

Positive Function of Nostalgia Mediated the Relationship between Positive Nostalgia Proneness and Life Satisfaction or Subjective Happiness

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Abstract

Background: Nostalgia means sweet or bitter memories of people's life. Since it relates with psychological well-being, various studies about nostalgia have been conducted. However, it has not been clear of a path among nostalgia proneness, positive function of nostalgia, and well-being like happiness or life satisfaction. **Purpose:** The purpose of this study was to investigate a hypothesis that positive function of nostalgia mediated the relation between positive nostalgia proneness and subjective happiness or life satisfaction using a path analysis. **Method:** Participants were healthy twenty elders. They participated in collage therapy once for about 90 hours, they remembered past of their lives or daily life. After the therapy, they completed questionnaires of nostalgia proneness (Positive, Negative), positive function of nostalgia (Social Connectedness, Self-Continuity, Meaning of life, Self-Clarification), Subjective Happiness and Life Satisfaction scale. We conducted a correlation analysis and a path analysis. The ethical committee permitted the study. **Results:** The Positive nostalgia proneness correlated with all 4 factors of positive function of nostalgia, and all 4 factors correlated with Life Satisfaction and Subjective Happiness. In the path analysis, Positive nostalgia proneness significantly affected Social Connectedness, and Social Connectedness affected Subjective Happiness. And Positive nostalgia proneness significantly affected Meaning of life, and Meaning of life affected Subjective Happiness and Life Satisfaction. **Conclusion:** Social Connectedness mediated the relationship between Positive nostalgia proneness and Subjective Happiness. Meaning of life mediated the relationship between Positive nostalgia proneness and Subjective Happiness or Life Satisfaction. The hypothesis that positive function of nostalgia mediated the relation between positive nostalgia proneness and subjective happiness or life satisfaction was approved.

Keywords

Positive Nostalgia Proneness, Positive Function of Nostalgia, Subjective Happiness, Life Satisfaction, Meaning of Life

1. Introduction

The number of elder is increasing all over the world and the increasing population of elders is one of the most important issues in the field of health and welfare. Elders often remember their lives and feel nostalgia. Nostalgia is a self-relevant emotion (Van Tilburg, Wildschut, & Sedikides, 2017), defined as a sentimental longing or wishful affection for the past (The New Oxford Dictionary of English, 1998), and it is useful for well-being of people. Garrido (1918) demonstrated that nostalgia could represent part of both adaptive and maladaptive coping strategies, depending on the personality and coping style of the individuals. Sedikides & Wildschut (2018) showed that nostalgia helps people attain a more meaningful life, protects from existential threat, and contributes to psychological equanimity in review article. Nostalgia makes people feel proud (Leunissen, Wildschut, Sedikides et al., 2021) and it may promote well-being (Layous & Kurtz, 2023). Studies about nostalgia are important for elders much more in future.

Van Tilburg, Sedikides, Wildschut et al. (2019) investigated why nostalgia increased meaning of life. Meaning of Life is defined as the subjective perception that one's life has a measure of predictability or order, has direction or goals, and has worth or value (King, Heinzelman, & Ward, 2016). They conducted 4 studies using questionnaires. Results showed that social connectedness and self-continuity mediated the relationship between nostalgia and meaning. Li, Zhu, Li et al. (2023) showed that nostalgia improves subjective well-being (positive affect and negative affect) by increasing gratitude, but may not alter cognitive well-being (satisfaction with life). Layous, Kurtz, Wildschut et al. (2021) showed that social connectedness mediated the relationship between nostalgic reflection and increase in well-being. Also meaning in life was a mediator between nostalgic reflection and increases in well-being.

In Japan, Kusumi (2021) made a Japanese version of Nostalgia Proneness Scale referring to Holbrook (1993), and showed that social connectedness and self-clarification of the nostalgia function mediated the relation between positive nostalgia proneness and life satisfaction. Ando, Hashimoto, Arima et al. (2024) conducted reminiscence therapy for elders in a clinical situation. Elders reviewed their lives and completed questionnaires pre and post reminiscence therapy. Results showed that positive nostalgia proneness is positively related to life satisfaction; however, the mechanism and a reason of this result have not been clarified.

From these previous studies, the factors of social connectedness, self-continuity, meaning are important factors to subjective well-being or cognitive well-being. There are no studies including these factors. Referring to previous studies, we

made a hypothesis that positive function of nostalgia mediated the relationship between positive nostalgia proneness and subjective happiness or life satisfaction. The purpose of this study was to investigate the hypothesis which positive nostalgia proneness mediated the relationship between positive nostalgia proneness and subjective happiness or life satisfaction. If the hypothesis will be approved, we can manipulate or come up with the method of life review or reminiscence therapy to promote subjective happiness or life satisfaction.

2. Method

2.1. Participants

Participants were 23 healthy people who attended an extension lecture in a university. Three people did not complete questionnaires and deleted. Then, the number of participants was 20 (male: 5, female: 15). The mean age was 70.0 years old.

2.2. Questionnaires

We used the following questionnaires (**Table 1**):

Table 1. The questionnaires in this research.

1)	Nostalgia Proneness Scale (Kusumi, 2021)	It consisted of 3 factors like Positive, Negative, Reminiscence Nostalgia Proneness. Reminiscence nostalgia proneness is neutral, we used only positive and negative. There are 14 question items measured from 1 point (not at all) to 8 (well true).
2)	Japanese version expansion function scale of nostalgia (Kusumi, 2021)	It is based on Cheung, Wildschut, Sedikides et al. (2013) or Sedikides, Wildschut, Cheung et al. (2016). It consists of 4 factors: Social Connectedness, temporal Self Continuity (Self Continuity), Meaning of life, Self-clarification. There are 16 question items measured from 1 point (not at all) to 5 (well true).
3)	Life Satisfaction Scale (Diener, Emmons, Larsen et al., 1985)	There are 5 question items measured from 1 point (not at all) to 8 (well true).
4)	Subjective Happiness Scale	We referred a visual analogue scale (Matsubayashi, Kimura, Iwasaki et al., 1992). We made a visual analog scale measured from 0 to 100 for elders to answer easily.

2.3. Procedure

Twenty participants had collage therapy in which they cut magazines or photos, paste them on B4 size paper, and talked about arts about 90 hours. We chose collage therapy as a work, because they remembered some of their memories and promoted nostalgia. Their impression reports showed their nostalgia. After the therapy, they completed questionnaires like Nostalgia Proneness scale, Japanese version Nostalgia expansion function scale, Subjective Happiness scale, and Life

Satisfaction scale.

2.4. Data Analysis

We used SPSS ver.28 to conduct correlational analysis and path analysis.

2.5. Ethics

We performed this study in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki. This study was approved from the Research Ethics Committee of Nishikyusyu University.

3. Results

3.1. Path Analysis

Figure 1 shows the result of the Path analysis. GFI was 0.85, AGFI was 0.51, RMSEA was 0.04. The analysis might be suitable. We showed the significant path coefficients in the Figure. Positive nostalgia proneness affected Social Connectedness (0.82), Self-Continuity (0.58), Meaning of life (0.56), and Self-Clarification (0.90). Negative nostalgia proneness affected Social Connectedness (-0.37) and Self-Continuity (-0.46). Moreover, Social Connectedness affected Subjective Happiness (0.65). Meaning of life affected Life Satisfaction (0.72) and Subjective Happiness (0.28).

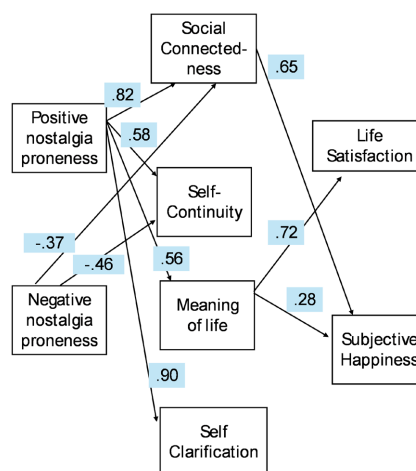


Figure 1. The significant path coefficients after the path analysis.

3.2. Correlation Analysis

We showed the result of correlation analysis (**Table 2**). Positive nostalgia proneness positively correlated with 4 factors of positive function of nostalgia, Subjective Happiness, and Life Satisfaction. On the other hand, Negative nostalgia proneness did not significantly correlate with other factors. Life Satisfaction and Subjective Happiness correlated significantly with other factors without Negative nostalgia proneness.

Table 2. Correlation coefficient analysis among variables.

	LS	Positive	Negative	SCO	SCN	Meaning	SCL	Happiness
LS	-							
Positive	0.40*	-						
Negative	-0.14	0.15	-					
SC	0.60**	0.66***	-0.11	-				
SCN	0.56**	0.45*	-0.20	0.51*	-			
Meaning	0.82***	0.43*	-0.10	0.58**	0.56**	-		
SCL	0.57**	0.76***	-0.08	0.78***	0.59**	0.53**	-	
Happiness	0.71***	0.64***	-0.29	0.85***	0.62**	0.68***	0.67***	-

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$; LS: Life Satisfaction, Positive: Positive nostalgia proneness, Negative: Negative nostalgia proneness, SCO: Social Connectedness, SCN: Self-Continue, Meaning: Meaning of life: SCL: Self-Clarification, Happiness: Subjective Happiness.

4. Discussion

Positive nostalgia proneness affected Social-Connectedness. People's positive memories include relationships or bond with others. By reliving the past through nostalgia, the individual symbolically reignites bonds with close others (Batcho, 1998), and people feel social connectedness. Juhl & Biskas (2023) said that nostalgia provides social connectedness, then people may become nostalgic when feeling socially disconnected to restore connectedness. Enea, Eissenbeck, Petrescu et al. (2021) showed that during the COVID-19 pandemic, loneliness predicted increased nostalgia. These studies support the present results.

In the present study, Social Connectedness mediated the relationship between Positive nostalgia proneness and Subjective Happiness. It is similar result that nostalgia evoked by music relates with subjective happiness (Kobayashi & Otake, 2018). Addition to the Sedikides, Wildschut, Cheung et al. (2016) which showed that nostalgia states caused from experimental methods promoted psychological well-being, the present study nostalgia in clinical situation promoted subjective happiness. Moreover, the fact that Positive nostalgia proneness affected Subjective Happiness supported Li et al. (2023). They conducted experiment research for young adults, establishing a nostalgia group and a no nostalgia group. The nostalgia group had higher positive affected, and gratitude partially mediated these associations. It is interesting that gratitude is another mediated factor to subjective happiness.

Positive nostalgia proneness also affected Self-Continuity. People collected sweet memories and recognized their past and the present stated, then might feel Self-Continuity. Van Tilburg et al. (2019) said that communal traditions that capture and elucidate one's life trajectory and serves as temporal landmarks for navigating through life. It is this nostalgia elucidate self-continuity. Although Self-continuity is important for confirming ego identity, it did not affect Life Satisfaction or Subjective Happiness in the present study.

Positive Nostalgia proneness affects Meaning of Life. Nostalgia confers psychological benefits like meaning of life (Van Tilburg, Sedikides, & Wildschut, 2018). The relationship between nostalgia and meaning of life is demonstrated by another study (Reid, Green, Wildschut et al., 2015). Moreover, in the present study, Meaning of life affected both Life Satisfaction (pass coefficient: 0.72) and Subjective Happiness (0.28). From pass coefficient score, the relationship between Meaning of life and Life Satisfaction is stronger than Subjective Happiness. One of the reasons for this difference is that Subjective Happiness shows the present emotion, but Life Satisfaction shows long-term feeling or thinking. Sameer, Eid, Veenhoven (2023) showed that the perceived meaning of life can affect life satisfaction in various other ways in a literature review. Moreover, the present result that meaning mediated the relationship between Positive nostalgia proneness and Life Satisfaction or Subjective Happiness supports the study of Layous et al. (2021).

About path for Life Satisfaction, although Meaning of Life affected Life Satisfaction in the present study, Social-Connectedness or Self Clarification affected Life Satisfaction in Kusumi (2021). There may be some reasons for this difference. The study of Kusumi was an internet observational study, however the present study was the clinical study to promote nostalgia in collage therapy. And there were differences in the numbers of participants and their range of ages.

5. Conclusion

Social Connectedness mediated the relationship between Positive nostalgia proneness and Subjective Happiness. Meaning of life mediated the relationship between Positive Nostalgia Proneness and Life Satisfaction or Subjective Happiness. The positive function of nostalgia mediated the relationship between Positive Nostalgia Proneness and well-being.

6. Limitation and Implication

As a limitation, the number of participants is small in a facility. Then we need to include much more participants in a few facilities. Still there are limitations, the present study has an implication. Since social connectedness and meaning of life are affective factors to subjective happiness or life satisfaction, we can manipulate these factors when we induce nostalgia to promote subjective happiness or life satisfaction. For example, we can use these factors in life review interview or reminiscence therapy to promote subjective happiness or life satisfaction.

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Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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