

A good night sleep and happiness: The role of the positivity of recalled experiences on peer intimacy and life satisfaction

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As a highly social being, human happiness hinges largely on social connectedness. However, people spend about one third of their time alone, sleeping. In this study, the effects of sleep quality on happiness and peer intimacy are examined. Further, we investigated its underlying psychological mechanism. Based on previous findings on the role of sleep in consolidation and recall of emotional memories (positive contents were more affected by sleep deprivation, compared to negative contents), it is hypothesized that a good sleep would promote happiness as well as peer intimacy by increasing the likelihood of recalling everyday social episodes in a positively biased manner.

Introduction

Focusing on nonsocial domains of happiness

- Although social relationships are essential for happiness, we spend about 1/3 of every day alone, sleeping. We all know that last night's good sleep leads to 'feeling good' the next morning.

Sleep plays a vital role in happiness

- Sleep is one of the basic needs required for survival.
- Not only insomnia is a major symptom of depression, depression is also known to be caused by long-term insomnia.
- Further, sleep deprivation is known to impair not only memory in general, but also emotional memory retrieval. Such impairment is greater for positive emotional contents, compared to negative ones.

Main hypothesis

- A good sleep would promote happiness and peer intimacy via increased tendency toward recalling everyday experiences in a positively biased manner.

Method

Participants

- 101 (Study 1) and 202 (Study 2) adolescents in Korea

Procedure

- Participants were asked to complete a survey twice with a two-week interval. At Time 1, baseline level of happiness (Study 1) and peer intimacy (Study 2) were assessed. At Time 2, sleep quality, current life satisfaction (Study 1) and peer intimacy (Study 2) were assessed. In both times, participants were asked to recall the same three social episodes of the day. The degrees of reported positivity of each episode were averaged to form a single positivity score.

Measures

- Sleep quality (IV): The Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index (PSQI)
- Life satisfaction (DV): The Satisfaction With Life Scale (Study 1, Diener et al., 1985).
- Peer intimacy (DV): Participants listed five friends they regularly interact, and indicated how close they feel toward them.
- Positive memory bias (Mediator): Subtracting the Time 1 positivity score from the Time 2 positivity score.

Results

The PROCESS method was used to examine the indirect effect of sleep quality on life satisfaction as well as peer intimacy through the positivity of recalled experiences

Study 1

Results revealed that, controlling baseline variables, last night's good sleep portends today's happiness. Moreover, this relationship was partially mediated by the degree of positivity in the retrieved episodes ($b = .28$, $SE = .29$, $p < .01$, $CI_{95} = [0.02, 0.16]$).

Study 2

Results revealed that, sleep quality predicted increased peer intimacy through the positivity in the retrieved episodes ($b = .02$, $SE = .01$, $p < .05$, $CI_{95} = [0.01, 0.05]$).

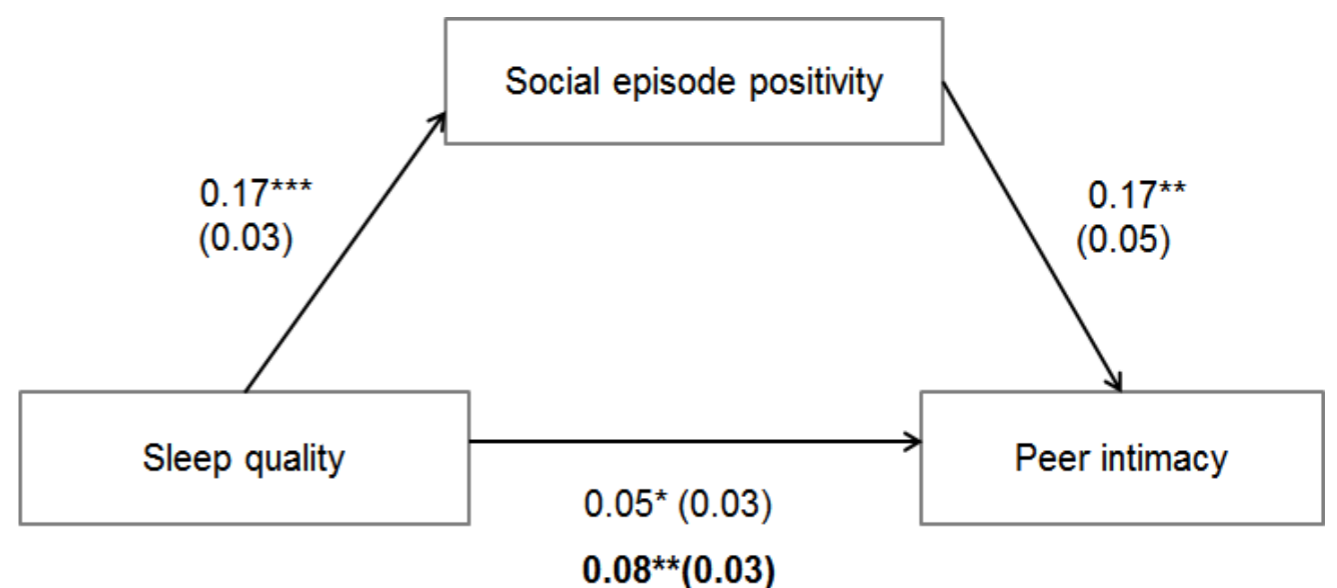


Figure. 1. Episode positivity as a mediator of peer intimacy (Study 2). Note. Regression coefficients are unstandardized and the total effect of sleep quality is noted in bold. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Conclusion

A new focus on a nonsocial component of happiness

- Although the importance of social experience is widely recognized in happiness research (Diener & Seligman, 2002), we opened interesting questions on a relatively unexamined, nonsocial component of happiness, sleep.

A positive feedback loop between sleep quality and happiness

- Sleep hygiene education can provide an efficient way to increase happiness.

The societal implications of a good sleep in Korea

- Koreans sleep the least among 18 OECD countries. Improving the public awareness on the importance of sleep can contribute to the increased national health and well-being.