

# Fantasy Behavior Scale: The Psychometric Properties

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## **Abstract**

*The development of a 24-item self-report scale for measuring fantasy behavior in populations is described, the concept was elucidated, theories and the previous studies that are applicable to fantasy behavior were applied and reviewed. The study also established the psychometric qualities and properties of the Fantasy Behavior Scale (FBS). Series of analyses was used to reduce the item pool from an initial 30 items to 24 items. The result of the factor loading for fantasy scale shows that the items loaded into seven (7) components, but most of the items loaded highest on five (5) factors or components which were named as follows: component one (fantasy behavior), loaded 17 items (8.56); component two (control over fantasy behavior), loaded 3 items (2.134); component three (attitude towards fantasy behavior), loaded 1 item (1.71); component four (loss of touch with reality), loaded 2 items (1.48) and component five (defense mechanism), loaded 1 item (1.44). The resulting (FBS) is a 24-item scale that showed high internal consistency ( $\alpha = .910$ ) and a subsequent reliability of ( $\alpha = .881$ ). It also showed external validity of  $r = .766$  (2-tailed) when correlated with fantasy proneness scale.*

**Key Words:** *Fantasy, Behaviour, Scale, Psychometric Property.*

## **Introduction**

In recent years, due to the activities of the dream fantasy merchants such as the media, who creates and merchant's pleasurable images, ideas, dreams and as well, creates what perfection should look like. Participation on fantasies has been on the increase and in turn, tends to have increased social categorization which has led to social stereotypic thinking which may influence the social behavior of individuals. The attitude towards fantasy is on the increase without the indulgers or fantasizers noticing the presence of this concept and its effect on their day to day productivity and managing of time which can be related with procrastination, and the development of

extremely passive or rigid perceptual ability and some personality type (Wilson and Barber 1983) which may also influence social behaviors.

According to Wilson and barber (1983), the actions of these "fantasizes" include spending a large amount of time fantasizing, having fantasies with hallucinatory "real as real" intensities, experiencing bodily concomitants of fantasies, procrastinations, prejudice and stereotypic thinking, bias social interpersonal relationship with people that does not fit into their fantasies, high expectation from life and life treatments. These has given rise to such concept like you hear the people or the youth saying

“dream job”, “dream partner”, “dream car”, “dream life”, “dream house” etc. and these dreams in most cases has served as a decapitator which cripples the indulgers ability to pursue reality, rather than serving as a motivator. The indulgers tend to create, achieve and enjoy their reality in their dream world. Some studies might have seen attitude towards fantasies as a coping style that some individuals use to cope with certain stressors, stressful life events or unfavorable situations.

The proneness for fantasies, daydreaming or recurrent imagination resides on every individual, male or female, old or young but attitude towards this concept tends to be on the increase on the youths. That might be the main reason why youths of these days appear quite desperate and impatient, which makes them go out of their way to do illegal, illogical and immoral things to achieve success and happiness. This is because, their fantasies seems to have created an anchoring point and created inconsistencies and inequalities with their fantasy, and reality which they can thus, do everything to resolve this problem.

### **Objective of Assessment and Significance of this questionnaire**

The aim and objectives of this assessment scale is to assess and measure the behavior of people towards fantasy, and the extent to which fantasizing can influence peoples behavior. This instrument will be significant in identifying the severity of peoples fantasizing behaviors.

### **Theoretical & Literature Review**

There are some psychological theories which can be used to explain the concept of fantasies. Most researchers have explained this “fantasy behavior” with the psychoanalytic theoretical view, which has to do with childhood fixations,

developmental pathology, abuse and repressed thoughts or reality, which then manifest later in life. But I want to explain this concept from the behavioral and the cognitive theoretical view.

The behaviorist (behavioral theory) sees some rigid behaviors as being acquired (learned) and maintained through the process of classical and operant conditioning (Plaud, 2001). This behaviorist deduced that behaviors are been controlled by environmental factors or contingencies (Follette & Houts, 1996). Applying this behaviorist view in fantasy, it can be said that the development, maintenance, reinforcement of this fantasy behavior is been controlled by the environmental factors which conditions the “fantasizers” by providing mental pleasure, that even in the absence of such conditioning, the individual continues to exhibit those fantasizing behaviors. For instance, learning to cope with boredom by imagining or fantasizing about pleasurable things or mentally fixing one’s self in a movie, stories, or books may actually distract the individual from the fact that he is bored. This may serve to reinforce the individual to engage in fantasizing when he/she is bored or in distress. Two main conduits have been recommended: In response to encouragement to fantasize from a significant other, and as a means of coping with loneliness, isolation and an aversive environment. A third, less investigated pathway, is partaking in activities such as drama, piano or ballet in young age, Barber, 1999; Lynn & Rhue 1988; Wilson & Barber (1983). The most emphasized function of fantasy proneness, based on interviews with fantasy prone individuals, is that of its use in coping with difficult situations and circumstances, Lynn & Rhue, (1988), (Persson & Vanek (2005).

The cognitive theorist deduced that such rigid behavior is as a result faulty

cognitive schemas through which environmental stimuli are perceived and processed. This theorist sees such rigid fantasizing behaviors as irrational, illogical, cognitive schemas that dominate a person's thought processes, reasoning or processing of information. When people holds a rigid thoughts or fantasies for a certain period, those thoughts tend to affect or influence their interpretation of reality and also influences how and what they expect from life or relationships. An example is that a person who always fantasizes about having a perfect romantic partner might find it very difficult choosing and accepting potential partners who appears less perfect. Which might be said to be the reason behind many people being "single" or being in a relationship or job and still be looking for another opportunity.

Wilson and Barber (1983) introduced a concept called fantasy proneness. They used this concept to refer to the distinct and related characteristics of a small group of people whom they labeled "fantasizers". Wilson and Barber described the discovery of fantasy proneness as a serendipitous result of their studies on hypnotic susceptibility. They focused on a sample of excellent hypnotic individuals and observed that they often display an extensive and deep involvement in fantasy. The researchers conducted an in-depth interview with these individuals and identified an array of features that they believed to be typical for fantasy proneness which includes spending a large part of the time fantasizing, having fantasies with "real as real" intensities; experiencing strong bodily concomitants of fantasies; having paranormal experiences; and having intense religious experiences. Wilson and Barber also estimated that around 4% of the population could be classified as having a fantasy prone personality and speculated that high fantasy

proneness might be a causal link that gives rise to the various unusual talents and experiences that were reported by participants in their study.

Studies have also revealed that there is less substantial association between hypnotizability and fantasy proneness. Braffman and Kirsch (1999) noted that the link between fantasy proneness and hypnotic suggestibility disappears when one controls for participants' expectancies. Lynn and Rhue (1988), in their research study, questioned Wilson and Barber's claim that fantasy proneness constitutes a unitary personality type. Lynn and Rhue (1987) discovered evidence that supports Wilson and Barber's speculations about the different developmental pathways that may contribute to fantasy proneness in individuals. Furthermore, Rhue and Lynn reported strong parental encouragement to engage in imaginary activities. In addition to this, they reported a heightened frequency of aversive childhood events. In these cases, a profound fantasy life may have become a means to cope with or escape from negative experiences.

## **Methodology**

### **Standardizing Sample**

Sixty (60) university undergraduate students (31 males and 29 females), with age between 16 and 29 and mean age = 22.18 and SD of age = 3.322. Eight (8) participants' responses were considered invalid and were not included and the reliability of the scale was tested using just 52 participants. Subsequently, two hundred and seventy seven (277) NYSC members randomly were drawn from eleven different local government areas in Ibadan Oyo state for this study. The participants were drawn through balloting sampling technique. The investigator gave the Corp members the

equal chances of participation in the study by picking either ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ wrapped ballot paper designed for the study. Those that eventually participated in the study were those that picked ‘yes’ in the balloting. However, out of three hundred and fifty questionnaire distributed to the participants, only three hundred and ten was returned. Two hundred and seventy seven was completed and thus, formed the sample size for the study.

Of this sample size of two hundred and seventy seven participants (mean age = 24.87), there were one hundred and twenty four male (44.8%) and one hundred and fifty three female (55.2) participants. The relationship status of the participants are; in a relationship (47.3%) and single (52.7%). The job status of the participants is; employed (31%) and unemployed (69%). The type of tertiary institution the participants graduated from are; private university (11.2%), federal university (41.5%), state university (26.7%), and polytechnics (20.6%). The religion of the participants is Christian (81.6%), Islam (18.1%) and others (.4%). And finally, the participants’ distribution of discipline/major fall into these categories; sciences (49.8%), arts and humanity (10.5%), management (19.5%), social sciences (9.0%), education (2.9%) and law (1.1).

**Items construction:** the item construction started off from the paper work of Herald, Robert, Peter (2000). Which listed 25 items of brief self-report measure of proneness characteristics and from the fantasy subscale

of Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI) Davis, M. H. (1980), from which I deduced a first set of items. I then had colleagues check these items to remove: (1) items that might be too invasive; (2) items that might deal with childhood experiences; (3) ambiguous items; (4) items that overlap too much with measures of highly related constructs and might contribute to tautological findings (e.g. Nicholls, Licht & Pearl, 1982). Out of the 25 items, I deduced 5 items from it which I reconstructed to remove ambiguity. From the questions I posed to some individuals about whether they fantasize and the content of their fantasies in a Focus Group Discussion (FGD), I was able to deduce the remaining 25 item, which gave me a total of 30 items that will test fantasy behavior. Face validity study saw the removal of five (6) items which has brought down items to 24. For the validity, a content validity was done by professionals in the field of psychology and it was ascertained that the contents of the items will measures what it is being developed to measure. A convergent validity study was also carried out to establish the external validity of the instrument. In a pilot study, this twenty four (24) items scale was administered to sample of 60 participants of 31 males and 29 females. They were drawn from using random sampling technique from a population of undergraduates of the university of Ibadan, and was scored using the Lickert scale of 1-5 (1=strongly agreed, 2=agreed, 3=undecided, 4=disagreed, 5=strongly disagreed).

**Results**

**Table 1: Result of the Factor Loading for Fantasy Behaviour Scale**

S/N	Items	1	2	3	4	5
1	I sometimes use fantasizing to cope with boredom	*				
2	I always fantasize about having the best things of life	*				
3	I think it is natural to fantasize			*		

4	I often mistake my fantasies with my real memories				*	
5.	I always use fantasies to cope with situations when situations seem bad or intense	*				
6.	I always fantasize what or how my dream partner should be like or look like					*
7.	I sometimes feel my fantasies are becoming too much and outrageous but there is nothing I can do	*				
8.	I love to fantasize				*	
9.	I do have episodes of fantasies that appear and feel too real	*				
10.	I can fantasize about anything at anytime	*				
11.	I have a very detailed and sweet fantasies that most times I prefer to stay at home and fantasize than waste my time going out to relate with people I don't know and might not like	*				
12.	I have fantasies of what and how I want my life to be like(eg) dream job, dream car, dream house, dream vacations, dream garget etc.	*				
13.	I spend a good amount of my time fantasizing	*				
14.	I keep fantasizing even when I know that it's only few or none of my fantasies has ever come to pass.		*			
15.	I feel satisfied and actualized after a good episode of fantasizing	*				
16.	I like discussing my fantasies with friends	*				
17.	I wouldn't like my friends to know that I do fantasize	*				
18	I daydream and fantasize always, about things that might happen to me.	*				
19	I really get involved with the feelings of the characters in a novel/movies.	*				
20	I am regularly objective when I watch a movie or play, that I don't often get completely caught up in it.	*				
21	Becoming extremely involved in a good book or movie is to some extent uncommon for me.	*				
22	After watching a play or movie, I have felt as though I were one of the characters (actor or actress).		*			
23	After watching a good play or movie, I can very easily put myself in the place of a leading character.	*				
24	After reading an interesting story or novel, I imagine how I would feel if the events in the story had happened to me.		*			

The result of the factor loading for fantasy scale shows that the items loaded into seven (7) components, but most of the items loaded highest on five (5) factors or components which were named as follows: component one (**fantasy behavior**),loaded 17 items (8.56); component two (**control over fantasy behavior**), loaded 3 items (2.134); component three (**attitude towards fantasy behavior**), loaded 1 item (1.71); component four (**loss of touch with reality**), loaded 2 items (1.48) and component five (**defense mechanism**), loaded 1 item (1.44).

**Table 2: Result of Reliability Statistics of Fantasy Behaviour Scale**

Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha (1)	Cronbach's Alpha (2)	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items

24	.910	.881	.880
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To test the **Reliability** of the items, Cronbach's Alpha was used in determining the internal consistency of the instrument. A Cronbach alpha= .910, .881 and Cronbach alpha based on standardized items = .880 was gotten with different population, this appears to be strongly high on internal consistency.

**Table: 3 Result of the Convergent Validity Correlations**

		FANTACYSCALE	FANTAPRONNESS
FANTACYSCALE	Pearson Correlation	1	.766**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	52	45
FANTAPRONNESS	Pearson Correlation	.766**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	45	50

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

To check the external validity of the instrument, a convergent validity analysis was carried out between fantasy behaviour scale and fantasy proneness scale  $r = .766$  (2-tailed).

### Discussion

This study was to establish an instrument or scale that will be reliable in measuring fantasy behavior of people and the extent to which they are influenced by their fantasies. A factor analysis showed that FBS loaded into seven (7) components, but only loaded highest in five (5) components; the factors or components which were named as follows: component one (**fantasy behavior**), loaded 17 items (8.56); component two (**control over fantasy behavior**), loaded 3 items (2.134); component three (**attitude towards fantasy behavior**), loaded 1 item (1.71); component four (**loss of touch with reality**), loaded 2 items (1.48) and component five (**defense mechanism**), loaded 1 item (1.44). It also showed internal consistency of Cronbach alpha= .910, .881 and Cronbach alpha based on standardized items = .880 was gotten with different population, which definitely appeared to be on the high side of

consistency. The external validity of the instrument also showed a convergent validity result between fantasy behaviour scale and fantasy proneness scale of  $r = .766$  (2-tailed).

Fantasy proneness which is highly correlated with FBS, prior research studies showed that Fantasy proneness did not correlate with the general BSI scale, but there were significant correlations with two of the subscales, somatization and hostility/aggressivity, Persson & Vanek (2005). Dissociative Experiences Questionnaire (DES); Bernstein & Putnam, (1986) has been found to be a close correlate of fantasy proneness in several studies (Merckelbach, Muris, & Rassin, (1999); Merckelbach, Horselenberg, & Stougie, (2000); Merckelbach, á Campo, Hardy, & Giesbrecht, (2005); Pekala, Angelini, & Kumar, (2001); Rauschenberger & Lynn, (1995); Waldo & Merritt, (2000). But, Cognitive Failures Questionnaire (CFQ),

which in itself has not been found to correlate with fantasy proneness, still do have a significant correlation with DES, Merckelbach et al., (1999), but, might not be reliable for non-clinical populations, Sandberg & Lynn, (1992). Whilst some studies found no link between fantasy proneness on the one hand and depression, or anxiety on the other hand (Lynn & Rhue, (1988), other studies have indeed found a link between fantasy proneness and clinical depression and fantasy proneness and personality disorders, Rauschenberger & Lynn, (1995); Waldo & Merritt, (2000). Fantasy proneness and measures of health have mainly revolved around depression, anxiety and distress. Rauschenberger and Lynn (1995) found no link between fantasy proneness and mental health as measured by the Mental Health Inventory (MHI). However, FBS if when correlated with BSI, DES, CFQ, MHI and so on, shows a significant relationship, it may be used to indicate or measure pathology in clinical setting. So therefore, FBS should be radically and extensive used in order to further establish it external validity and relevance.

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