



Presenter: Mary Jo Gallegos

Session & Time: Poster_III / 2:00 to 2:50pm

Room: Guzman Lecture Hall

Discipline: Psychology

Faculty Mentor: Afshin Gharib

Digital Portfolio URL:

Title: Perceptions of Wealth: How Socioeconomic Status Shapes Students Attitudes Towards Happiness

Abstract:

There are mixed opinions about the relationship between wealth and happiness and the belief that the more money someone has, the happier that individual will be. While many people assume there is a connection, this is not always true because the definition of wealth may vary amongst people. Some people may define wealth as having an abundance of good people around them and others may define it as having an abundance of material possessions. Furthermore, while financial stability can provide comfort and security, these are not the only factors in someone's happiness. To determine what the perception is among college students, participants will read vignettes about an individual described as either wealthy or not and complete a measure of happiness for that person (Lyubomirsky & Lepper, 1999). This research will also measure participant's Belief in a Just World (Vonderhaar, 2015) and Protestant Work Ethic (Blood, 1975). Examining these two ideologies are important in uncovering mental

processes that shape the participants' belief in their perception of wealth and happiness. Past research has stated that people who agree with the Protestant Work Ethic tend to have negative views towards poor people (Furnham & Gunter, 1984). People who believe in PWE tend to put work as a top priority compared to those who believe otherwise, therefore seeing people who are wealthy will give the impression that the poor person is not working hard enough or not valuing hard work. The Belief in a Just Work Theory suggests that wealth is a sign of earned success which strengthens the perception that those that are wealthy are happier. It is predicted that students who agree with the PWE belief, agreed that the individual who was wealthier was happier. Additionally, those who come from a wealthier family will more likely view the described wealthy individual as happier than the other. The study is expected to be completed in March 2025. If the results are as predicted, this study will provide additional insight into whether and why people judge the wealthy as happy