Psychological Construct or Buzzfeed Quiz?: Validity of Satisfaction With Life Scale
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Sponsored by: Rice University’s Department of Psychology

Background
- There is convincing evidence supporting the validity of the Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS), which intends to measure a person’s perceived state well-being (Diener et al., 1985). It has been claimed that the SWLS is applicable for nearly all populations and is relatively stable across various factors (Huebner, 1991).
- Research suggests film segments can be highly effective in arousing the specific emotion which they are intended to evoke, and the aroused emotions are relatively consistent across subjects (Mchugo et al., 1982).
- The purpose of this research is to evaluate whether SWLS scores are affected by the emotional state of the participant.

Predictions
- We predicted that the distribution of students’ SWLS scores would be statistically significantly different depending on which induction condition they experienced.
- We hypothesized that the distribution would be the lowest for participants in the negative induction condition and the highest for the positive condition, with the neutral condition distribution somewhere in between.

Method
- Participants were unaware of the true purpose of the study and were led to believe the survey was intended to measure attitudes toward animals.
- Participants: 98 undergraduate students at Rice University over the age of 18 participated. Some students received class credit but none were compensated. Participants completed an online survey administered through Qualtrics consisting of two sections.
- Induction: Participants were randomly assigned to complete one of three different priming conditions:
  - Positive - short video with various clips of puppies playing
  - Neutral - short video of fish swimming in the ocean
  - Negative - short video with various clips of animal neglect
- Post-Induction: Participants completed a manipulation check to assess the emotional effect of the video clip they saw. They then completed the SWLS questionnaire and, lastly, answered questions regarding their attitudes toward animals.
- After all irrelevant data was eliminated, analysis was performed on the data of 57 participants.

Data
- Data was eliminated for participants who failed the manipulation check and for those who did not meet the time constraints.
  - Time: We decided participants needed to spend at least 156 seconds on the survey but no more than 30 minutes.

Results
- A One-way ANOVA showed that there were no statistically significant differences in SWLS scores depending on induction condition, $F(2,57) = 1.48$, $p > .05$, 95% CI [21.56, 24.79].
- Data was eliminated for participants who failed the manipulation check and for those who did not meet the time constraints.
  - Time: We decided participants needed to spend at least 156 seconds on the survey but no more than 30 minutes.

Conclusions
- The results of this study further contribute to the pool of research supporting the validity of the Satisfaction With Life Scale.
- Specifically, this study indicates that SWLS scores are not affected by the current emotional state of the participant.
- These results support the idea that the SWLS is a measure of true perceived well-being rather than a measure of state-dependent happiness or mood.

Future
- Future studies should examine the impact of video clips about animals on mood to determine whether they are effective in eliciting the intended emotion.
- Other research could explore the effects of other variables on SWLS scores (e.g. time of day the questions are answered).

Reference