**Method**

**Participants**

Sixty-two undergraduate students from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte participated in this study. Participant ages ranged from 18 to 53 (*M =* 20.15, *SD* = 4.97) and included 51.6% freshmen (n = 32), 30.6% sophomores (n = 19), 11.3% juniors (n = 7), and 6.5% seniors (n = 4). The breakdown of races represented was 67.7% Caucasian (n = 42), 16.1% Black (n = 10), 1.6% Hispanic (n = 1), 9.7% Asian (n = 6), and 4.8% other or multiracial (n = 3). The participants accessed the study (survey) though the SONA system, a website that allows undergraduate students and professors to post research studies for students to participate in in exchange for course credit or extra credit. The participants were able to take the survey directly from their personal computers at a destination of their choosing. During the survey, participants were first presented with a series of demographic questions followed by the measures described below. Each participant had the option to discontinue the study at any time.

**Measures**

All items presented to participants can be found in the Appendix. Participants began by answering four demographic questions.

Participants then proceeded to take the Oxford Happiness Inventory (Hills & Argyle, 2001), a 29-question survey previously used in studies to quantify current happiness by asking participants to rate how much they agree or disagree with a statement on a Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 6 = *strongly agree*). Some of the statements, marked (R), were measured in reverse meaning that if participants rated an (R) question as 1, that question would be counted as a 6. All of the ratings a participant gave were added together and divided by 29 to determine their happiness score. Higher scores indicated higher happiness at the time of the study. Some of the items presented to participants in this section included “I don’t have particularly happy memories of the past” and “I feel fully mentally alert.” Scores in this section ranged from 2.10 to 5.45 (*M* = 3.98, *SD* = 0.83). The scale’s reliability analysis yielded a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.53. This low alpha score would ordinarily indicate that the 29 items contained in the scale were lowly related to each other and therefore did not measure what they were intended to. However, the presence of reverse rated items (R) in this survey meant that some items were purposefully unrelated to each other, something this reliability test did not account for resulting in this low Chronbach’s alpha.

Following the happiness inventory, participants were presented with a list of 25 neutral vocabulary words adapted from a list by Scott, O’Donnell, Leuthold, & Sereno (2009). Participants were asked to rate on a six-point scale how positively or negatively they viewed each word (1 = *extremely negative,* 6 = *extremely positive*). Examples of items presented to participants in this section included “nonsense” and “book.” Scores were calculated by adding together the ratings participants gave for all of the words on the list. Scores ranged from 2.52 to 5.40 (*M* = 3.77, *SD =* 0.47). Higher scores indicated that a participant rated the neutral word presented more positively. The scale’s reliability analysis yielded a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.80 indicating that the neutral words were highly related to each other.

Table 1

*Means, Standard Deviations and Intercorrelations among Study Variables*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Variables** | ***M*** | ***SD*** | **1** | **2** |  |
| 1.      Perceived Happiness | 3.98 | .83 | - |  |  |
| 2.      Word Positivity Rating | 3.77 | .47 | .31\* | - |  |

*Note. N* = 62. \**p*<.05.

Table 2

*Reliability Statistics for the Survey Measures*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Variables** | ***Cronbach’s Alpha*** | ***Number of Items*** |  |
| 1.      Perceived Happiness | .53 | 29 |  |
| 2.      Word Rating | .80 | 25 |  |

**Appendix**

Survey items to be included: Demographic questions, Oxford Happiness Inventory, and neutral word list adapted from Scott, O’Donnell, Leuthold, & Sereno (2009)

**1. Demographics**

1. What is your sex?
   1. Male - 1
   2. Female – 2
   3. Transgender – 3
2. What is your age? \_\_ (they list their age in years)
3. What is your race?
   1. Caucasian – 1
   2. African American – 2
   3. Asian – 3
   4. Hispanic – 4
   5. Other/mixed – 5
4. What year at UNCC are you?
   1. Freshman - 1
   2. Sophomore - 2
   3. Junior - 3
   4. Senior – 4

**2. Oxford Happiness Inventory**

Below are a number of statements about happiness. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each by entering a number in the blank after each statement, according to the following scale:

1 = Strongly Disagree  
2 = Moderately Disagree  
3 = Slightly Disagree  
4 = Slightly Agree  
5 = Moderately Agree  
6 = Strongly Agree

Please read the statements carefully, because some are phrased positively and others negatively. Don’t take too long over individual questions; there are no “right” or “wrong” answers (and no trick questions). The first answer that comes into your head is probably the right one for you. If you find some of the questions difficult, please give the answer that is true for you in general or for most of the time.

1. I don’t feel particularly pleased with the way I am. (R) \_\_\_\_\_

2. I am intensely interested in other people. \_\_\_\_\_

3. I feel that life is very rewarding. \_\_\_\_\_

4. I have very warm feelings towards almost everyone. \_\_\_\_\_

5. I rarely wake up feeling rested. (R) \_\_\_\_\_

6. I am not particularly optimistic about the future. (R) \_\_\_\_\_

7. I find most things amusing. \_\_\_\_\_

8. I am always committed and involved. \_\_\_\_\_

9. Life is good. \_\_\_\_\_

10. I do not think that the world is a good place. (R) \_\_\_\_\_

11. I laugh a lot. \_\_\_\_\_

12. I am well satisfied about everything in my life. \_\_\_\_\_

13. I don’t think I look attractive. (R) \_\_\_\_\_

14. There is a gap between what I would like to do and what I have done. (R) \_\_\_\_\_

15. I am very happy. \_\_\_\_\_

16. I find beauty in some things. \_\_\_\_\_

17. I always have a cheerful effect on others. \_\_\_\_\_

18. I can fit in (find time for) everything I want to. \_\_\_\_\_

19. I feel that I am not especially in control of my life. (R) \_\_\_\_\_

20. I feel able to take anything on. \_\_\_\_\_

21. I feel fully mentally alert. \_\_\_\_\_

22. I often experience joy and elation. \_\_\_\_\_

23. I don’t find it easy to make decisions. (R) \_\_\_\_\_

24. I don’t have a particular sense of meaning and purpose in my life. (R) \_\_\_\_\_

25. I feel I have a great deal of energy. \_\_\_\_\_

26. I usually have a good influence on events. \_\_\_\_\_

27. I don’t have fun with other people. (R) \_\_\_\_\_

28. I don’t feel particularly healthy. (R) \_\_\_\_\_

29. I don’t have particularly happy memories of the past. (R) \_\_\_\_\_

Items marked (R) should be scored in reverse

**3. Neutral Words List**

Below is a list of words. Please indicate how positively or negatively you view each word to be by entering a number in the blank after each statement according to the following scale:

1 = Extremely Negative  
2 = Moderately Negative  
3 = Slightly Negative  
4 = Slightly Positive  
5 = Moderately Positive   
6 = Strongly Positive

1. Book
2. Patient
3. Swamp
4. Wine
5. Alien
6. Limber
7. Salute
8. Icebox
9. Context
10. Scissors
11. Gender
12. Trumpet
13. Writer
14. Concentrate
15. Insect
16. Teacher
17. Glass
18. Nursery
19. Flyer
20. Watch
21. Custom
22. Nonsense
23. Medicine
24. Coast
25. Hide