

Savoring as a Predictor of Happiness and Positive Affect among Adolescents

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Across the globe the nations are trying to explore and identify the strategies which would help in enhancing the positive affect leading to ultimate happiness in each and every stratum of the society specifically among adolescents. Positive Psychological Interventions (PPIs) such as mindfulness, savoring, gratitude, kindness, empathy, meaning, flow exercises etc. are being applied to generate positive feelings and to attain the goal of sustainable happiness and well-being. Savoring is believed to be one such strategy in positive psychology which has shown promising effects in enhancing happiness, positive affect and reducing negative affect. The present study comprising of 300 (N=300) adolescents from the state of Haryana (India) made an attempt to explore relationship between savoring, happiness, positive affect and negative affect. Savoring Beliefs Inventory by Bryant (2003), Oxford Happiness Questionnaire by Hills & Argyle (2002) and Positive and Negative Affect Schedule by Watson et al. (1988) were applied to measure the variables. Savoring emerged as a significant correlate and predictor of happiness and positive affect among adolescents.

Key words: Savoring, happiness, positive affect, negative affect

Introduction

Happiness has been considered as one of the sole goals of positive psychology (Seligman, 2003) and is understood as a positive emotional state which originates as joy from all fundamental human emotions (Diener, 2000). Considering happiness as a “fundamental human goal” and “universal human right”, the General Assembly of UN announced 20th march as an ‘International Day of Happiness’ in the year 2012. The World Happiness Report (2022) positioned India at the rank 146 out of 186 countries. Looking at the ranking and considering the fact according to the population census 2011, ‘adolescents’ constitute about one-fifth of the country’s total population (Registrar General I. Census of India, 2011). As mentioned in the ‘States of the World’s Children 2021’ report around 14 percent of those in the age bracket of 15 to 24 in India or 1 in 7 often report the feeling of depression or loss of interest in doing even little things. In the previous researches,

Larson et al. (2002) suggested consistent decrease in positive emotions among adolescence. Poor emotional clarity and negative emotions have been found to be linked with inexpedient psychological consequences involving depression, anxiety and suicidal tendencies among adolescents (Rojas et al., 2015; Salguero et al., 2012; Van Roekel et al., 2016). Research findings further depict decrement in the levels of happiness and life-satisfaction among early adolescents (Bisegger et al., 2005; Michel et al., 2009).

Considering the hedonic model of subjective well-being the happiness has been described in terms of life satisfaction and balance between positive and negative affect. Inclusive of emotions, mood and feelings (Zhang, 2013), affect is recognized as an umbrella term which is indicative of a person’s tendency to behave in a predictable way when experiencing both positive and negative emotions (Watson & Clark, 1984).

Considering positive and negative affect as the facets of emotional experiences (Watson & Tellegen, 1985): Positive affect is one’s extent to feel the positive emotions such as interest, joy and alertness etc. whereas negative affect is the extent to which an individual encounters negative emotion such as sadness,

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anger, guilt and fear. Happiness is felt when positive affect is more than the negative affect (Diener et al., 1991). Research conducted in the past suggests that people with greater level of positive affect possess the traits of self-confidence (Diener, 2000), optimism and deal effectively with their negative experiences (Fredrickson & Joiner, 2002). In contrast, people with high level of negative affect showed high level of aggression accompanied with feeling of guilt and remain scared (Diener, 2000), furthermore such people have also been found to have difficulties in adapting (Watson & Clark, 1984).

Across the globe the nations are trying to explore and identify the strategies which would help in enhancing the positive affect leading to ultimate happiness in each and every strata of the society specifically among adolescents. In positive psychology, Positive Psychological Interventions (PPIs) such as mindfulness, savoring, gratitude, kindness, empathy, meaning, flow exercises etc. are being applied to generate positive feelings and to attain the goal of increasing happiness and well-being. Savoring is believed to be one such strategy in positive psychology which has shown promising effects in enhancing happiness, positive affect and reducing negative affect. Savoring means “the capacity to attend, to appreciate and enhance the positive experience in one’s life” (Bryant & Veroff, 2007). Savoring beliefs, an important concept is “the notion that people make self-evaluations of their capacity to enjoy positive experience. We refer to people’s subjective perceptions of their personal ability to enjoy positive experiences as beliefs about savoring capacity” (Bryant & Veroff, 2007). According to Bryant and Veroff (2007), people may amplify and savor their current positive feelings through three different time orientations: (a) reminiscing past positive events (b) appreciate present pleasant events (c) anticipation of upcoming positive events.

Savoring has significant impact on one’s physical, mental and psychological health. Numerous studies document the significant correlations between savoring positive experiences and levels of one’s subjective well-being involving greater level of positive affect, satisfaction, happiness, and lower levels of distressing symptoms such as anxiety and depression (Bryant, 2003; Jose et al., 2012; Quoidbach et al., 2010; Wood et al., 2003).

Bryant, Smart and King (2005) investigated the benefits of savoring among young people. The

researchers in a randomized control trial found that the people who were directed to savor positive experiences for the period of one week demonstrated consistent rise in happiness level throughout the week.

The findings of Thornton and Brocchi (1987) revealed that people who savor to a higher extent are less probable to experience depression and are better able to cope with stressful situations. The researchers also concluded that the attendance and appreciation of pleasant feelings increase the amount of serotonin and dopamine which are considered as “feel-good” neurotransmitters that regulate stress and calm the nervous system. Pasupathi and Carstensen (2003) also concluded that the reminiscence in group generates positive emotional experiences. Consequent to which, people with high propensity of savoring are able to feel more pleasure from past pleasant experiences and can easily regulate own emotions.

The present literature review suggests that there is need to adequately explore the relationship between savoring belief, happiness, positive and negative affect among adolescents. Considering the same, the present research study aims to:

1. To explore the relationship between savoring beliefs and happiness among adolescents.
2. To explore the relationship between savoring beliefs and positive affect among adolescents.
3. To explore the relationship between savoring beliefs and negative affect among adolescents.

Hypotheses of the present study

1. There will be a significant relationship between savoring beliefs and happiness among adolescents.
2. There will be a significant relationship between savoring beliefs and positive affect among adolescents.
3. There will be a significant relationship between savoring beliefs and negative affect among adolescents

Method

Participants

The participants of the present research were three hundred adolescents ($n = 300$) between the ages of 15-19 years. The sample of the present research was randomly chosen from different universities and colleges of the Haryana state, India. The sample was limited to research participants who gave their consent to participate.

Measures

Tools used in the study are as follows:

Savoring Beliefs Inventory (SBI) (Bryant, 2003): This is a 24-item inventory used to measure

beliefs about a person's ability to savor positive experiences based on three temporal subscales: Savor the past, savor the present and savor the future. The responses range from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (7) on a 7-point Likert scale. The questionnaire possesses internal consistency ranging from .88 to .94.

Oxford Happiness Questionnaire (Hills & Argyle, 2002): This is a 29-item self-report questionnaire on a 6-point Likert scale that is used to measure an individual's happiness. The responses on this scale range from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Higher score shows the higher level of happiness. The questionnaire possesses test re-test reliability of 0.91 at Chronbach alpha.

Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS) (Watson, Clark & Tellegen, 1988): Self-report questionnaire comprising of 20-items which asks participants to rate positive affect and negative affect on a 5-point Likert scale. The scoring ranges from 1 (very little) and 5 (extremely) indicate positive and negative feelings respectively. The internal consistency for the positive affect scale ranged from .86 to .90 while it is .84 to .97 for the negative affect scale.

Procedure:

In order to obtain the objectives of the current research, an informed consent was taken from the participants, a rapport was established with them and their doubts were clarified. The tests were administered individually as well as in the small group settings. The questionnaires were collected after the participants completed them and their responses were scored according to the scoring instructions provided in the respective manual. The data obtained after scoring was further put to statistical analysis and inferences were drawn.

Statistical Analysis

The analysis of the research data was done with the help of SPSS 16.0. To examine the relationship among the variables, the descriptive statistics and Pearson's product moment coefficient of correlation were used. Further, in light of the correlational findings, regression analysis was used to explore the effect size of the variables.

Results

The principal aim of the current research study was to find out the relationship between savoring beliefs, happiness, positive and negative affect among adolescents. The results of the present research are shown in Tables 1, 2, 3 & 4.

Table 1
Descriptive statistics and intercorrelation matrix between savoring beliefs, happiness, positive and negative affect among adolescents (N= 300)

Variables	Mean	SD	SBI	HPY	PA	NA
SBI	19.25	15.32	1	.565**	.427**	-.290**
HPY	4.07	.60		1	.565**	-.362**
PA	33.13	7.14			1	-.246**
NA	22.52	7.04				1

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

Note: SBI- Savoring Beliefs, HPY- Happiness, PA- Positive affect, NA- Negative affect, SD- Standard Deviation

Table 1 depicts the relationship between savoring beliefs, happiness, positive and negative affect. The outcome of the present research reveals the significant positive correlation ($r=.565, p<.01$) between savoring beliefs and happiness. The research also shows the significant positive correlation ($r=.427, p<.01$) between

savoring beliefs and positive affect and significant positive correlation ($r=.565, p<.01$) between happiness and positive affect. Further, the results establish the significant negative correlation ($r=-.290, p<.01$) between savoring beliefs and negative affect.

Table 2
Regression analysis of savoring beliefs and happiness (N= 300)

Predictors	B	SE B	B	t	Sig.(p)
Constant	3.642	.047		77.933	.000
SBI	.022	.002	.565	11.830	.000
R ²	.320				
F	139.951				.000

Dependent Variable: Happiness; Predictors: (constant): SBI- Savoring beliefs

Table 2 displayed that spiritual beliefs emerged as the significant predictor against happiness with $R^2 = .320$, $F = 139.951$, $p < .01$. The findings establish spiritual beliefs as a significant predictor with 32.0% variance of happiness among adolescents. Savoring beliefs ($B = .022$, $\beta = .565$, $p < .01$) was found to be significant positive

correlated with happiness. The findings depicted that significant positive correlation between savoring beliefs and happiness provides us the understanding of the fact that the adolescents with high savoring beliefs exhibit the higher levels of happiness.

Table 3
Regression analysis of savoring beliefs and positive affect (N= 300)

Predictors	B	SE B	B	t	Sig.(p)
Constant	29.304	.601		48.786	.000
SBI	.199	.024	.427	8.149	.000
R ²	.182				
F	66.411				.000

Dependent Variable: Positive Affect; Predictors: (constant): SBI- Savoring beliefs

As presented in the Table 3 savoring beliefs appeared as the predictor against positive affect with $R^2 = .182$, $F = 66.411$, $p < .01$. The variable savoring beliefs is found as a significant predictor with 18.2 % variance of positive affect among adolescents. Savoring

beliefs ($B = .199$, $\beta = .427$, $p < .01$) was found to be significant positively correlated with positive affect. The present findings between savoring and positive affect provide us the understanding of the fact that people with high savoring beliefs exhibit high positive emotions.

Table 4
Regression analysis of savoring beliefs and negative affect (N= 300).

Predictors	B	SE B	B	t	Sig.(p)
Constant	25.088	.627		40.010	.000
SBI	-.133	.026	-.290	-5.224	.000
R ²	.084				
F	27.291				.000

Dependent Variable: Negative Affect; Predictors: (constant): SBI- Savoring beliefs

Table 4 revealed that savoring beliefs is found as the protective factor against negative affect with $R^2 = .084$, $F = 27.291$, $p < .01$. The findings establish savoring beliefs as a significant protective factor with 27.291 % variance of negative affect among adolescents. Savoring beliefs ($B = -.133$, $\beta = -.290$, $p < .01$) was

established to be significant negatively correlated with negative affect. The present findings between savoring and negative affect provide us the understanding of the fact that people with high savoring beliefs exhibit less negative emotions.

Discussion

The principal aim of the current research study was to find out the relationship between savoring beliefs, happiness, positive and negative affect among adolescents. Sequent with the hypothesis, the results of the present study describe the significant positive correlation between savoring beliefs, happiness and positive affect. The results also depicted significant negative correlation between savoring beliefs and negative affect among adolescents. Thus, on the basis of the results, it is concluded that greater the level of savoring ability, greater will be happiness and positive affect and lesser will be the negative affect.

Savoring acts as a predictor of happiness which has also been validated by the research conducted in the past (Koo et al., 2008; Burton & King, 2004; Zhang 2013).

Furthermore findings of the current research study are consistent with the findings of the Hurley and kwon (2012) study wherein they reported significant interactions and levels of positive affect and life satisfaction among the undergraduate students. Savoring was found to uplift the positive affect with the sense of life satisfaction among the participants of the study.

Moreover, the present findings are in agreement with the findings of Jose et al. (2012) wherein with the sample of 101 participants researchers established savoring as the one of the mechanisms of deriving happiness via savoring positive events.

In the same congruence, Quoidbach et al. (2010) also stated that savoring past experiences and sharing

them with friends lead to increase in the levels of happiness among university students.

In light of the present findings, it is established that savoring belief is a significant predictor of happiness and positive affect among adolescents. Thus, the hypotheses of the present study that there will be a significant relationship between savoring belief, happiness, positive affect and negative affect is accepted.

Conclusion

Adolescents, during their formative years, have to confront abundant changes in their life. So, they experience plethora of positive and negative emotions and the balance these emotions is an important step in achieving their overall growth and development. The present research documents the significant positive association between savoring beliefs, happiness and positive affect as well as the significant negative association between savoring beliefs and negative affect. The present research also concluded savoring as a predictor of happiness and positive affect.

Inferring from the findings of present research, it can be concluded that there is need to promote and practice savoring strategies in schools and homes as these skills can have a significant impact on increasing happiness and positive emotions as well as reducing the impact of negative emotions among adolescents. For educational counselors and psychologists, this research may provide a unique insight to the understanding of savoring as a significant and adaptive part of adolescents' lives, allowing them to sail through the stressful life events in adaptive manner.

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