

How passionate people respond when good things happen

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People with high levels of harmonious passion tend to savour the moment and try to make the experience feel even more positive. Credit: Trevor Hagan, Bison Sports

A new Faculty of Kinesiology and Recreation Management study found that the ways in which passionate people respond when good things happen in their favourite activities depends on their predominant passion type.

"We know that having high levels of harmonious passion for an activity often leads to adaptive outcomes such as well-being and enjoyment, and that having high levels of obsessive passion typically leads to less optimal experiences," says Dr. Ben Schellenberg, an assistant professor in the University of Manitoba's Faculty of Kinesiology and Recreation Management.

The study's findings, co-authored by Schellenberg and Dr. Patrick Gaudreau of the University of Ottawa's School of Psychology, appear in the April 2019 issue of *Journal of Happiness Studies*.

"This research helps us understand why both passion types lead to different outcomes: when passionate people experience victories, achievements, or other types of positive events, they respond differently depending on their levels of harmonious and obsessive passion," Schelleberg adds.

The team conducted three studies with over 1,000 participants to test if the extent to which people respond to positive events by engaging in savoring (i.e., attempting to maintain or enhance [positive emotions](#)) and dampening (i.e., attempting to down-regulated or stifle positive emotions) is predicted by levels of harmonious and obsessive passion for an activity.

Study 1 and study 2 both showed that harmonious passion positively predicted savoring, whereas obsessive passion predicted less savoring and greater dampening.

Moreover, in study 2, savoring mediated the relationships between both passion varieties and well-being outcomes.

In study 3, the duo extended these findings and tested if these relationships depended on whether a positive event was a result of an in-

progress or completed achievement.

Soccer fans imagined how they would react if their [favorite team](#) won either the semi-final (in-progress condition) or final (completed condition) of the ongoing UEFA champions league.

In both scenarios, harmonious passion was a stronger predictor of savoring than obsessive passion. Obsessive passion also showed strong relationships with dampening in both scenarios, although this [relationship](#) was attenuated in the completed condition.

Overall, these results reveal that passion varieties matter for predicting how people manage their good feelings following positive events, a finding that has implications for our understanding of the pathways that link [passion](#) varieties with well-being outcomes.

More information: Benjamin J. I. Schellenberg et al. Savoring and Dampening with Passion: How Passionate People Respond when Good Things Happen, *Journal of Happiness Studies* (2019). [DOI: 10.1007/s10902-019-00114-w](#)

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