

Cognitive and personality differences of supernatural belief

ABSTRACT:

Background

This project examined if we believe in certain things because we think in a certain way or have certain personality. This required the development of the scale to enable the study of cognition and personality with relation to belief.

Aims

Examine cognition and personality of people who hold different types of supernatural belief.

Method

Four studies were conducted at the University of Derby and via social media. Studies one and two created and validated a new scale. Studies three and four used various measures of cognition and personality to create a new model.

Results

Studies one and two created and validated the Belief in the Supernatural Scale, a 44 item scale with five factors: 'mental and psychic phenomena', 'religious belief', 'psychokinesis', 'supernatural entities', and 'common paranormal perceptions'. Study three revealed two profiles relating to cognition: 'reflective thinkers' and 'intuitive implicit believers'. The final study revealed 'sensitive and abstract thinkers' and 'reflective metacognitive dogmatists' profiles. Structural Equation Modelling was then used to test different models finding that personality predicted belief, and belief predicted cognition.

Conclusion

This project indicated a clear separation of religious and paranormal belief within the new scale, and that spiritual belief overlaps between the two. Also found that 'sceptics' and 'religious believers' have remarkably similar profiles. The 'paranormal believers' did not think critically or analytically. Schizotypy was the main predictor of belief and the relationship between belief and cognition being dependent on the type of belief.

Keywords

Supernatural, Belief, Cognition, Personality, Paranormal, Religious

Published Work:

Schofield, M. B., Baker, I. S., Staples, P., & Sheffield, D. (accepted). The creation and validation of the Belief in the Supernatural Scale. *Journal of Parapsychology*.

Os textos são da exclusiva responsabilidade dos autores
All texts are of the exclusive responsibility of the authors

Researcher's Contacts:

Dr Ian Baker, C.Psychol., FHEA., AFBPsS.

Senior Lecturer in Psychology & Programme Leader for B.Sc. (Hons) Psychology.

Department of Life Sciences

College of Life & Natural Sciences

University of Derby

Kedleston Road

Derby

DE22 1GB

Tel: 01332 593026

Email: i.s.baker@derby.ac.uk