

Belief perseverance essay sample



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Jonestown cult members made a public declaration of their loyalty to Jim Jones by selling everyone of their personal possessions, and then followed him to the Republic of Guyana. Later, they would experience irrational manipulation and abuse, and they even stayed to the point of committing mass suicide when told them to do so. This terrible and unfortunate story is a perfect example of belief perseverance. Belief perseverance essentially states that if we decide that we believe something, then we will persevere in our belief, even when facing indisputable evidence proving otherwise. This is particularly applicable when the individual has stated their beliefs to other people, or if the others generally know the beliefs of the individual. The psychological term has been around since 1975, when two psychologists conducted an experiment in attempt to prove their hypothesis. The experiment asked participants to look at suicide notes to determine which were real and which were not real. A third of each of the participants were told that they were right 10, 17, and 24 out of 25 times. They were then told that they had been lied to and asked to estimate more correctly.

Interestingly enough, each participant who had been told higher numbers still continued to guess high, even after knowing that they had been lied to.

It has been interesting to learn about this concept and apply it to friends that strongly support one of the republican presidential nominees. The nominee's campaigns have been going on for some time now, so I feel that the majority of voters have already picked who they will be giving their vote to. What is interesting to me, is when the supporter of one candidate attempts to convince the supporter of another candidate, that one candidate is inferior to the other. These conversations almost always go nowhere, and usually just

result in frustration between the two. There are three different types, or theories, of belief perseverance that have been extensively studied. They are self-impression, social-impression, and naïve theory. The theory that I would like to focus on, is the naïve theory. Naive theory is a theory based on beliefs regarding how the world works. Most research on naive theories has focused on social theories, beliefs about people and how they think, feel, behave, and interact. This theory may include stereotypes about teenagers, Asian Americans, Muslims, beliefs about lawyers, artists, firefighters, and even beliefs relating to the causes of war, poverty, or violence.

A practical application of this theory would be, someone who has been raised up and fostered in a racist environment, is likely to be racist towards a given demographic, even though all members of that demographic have been nothing but kind and polite to him or her. It is interesting to relate naïve theory back to the example I mentioned earlier regarding the supporters of potential presidents. The majority of these candidate debates are over the policies that these candidates would put in place should they get elected. I will admit that I fall guilty to this as well, but nearly every time a supporter talks about their candidate's potential policies, they discuss them with such certainty of success, that you think that they already know the outcome. When the reality of the matter, is that the majority of the potential results of these plans and policies are mere speculation and nothing more.

So now in closing, I feel that there is some very practical knowledge that we can take away from the belief perseverance concept. First of all, from a marketer's point of view, I feel that there are two lessons that we can take away from this concept. First, if you want to change someone's beliefs, then <https://assignbuster.com/belief-perseverance-essay-sample/>

try to not let them declare their current beliefs. This lesson is particularly applicable in sales. Secondly, if you want someone to keep their beliefs, then get them to announce these beliefs as soon as possible. Lastly, I feel that there is one more lesson that everyone can take away from the belief perseverance concept that would be very beneficial. So here it is, pay attention to evidence and facts, and try to avoid skipping past what you see just because you have already concluded something. If we could all do this then I think that a lot of wasted time would be saved, and many pointless debates would be averted.