

Effect of Chocolate Consumption on Happiness

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Wofford College

Sarah Holstein 10/22/13 11:41 AM

Comment [1]: Capitalize first letter of every major word

The Effect of Chocolate on Happiness

For centuries, scientists, physicians, and philosophers have examined the mood altering properties of various chemical compounds (Historical & Science, 1998). With the advent of anti-depressant medication in the 20th century, research has almost exclusively focused on the pharmacological management of mood. However, common food products, such as chocolate, may just as effectively alter mood and may hold promise as a safer and more cost effective treatment strategy for minor mood disturbances (Science, Schmiencie, & Research, 2003).

In a seminal study by Hershey, Ghiradelli, and Cadbury (2008), chocolate consumption was associated with a significant reduction in subjective ratings of depression, as well as feelings of sadness and despair, in comparison to healthy participants who did not consume chocolate. Combined with research showing a significant increase in chocolate consumption during times of subjective stress and loneliness (On & Edge, 2011), these studies suggest that chocolate has significant mood elevating effects.

Developed in 2013, the Steinmetz Happiness Scale (SHS; Steinmetz, 2013) has been well validated as a reliable measure of subjective happiness. Commonly prescribed anti-depressant medications such as Prozac and Wellbutrin have both been reported to increase happiness scores on the SHS, as have commonly abused substances such as alcohol (Holstein & Steinmetz, 2013; Steinmetz, 2013). The effects of chocolate consumption on this validated measure of happiness, however, have not been evaluated.

Although chocolate has previously been found to reduce subjective ratings of depression and sadness, no study to date has examined whether chocolate consumption can increase subjective feelings of happiness. Therefore, the purpose of this experiment was to examine the effect of chocolate consumption on happiness. I hypothesized that participants who ate chocolate

Sarah Holstein 10/22/13 7:43 AM

Comment [2]: First line of introduction = title (capitalize first letter of each major word, center title)

Sarah Holstein 10/12/13 9:11 PM

Comment [3]: Introduces the larger topic at hand: can chocolate alter mood.

Sarah Holstein 10/12/13 9:18 PM

Comment [4]: Summarizes the literature – what previous related research has been done

Sarah Holstein 10/13/13 11:17 AM

Comment [5]: Begins to hone down the introduction to the topic / purpose of the current experiment

Sarah Holstein 10/22/13 7:44 AM

Comment [6]: Further summarizes the background literature (in this case, describing the scale / methodology to be used) and describes what has not been evaluated in the field

Sarah Holstein 10/22/13 1:30 PM

Comment [7]: Further restricts the introduction to the purpose of the current experiment

Katherine Steinmetz 10/22/13 1:31 PM

Comment [8]: Makes a case for the need for this research

Sarah Holstein 10/22/13 10:22 AM

Comment [9]: Identifies purpose of the current experiment. Note: this is the only place for your lab report that active voice will be acceptable!

would be significantly happier, as determined by the SHS (Steinmetz, 2013), than participants who did not eat chocolate. This effect was predicted to occur because chocolate has previously been found to alter mood and decrease feelings of sadness (Hershey et al., 2008).

Sarah Holstein 10/22/13 8:33 AM

Comment [10]: Identifies the hypothesis (including direction of change).

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Comment [11]: Identifies rationale for this hypothesis.

ALTERNATIVE HYPOTHESIS STATEMENT ARRANGEMENT:

As chocolate has previously been found to decrease feelings of sadness (Hershey et al., 2008), I hypothesized that participants who ate chocolate would be significantly happier, as determined by the SHS (Steinmetz, 2013), than participants who did not eat chocolate.

Sarah Holstein 10/22/13 1:31 PM

Comment [12]: Another way to state your hypothesis: Provide rationale for hypothesis first, then describes hypothesis. Just make sure the sentence doesn't become a run-on!

GENERAL STYLE GUIDELINES FOR AN INTRODUCTION SECTION:

- Use simple, clear, and straightforward language.
- Keep text in past tense.
- No quotations! Carefully PARAPHRASE the articles you are citing.
- Remember you are writing for a general reader who may not be familiar with the topic – give them enough information to understand the background of the area and the purpose of your research.
- Length: minimum of 1½ pages and no more than 3 pages for your introduction.
- EDIT! Read your introduction out loud to see if it makes sense. Take it to the writing center for assistance. Use spellcheck!