the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale (MCSDS), NEO Five-Factor Inventory

Agreeableness domain (NEO-FFI A), NEO Five-Factor Inventory Conscientiousness domain (NEO-FFI C), NEO Five-Factor Inventory Neuroticism domain (NEO-FFI N), Beck Depression Inventory-II (BDI-II), Beck Anxiety Inventory (BAI), and Magical Ideation Scale (MIS). These external scales were utilized to evaluate the convergent and discriminant validity of the short forms of the Dream Motif Scale.

Dream Motif Scale – Short Form (DMS-SF). Two versions of the DMS-SF were designed. The DMS-SF-15 consists of 15 items measuring the Ego Ideal, Grandiosity, and Persecution predispositions (see Appendix A). Each predisposition is measured by 5 items; the sum of all 15 item scores generates a total score for dream delusion. The DMS-SF-20 contains the same 15 items and 5 additional items for assessing the Appetite-Instinct predisposition (see Appendix B). These 20 items were selected based on face validity, prevalence rates, and previous psychometric statistics. Specifically, only themes that are believed to directly measure the four constructs and have been shown to have a prevalence rate of at least 40%, high factor loadings, large item-scale correlations, and reasonable discrimination and difficulty values (logistic item analyses) were included. The original instructions of the DMS were erased to simplify the procedure for completing the DMS-SF. The original 5-point rating scale was revised to maintain the clarity of the answering method: 0 = *never or unsure*; 1 = *only once or twice in my entire life*; 2 = *three times or more in my entire life, but not regularly*; 3 = *around several times a year, but not each month*; 4 = *almost once a month or more often*.

MCSDS, NEO-FFI A, and NEO-FFI C. As demonstrated in my previous studies (Yu, 2013b, 2013c), the construct of superego functioning can be indicated by repression defensiveness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness. In the study presented here, these indicator variables were measured using the MCSDS (Crowne & Marlowe, 1964), NEO-FFI A scale (Costa & McCrae, 1985), and NEO-FFI C scale (Costa & McCrae, 1985).

NEO-FFI N. The present study employed the NEO-FFI N (Costa & McCrae, 1985) to assess participants' general trait affect. The NEO-FFI N comprises 12 items, most of which depict anxious and depressive characteristics.

BDI-II. The BDI-II (Beck, Steer, & Brown, 1996) is made up of 21 groups of statements. Participants chose one sentence from each group to describe their feeling over the past two weeks. Higher BDI-II scores indicate more severe depressive symptoms.

BAI. The BAI (Beck & Steer, 1990) contains a list of 21 anxiety symptoms. Participants rated the severity of each symptom they experienced last week on a four-point scale.

MIS. The MIS (Eckblad & Chapman, 1983) contains 30 true-false items for measuring magical ideation as a major symptom of schizotypal personality or schizophrenia proneness.

RESULTS

The Cronbach's α reliability value for the delusion scale made up of the 15 Ego Ideal, Grandiosity, and Persecution items was .906. The corrected item-total correlation coefficients ranged between .490 and .676. Elimination of any items from the scale would reduce the reliability value. Principal axis factoring with direct oblimin rotation was performed using the 15 items. The resultant three-factor model accounted for 51.1% of variance. All items loaded highly on their corresponding factors as originally designed (see Table 1). The Cronbach's values for the three subscales were all well above the 0.7 conventional level. The three factors scores were positively correlated with each other, all p values < .001. The Appetite-Instinct subscale also exhibited a reasonable reliability value (.742) and was correlated most strongly with the Grandiosity subscale, r = .708, p < .001. The item-scale correlation coefficients for the four subscales are provided in Tables 2-5; all of them exceeded 0.4.

Table 1. Factor Model of 15 Dream Motif Items

Dream Themes	Ego Ideal	Persecution	Grandiosity
14 Failing or performing very badly in front of others (e.g., teachers, classmates, bosses, colleagues, etc.)	**.777**	.506	.466
9 Being blamed or punished	**.765**	.548	.447
10 Blaming others for doing something wrongly/ making troubles/ committing mistakes	**.724**	.481	.483
15 Others not giving you proper credit for your achievements	**.719**	.398	.565
13 Some people spying on or talking about you	**.678**	.555	.492
8 Being persecuted	.528	**.731**	.355
7 Some people plotting against you	.547	**.677**	.407
2 Being physically attacked (e.g., beaten, stabbed, raped, etc.)	.411	**.670**	.340
1 Being chased or pursued, but not physically injured	.407	**.668**	.302
18 Encountering a devil in some form	.409	**.539**	.425
16 Having a superior status	.618	.397	**.829**
11 Becoming an important person or celebrity	.553	.421	**.772**
5 Having superior knowledge or mental ability	.381	.298	**.661**
6 Having magical powers (other than flying, soaring, or floating through the air)	.429	.515	**.631**
19 Coming into contact with an important person or celebrity	.532	.410	**.603**
% of explained variance	40.724	6.386	3.953
Cronbach's α	.855	.828	.789
Correlation with Persecution	.622		
Correlation with Grandiosity	.643	.537	
Correlation with Appetite-Instinct	.678	.540	.708

Note. The largest loading value for each item is bolded.

Table 2. Item Analysis for the Ego Ideal Subscale (*N* = 1186)

Dream themes	*r*	r^2	α
9 Being blamed or punished	.697	.513	.818
10 Blaming others for doing something wrongly/ making troubles/ committing mistakes	.666	.462	.826
13 Some people spying on or talking about you	.619	.385	.838
14 Failing or performing very badly in front of others (e.g., teachers, classmates, bosses, colleagues, etc.)	.712	.526	.814
15 Others not giving you proper credit for your achievements	.652	.448	.830

Note. *r* = Corrected item-total correlation; r^2 = Squared multiple correlation; α = Cronbach's α if item deleted.

Table 3. Item Analysis for the Grandiosity Subscale (*N* = 1186)

Dream themes	*r*	r^2	α
5 Having superior knowledge or mental ability	.582	.385	.805
6 Having magical powers (other than flying, soaring, or floating through the air)	.570	.333	.813
11 Becoming an important person or celebrity	.697	.532	.772
16 Having a superior status	.723	.559	.765
19 Coming into contact with an important person or celebrity	.566	.369	.809

Note. *r* = Corrected item-total correlation; r^2 = Squared multiple correlation; α = Cronbach's α if item deleted.

Table 4. Item Analysis for the Persecution Subscale (*N* = 1186)

Dream themes	*r*	r^2	α
1 Being chased or pursued, but not physically injured	.568	.334	.752
2 Being physically attacked (e.g., beaten, stabbed, raped, etc.)	.587	.352	.743
7 Some people plotting against you	.588	.439	.745
8 Being persecuted	.637	.479	.729
18 Encountering a devil in some form	.476	.229	.779

Note. *r* = Corrected item-total correlation; r^2 = Squared multiple correlation; α = Cronbach's α if item deleted.

Table 5. Item Analysis for the Appetite-Instinct Subscale (*N* = 1186)

Dream themes	*r*	r^2	α
3 Eating delicious foods	.458	.215	.716
4 Finding money, winning a lottery, or becoming rich	.471	.237	.711
12 Living in a very big house	.584	.354	.667
17 Searching for something	.566	.336	.673
20 Encountering the person that you like or you want to see	.461	.228	.714

Note. *r* = Corrected item-total correlation; r^2 = Squared multiple correlation; α = Cronbach's α if item deleted.

Table 6. Correlations with External Scales (*N* = 611)

	15-Item Scale	Ego Ideal	Grandiosity	Persecution	Appetite-Instinct
MCSDS	-.267***	-.290***	-.118**	-.268***	-.165***
NEO-FFI A	-.217***	-.224***	-.154***	-.170***	-.088*
NEO-FFI C	-.118**	-.124**	-.029	-.152***	-.066
NEO-FFI N	.239***	.302***	.052	.257***	.111**
BDI-II	.198***	.294***	.029	.183***	.121**
BAI	.291***	.317***	.164***	.253***	.169***
MIS	.364***	.294***	.298***	.327***	.305***

Note. *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001.

Table 6 presents the correlations of the 15-item scale and four subscale scores with external scales. Almost all DMS scores were correlated negatively with the MCSDS, NEO-FFI A, and NEO-FFI C scores and positively with the NEO-FFI N, BDI-II, BAI, and MIS scores. The Grandiosity score was relatively less sensitive to the variations in scores on the external scales.

DISCUSSION

The DMS-SF-15 is intended as a screening tool for assessing the three primary predispositions for modulating the psychotomimetic aspects of dream content. The DMS-SF-20 provides an optional subscale for measuring the Appetite-Instinct predisposition, which according to the neurostrucutral model, plays a pivotal part in dream formation but does not necessarily involve dream thoughts characteristic of delusion or paranoia. The DMS-SF scale and all its subscales showed good reliability and item-scale correlation values. The factorial validity of the DMS-SF was also demonstrated by the significant inter-correlations between the Ego Ideal, Grandiosity, and Persecution subscales and by the Appetite-Instinct subscale being most strongly correlated with the Grandiosity subscale.

Likewise, the convergent validity of the DMS-SF was corroborated by the significant correlations of the DMS-SF with the measures of superego functions, negative emotions, and magical ideation. On the other hand, the findings that the Grandiosity and Appetite-Instinct subscales were correlated relatively weakly with the negative emotion scales somewhat substantiated the discriminant validity of the DMS-SF. Nevertheless, the reason for why the two DMS-SF subscales were more sensitive to the BAI than to the BDI-II requires clarification through further investigation. Moreover, the two DMS-SF versions, which were developed based on my previous sample, should be tested on other samples in the future.

Time required for completing the DMS-SF-15 or the DMS-SF-20 is far shorter than that for completing the 100-item DMS version. The DMS-SF may therefore be suitable for those studies involving participants with short attention spans or limited time available or those studies investigating dream content merely as one of the many psychological correlates. The trade-off, however, is that the full DMS version contains many classic, typical themes that have not been encompassed in the DMS-SF, such as wearing inappropriate clothing, failing an examination, and using a toilet. In a similar vein, the DMS-100 assesses more predispositions than does the DMS-SF and is better for profiling an individual's dream experiences. Investigators may consider which version is a more pertinent option for attaining their purposes.

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Appendix A: Dream Motif Scale-Short Form-15 (DMS-SF-15)

Have you ever dreamed about the following themes:	Never or unsure	Only once or twice in my entire life	Three times or more in my entire life, but not regularly	Around several times a year, but not each month	Almost once a month or more often
1 Being chased or pursued, but not physically injured	0	1	2	3	4
2 Being physically attacked (e.g., beaten, stabbed, raped, etc.)	0	1	2	3	4
3 Having superior knowledge or mental ability	0	1	2	3	4
4 Having magical powers (other than flying, soaring, or floating through the air)	0	1	2	3	4
5 Some people plotting against you	0	1	2	3	4
6 Being persecuted	0	1	2	3	4
7 Being blamed or punished	0	1	2	3	4
8 Blaming others for doing something wrongly/ making troubles/ committing mistakes	0	1	2	3	4
9 Becoming an important person or celebrity	0	1	2	3	4
10 Some people spying on or talking about you	0	1	2	3	4
11 Failing or performing very badly in front of others (e.g., teachers, classmates, bosses, colleagues, etc.)	0	1	2	3	4
12 Others not giving you proper credit for your achievements	0	1	2	3	4
13 Having a superior status	0	1	2	3	4
14 Encountering a devil in some form	0	1	2	3	4
15 Coming into contact with an important person or celebrity	0	1	2	3	4

Appendix B: Dream Motif Scale-Short Form-20 (DMS-SF-20)

Have you ever dreamed about the following themes:	Never or unsure	Only once or twice in my entire life	Three times or more in my entire life, but not regularly	Around several times a year, but not each month	Almost once a month or more often
1 Being chased or pursued, but not physically injured	0	1	2	3	4
2 Being physically attacked (e.g., beaten, stabbed, raped, etc.)	0	1	2	3	4
3 Eating delicious foods	0	1	2	3	4
4 Finding money, winning a lottery, or becoming rich	0	1	2	3	4
5 Having superior knowledge or mental ability	0	1	2	3	4
6 Having magical powers (other than flying, soaring, or floating through the air)	0	1	2	3	4
7 Some people plotting against you	0	1	2	3	4
8 Being persecuted	0	1	2	3	4
9 Being blamed or punished	0	1	2	3	4
10 Blaming others for doing something wrongly/ making troubles/ committing mistakes	0	1	2	3	4
11 Becoming an important person or celebrity	0	1	2	3	4
12 Living in a very big house	0	1	2	3	4
13 Some people spying on or talking about you	0	1	2	3	4
14 Failing or performing very badly in front of others (e.g., teachers, classmates, bosses, colleagues, etc.)	0	1	2	3	4
15 Others not giving you proper credit for your achievements	0	1	2	3	4
16 Having a superior status	0	1	2	3	4
17 Searching for something	0	1	2	3	4
18 Encountering a devil in some form	0	1	2	3	4
19 Coming into contact with an important person or celebrity	0	1	2	3	4
20 Encountering the person that you like or you want to see	0	1	2	3	4