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Sarita Rani & Taruna Gera

Savoring as a Predictor of Psychological Well-Being among Adolescents

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Abstract

Uncertain transitions of adolescent's stage, increased family, peer, technology and cultural pressure, loss of personal values, adapt risk taking behavior, self-harm or suicidal tendencies negative and destructive cognitive mindset, emotional instability etc. are exhibiting alarming phase of break down 'well-being' among adolescence. A positive psychology intervention 'Savoring' has shown efficacy in enhancing the resilience level, gratitude and overall well-being levels among adults and older adults. An investigation of the relationship between savoring beliefs and psychological well-being amongst adolescents became pertinent to determine whether the two had the same level of affect and effect in the adolescent population. The present research assessed savoring beliefs and psychological well-being in 300 adolescents in the Haryana state of India. The findings established that there exists a significantly positive correlation between savoring and psychological well-being.

Key words: Savoring, Psychological Well-Being, Savoring Beliefs, Positive Psychology

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INTRODUCTION:

The multifaceted construct of well-being has long been the issue of concern and study to various branches of scientific investigation, including but not limited to, sociology, psychology, anthropology, among others. Whatever the branch of research, the underlying goal of all those researches has been the well-being of mankind.

“Well-being” as an umbrella term has been studied from various perspectives which include hedonic and eudemonic approaches. With impetus on pleasure and focus on subjective well-being, the hedonic perspective of well-being is understood in

terms of higher levels of positive affect, an absence of negative affect, with enhanced levels of life satisfaction, (Diener & Lucas, 1999) whereas eudemonic perspective perceives it in terms of psychological well-being defining the fully-functioning person (Ryff, 1989a). It further concerns happiness with meaningfulness in life (McGregor & Little, 1998), along with a sense of growth, acceptance and actualization (Ryff, 1989a, Ryan & Deci, 2000). The different perspectives have contrasting viewpoints, but it is evident that they do complement each other, and merge at one singular concern, which is the promotion of wellness.

Academic explorations have identified two significant facets of well-being, namely psychological well-being and subjective well-being, with the present research exploring the former further. Even though an operational definition of psychological well-being is still argued over highly amongst theorist, a rather well-accepted theoretical definition defines it as “inter and intra-individual levels of positive functioning that includes one’s relatedness with others and self-referent attitudes that include one’s sense of mastery and personal growth” (Burns, 2017).

Ryff(1984,1995), in his seminal work, developed a multidimensional model of psychological well-being, which has become widely acclaimed since. According to the multidimensional model, psychological well-being can be said to be comprising of six factors, namely: *Self-acceptance*, which is pivotal to mental health and represents self-actualisation, along with maturity, and optimal functioning; *Positive relations with others*, which emphasizes the significance of trusting, warm and respectful interpersonal relationships; *Autonomy*, which could be simply stated as the ability of independence in self-regulation, allowing deterministic behaviour; *Environmental Mastery*, which signifies the capacity and ability to choose and control immediate surroundings, off one’s own volition; *Purpose in Life*, signifying the importance of a sense of direction, immediate and future goals, long-term beliefs and intentions that promote a sense of belonging; *Personal Growth*, which is one’s capacity to grow and develop on a personal scale and work towards realizing one’s own potential and talent.

In recent years, interest in the psychological well-being of young people has been on the rise, among researchers and practitioners, both in theory and in practice.

The interest is justified as well, since the youth holds an important majority in the human resource section of any society, country, and collectively, the world, and with the increasing number of cases diagnosed with mental ailments amongst the particular population, ranging from simple but prolonged bouts of sadness to extreme cases of anxiety, and depression, it’s a slippery slope that needs to be tackled before it’s too late.

The measurement and promotion of well-being amongst adolescents has become a prudent social and political objective, as globally 16% of the world’s population comprises of young people aged 10-19, coming up to a total of 1.3 billion adolescents (UN, 2022). Adolescence is considered as a critical developmental stage marked by complex transitions. It is also referred to as the golden period accompanied by various problems and challenges. Expectations at home, academic pressures, disagreements with parents, struggles with societal, cultural and religious norms, relationship issues, social media and mass media explosion, substance abuse, are but some of the challenges adolescents encounter on a regular basis.

WHO (2021) report mentioned that globally every seventh individual in the age bracket of 10-19 years experiences mental disorders in some or the other manner, which accounts for about 13% of the global burden of disorder among this age group. The 2023 NCRB report puts forward a startlingly high figure of 34.6% of suicides in India being reported from the age group of 18-30 years. Furthermore, a total of 10,205 suicides were committed by people under the naivage of 18 years, imposing challenge for health and mental health professionals. Malhotra (2014) reported that 23.3% of school going children and adolescents in India have psychiatric disorders with high level of suicide rates.

The trend has been consistent in the adolescent population as earlier reports showcase 13,089 students died by suicide in 2021 (NCRB, 2021), a 32.5% hike compared to 9,905 deaths in 2017. Another concerning factoid is that among these suicides, there has been a gradual increase in the number where the causes stem from depression and other psychological disorders, instead of sudden shame or impulsivity. More simply, mental health conditions are a key risk factor for teenagers and suicide has been the vanguard (UNICEF, 2023).

The available information is enough to grasp an understanding of the obvious, adolescents are relatively less happy and more prone to decline in their levels of psychological well-being. The consequences of failing to address adolescent mental health conditions can't be handled insouciantly, as they may extend to adulthood, impairing their physical, mental, social and emotional health, further limiting opportunities to lead fulfilling lives as adults moving forward. Thus, it is essential to understand and identify certain strategies for maintaining and enhancing levels of psychological well-being, especially in the adolescent population.

Ever since the inception of positive psychology in 1998, by Martin E. Seligman, the sub-field of psychology has focused on the positive, on the optimal functioning and development of individuals, as individuals, and as a whole. It has flourished by allowing individuals to realize their potential, their talents, and the power they hold to make their lives, by simple activities, like mindfulness, among others. Amidst many positive psychology interventions (PPIs), a particularly propitious approach that is believed to demonstrate significant positive impact on psychological well-being is savoring.

Savoring may be explained as the capacity to produce, sustain, or heighten and intensify positive feelings. (Bryant & Veroff, 2007). The quintessence of savoring resides in "conscious awareness of ongoing positive feelings related to the experience" (Smith & Bryant, 2017). Savoring enables for the kindling, perpetuation, and magnification of positive feelings, while also providing a buffer that is antagonistic towards negative health outcomes and adverse emotions (Smith et al., 2020; van Steenbergen et al., 2021). Savoring may incorporate a kind of cognitive temporal voyage through which an individual becomes able to foster positively favorable emotional states in the present, with credit to the distinct concentration on the current moment (present), the imagination of the past (positive reminiscence) and future positive events (positive anticipation). (Quoidbach et al., 2010; Bryant, Chadwick & Kluwe 2011). According to Bryant (2021), "savoring beliefs involve a conscious awareness of one's ability or inability to experience and manage positive experience." The works of Bryant and Veroff (2007) helped in identifying numerous savoring strategies that can intensify the potency and temporal extent of positive emotions.

Not only does savoring have a significant overarching impact on one's physical, mental and psychological health, numerous studies document the significant correlations between savoring positive experiences and higher levels of happiness, psychological well-being and lower levels of distressing symptoms, such as anxiety and depression (Smith and Hani, 2019; Hou et al., 2016; Quoidbach et al., 2010; Shaban et al., 2023). Smith and Hani (2019) corroborate that savoring has an ability to amplify older adult's psychological well-being and resilience. A study conducted by Shaban et al. (2023) yielded results suggesting that a savoring intervention

program for the elderly improved their resilience, gratitude, and psychological well-being levels. Smith et al. (2016) conducted a study on a sample of 266 older adults and concluded that there was a significant relationship between greater savoring capacity and psychological well-being.

There is a plenitude of existing literature within the sub-discipline of positive psychology showcasing that people with positive levels of psychological well-being increase their chances to live healthier lives, witness an increase in their life-span expectancy and overall enjoy a better quality of life, with increased life satisfaction (Kubzansky et al., 2018, Saldanha et al., 2021). Therefore, an attempt to understand, explore, and thus facilitate a higher level of psychological well-being amongst adolescents, through positive psychology interventions like savoring becomes an obvious step to take for moving towards a time where adolescents can enjoy an increasingly positive level of psychological and over-all well-being. But before that, it is essential to find out whether savoring does correlate to higher levels of psychological well-being in the adolescent population.

Objectives:

- To explore the relationship between savoring beliefs and psychological well-being amongst adolescents.

Hypothesis:

- There will be a significant relationship between savoring beliefs and psychological well-being among adolescents.

METHODOLOGY:

Sample:

The participants of the present research comprised of 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 in the Haryana state of India. The sample was limited to research participants who gave their consent to participate.

Psychological Tools used::

The tools used in the study are as follows:

- **Savoring Beliefs Inventory (SBI) (Bryant, 2003):** This is a 24-item inventory which is employed to measure beliefs about a person's ability to savor positive experiences based on three temporal subscales, namely: "Savor the past", "savor the present" and "savor the future". The 7-point Likert scale allows for responses ranging from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (7). The inventory possesses a test-retest reliability of 0.84 and internal consistency ranging from 0.88 to 0.94.
- **Ryff's scale of Psychological Well-being (2010):** The 18-item scale assesses general psychological well-being through a total of six including autonomy, environmental mastery, personal progress, positive relationships with others, life purpose, and self-acceptance. The total scores range from 18 to 126, with higher values representing better levels of psychological well-being. This is a 7-point scale ranging from "strongly agree" (1) to "strongly disagree" (7). This version of the scale holds good reliability and validity, and correlated from 0.7 to 0.89 with the 20-item parent scale.

Procedure

After finalizing the sample, informed consent was gained from the participants as the first thing, making sure suitable conditions for the administration were available. Rapport was established and instructions preceded the process of clearing their doubts regarding the scales, if any. The administration was done in both, individual, as well as small group settings. The instructions were provided exhaustively and it was always ensured that the participants felt like they could be honest, and could ask questions at any point during and even after the administration.

Fully-filled questionnaires were collected after the participants completed them and the participants were thanked for their participation before their responses were scored according to the scoring instructions provided in the respective manuals. The data obtained after scoring was further put to

Table 1 Descriptive statistics and Intercorrelation Matrix between savoring beliefs and psychological well-being among adolescents (N=300).

V	SBI	PWB	PWB	PWB	PWB3	PWB4	PWB5	PWB6	M	SD
		T	1	2						
SBI	1	.435**	.178**	.265**	.189**	.385**	.165**	.283**	19.25	15.32

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

Note: V- Variable; **SBI-** Savoring Beliefs; **PWBT** – Psychological Well- being total; **PWB1-** Autonomy; **PWB2-** Environmental mastery; **PWB3-** Personal Growth; **PWB4-** Positive Relations with Others; **PWB5-** Purpose in life; **PWB6-** Self-Acceptance;

The outcome obtained from the present study highlight the significant positive correlation (r=.435, p<.01) between savoring beliefs and overall psychological well-being.

The present findings also establish the significant positive correlation (r=.178, p<.01) between the autonomy dimension of

statistical analysis and inferences were drawn.

Statistical Analysis

The data obtained from the present study was analyzed with the help of SPSS 16.0. The descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) and Pearson’s Product Moment coefficient of correlation was used to explore the correlation amongst the variables of the study. A regression analysis was further done to study the effect size of the variables.

RESULTS:

The principal objective of the present study was to explore the relationship between savoring beliefs and psychological well-being among the adolescents. After applying the appropriate statistical tools on the data obtained from the study, the detailed findings are presented as under:

psychological well-being and savoring beliefs. Findings also establish a significant positive correlation (r=.265, p<.01) between environmental mastery sub dimension of psychological well- being and savoring beliefs.

Furthermore, the findings establish the significant positive correlation (r=.189, p<.01) between the personal growth and savoring beliefs. The results as demonstrated in Table No.1 suggest the significant positive correlation (r=.385, p<.01) between positive relations with others dimension of

psychological well-being and savoring beliefs.

Similarly, the findings also suggest a significant positive correlation ($r=.165$, $p<.01$) between purpose in life sub dimension of psychological well-being and savoring beliefs.

Moreover, the findings demonstrate the significant positive correlation ($r=.283$, $p<.01$) between self-acceptance sub dimension of psychological well-being and savoring beliefs.

Table 2 Simple Linear Regression coefficient of Psychological Well-Being and Savoring Beliefs (N= 300).

Predictors	B	SE B	B	t	Sig.(p)
Constant	81.655	.993		82.225	.000
SBI	.336	.040	.435	8.328	.000
R ²	.189				
F	69.361				.000

Dependent Variable: Psychological well-being
Predictors: (constant): **SBI-** Savoring beliefs

As displayed in the Table 2, savoring beliefs emerged as the significant predictor against psychological well-being with $R^2 = .189$, $F= 69.361$, $p<.01$. The findings establish savoring beliefs as a significant predictor with 18.9% variance of psychological well-being among adolescents. Savoring beliefs ($B= .336$, $\beta= .435$, $p<.01$) were found to be significantly positively correlated with psychological well-being. Significant positive correlation between savoring beliefs and psychological well-being is also established, and the findings provide us with the understanding that adolescents with higher levels of savoring beliefs also exhibit higher levels of psychological well-being.

DISCUSSION:

The positive psychology movement has been helping improve distressed individuals' lives for over two decades now through its focus on optimal development, flourishing and holistic development. As the movement has caught steam, the challenges

presented have only grown stronger. The modern life is full of stress and burdens that couldn't even be conceived of just until a few decades ago. These burdens have not only affected adults, but also adolescents and school-going children just the same, if not worse. The competition and the fear of failure has made adolescence more a time of increased distress, rather than being the insouciant and fun experience it used to be. It has become much too common to read the news and find a couple cases of adolescent suicides, for reasons ranging from fear of failure, unfavorable examination results, feelings of guilt and shame, familial discord, among other reasons. It is a horrifying that for the past two years, over 13,000 adolescents have committed suicides each year (NCRB, 2023).

Efforts have been ongoing to explore the factors which would work in improving and enhancing the psychological well-being of adolescents for a long time now. However, in the last few decades, the researchers have tried to study the role of

savoring (a positive psychology intervention) in enhancing the well-being of mankind. Considering the findings that showcase the positive role of savoring in enhancing well-being of adults and old-age people, it becomes pertinent to study the correlation between savoring and psychological well-being amongst the adolescent population.

Conforming with the hypothesis of the study, the results of the current study sufficiently establish the significant positive correlation between savoring beliefs, and psychological well-being. There is also significant positive correlation between savoring beliefs and the sub dimensions of psychological well-being, namely, autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life and self-acceptance amongst the directed sample population of adolescents. The results also highlight that savoring beliefs appear to be a significant predictor of psychological well-being amongst adolescents. Thus, the findings of the present research study provide us with the understanding that the higher the level of savoring ability, the greater would be the psychological well-being amongst adolescents.

Differing perspectives have emerged and advocated for the consideration that optimal functioning during adolescence is more than the absence of problems, difficulties or pathologies (Lerner et al., 2005; Seligman, 2008). Hence, the ability to savor moments of the present, the future and the past may indicate an ability to take oneself out of a reality that may be stressful and overwhelming, even in the absence of obvious problems, difficulties, and pathologies.

The findings of the present study also fall in line with the studies conducted in the past. Smith et al. (2020) documented that people with high level of savoring ability

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showed greater level of psychological well-being and had a greater understanding of the meaning of life. To expect adolescents to understand meaning of life might be a bit of a reach, but to understand the importance of life, by having a meaningful understanding of it, could help dampen the number of adolescent individuals who feel their life is meaningless. Furthermore, the findings are also in line with the findings of Smith et al. (2016) wherein a sample of 266 older adults impressed the same significant relationship between greater savoring capacity and psychological well-being, just as the adolescents in the present study.

In the same established congruence, Smith and Hollinger-Smith (2015) state that a greater ability to savor positive experiences and higher resilience both predicted greater happiness, lower depression, and greater psychological well-being among older adults. It would be hopeful to predict that savoring beliefs and techniques, when paired with resilience techniques, could result in higher levels of happiness and lower levels of depression in the adolescent population as well. Shaban et al. (2023) with a sample of 52 elderly people stated that psychological savoring intervention program for the elderly improved their resilience, gratitude, and psychological well-being levels. Increased gratitude levels in adolescents through savoring interventions may also help them see more meaning in life and be grateful for their experiences.

The significant positive correlation between savoring beliefs and psychological well-being implies that individuals with greater ability to savor positive events or experiences have better sense of mastery over daily life affairs, are better able to be open towards new experiences, better realize one's own potentials, possess a strong sense of warmth, trust and healthy relationships with others. They also find it easier to have a

definite purpose, direction and an intention in life that gives life more meaning and possess a positive attitude toward oneself.

In light of the above findings, the hypothesis of the present study predicting there will be a significant relationship between savoring belief and psychological well-being among adolescents stands true and accepted.

Conclusion

It is a shared understanding that young people today live in far more complex times than comparable young people from previous generations. Their life's uncertain transitions, dominant culture of materialism and individualism, peer pressure, academic pressure, family conflicts, loss of values and self-esteem, along with the increasing rates of adolescent's suicides, substance abuse, crime and violence culminate in the breakdown of an individual's well-being, and their sense of belonging, leaving them to take drastic life-threatening steps.

The present research has documented the significant positive association between savoring beliefs and psychological well-being, highlighting savoring beliefs as a predictor of psychological well-being.

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 well-being 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 an adaptive manner.

Limitations and Further Directions

The co relational nature of the study is one the major limitation of the present

research. The sample being limited to one state may also be seen as another drawback. More detailed studies with gender, advanced statistical methods and interventional component may further be conducted in the area for a better understanding. Furthermore, the findings of the present study underlie the need of savoring strategies so as to enhance the psychological well-being among the individuals.

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