

Dream Recall Frequency and Personality Types at Southern Adventist University Undergraduate

Students

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Dream Recall Frequency and Personality Types

A study conducted by Michael Schredl and colleagues (2003) on dream recall frequency found a statistically small relationship between dream recall and classical personality types; however, his discovery was still demonstrable in that his findings demonstrated that further research should be conducted to analyze the relationship between dream recall and personality types. Dream researchers have continually studied different theories on dream recall understanding different factors that could be related to the frequency in which individuals can recall their dreams. Researchers have studied factors such as gender, age, handedness, attitude towards dreams, and personality types to examine the validity and reliability of each of these theories.

The following describes the current knowledge base on the relationship between different personality types such as the Big Five, and the frequency an individual with a certain personality can remember his or her dreams. Research conducted on dream recall, applied certain parameters such as personality, behavior, and attitude towards dreams to assess the frequency and accuracy of dream recall based on those parameters. Research was also conducted to find a relationship between a) right-handed and left-handed people and dream recall frequency, b) gender differences and dream recall frequency, c) a three-year parameter and dream recall frequency, and d) people's attitude towards dreams and dream recall frequency. These studies will be considered to provide information for following research.

All sources in this literature review were acquired from the EBSCOhost database at Southern Adventist University. The key terms used to find these sources were *dreams*, *dream recall*, *handedness*, *gender*, *age*, *attitude*, and *personality*.

Dream Recall and the Big Five Personality Factors

Dream recall refers to the frequency and accuracy in which individuals can recite the events in their dreams (Wolcott, & Strapp, 2002). Dream recall enables psychologists to analyze the dream's accuracy according to the individual's description of the dream; however, dream recall frequency can be affected by individuals' by personality, behavior, attitude, openness to experience, and age.

Wolcott and Strapp (2002) conducted a study on dream recall frequency compared to dream detail related to the personality, behavior, and attitude variables. They found that emotions increased the rate of dream recall frequency, but it had no effect on dream detail. Related to personality, the researchers found that relaxed and easygoing individuals recalled dreams more frequently than other competitive, impatient, and cynical participants. In contrast to Wolcott and Strapp's research, another study, conducted by Levin, Fireman, and Rackley (2003), found that personality was not associated with dream recall frequency.

Another aspect of personality. Openness to experience, thin boundaries, and absorption were studied by Schredl, Ciric, Gotz, and Wittmann (2003), who found a small relationship between dream recall frequency, openness to experience, thin boundaries, and absorption. The researchers found that attitude towards dreams was irrelevant in moderating the relationship between personality and dream recall. In contrast to other studies, the researchers found a smaller correlation between dream recall frequency, openness, absorption and thin boundaries. Although past research has found small, but demonstrable, relationships between personality and the frequency of dream recall, some people have the tendency to remember dreams they never experienced (Beaulieu-Prevost & Zadra, 2015).

Beaulieu-Prevost and Zadra (2015) provided participants with false information to induce false memories which, in turn, created false dreams in 15% of the participants; therefore, although the results may present small correlations being that only 15% of participants reported false elements induced by the technician, the results still present evidence towards a tendency that could affect the validity and reliability of dream recall.

Age and dream recall. Schredl and Goritz (2015) conducted a study on dream recall over a three-year period. According to the researchers dream recall frequency declines with age; however, the reasoning behind this statement is poorly understood. Their results showed that 75.90% of their participants had a decline in dream recall, during adulthood, over the course of three years.

Different areas of dream recall have been analyzed throughout the years, and the frequency in which a person remembers their dreams is related to factors such as personality types, gender, age, attitude toward dreams, and handedness; however, the amount of research conducted on these topics are not sufficient to fully understand the realm of dream recall frequency.

Statement of the Problem

All people dream, but not everyone remembers their dreams, and many researchers have overlooked the concept of dream recall; moreover, further dream research should be conducted to assess different dream theories which will help mental health professionals evaluate patients' subconscious. The purpose of the study is to explore different personality types and the relationship between these personality types with the frequency in which individuals can recall their dreams. Uncovering how often different personality types can recall their dreams will provide mental health professional with more information to dig deeper into an individual's

subconscious and further help the individual deal with his or her problems. Past research has found that individuals with relaxed and easygoing personality types will remember their dreams more often; however, not enough research has been conducted to concretely trust these allegations. This study can benefit different professionals in the areas of counseling, therapy, and mental health practices.

Five subproblems will guide this study:

1. The first subproblem is to explore the difference between students' personality types and the frequency in which these individuals can recall their dreams.
2. The second subproblem is to explore gender differences in dream recall.
3. The third subproblem is to examine the difference between students' ages and dream recall frequency.
4. The fourth subproblem is to measure students' attitude towards dreams and explore the difference between their attitude and dream recall frequency.
5. The fifth subproblem is to measure the relationship between an individual's dominant hand and dream recall frequency.

Two research hypotheses will guide this study:

1. Students with a more relaxed and open-to-experience personality will recall their dreams more often.
2. Right-handed undergraduate students will recall their dreams more often compared to left-handed undergraduate students.

Three research questions will be addressed in this study:

1. What is the relationship between dream recall frequency and gender differences between southern students?
2. Does dream recall frequency decline with age?
3. Will students with high levels interest toward dreams present high levels of dream recall?

The following terms are operationally defined for this study:

1. Personality types will be measured using the *Big Five Inventory (NEO-PI-R)*, a self-report questionnaire to assess participants' personality type for the study.
2. Gender will be measured by participants' self-report on the demographic section of survey.
3. Age will be measured by participants' self-report on the demographic section of survey.
4. Attitude towards dreams will be measured through participants' self-report on the *Attitude Towards Dreams Questionnaire* to assess positive and negative attitude towards dreams.
5. Handedness will be by participants' self-report on the demographic sections of survey.

This is a limited, targeted, exploratory study on the topic of dream recall frequency at Southern Adventist University. There are three major limitations in this study:

1. This is neither a comprehensive nor exhaustive treatment of dream recall frequency among Southern Adventist University students.
2. Students may experience other factors that relate to their levels of dream recall.
3. This study does not compare dream recall frequency among non-residential campus SAU students.

Three assumptions are made explicit in this study:

1. This study has scientific merit.
2. The timeframe for completing this project is adequate.
3. Participants will be honest in their self-report of dream recall frequency.

Importance of the Study:

Little is known about dream recall frequency and personality types. Since dream recall is a requirement in understanding dream detail and aspects within the psychodynamic theory, the results in this study can be a significant step in uncovering other mysteries about southern student' subconscious mind, and that could assist mental health professionals in their diagnoses.

Method Section

Participants

This study will include at least 30 undergraduate participants, from freshmen to senior academic standing, at Southern Adventist University between the ages of 18-24. For the purposes of the study the male and female genders will be the only genders assessed during the study. In order to carry out a confirmatory factor analysis, participants will also be asked to complete the attitude towards dreams questionnaire.

Materials Designs and Procedures

This study will include the use of the *Big Five Inventory (NEO-PI-R)*, the *Attitude Towards Dreams Questionnaire*, a five-action physical test to differentiate right-handers from left-handers, and a survey will be administered to assess participant's age and gender. The *Big Five Inventory (NEO-PI-R)* is comprised of 240 five-point items measuring the Big Five personality measures (neuroticism, extroversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, and consciousness), and the internal consistencies of the scales are high ($r = .89$ to $.92$). The *Attitude Towards Dreams Questionnaire* includes 25 items and that, in addition to assessing dream recall,

other items are related to a positive or negative attitude towards dreams with a factor analysis of $r = .803$. The five-action physical test includes 5 actions to assess participants' dominant hand.

Data Analysis

The *Big Five Inventory (NEO-PI-R)* will be analyzed through gathering data and entering it on SPSS and running a descriptive statistics test while comparing it with dream recall results for each individual. The five-action physical test will be analyzed through observation to gather data and running that data through SPSS to find the descriptive statistics in dream recall.

Through gathering participants' age and gender through the survey, data will be entered into SPSS to classify every participant in descriptive statistics. The *Attitude Towards Dreams Questionnaire* will be used to gather data on participants' attitude towards dreams and enter it on SPSS to compare it with their dream recall frequency.

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