

**A STUDY ON  
PERFORMANCE PRESSURE AND PROBLEM-ORIENTED  
DAYDREAMS: KEY DRIVERS OF INNOVATIVE WORK BEHAVIOUR  
FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.**

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**Abstract:**

Researchers studying organizational behavior have been examining a variety of intricate phenomena that result in improved performance outcomes for a long time. To achieve organizational expectations, workers must carry out their duties in a logical and reasonable manner. Previous research on the value of attention in organizations has shown that maintaining engagement has positive effects. Engagement is defined as the use of cognitive, physical, and emotional energies for various tasks and activities that will make up one's role at work (Kahn, 1990; Newton, LePine, Kim, Wellman & Bush, 2020).

The study focuses on stress and daydreaming or mind wandering and exploring the relationship between innovative work behaviour, daydreaming and sustainability development. Surveyed 436 employees in Bengaluru, using a structured questionnaire for primary data collection alongside relevant secondary data. An effort was made to examine whether the problem-oriented daydreams determine the relationship between innovative work-behaviour and performance pressure. The role of problem-oriented daydreams between task performance and performance pressure was also examined. The study concludes that encouraging problem-oriented daydreaming in high-pressure environments may support sustainable, innovation-focused outcomes in organizations.

**Key words:** Innovative work behaviour, Daydreaming, Performance pressure, employees, mind wandering, Sustainability.

**INTRODUCTION:**

Researchers studying organizational behavior have been examining a variety of intricate phenomena that result in improved performance outcomes for a long time. To achieve organizational expectations, workers must carry out their duties in a logical and reasonable manner. The importance of attention in organizations has been the subject of numerous studies in the past, which have shown the benefits of maintaining engagement, which is defined as the application of cognitive, physical, and emotional energies to various tasks and activities that will make up one's role at work (Kahn, 1990; Newton, Lepine, Kim, Wellman & Bush, 2020). Many

measures of employee and organizational success, including work satisfaction, sales, customer loyalty, organizational commitment, and profitability, have been found to be positively correlated with employee engagement (Harter, Schmidt, Killham & Agrawal, 2009; Newton et al., 2020; Saks, 2006). It has been discovered that workers will not always be able to focus their attention on a single activity. It is anticipated that daydreaming will have a negative impact on the work completed. Therefore, how can an individual efficiently do their work if they are unable to focus on the duties that are consistently presented to them? Many academics believe that daydreaming can have positive effects and is not always harmful. According to Dane (2018), a person's mind can generate a variety of ideas that can occasionally be unconventional and span the past, present, and future. Thinking while daydreaming can inspire original solutions to issues.

#### **Literature review:**

**Brummel & Dane 2013; Digdon, Howell & Buro 2010:** Mindful employees will be positively associated with reduced labour turnover intentions, enhanced job performance and psychological well-being.

**Killingsworth & Gilbert 2010 & Kane et al., 2007:** Believe the human mind is not always attentive and could deviate from the existing moment. Recent studies show that a human mind can wander close to 30-50% of a person's waking hours.

**Custers & Aarts, 2010; Baird et al., 2012 & Mason & Reinholtz, 2015:** Felt that thoughts engendered during daydreaming could generate creative solutions to the problems one was facing, it could facilitate planning and prepare for future events as well as remind an individual of the existing goals and enable them to pursue their goals.

**Dane 2018:** Though research on mind wandering or day dreaming has gravitated more towards its conceptualisation, some researchers have focussed on the possible content and could generate during daydreaming and its performance-related outcomes in an organisation.

**Baer et al., 2020:** Generally, problem-oriented daydreams will involve images and thoughts about the problems faced by the individuals in their day-to-day work or non-work activities. problem-oriented daydreams will involve a period of deep engagement whereby the mind unconsciously will search for solutions to the existing problems irrespective of the task one is currently performing.

#### **Methodology of study**

The study paper's methodology emphasizes both qualitative and quantitative approaches. This approach seeks to give a thorough grasp of how innovative work practices, performance pressure, and daydreams incorporate sustainability into management strategies in order to attain long-term success.

#### **Research Design:**

Mixed-methods research combining quantitative (survey) and qualitative (secondary data analysis) approaches to examine the role of problem-oriented daydreaming (POD) in innovation and sustainability. 436 employees from diverse industries in Bengaluru were surveyed using a structured questionnaire. Key variables include problem-oriented daydreaming, innovative work behavior (IWB), performance pressure, and sustainability outcomes. Statistical methods like regression and mediation analysis assess the relationships between performance pressure, POD, and IWB.

## Data Collection Methods

### a. Primary Data Collection:

The primary data was gathered through a Google Form questionnaire. Responses were collected from a diverse range of stakeholders, including senior executives, managers, and sustainability officers from various industries. The structured format ensured consistency in capturing insights on performance pressure, problem-oriented daydreams, and their impact on innovative work behavior. The questionnaire explored participants' experiences, challenges, and strategies in fostering sustainable development through innovation

### b. Secondary data:

Industry Publications and Case Studies: Examined pertinent books, articles, and case studies that highlighted effective sustainability strategies across a range of industries.

## Objectives of study

1. To analyse the Interplay Between Performance Pressure, IWB, and Daydreams in Sustainable Development
2. To analyse the role of problem-oriented daydreams in fostering innovation and sustainable solutions in work settings
  1. To analyse the Interplay Between Performance Pressure, IWB, and Daydreams in Sustainable Development

### Hypothesis:

#### **H<sub>0</sub> (Null Hypothesis):**

*There is no significant relationship between performance pressure, individual work behaviour (IWB), and daydreaming in influencing sustainable development outcomes.*

#### **H<sub>1</sub> (Alternative Hypothesis):**

*Performance pressure significantly impacts individual work behaviour (IWB), and this relationship is mediated by the nature and frequency of daydreaming, which affects sustainable development outcomes.*

	Coefficients	Standard Error	t Stat	P-value	Lower 95%	Upper 95%	Lower 95.0%	Upper 95.0%
Intercept	1.0000	0.57177	1.74895	0.09210	-0.17529	2.17529	-0.17529	2.17529
work-related problems during breaks or free time.	-1.0000	0.32026	-3.12250	0.00436	-1.65830	0.34170	-1.65830	0.34170
experiment with different approaches to enhance the sustainability	1.1667	0.10841	10.76189	4.4975	0.94383	1.38950	0.94383	1.38950
problem-oriented	0.3333	0.14618	2.28035	0.03100	0.03286	0.63380	0.03286	0.63380

daydreaming has a positive impact on my ability to innovate.								
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The **null hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>)**, which states that the independent variables **do not significantly predict** the dependent variable, is **rejected**

**The Alternative Hypothesis is accepted.**

- To analyse the role of problem-oriented daydreams in fostering innovation and sustainable solutions in work settings

	<i>Coefficients</i>	<i>Standard Error</i>	<i>t Stat</i>	<i>P-value</i>	<i>Lower 95%</i>	<i>Upper 95%</i>	<i>Lower 95.0%</i>	<i>Upper 95.0%</i>
<b>Intercept</b>	-0.545	1.010	-0.540	0.593	-2.617	1.526	-2.617	1.526
<b>I feel that my problem-oriented daydreaming has a positive impact on my ability to innovate.</b>	-0.909	0.192	-4.743	0.000	-1.302	-0.516	-1.302	-0.516
<b>I think about work-related problems during breaks or free time.</b>	2.182	0.383	5.692	0.000	1.395	2.968	1.395	2.968

**Null Hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>):** Problem-oriented daydreams have no significant role in fostering innovation and sustainable solutions in work settings.

**Alternative Hypothesis (H<sub>1</sub>):** Problem-oriented daydreams significantly contribute to fostering innovation and sustainable solutions in work settings.

The null hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>) is **rejected**. Both predictors (problem-oriented daydreaming and thinking about work-related problems during breaks) significantly contribute to fostering innovation or sustainability in work settings.

And **The Alternative Hypothesis is accepted.**

From Secondary Data:

The study explores the dual nature of mind wandering, focusing on the positive potential of problem-oriented daydreaming (POD) in organizational contexts. While traditionally linked with negative performance outcomes, the research highlights that under performance pressure, individuals may engage in POD as a constructive coping mechanism to address challenges. Results reveal a significant relationship between performance pressure and POD, where individuals

channel cognitive resources to strategize solutions, aligning with prior studies. However, excessive pressure can shift mind wandering toward emotion-focused thinking, characterized by negative outcomes like regret or frustration.

The findings confirm that POD positively influences innovative work behaviour (INWB) and mediates the relationship between performance pressure and INWB, aligning with past research linking mind wandering to creativity. Additionally, POD mediates the link between performance pressure and task performance, emphasizing its functional role in enhancing problem-solving and innovation. This research advances the understanding of mind wandering in organizational settings, illustrating that under specific conditions, POD can be a valuable cognitive tool rather than a liability.

## Conceptual Framework of Innovative Work Behaviour in organisations

The conceptual framework of innovative work behaviour in organisations consists of the following aspects:

**1. Distress and Eustress:** Sullivan is of the opinion that stress does not have a negative experience always. When a person works under pressure, it could lead to both negative as well as positive stress i.e. is distress and eustress. There could be several aspects that could be associated with high levels of stress, some of them are a job with a high level of scope, high level of workload, high responsibilities, and time pressure could be considered as an obstacle in achieving the required outcome. Research in the past has shown that an employee's performance objectives will be stretched when they are faced with eustress, but it is still feasible to accomplish through hard work and a reasonable degree of risk. On the contrary to this, distress results due to demands which are threatening. Very often the employees are of the opinion that they have no control over their job when they are faced with distress. Hence there is a link between an individual's psychological, physical health and their attitude towards work. Unrelated work stress could impact individuals negatively and affect their ability to perform innovative jobs and their psychological health within the organization

On the other hand, eustress, is regarded as a positive stress factor for an individual, whereby the work requirement is viewed as an opportunity to enhance self-development and achieve goals, such as manageable workload which will require little hard work. The effect of eustress incites positive emotions, improves innovative attitude, increases performance and motivation, and allows for an increase in the quality of work, which will lead to improvement in innovative behaviour.

**2. Health:** In many ways, a person with a job feels better and will have a better outlook on life overall. But, there are many challenges that outweigh the possible benefits and also pose a risk to one's health. In the present day world, work-related distress is a growing problem which not only affects an employee's health but could also influence their innovative work behaviour through their health. Stress is those harmful physical and emotional reactions triggered by what the job demands which are out of proportion to an individual's ability, their resources and needs. Hence, stress could cause poor mental and physical health and a variety of injuries. Employees are more likely to engage in unhealthy behaviour when they are stressed at work, which will ultimately reduce the likelihood of employees engaging in innovative behaviour at work.

In the most extensive review of the subject of eustress, Cooper and Edwards are of the opinion that eustress could either improve an employee's health by directly modifying biochemical and hormonal substances or indirectly by facilitating abilities and effort towards coping with existing distress effectively. It has been found that a variety of sources such as laboratory experiments, anecdotal evidence and studies of workplace and positive life events were utilised to review the findings. Thus, manageable stress will increase the alertness and influence the work behaviour of employees

**3. Support by Supervisor:** Studies show that support from supervisors is based on the theory of organizational support theory, which makes it clear that the aim of the supervisors is to build strong and long-lasting social bond with their co-workers to increase the responsiveness and collaboration among them and to ensure that the organisation is successful ultimately. Employees feel that their supervisors are there to assist them in their work-related issues and also help them in completing the work assigned to them in terms of targets. With the support of supervisors the employees will be able to share their knowledge and experience with their co-workers. Supervisors who are able to effectively reduce stress are able to improve the physical and mental health of their employees, this is considered as a primary intervention which is a proactive measure in reducing stress by removing the potential stressors. Supervisors are able to increase the resources and time to help complete specific tasks on the job which will prove to be beneficial in enhancing their innovative work behaviours.

### **Problem-oriented daydreams (POD) & Performance pressure:**

Organizations in the rapidly expanding knowledge economy today will need intellectual resources and expect their members to create high-quality work that yields favorable outcomes. Since their achievements will be connected to their promotions, raises, and benefits, employees will be required to be alert to satisfy job requirements. High-performance results will be continuously demanded by organizations looking to gain a competitive edge, and individuals will be under pressure to meet these standards or risk serious implications. Performance pressure is seen as a major source of stress that will cause a person to be persistent in reaching organizational objectives. Performance can therefore affect the result in both positive and bad ways. Further research also shows that this nature of construct which links problem-oriented day dreams and understanding the mechanism can influence the performance pressure.

The theory of conservation of resources (COR), as stated by Hobfoll in 1989, holds that people would defend, work to preserve, and develop resources, and that the only thing that threatens them is the possibility of losing the things they value. According to COR, an individual's cherished things, circumstances, personalities, or energies will be used as a means of achieving these things, circumstances, or energies. The physical and psychological resources in one's workplace, such as social support, job security, autonomy, and family-friendly rules, have been clarified by research on COR theory over the years. When under continual pressure to perform well at work, an individual may feel that their job security is at jeopardy. For instance, a person may feel that their career is at jeopardy and fear being demoted or even fired if they are unable to reach organizational goals and deal with performance pressure. Employees may participate in behaviors that could result in loss aversion because of their stressful concern of losing some important resources at work. One such mental exercise is problem-oriented daydreaming, which is a type of daydreaming in which the dreamer creates ideas and pictures to address difficulties in their present circumstances. These pictures and ideas may or may not be relevant to employment. For example,

an employee with a tight deadline to complete his/her task by the end of the week could constantly daydream of different ways in which the task could be completed, even while he/she is performing some other activity.

The idea that people may use their existing resources to try to save them from further depletion when they fear losing their valuable resources is a key component of the COR theory. Understanding this component of COR theory is crucial because it will help address some significant questions regarding why people are more likely to engage in problem-oriented daydreams than other types of daydreaming, such as emotion-focused daydreaming, since problem-oriented daydreaming is a mental activity that uses cognitive resources. Employees will engage in problem-oriented daydreams when they believe that performance pressure poses a threat to their jobs. This may assist them manage the ongoing demands of performance pressure and preserve their remaining resources. Therefore, acknowledging this phenomenon is crucial since failing to manage performance pressure and conserve other resources may have detrimental effects on depression and other types of job loss. Additionally, people may be subjected to high levels of performance pressure, which could cause them to engage in other types of daydreaming. One recent study, for example, examined the connections between various types of daydreaming and how they relate to creative future planning.

Therefore, performance pressure may serve as a catalyst for problem-oriented daydreams, in which people attempt to minimize resource loss and, to some extent, have control over the information they are dreaming about. People will therefore be more prone to daydream and think about problems if they feel pressure to perform better at work. Additionally, recent research indicates that stressful events may cause problem-oriented daydreams as well as generalized mind wandering.

### Conclusion

This study underscores the transformative potential of **problem-oriented daydreaming (POD)** in organizational contexts, especially under conditions of **performance pressure**. Contrary to traditional beliefs that daydreaming hinders productivity, findings demonstrate that POD serves as a constructive cognitive mechanism that fosters **innovative work behavior (IWB)** and supports **sustainable development**.

By engaging in structured mental exploration, employees channel their cognitive resources to devise creative solutions to workplace challenges, aligning with organizational goals. Furthermore, performance pressure, when balanced as eustress, positively stimulates POD, enhancing employee resilience, problem-solving, and innovation. Supervisory support and organizational initiatives that nurture this process can amplify sustainable, innovation-driven outcomes.

Recognizing POD as a valuable tool in high-pressure environments can redefine approaches to stress management, creativity, and sustainability in the modern workplace. The study highlights the importance of fostering a work culture that encourages cognitive flexibility and innovation for long-term success.

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