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Mediating Role Of Savoring For The Relationship Of Music Absorption And Psychological Wellbeing In Students With Creative Interests

Asma Irfan[1] , **Irsa Fatima Mahkdoom (PhD)**[2] , **Mohsin Atta (PhD)**[3] , **Najma Iqbal Malik (PhD)**[4]

[1]*Department of Psychology, University of Sargodha*
[2]*Department of Psychology, University of Sargodha*
[3]*Department of Psychology, University of Sargodha*
[4]*Department of Psychology, University of Sargodha*

Corresponding Author: ***Najma Iqbal Malik (PhD), Associate professor, Department of Psychology, University of Sargodha, Sargodha, Pakistan. Email: najmamalik@gmail.com, ORCID ID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3521-1014*

Abstract

The present research aims to study the mediating role of savoring in the relationship between music absorption and psychological well-being in students with creative interests (N = 300). The sample was approached by using multistage sampling following a correlational research design. Music absorption, savoring and well-being were measured by using the Absorption in Music Scale, Savoring Abilities Scale and Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Inventory respectively. The results revealed that absorption in music, savoring abilities and psychological well-being positively correlate with one another. Moreover, the results concluded that savoring was a mediator between music absorption and psychological well-being among students with creative interests. The study has important implications in the field of positive psychology, and the mental health of students in general and specifically for students with creative interests.

Keywords: Absorption in music, Savoring, psychological well-being, students with creative interests.

Introduction

Recent years have witnessed the most unpredictable changes in both the overall world as well as in the sub-continent in terms of pandemic chaos, political instability, inflation and many more. In such chaotic circumstances, the youth is often a serious victim of unstable change and thus, is at greater risk of developing mental health issues. The effects of such unstable experiences may be witnessed in ever-increasing rates of suicide, delinquent tendencies, and many other mental health problems around the globe as well as in the sub-continent. Such issues may be even more common in students who have some sort of creative interests because such students are often non-conformists to rules and regulations (Günçer & Oral, 1993) and thus, may feel as out-group, therefore, such students may be at greater risk of developing mental health issues.

In these circumstances, psychological well-being may function as a lifebuoy and can save the youth from developing such mental health issues. In the present study, the researchers study how positive psychological factors i.e., savoring may be helpful in enhancing the well-being of the students. More specifically, the study aims to examine if savoring acts as a mediator between

the relationship between absorption in music and psychological well-being.

Music Absorption and Psychological wellbeing. Music has significant effects on listeners. It serves many emotional functions for the listeners, such as mood regulation, a source of pleasure and helps maintain issues of identity, agency, and belongingness (Laukka, 2007). Moreover, it helps individuals in improving task performance, maintaining stress and early recovery from stress, increasing personal happiness and many more (Ferguson & Sheldon, 2013). Music absorption is the degree to which oneself is absorbed in music and gets him/herself engaged in the music (Sandstorm & Russo, 2010).

This absorption is related to one's listening preferences and habits as well as it relates with how much the music can be influential for the listener's mood (Wild et al., 1995). This is different from specific music listening as it involves being responsive to the music (Sandstorm & Russo, 2013). This absorption serves a serene purpose and enhances spirituality, which in turn enhances the psychological well-being of the listeners (Faran et al., 2021).

This music absorption enhances positive mental health. Positive mental health, or stated otherwise, mental well-being refers to an overall positive mental state marked by positive relations, joy, positive emotions, and overall satisfaction with life (Winefield et al., 2012). Multiple factors amalgamate to form the construct of psychological well-being including autonomy, mastery, positive social relations, personal adequate growth, and purposeful life (Deci & Ryan, 2008). The capability of a person to resist negativity and pursue positivity is possible through the presence of well-being in an individual. The absence of well-being proves itself the cause of vulnerability and distress (Ryff & Singer, 2008). Previous studies suggest that music related factors result in many positive outcomes. For instance, music engagement may result in enhanced level of posttraumatic resilience in patients with childhood trauma (Rosenberg et al., 2021). Not only absorption and engagement in music, music making also serve as a strong antecedent of increased well-being in everyday life (Koehler, & Neubauer, 2020)

Savoring and Psychological Wellbeing

The very concept of the pursuit of happiness which means urging the way of happiness to walk on it eternally can be highly interlinked with the concept of savoring, which is the mindful awareness of the surroundings to make it meaningful and to develop deep appreciative reflection. Happiness is the feeling that makes a base of comfort for psychological wellbeing (Hall et al., 2016). Today we are living in the century of speed and sufficiency, everything around us is going so fast that we lack the character of 'in praise of slowness'. Being slow allow us to concentrate more on the minute details of everything happening around us, that deep focus tend us to develop more mature emotions in us to become a person with strong wellbeing. Main function of savoring is to develop the seed of wellbeing by prolonging, extending and by intensifying experiences that can bring happiness for a person (Germer, 2009).

According to Germer (2009), savoring is of three types, each type with unique benefits and effects on mental health. Savoring about present can protect a person from all negative disorders of mental health. Savoring about the past can allows a person to appreciate the present. At last, the savoring of the future can make a person emotionally strong, optimistic, and meaningful. Research conducted by Jose et al. (2012) concluded that momentary positive events and realization can produce momentary well-being. To cultivate wellbeing, a proper cognitive-emotional map followed in the back starting from realization to savor all happenings of life. This

happiness may be derived from the positive emotions that develop as a result of savoring experiences (Su-Keene & DeMatthews, 2022). According to research conducted by Croft et al. (2014), small pleasures of life need little appreciation, but that little appreciation develops a sense of savoring in personality which later develops into high well-being person.

Salces-Cubero et al. (2019) reported that when individuals were trained for increased savoring experiences, they were more likely to experience increased, positive affect, heightened life satisfaction, and decreased negative affect. Moreover, such individuals experienced a higher level of subjective happiness as well as resilience. All of these factors ultimately result in an increased experience of well-being. Similarly, different styles of savoring affect eudaimonia, life satisfaction, and overall happiness; thus, ultimately contribute to the well-being of the individuals (Chadwick et al., 2021)

Mediating Role of Savoring in the Relationship of Music Absorption and Psychological Wellbeing

Music is used as a symbol of emotions in societies, other than that music is a significant part of clinical therapies used for psychological treatments and in research as well. While listening to music, variability of absorption patterns is observed in listeners. Getting absorbed into music is an emotion as well as a cognitive activity (Mithen, 2006). A deep understanding of the event makes that event more reasonable and explored, the same is the case for music. If someone is using deep cognitions to feel the music or associating the feeling with music while listening to it, a person is getting assistance from the tool of savoring, to enjoy happening deeply. Systemizing or understanding the segment of rhythms rely on the ability to focus and ability to enjoy. If someone lets anything go without specific concentration and importance, then that would be hard for that person to get associated with music on a deeper level. After savoring the emotional attachment to music, one can make it a lasting part of the personality to explore more hidden features of happening and rhythms around him in daily life. That savoring of music absorption makes a person develop a feeling of empathy by focusing on the emotions of others, the same as they were focusing on the beats of music (Juslin & Vastjall, 2008).

Therefore, that focus or concentrated optimism and ability to enjoy becoming the part of their nature, make them a person of high well-being. Referring to music, not only words and lines are the elements of music, beats, rhythms, sequences, timings and sources also make it a complete part of the music. In our days and darks, we meet millions of rhythmic as well as non-rhythmic sounds around us. What a person need is just to develop a focus to get partially absorbed into those sounds. The sort of music around us is the depiction of time, weather, hotness, coldness, presence, danger, bareness, colors and emotions (Radford, 1989). Therefore, our surroundings call us every time to savor all aspects of music in it, that sort of savoring can boost our focus, develop our interpersonal as well as intrapersonal skills in a better way, and ultimately develop compact well-being in society.

Bryant, conceptualized savoring as the ability to get engaged in positive events mindfully. Savoring is characterized by the capacity to be attentive towards the pleasures, happiness and joy that we derive from our day-to-day lives (Bryant & Veroff, 2007). This conscious involvement and focused attention cause happiness in life and the moment (Bryant et al., 2005). Savoring is referred to forthcoming and past events as well, termed as anticipating and reminiscing (Bryant et al., 2005). Mindfulness is knitted to music from a very early age; thus, music is the constant tool for enhancing focus and enrichment of mood, which is closely related to the concept of savoring (Bryant & Veroff, 2007).

Savoring is basically a mindful activity targeted towards the pleasure and joy of a particular experience, not specifying the event as either positive or negative. Just like all other mindful exercises, it also offers many benefits for the person who savor including promoted positive psychological functioning (Smith & Bryant, 2017), heightened level of resilience (Smith & Hanni, 2019), decreased level of negative affect and depressive symptoms (Hurley & Kwon, 2012) and thus ultimately the increased level of wellbeing (Stone & Parks, 2018). Involvement of individuals in an activity which is close to their interest can easily boost up pleasure, and thus may act as a savoring experience.

Moreover, absorption in music is directly associated with strong visualization and imagination as the words and rhythms sharpen the ability to imagine feelings and the unseen world (Herbert, 2011). This very absorption is a key concept in savoring experiences. Therefore, listening to music may be a savoring activity under certain circumstances. Moreover, we suggest that those who have a natural tendency to get themselves absorbed in music may be more likely to get engaged in savoring. Therefore, we argue that absorption in music is positively associated with psychological wellbeing through savoring and hypothesize that:

H1: Music absorption will predict psychological wellbeing in students with creative abilities.
H2: Savoring will positively predict psychological wellbeing in students with creative abilities.
H3: Savoring will mediate the relationship of music absorption and psychological wellbeing in students with creative abilities.

Figure 1. The conceptual framework of the study

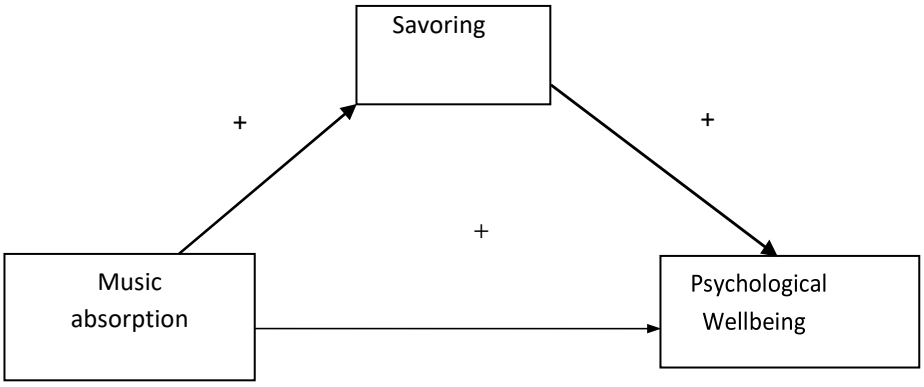

Figure1. Conceptual Framework Indicating the mediating role of savoring for the relationship of music absorption and psychological wellbeing.

Method

This section highlights the methodology of the present study including information about participants, assessment measures and procedure of the study.

Participants

The sample of the study consisted of students with creative interests (N = 320) including boys (n = 148) and girls (n = 171). The students were approached using multi-stage random sampling where at the first stage, the faculties were randomly selected from the prospectus list of a public sector university using the lottery method. Out of seven faculties, four faculties including Natural Sciences, Business Studies, Arts and Humanities and Social Sciences and from each faculty two departments were randomly selected through a lottery method. From each department, an equal number of students (n = 40), regardless of their gender and creative interest, were approached by using convenience sampling. The details entailed with demographic variables are composed and detailed to avoid confounding variables and make results more reliable. The ratio among male and female representatives of the sample was 46.3% and 53.7% respectively. Other than that sample was effectively filtered based on extraordinary skills to authenticate the statement of research.

Assessment Measures

The following instruments were used to assess the constructs of the study:

Absorption in Music Scale (AIMS)

AIMS is a measure to identify the emotional responses to the music of individuals on items of the scale. It was mainly developed by Sandstrom and Russo (2013). The scale was constructed on 5-point likert scale, with having 1=strongly disagree and 5=strongly agree. All the items included in the current version of the scale are positively constructed but in the previous version, some of the negative direction items were also included. It consists of total 34 items, so the total score comprises of the sum of scores from all 34 items. The temporal reliability of the scale is given as r = .91.

Savoring Abilities Scale (SAS)

Bosetti (2008) constructed Savoring Abilities Scale (SAS) to measure the ability of savoring among different individuals. It was constructed on 5- point Likert scale, having marking strategies as 1=strongly agree to 5= strongly disagree. The scale is comprised of 21 items, with a reliability with an alpha range of .70.

Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS)

It was developed on the 5-pint likert scale starting from 1=none of the time and ends to 5=All the time (Tennant et al., 2007). It was validated initially over 16 years and comprised of 14 items. Conclusion of scoring would be got by just add up the total number of responses to each question and taking an average score by dividing the total score by 14. This scale is especially designed to measure both types of wellbeing (hedonic and eudemonic) (Clarke, et al., 2011).

Procedure

The study followed a correlational research design. Firstly, the topic was approved by the Institutional Research Review Board, department of psychology of a public sector university. After getting permission from the department, the researchers selected four faculties and two departments from each faculty randomly by using the lottery method. Afterwards, brochures were pasted on the notice boards of the selected departments inviting students to have creative interests in the study. The brochures clearly stated that participation in the research was completely voluntary, and that no incentive would be given to participating in the study. The researchers identified the artistic students by first using the screening question tool and when they identified themselves as having a particular skill, the researchers asked them to show their piece of creation. The researcher then formulated a committee consisting of one associate professor, two assistant professors and one lecturer from the Department of Psychology of a public sector

university. All of them were PhD degree holders. Three of the participants decided not to be included in the study based on the decision of the committee. For these three participants, the researcher personally visited the departments and asked the students to be part of the study. When the sample was completed, the researcher noted down their skills and informed consent was got signed by them. Sample participants were ensured that the study would give no harm to them, and the confidentiality of information taken from them was ensured. Moreover, they were briefed about the nature of the research through written as well as verbal instructions. It took almost 21 to 25 minutes to fill out the questionnaire by each participant. In the end, the researcher thanked the participants for their participation and cooperation. The data obtained was subjected to analysis using SPSS and Process Macro by Hayes.

Results

This section outlines the results section where the Mean, Standard deviations, alpha reliabilities initial relationship pattern, and the mediating effect of savoring between music absorption and mental well-being are summarized.

Table 1 Means, Standard Deviations, Alpha Reliabilities and Correlation Matrix for Study Variables (N =320)

Variables	M	SD	MA	WB	SA	α
MA	2.97	.24	--	.22***	.13*	.71
WB	3.07	.44	--	--	.25***	.72
SA	3.11	.44	--	--	--	.68

Note. MA = Music Absorption; WB = Mental wellbeing.
SA= Savoring experiences
*p < .05, ***p < .001

Table 1 concludes the relationship pattern among absorption in music, savoring and mental wellbeing. The Table enunciates that music absorption, savoring and wellbeing all are positively related with one another. Further, the Cronbach Alpha suggests that the reliabilities are satisfactory.

Table 2 Path Coefficients for Direct and Indirect Effects of MA (N = 320)

Paths	Outcome Variable	Predictor Variable	B	95%CI	
				LL	UL
A	Savoring	MA	.23*	.02	.43
B	WB	Savoring	.23***	.12	.34
C	WB	MA	.35***	.14	.55
D	WB	MA through SA	.05[a]	.01	.12

Note Music Absorption; WB = Mental wellbeing. SA= Savoring abilities *p<

The value of the upper and lower limit indicates that the path is significant. The mediation analysis was carried out by using Model 4 of Process Macro. The results revealed that music absorption is a positive predictor of savoring and savoring positively predicts wellbeing. Moreover, music absorption predicts wellbeing directly as well as indirectly through savoring.

Discussion

The present study was aimed at finding the mediating role of savoring in the relationship of music absorption and wellbeing in the students with creative interests. The results revealed that absorption in music, which is defined as the natural tendency to get oneself absorbed in music and get oneself driven by music (Sandstorm & Russo, 2013) a powerful tendency for having mindfulness and serenity and it enhances the wellbeing (Bryant & Veroff, 2007; Sandstorm & Russo, 2013). The absorption itself is immensely powerful in a sense that it creates the focus of the individual to one and only one activity at time and thus may have therapeutic benefits including greater ability to free associate, having higher level of transpersonal experiences, increased self-expression, and others (Russo, 2019; Solli, 2008). Moreover, participatory music engagement enhances wellbeing by affecting expression and management of emotions, enhancing self-development, facilitating connections, and acting as a respite in the busy life (Perkins et al., 2020).

Further, music also affects mental wellbeing of the individuals. For instance, Douglas (2019) reported that selecting a playlist of one's choice and listening to it may affect eudaimonic and hedonic wellbeing as well as it affects the work-related experiences positively. Therefore, music absorption directly and indirectly affects wellbeing of individuals. One such linking mechanism through which music absorption enhances well-being is savouring. Individuals who tend to be absorbed in music may feel easier to get absorbed in other activities as well. One such activity is savouring. Thus, the

individual with music absorption may have a greater tendency to absorb the present moment and enjoy it deeply. This enjoyment and deep involvement in the pleasure of the current moment is savoring. Savoring, as Smith and Hanni (2019) asserted, is the ability to enjoy positive moments and extract positive feelings mindfully from these experiences. Savoring results in many positive experiences including reduced depressive symptoms, increased resilience and generally, happiness. Moreover, savoring improves everyday psychological functioning and thus, ultimately, enhances the overall well-being of the individuals (Smith & Hanni, 2019; Smith & Bryant, 2017).

Similarly, different techniques of savoring such as writing about a moment of savouring may directly enhance positive affect, any reduced negative affect, increase happiness and add to life satisfaction, hence resulting in an enhanced level of life satisfaction (Jiao et al., 2021). Further, savoring not only directly influence mental health such as depression but also interacts with other variables and thus results in an enhanced effect of positive affect and a reduced effect of negative affect (Kahrilas et al., 2020) which may result in enhanced well-being.

Conclusions

The study concludes that students who have creative interests and have a natural tendency to get absorbed in music are more likely to experience savouring. Moreover, the absorption in music as well as enhanced savouring result in an increased level of wellbeing

Limitations and Suggestions

The study has some limitations. One major limitation is that the type of creative interest was not controlled. Some creative interests may have a predisposed preference for music which may act as a third variable. Future studies must assess this relationship while focusing on those individuals who have higher musical intelligence, or musical intelligence may be studied as a third variable. Further, although the probability sampling technique was used, the sample size was small and future studies may extend the sample size. One other limitation is that many backgrounds of an individual also resist developing the ability of savoring or associate with music, in future research that should be keenly observed. Finally, the sample of the study was taken from one Public Sector University and future studies may take a sample from different universities and colleges and from the public sector as well.

Implications

The study has important implications for positive psychology theorists and practitioners. In clinical premises, that would be a new idea for implementation to savor the music around patients in daily life for better well-being. The theorists can assess the mediating role in other forms of absorption as well as the absorption in music and well-being relationship. Moreover, the practitioners can base therapies using savoring based on music for individuals who get themselves involved in music as well as those who have some sort of creative interests. Skills-oriented institutes can use music as a tool to capture basic polishing needs. On a higher level, making society understand every happening in life, the concept savoring should be spread to lighten the darkness of pessimism and hopelessness in society. In contrast, research also offers the privilege of understanding the significance of the students having extra skills, which should not be wasted being unobserved and should be polished more by certain responsible organs.

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Author contribution: The main idea of the paper, data collection and data analysis were done by AI & IFM under the Supervision and co-Supervision of MA & NIM. All the authors worked collaboratively on the literature search, and data analysis, and have co-written and approved the final version of the manuscript.

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