

Positivity among Adolescents in Goa: An Intervention Based Study

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Abstract: *In the age when humanity reports negative experiences, educational practices can rescue the demeaned world. Education is a process of inculcating the fundamental qualities of the mind, fostering and refining them, and thereby creating individuals, capable and willing to play a part in the betterment of self and of society. The present study assessed the effects of an intervention programme on the virtue of positivity. A sample of 40 adolescents (20 males- 20 females) were studied using a personal data sheet, Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (Watson, Clark & Tellegen, 1988) scale, and a self directed learning workbook to promote positivity by Caroline Lavelock and Everett Worthington. A pre-test and post test administration was used. A t-test analysis indicated very highly significant differences in the sample group with regards to positivity-trait measures and positivity state measures indicating the positive influences of the intervention module.*

Keywords: Positivity, Education, Adolescents

1. Introduction

Positivity can make an enormous difference in life. With positivity, one sees new possibilities, can retreat from setbacks, connect with others, and become the best version of one's self. Positivity presents an opportunity to step up to the next level of existence: to broaden one's mind and build a better future.

At times, person's emotions tend to be centred on negativity— depression, aggression, anxiety, and all the ills that negative states like these can produce. These states are present in individuals and they hover over and ruin the existence of pleasant living. The community of psychology needs to make attempts to drive and promote the values of Positivity.

Positivity "reigns whenever positive emotions – like love, joy, gratitude, serenity, interest, and inspiration – touch and open your heart" (Fredrickson, 2009, p.16). One of the hallmark features of positivity is its ability to take what is already present and good in an individual and expand upon it (Fredrickson, 2009).

While no general positivity interventions exist, Fredrickson (2009) makes many suggestions for promoting positivity in one's life. These include: searching for meaning, savouring that which is good, counting one's blessings, being kind in relationships and deeds, dreaming positively about the future, exercising strengths, and connecting with nature. Education is not the mere possession of book knowledge or a literary bank to show off and to impress the fellowmen. The Principles of Education can be employed to individuals struck with momentary and even long-term negativity. The resultant influence would be transformation of negativity lodged in individuals to facilitation of optimal functioning, i.e. positivity.

Among adolescents today, negativity can provoke risk behaviours and threaten healthy development. Promoting

protective factors such as family and school connectedness, community engagement and positive peer support are important factors that promote a healthy adolescent phase. The present study aims at determining the various positive interventions that can foster and nurture positivity among adolescents today.

Objectives of the study:

To investigate whether workbook-based interventions promote Positivity.

Hypothesis:

Workbook-based interventions aimed at promoting virtues will promote virtues namely Positivity (Positive and Negative Affect Schedule).

Participants:

Purposive sampling method was used and 40 adolescents (20 males and 20 females) were selected from the colleges of Goa.

Tools:

Personal data sheet including the socio-demographic information of the participants.

Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS; Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988) scale. The scale consists of 20 words that reflect feelings and emotions. The participants are required to mark on a scale of very slightly or not at all (1) to extremely (5). Two aspects measured by the scale are the *Trait* measures and *State* measures.

A **Self directed learning workbook** titled, *The Path to Positivity: Six practical sections for Becoming a More Positive person* by Caroline Lavelock and Everett Worthington was used.

Procedure:

This research is proposed to be in three phases.

First Phase:

In this phase the scale was administered on the sample selected and the participants were asked to take part in the study based on their self-willingness.

Second Phase:

In this phase, the participants were administered a pre-test (PANAS Scale). Further, the intervention workbook was provided with due guidance by the researcher. After the completion of the interventions, the scale was re-administered as a post test to study the impact of the intervention.

Statistical Technique

A t-test assessing significant differences in the sample group.

2. Results and Discussion

Workbook-based interventions aimed at promoting virtues will promote virtues namely Positivity (Positive and Negative Affect Schedule).

Table 1: Indicating Mean, Standard Deviation and t-Value scores of the Positivity group

SCALES		N	Mean	SD	t-value
PANAS (Trait - Positive)	Pre	38	38.47	6.27	6.02***
	Post	38	49.58	10.49	
PANAS (Trait - Negative)	Pre	38	62.00	2.44	9.23***
	Post	38	49.24	8.24	
PANAS (State Positive)	Pre	38	39.17	5.99	5.08***
	Post	38	48.16	9.47	
PANAS (State Negative)	Pre	38	62.11	2.23	9.36***
	Post	38	49.38	7.93	

*** P<0.001: Very Highly Significant

** P<0.01: Highly Significant

* P<0.05: Significant

The observation of Table No. 1 reveals that for **PANAS (Trait- Positive)** the t-value computed was 6.02 and is very highly significant (P<0.001). The intervention on Positivity has made a great impact on the positive outlook that the subjects inculcated as part of their long term trait. The marked improvement in the post test scores as shown in Table 1 indicates an evident change in the Positivity in the subjects. Psychological interventions (workbook based interventions in the present study) help improve mood and are associated with positive changes in fatigue, sleep disturbances, pain and overall quality of life.

The **PANAS (Trait - Negative)** revealed the t-value was 9.23 and is very highly significant (P<0.001). The marked drop in the post test scores indicate that the intervention module made a distinguishing difference to do away with a lot of negative affect that was present in the subjects. The impact of the workbooks was remarkable to make way for the depletion of Negativity as a trait. *Kobau and her colleagues (2011)* asserted that working on positive emotions could be considered as an independent technique for improving (or restoring) mental health and well being. Educational interventions in general are aimed towards enhancing the personal qualities and strengths of individuals thereby reducing negativity.

The **PANAS (State - Positive)** indicated the t-value to be 5.08 and is very highly significant (P<0.001). The intervention on Positivity has made a great impact on the positive outlook that the subjects inculcated for their conscious state of being. The marked improvement in the post test scores as shown by table 1 points out to an evident change in the Positivity in the subjects. As a state characteristic, positivity encourages meaning in life and a sense of coherence. The intervention in the present study across its varied activities associated the psychological and spiritual strengths of the participants thereby facilitating resilience and growth.

The **PANAS (State - Negative)** showed a t-value of 9.36 and is very highly significant (P<0.001). The marked drop in the post test scores indicate that the intervention module made a distinguishing difference to do away with a lot of negative affect that was lodged in the consciousness of the subjects. The impact of the workbooks was remarkable to make way for the depletion of Negativity. The intervention aimed at encouraging adolescence to being patient and calm in times of adversities and suffering. It was observed that adolescents felt a strong urge to withdraw from the interventions because they could not wait to see the changes. The intervention however provided them a sense of engagement, control, a clear goal for the activity, a challenge which demanded a variety of skills and required focused concentration along with a feedback from the researcher. These factors could have contributed to the reduction of negative thoughts and feelings. As indicated in the above findings, the positive experiences of the adolescents in the present study were further enhanced while their negative experiences reduced as an effect of the work book based interventions.

3. Conclusion

The hypothesis that workbook-based interventions aimed at promoting virtues will promote virtues namely Positivity (Positive and Negative Affect Schedule) is accepted.

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