

DOES ATTENTION SEEKING REPRESS HAPPINESS FROM WITHIN?

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Abstract

Attention seeking acts as a barrier from experiencing inner happiness. Happiness is about more than simply the experience of a positive mood. Happiness is a subjective experience and there is no common factor which gives happiness to all. The search for happiness is unique for each and every individual and it is explained by each individual in their own frame of reference. People who are high in attention seeking find happiness only by capturing the attention of others. Most of the human beings strive for attention and recognition of others in one or another occasion. Enjoying the attention of others is socially acceptable in some situations. But the problem arises when the attention seeking tendency crosses the threshold. The extremity of attention seeking leads to complications in life. If the behaviours elicited by the attention seekers fail to grab the attention of others, it makes them feel frustrated. And it also makes them to engage in behaviours which can be both positive and negative, whether it is liked by them or not which in turn again fails to make them feeling happy if it again fails to meet the criteria of attention seekers. So for high attention seekers, they have to depend on others for their happiness which lacks in turn is dubious for experiencing happy. So high attention seekers are restricted to happiness what the average individuals enjoy in their life. This paper is an attempt to study how the trait of attention seekers limited themselves to the particular factor for experiencing happiness.

Key words: Attention seeking, Behaviour, Happiness, Contentment, Frustration.

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Introduction

The core of all searches of human beings is the search for happiness. But some search the happiness from inside and some search the happiness from outside. Searching the happiness from outside will not be long lasting and it fails to offer peace (Ara, Eshrat, 2019). Happiness is a state of well-being that encompasses living a good life, one with a sense of meaning and deep contentment. The ultimate goal of most of the people is attaining happiness, yet most people define happiness in their own frame of reference. Experiencing quantum of happiness is vital for psychological well-being of an individual. Release of various hormones is responsible for experiencing happiness and it varies with the individual difference. Each human is unique and each one possesses their own understanding for happiness (Tamir, 2017). But many traits of human being acts as a blockage for experiencing happiness. Attention seeking is one such characteristics feature which acts as a factor that obstruct happiness. The prevalence of attention seeking behaviour brought motivation in the early stages but it may not provide the cohesion in their well-being and the sense of belongingness the mature adults require. Attention seeking behaviour is to act in a way which likely to elicit attention, usually to elicit validation from others. In early stages of life, attention seeking helps the individual to get things done and to somehow it is productive. But in later years of life if it continues above the threshold, it creates obsession that reduces their productivity.

Attention seekers tend to engage in any activity for being the centre of attraction in spite of their consequences independent of the actual benefit or harm to health. Attention seekers show behaviour only motivated to grasp others' attention to be driven by self-consciousness. Most of the behaviour that is motivated by attention seeking is not internal and self-motivated behaviour as it is only driven by self-conscious and thus an externalization of personality. This type of leverage on behaviour creates outcome of loss of a person's sense of agency, personality disorder and the meaningless behaviour associated with these conditions. Attention seeking also makes the individual addicted to social media to gratify the quest for attention by actively engaged most of the time spending to get recognition and acknowledgement through likes and comments. It makes them obsess which leads them to do dangerous activity like taking selfie in the dangerous way which is jeopardize to their own safety. It sometimes makes them face serious consequence, even life threatening and collapse the total well-being and happiness of the individual. Attention seekers may also become successful in their career as they try to reach out for the attention of others and they choose career which gives them fame and name.

Peculiar features of Attention seekers

Attention seeking is one of the most under researched concept yet it is a wide spread occurring phenomenon which receives little or no consideration. The behavior of attention seeking is often associated with the psychiatric illness like Histrionic Personality Disorder (American Psychiatric Association, 1994) and as a motivational factor for certain factitious disorder (Feldman & Ford, 1994; Munro & Thrusfield, 2001). However attention seeking itself is a condition legitimately be seen as a problem in themselves. Attention seeking refers to those behaviours, through their very irritating nature, bring a child to the attention of a number of adults in a persistent manner over a lengthy period of time, causing great concern.

We would exclude the sudden reaction of a child to an upset at home lasting for a few days or weeks. In addition, the pattern should appear in more than one setting (Mellor, 2005). Attention seeking can also be confounded as “a brain wiring response to early developmental trauma caused by neglect,” causing people with formative experiences of emotional and physical neglect to continuously seek the nurturing and safety they were denied as children (Kvarnstrom, 2015). All the attention seeking characteristics of an individual cannot be considered as problem behavior. It can only be assessed as problematic when it is judged as inappropriate to the particular circumstances.

Attention seekers constantly look for the compliment from others and frequently expect others to reaffirm their aptitude even though they know about their qualities and abilities. Individuals with the personality of high attention seeking most of the time try to involve others in their and usually over estimate their problems and they need to be heard about their own problems and make others to be a part of it. They overplay their achievements and exaggerate the real story of success. They usually magnify their smartness and their ability to achieve and they want the world to know their attainment of success desperately. Attention seekers try to accuse others for their over usage of social media and they often give the statement that it is spoiling the society but paradoxically they will be active in social media to seek the attention of others. They always want to be the centre of focus in each and every social gathering, if it fails they can't resist. They even try to do something out of the box to get the spotlight on them. They want everyone to praise for their presence.

Attention seekers play the role of victim to gain the attention of others by winning their sympathy for them. They are over dramatic and never apologise for their mistakes and instead they make others to comfort them for feeling low. They usually try to find fault in each and every thing in life no matter how organized the things going on. They are pessimistic and suspicious all the time and play the role of doubter and moaning all the time about the flaws. Attention-seekers are good in grasping the audience through their skill of story-telling and they made the listeners curious about the lead in the story. They are good in magnifying the instances and creates thrill by fake twist to captivate the attention. They hesitate to allow the circumstance to be smooth and getting things organized so that they make everything in trouble (Edwards, 2019). They can't resist thanking someone for their work and they start spreading rumours and annoying everyone. They want people to admire their way of life and even try to get the envy of others for their lifestyle. So they pretend to be over charming and overwhelming about their luxurious life. They want to showcase that their life is pitch-perfect.

Attention seeking vs. Happiness

Happiness is a state of well-being that encompasses living a good life, one with a sense of meaning and deep contentment. Happiness is “people's evaluations of their lives and encompasses both cognitive judgments of satisfaction and affective appraisals of moods and emotions” (Kesebir & Diener, 2008, p.118). Happiness consists in achieving, through the course of a whole lifetime, all the goods — health, wealth, knowledge, friends, etc. that lead to the perfection of human nature and to the enrichment of human life. This requires us to make choices, some of which may be very difficult (Aristotle). Happiness consists of three main elements pleasant life, good life and meaningful life. Research in the field of

positive psychology often describes a happy person as someone who experiences frequent positive emotions, such as joy, interest, and pride, and infrequent (though not absent) negative emotions, such as sadness, anxiety, and anger (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005)

Attention seekers in their effort to grab the attention of others they are recessive in knowing about what they really need in life. They lack productivity which is one of the major criteria for good life as they do things which can be only attract others' attention. They lack empathy and sympathy for others which in turn fail to establish trusted relationship with others. So people find exhausted with their relationship soon that leave them isolated. Their constant effort to be the centre of attentions leaves them frustrated when they fail to meet the criteria of lime light. They can't be good with other people in their working place as they lack recognizing and appreciating the work of others. As attention seekers tend to find fault in everything and everyone around them they fail to enjoy the moment which brings happiness to them. They exaggerate the problem to pull people so that they tend to be in that problem instead of finding solution. They are master in exaggerating the reality by making twist and turns that makes them hard to find the reality.

The choice of attire for the overwhelming response from others makes them deviated from choosing appropriate and comfort attire. The habit of gossiping about others' as an act to spoil the reputation of others which is threatening to their want of attention from others leave the negative impression upon them. They won't go well with other members of the team as they try to always be in the spotlight so that they are unsuccessful in their part of work. They spent more time in social network which leaves them unproductive. Being always engage in social media for constant attention they lack in potential and productivity which are essential for the psychological, social and economical well-being of an individual (Edwards, 2017) They become sedentary in their lifestyle which in turn makes them suffer from some physical ailments. They want others to envy them so they end up pretending to live luxuriously which in turn avert them to enjoy the resources and happiness existing in their real life. They exhibit undesirable even offensive behaviour in search of attention from others and they won't find themselves guilty if it satisfies themselves by getting the attention of others makes them ended up against law.

Implications

Attention seeking behaviour of the students has to be governed from the early stages of life by parents and teachers. Through proper intervention by using rewards and punishments attention-seeking behavior can be controlled. Attention - Seeking behaviour should not be encouraged and reinforced by the people around them in the early stages of development especially by the parents. Over gratification and under gratification of the child need to be avoided and optimum level of attention supposed to be inculcated in parenting. The unpleasant behavior of the person for the sake of attention seeking ought to be made followed by ignorance and sympathy should be avoided while they try to play the role of victims for grabbing attention.

Conclusions

Attention seeking like other psychological problems is one such common behavioural problem addresses not only in children but also in adults. As there is lot of obstruction to

contentment and happy life, attention seeking is a subjective barricade which resists the individual to lead a happy contented life. As happiness is to have a favourable attitude about one's life as a whole the attention seekers deteriorate happiness as they decline in their attitude of viewing satisfaction in whatever they encounter. Attention seekers tend to experience negative emotions more frequently than the happy person who tend to experience positive emotions frequently than the negative emotions. Attention seeking receives less lime light in the area of research yet the condition is more prevalent. So it is mandatory to initiate more number of research in the area of attention seeking as there is an alarming increase in the over usage of social media only to get the attention of others both by the adolescents and adults.

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