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Type A Behavior and Savoring Among College Undergraduates: Enjoy Achievements Now—Not Later

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Recent research tested the *a priori* hypothesis that Type A Behavior (TAB) undermines enjoyment of leisure time, and that this effect is mediated by savoring responses which hamper enjoyment.[1] Findings suggested that the hypothesized A-B differences in savoring reflect differences in perfectionism rather than in time urgency. The present study uses the same sample to compare 117 extreme Type A and 131 extreme B undergraduates on ten dimensions of savoring assessed for a performance-related stimulus. Findings revealed Type As focus on how proud they are and impressed others are, but are only moderately to weakly involved in actively storing positive memories for later recall, or in reminiscing about prior positive events.

Classification of subjects[1] into extreme A/B categories was made based on normative recommendations.[2] Subjects completed the Ways of Savoring Checklist (WOSC), a 60-item survey assessing types of savoring responses and strategies, and providing scores on ten dimensions of savoring[3] (see Table 1). The WOSC was completed twice: once using one's most recent vacation as the target stimulus, and again using one's most recent grade on a test as the target stimulus.[3] There was no relationship between A/B Type and gender ($p<0.63$, ESS= 2.9). Findings for the vacation enjoyment (leisure-related) stimulus all had $p>0.08$ and ESS$\leq$14.6, and thus are not presented.

Table 1 summarizes univariate findings for the ten dimensions of savoring for the test grade (performance-related) stimulus.[4] As seen, only a relatively weak effect of self-congratulation was statistically reliable: extreme Type A undergraduates are more likely to score at higher levels on this dimension (the cut-point value of 4.79 corresponds to the 62nd percentile in the sample) when compared to extreme Type B undergraduates.

Figure 1 presents the hierarchically optimal classification tree analysis (CTA) model obtained using the ten savoring dimensions as potential attributes to predict A/B status.[5] Note that although the effect for memory-building *wasn't* statistically reliable in total-sample analysis, memory-building *was* statistically reliable for the sub-partition of undergraduates scoring at higher levels on self-congratulation.

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Table 1: Univariate relationships between Type A Behavior and savoring (test grade stimulus)

Savoring Dimension	UniODA Cut-Point	N	Percent of Type A's	*p*<	ESS
Sharing with Others	≤ 3.92	127	40.2	0.12	13.8
	> 3.92	113	54.0		
Memory Building	≤ 2.64	148	40.5	0.09	14.6*
	> 2.64	93	55.9		
Self-Congratulation	≤ 4.79	148	37.8	0.003	21.9*
	> 4.79	92	60.9		
Temporal Awareness	≤ 3.64	154	42.2	0.37	10.4
	> 3.64	88	53.4		
Behavioral Expression	≤ 1.38	69	37.7	0.36	10.3*
	> 1.38	175	50.3		
Sensory-Perceptual Sharpening	≤ 1.62	27	53.1	0.90	5.6
	> 1.62	207	45.1		
Absorption	≤ 2.25	99	37.4	0.12	14.1
	> 2.25	141	51.8		
Comparing	≤ 3.70	166	42.2	0.19	12.5*
	> 3.70	76	56.6		
Counting Blessings	≤ 3.50	93	37.7	0.07	14.8*
	> 3.50	152	53.3		
Kill-Joy Thinking	≤ 2.79	160	43.8	0.66	7.8*
	> 2.79	82	52.4		

Note: Total N varies due to missing values. Effect strength for sensitivity, or ESS, is a normed index of classification accuracy on which 0=the level of classification accuracy which is expected by chance, and 100=perfect, errorless classification: values ≤25 indicate a relatively weak effect.[4] An asterisk indicates that the model performance was stable in "leave-one-out" jackknife analysis, suggesting that the findings are expected to cross-generalize to an independent random sample of extreme Type As and B undergraduates.[4]

As seen, Type A undergraduates are modestly *less likely* (2:3 odds) than Type Bs to score at *lower levels* on the self-congratulation dimension of savoring (the CTA cut-point reflects the 62nd percentile on this dimension for the sample). And, among those undergraduates scoring at higher levels on self-congratulation, Type As are modestly *less likely* (2:3 odds) than are Type Bs to score at *higher levels*, and Type As are substantially *more likely* (7:3 odds) to score at *lower levels* on the memory-building dimension of savoring versus Type Bs (the CTA cut-point reflects the 82nd percentile on this dimension for the sample).

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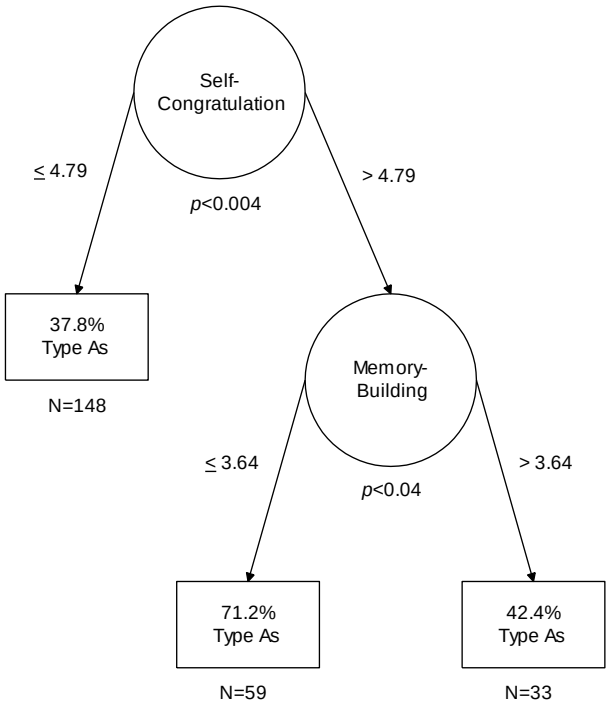
Considered as a whole this model reveals that extreme Type As are most likely to score in the *highest* quintile on self-congratulation, and in the *lowest* three quintiles on memory-building. Extreme Type A undergraduates focus strongly on how proud they are and how impressed others must be, but they are moderately or less involved in actively storing positive memories for later recall, or in reminiscing about prior positive events.[1]

Figure 1: CTA Model Discriminating Type As Versus Type Bs on Ten Savoring Dimensions: Test Grade Stimulus



The model correctly classified 86.7% of the Type Bs, and 37.5% of the Type As. The model was correct 61.3% of the time it was predicted that an observation was a Type B, and 71.2% of the time that it was predicted an observation was a Type A. Overall the CTA model achieved ESS=24.2, a borderline moderate effect.[4]

The current findings are consistent with earlier research on Type A behavior and reminiscence that found Type As are less likely than Type Bs to store details of positive events for later recall.[6] Type As' tendency to avoid building memories of personal achievements may stem from their impatience to move on to new opportunities, or from their reluctance to spend time encoding memories at the expense of striving toward future accomplishments.[6]

References

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