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Social Reminiscence and Emotional Regulation

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Introduction

Reminiscence is the recall of personally experienced events from one's past.

Reminiscence is considered to be beneficial for mental health.

Previous research organized 8 major functions of reminiscence into a model which includes 3 dimensions:

1) Positive self-functions: Identity, Problem-Solving, Death Preparation

- have a direct and positive influence on well-being and health;

2) Negative self-functions: Boredom Reduction, Bitterness Revival, Intimacy Maintenance

- have a direct and negative influence on well-being and health;

3) Pro-social functions: Conversation or Narrative, Teaching/Informing

- proposed that they contribute to well-being and health in an indirect way.

Research concluded that the effect of pro social reminiscence is not clear cut.

The overall study aims at better understanding of emotion regulation in later life.

The poster presents the 1st phase of the study, performed with a sample of younger adults (18-30 years old).

Primary Goal

Examine whether pro-social reminiscences, specifically here Narrative reminiscence, induce positive emotions

Objectives

- Examine the effect of Narrative reminiscence on the regulation of emotions among younger adults
- Contrast Narrative reminiscence with
 - Storytelling (it is similar to Narrative reminiscence but does not rely on autobiographical memory)
 - Integrative reminiscence (it involves an evaluation of autobiographical memory)
- Conduct preliminary validation of Effects of Personal Memory questionnaire, the instrument developed for the study to evaluate the effects of recalling a personal memory or a story

Method

Participants

52 younger adults, 32 women, 20 men; mean age of 21.14 years; age range: 18 – 30 years

Measures

➤ Positive and Negative Affect Scale (PANAS)

consists of 60 items (adjectives) which refer to basic negative and positive affects.

Participants indicated how they felt “right now – at the present moment” on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from *very slightly or not at all* to *extremely*.

PANAS was completed twice: before and after recalling a memory or a story.

➤ Effects of Personal Memory questionnaire (EPM)

consists of 8 items which pertain to one of the four dimension: helping to regulate emotions, providing guidance, nurturing relationships, and sustaining identity.

The measure utilises a 5-point Likert scale ranging from *very slightly or not at all* to *very much or extremely*.

Participants completed the questionnaire after completing PANAS the 2nd time.

Procedure

Data collection took place at a mutually convenient time at a laboratory located at 200 Lees. There was one participant at a time. Each session lasted between 30 and 45 minutes.

Participants were randomly assigned to one of the 3 conditions: (a) Narrative reminiscence; (b) Integrative reminiscence; or (c) Storytelling.

Data analysis

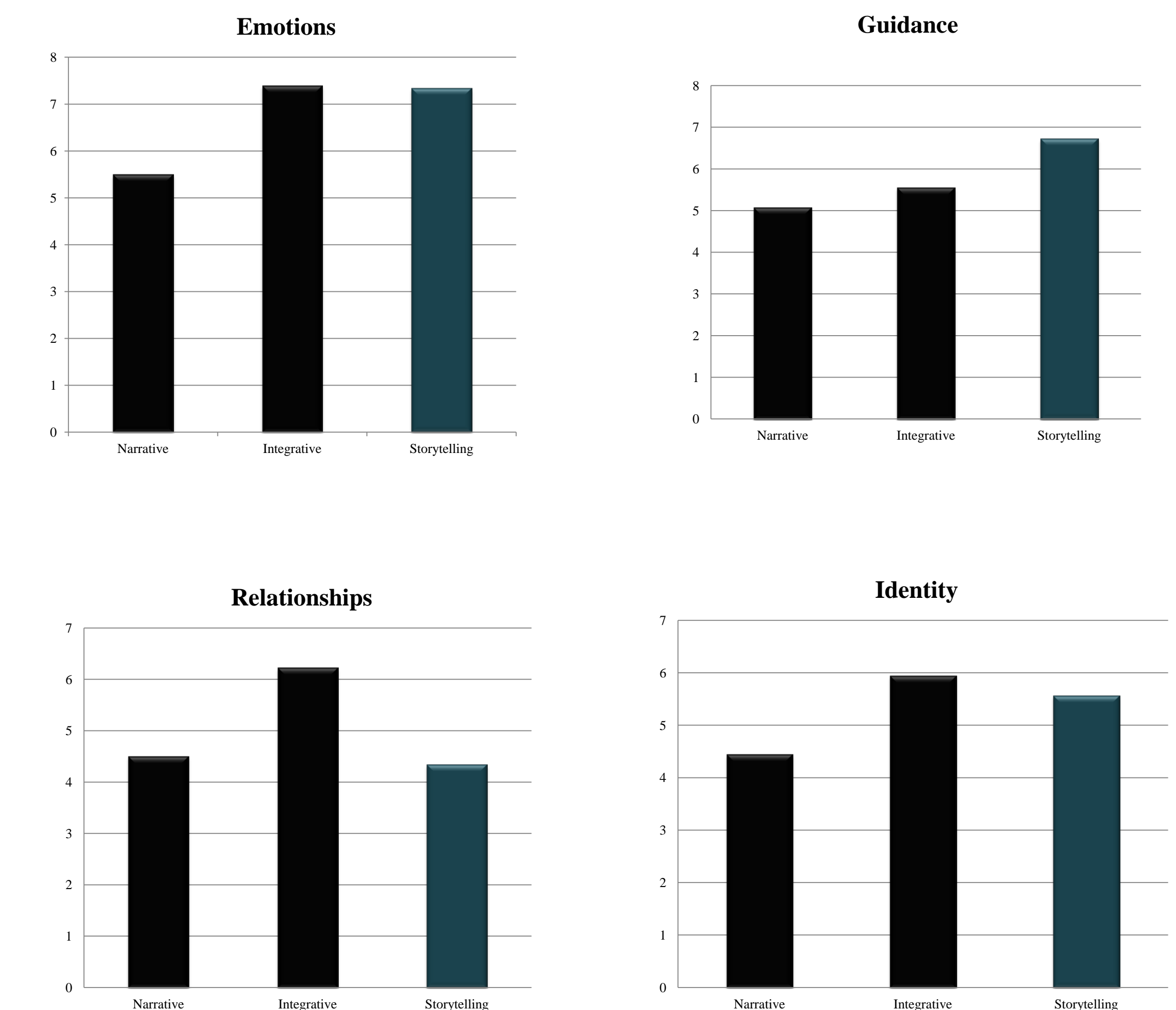
Due to the fact that the period of data analysis coincided with the move to the main campus, it was not possible to do proper analysis using SPSS and QDA-Miner software.

Some simple analysis of the results obtained on the EPM: means on each dimension for every participant were calculated and compared between the three groups of reminiscence functions.

It was predicted that:

- 1) the dimension of emotional regulation would be higher for narrative reminiscence,
- 2) there would be no significant difference on the dimension of guidance;
- 3) the dimension of relationships would be higher for integrative reminiscence, and
- 4) the dimension of identity would be higher for integrative reminiscence.

Results



Prediction # 1 – NOT SUPPORTED: Integrative reminiscence and Storytelling were higher than narrative reminiscence on the scale of emotional regulation.

Prediction # 2 – SUPPORTED: no significant differences but Storytelling has a component of guidance.

Prediction # 3 – SUPPORTED: function of nurturing relationships is salient for Integrative reminiscence.

Prediction # 4 – SUPPORTED: function of consolidating identity is salient for Integrative reminiscence.

Discussion

Not all predictions about the new instrument were supported.

The fact that the results for Narrative reminiscence were lower than for Integrative reminiscence and Storytelling on the scale of emotional regulation is troublesome.

BUT

Detailed analysis of the content of memories and stories is needed to determine:

- the extent to which the contents were consistent with the type of reminiscence;
- emotions induced by a particular type of reminiscence.

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