Debriefing

We would first like to sincerely thank you for your valued participation in this research study.

This study is part of an important line of research in educationalpsychology, which will benefit students. We are investigating the effects of music and pre-test instructions on students’ anxiety and test performance.

Regarding music, for this particular study, you were in only one of three music conditions: obnoxious music, calming music, or no music. We expect that students listening to calming music before taking a test will experience lower levels of anxiety (demonstrated by lower scores on the anxiety survey and by lower readings of heart rate and blood pressure), which will help students focus and perform better on the test (demonstrated by higher scores on the math test). In contrast, we expect that students listening to obnoxious music will experience slightly elevated levels of anxiety, which will prevent them from doing as well on the test. Whereas previous research has shown that music reduces stress and positively enhances the psychological state of working adults (Smith, 2008), this study may show similar benefits of music in academic settings. In addition to offering students a more effective way to succeed in their academic life, this research may also provide people with a more effective way to reduce stress and anxiety in any aspect of their life. Given the negative effects of anxiety on blood pressure and the negative effects of blood pressure on health (Marazziti et al., 2007), any means of reducing anxiety will ultimately improve health.

Regarding pre-test instructions, you were in only one of two conditions: warning or consoling. In the warning condition, participants were told that the math test would be difficult and that the amount of extra credit received would be based on how well they did on the test. In the consoling condition, participants were told to not worry about the difficulty of the test because they would receive the same amount of extra credit regardless of how well they performed on the test. In actuality, each participant will receive the maximum amount of extra credit points offered by his or her instructor regardless of performance on the test. Given the predictions and implications above, I hope that you understand why participants in the warning condition were falsely told that the amount of extra credit received would be based on how well they did on the test. The warning condition was important for trying to match real test conditions, which are characterized by difficult tests and corresponding test anxiety. Without this warning, participants may not have taken the test seriously and the results of the study would not reveal an anxiety-relieving way of preparing for real tests. For these reasons, we ask that you not share this information with your friends and peers who may be participating in this study at a later date.

After all of the data have been collected for this study, by December 31, a written summary of the findings will be posted online at the following address: <http://www.psych.txstate.edu/research/debriefing.php> I hope that you find the results interesting and educational. If you would like additional information about the study, please contact me (Jennifer Lilley) by email at [jl1492@txstate.edu](mailto:jl1492@txstate.edu) or Dr. Crystal Oberle by email at [oberle@txstate.edu](mailto:oberle@txstate.edu) or by phone at 512-245-3166.

As indicated on the consent form, if you experience any distress from your participation in this study, you may want to contact the Texas State Counseling Center. Mental health services at the Counseling Center are free to registered students, though the number of sessions allowed may be limited. If you seek another mental health provider, any costs incurred for these mental health services are your sole responsibility. Contact information for the Counseling Center and for three outside mental health providers are provided below.

* Texas State Counseling Center / phone: 512-245-2208 / email: counselingcenter@txstate.edu / location: 5-4.1 LBJ Student Center on the campus of Texas State University in San Marcos, TX
* Kathie Cleveland, LPC / phone: 512-353-3103 / location: 829 N. LBJ, Suite #207 in San Marcos, TX
* Winston Haun, PsyD / phone: 512-396-1722 / location: 13 Pampass Pass in San Marcos, TX
* Trini Rodriguez, LPC / phone: 512-396-7170 / location: 205 Chetham St., Suite #1 in San Marcos, TX

Thank you again for participating in this study. We hope you found the information interesting and educational.